

**“GIVE ME A CLEAN HEART”:  
THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF MARGARET PLEASANT DOUROUX**

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## **Abstract**

Margaret Pleasant Douroux (b. 1941) of Los Angeles, California is one of the most influential African American female gospel music composers of the twentieth century. She has penned classic hymns and gospel songs such as "I'm Glad," "We're Blest," "God is Not Dead," and "Rivers of Joy". Her compositions "Give Me a Clean Heart," "He Decided to Die," and "If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side" have become standards in the African American Church and have been sung by congregations and choirs for decades. However, in the roster of composers who have contributed to the genre of gospel music, she has often been overlooked. Many of her compositions appear in hymnals and songbooks and have been professionally recorded by gospel and secular artists alike. Margaret Douroux' body of work has often transcended cultural boundaries of style, genre, race, denomination, and doctrine. To examine the influence of this living composer who has contributed greatly to the musical and spiritual richness within the African American church community, the qualitative descriptive study approach is used to gain understanding of the life, music and influence of Margaret Pleasant Douroux and her importance to the history of African American Gospel music. As a result, this study distinguishes Douroux as an emblematic contributor in African American gospel music and makes her worthy of recognition and celebration amongst the genre's greatest contributors.

**Key Words:** African American female, Gospel Music, Composer

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## **Abbreviations**

**G. M. W. A.** – Gospel Music Workshop of America Inc., founded by singer, songwriter and recording artist James Cleveland in 1968.

**N. C. G. C. C.** – National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses founded in 1933 by Thomas Dorsey, Sallie Martin, Theodore Frye, Magnolia Lewis Butts, and Beatrice Brown.

**H. M. F** – Heritage Music Foundation Inc., founded by Margaret Pleasant Douroux in 1985.

**UIL** - University Interscholastic League; exists to provide educational extracurricular academic, athletic and music contest. The UIL was created by the University of Texas in 1910 and has grown into the largest inter-school organization of its kind in the world. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “University Interscholastic League,” The University of Texas at Austin, accessed November 23, 2019, <https://www.uil texas.org/>.



## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Spring of 2019 afforded me the opportunity to be present in the beautiful edifice of the Saint James Presbyterian Church in Katy, Texas, while attending the University Interscholastic League (UIL) Choral and Sight-Reading Competition. As an avid supporter of high school choral arts programs and its students in the Houston Independent School District, I eagerly awaited the start of the afternoon competition. To pass the time, I developed interest in the hymnal that rested in the pew before me. The hymnal, *The Faith We Sing*, was filled with hundreds of songs, many of which I hadn't had the privilege of hearing at that time. As I perused the selections, hymn No. 2133, entitled "Give Me a Clean Heart," by Margaret Pleasant Douroux immediately arrested my attention. My initial reaction was one of excitement! Though as passionate and Christ-centered as its fellow hymns, transparently, I was shocked to see her work incorporated into this denominational hymnal. I further considered the beauty of such a work, by Margaret Pleasant Douroux, being showcased in the hymnal of a denomination that historically did not highlight Black Gospel Music. This prompted me to consider the unfortunate and possible reality that more of her music similar to "Give Me a Clean Heart" had not been exposed to congregations in their beautiful edifices. This simultaneously suggested that without the directors, musicians, choirs, and congregants being introduced to the music, it was possible that they may not have the opportunity to know about the composer. If research were not done, the world may never have the privilege to know the beauty of the hymnist, composer and musician that is Margaret Pleasant Douroux. This triggered another memory that reiterated her importance to gospel music.

At the age of five, while riding to Vacation Bible School, with family, at Shady Acres Church of Christ, they sang song after song on the long van ride. Even on such a warm summer

day, I enjoyed the moment, but I wanted to be involved as well. Tugging on my older cousin Cynthia, I mentioned I had a song which I wanted them to sing. As the youth leader, she instructed them to sit and focus as I taught them the song. After recently hearing it on the radio and again in church, I had fallen in love with it as much as a five-year old child could. That song was Margaret Pleasant Douroux' "Follow Jesus" which had gained its popularity in the early 1980's.

Thirty years later, and still one of my favorite songs, it still has had a major impact on my life and in the world of Black Gospel Music. Perhaps the origins of that impact are not always able to be articulated, but the trauma, of that same five-year-old child, who witnessed the near-death from physical abuse of his mother, by his father, "Follow Jesus" had a profound impact during that time. The thought of hope beyond tragedy and trauma that created a mindset of "...if He couldn't take me to the top, there was no one else who could,"<sup>2</sup> left a huge impression on me that would never be forgotten. The music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux easily became a daily refuge from uncertain realities that no child should have to face; these were situations no five-year-old should ever have to witness, still her work would prove to have influence for years to come.

First grade would re-introduce me to music through a young energetic teacher who formed our school's Gospel Glee Club. One of the most memorable songs she taught us was Margaret Douroux's "Move Mountain." At such an impressionable age, my teacher taught Godly principles that she knew we needed, and she did it through the music of Margaret Douroux that left an impression on her. "If you have the faith the size of a mustard seed, you can say, 'Move,

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<sup>2</sup> Margaret Douroux. Follow Jesus. (Los Angeles, CA: Earl A. Pleasant Publishing, 1981).

Mountain. Mountain get out of my way.”<sup>3</sup> These encouraging lyrics became our theme song, for the duration of matriculation in elementary school, and they were never forgotten it.

At the age of 14, while attending the initial sermon of a relative, the very first song the choir sang that night caught my attention that Sunday night. As Dr. Jessie Mae Berry, minister of music, conducted the chorale, they passionately exclaimed, “I said, ‘Lord, I am sick.’ He said, ‘I am a healer.’ I said, ‘Lord, I am lonely.’ He said, ‘I am a company keeper.’ I said, ‘Lord, I have no food.’ He said, ‘I’ll prepare a table. Whatever you need me to do, I am able.’ Sooner than right now, faster than immediately, the Lord answers prayers.”<sup>4</sup> The lyrics arrested me! And the choir sang it with so much command! It was their testimony and they sang as if no one could tell them otherwise. It was imperative that I knew who wrote the song, who originally recorded it and any other details I could know.

After worship, I shyly asked Dr. Berry about the piece and she, as influence as my Gospel Glee Club teacher, proudly let me know that the song was written by Margaret Douroux. The following day led me to search my limited sheet music for an address for this amazing composer and write her a letter to express my sentiments of “Sooner than Right Now.” To my surprise, two weeks later, Margaret would ensure that her response and a copy of the sheet music reached me. Certainly, “Sooner than Right Now” became one of my favorite songs because of her kind gesture.

Throughout my life’s journey, the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux has been a source of incredible inspiration. Growing as a musician and composer, I soon realized that I was aware of and influenced by much more of her music. I’d sang those songs with fellow believers for years. Her work is among many of my favorite songs, greatest sources of inspiration, and

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<sup>3</sup> Margaret Douroux. *Move Mountain*. (Los Angeles, CA: Earl A. Pleasant Publishing, 1984).

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Douroux. *Sooner Than Right Now*. (Los Angeles, CA: Earl A. Pleasant Publishing, 1988).

motivation. Like so much of Black Gospel Music, work from Margaret Pleasant Douroux like “Follow Jesus” and others wasn’t just impressive, it was *transformative*.

### **Background**

The *Encyclopedia of African American Music* includes a timeline which lists significant moments in African American Music. The only listing for the year 1970 states, “Margaret Pleasant Douroux composes gospel music classic ‘Give Me a Clean Heart.’ *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* adds gospel music as a category.”<sup>5</sup> This encyclopedia also lists Douroux among the “Black Hymnist and Psalmists: 1968 – Present,” and has two short paragraphs of biography written about the composer. In the *Encyclopedia of African American Music*, Douroux is also briefly mentioned in the small section written about the life of Rev. James Cleveland and his musical contributions.

James Cleveland’s contributions as editor of *Songs of Zion* (1981) was significant to black hymnody. It contains Cleveland’s arrangements of hymns, spirituals, and gospel songs as well as arrangements and compositions by gospel greats such as Andraé Crouch and Margaret Pleasant Douroux.<sup>6</sup>

Sadly, this is one of only five books written about African American music and Gospel Music that mentions the contributions of Margaret Pleasant Douroux. Dr. James Abbingtion’s *Let the Church Sing On! Reflections on Black Sacred Music* has one chapter dedicated to the interpretation of three of Margaret Douroux’ songs. Abbingtion also lists Douroux’ compositions in the books *Let Mt. Zion Rejoice: Music in the African American Church* and *Readings in African American Church Music and Worship*. Bill Carpenter’s book, *Uncloudy Days: The Gospel Music Encyclopedia*, gives two brief paragraphs concerning

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<sup>5</sup> Emmett G. Price, ed. *Encyclopedia of African American Music*. (Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood, 2011), xliv.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

Douroux' music, and is mostly focused on her song "He Decided to Die" recorded by the Donald Vails Singers. Douroux's music, her parents and organization, the Heritage Music Foundation, are mentioned in Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje and Eddie Meadows', *California Soul: Music of African Americans in the West*. Finally, in Gwendolyn Sim Warren's *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit*, a brief biography on Margaret Douroux and a reprint of her song, "Give Me A Clean Heart" is mentioned.

Ultimately, this doctoral work is inspired, in part, by the lack of scholarly material written on such an influential composer. Although the aforementioned literature has information on Margaret Pleasant Douroux and even some of her music, there is no dedicated study of her life and musical work. Her music, sang from coast-to-coast, from state-to-state, this study seeks to highlight her numerous contributions and discuss her national influence on the Black Gospel Music genre and beyond.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Douroux' significant contributions to gospel music, and her compositions have largely been performed and recorded by different ethnicities, generations, and religions, yet she has not received the recognition she deserves. This thesis attempts to rectify this problem. It is the first attempt at a scholarly assessment of one of the most influential African American female gospel music composers of the last five decades. This writing explores the life of Margaret Pleasant Douroux in much more detail than any other writing previously has, it analyzes her musical contributions to gospel music, and acknowledges her national influence more than any other literary writing has offered to do.

Finally, this doctoral work examines the biblical, cultural, and influential aspects of the musical works of Margaret Pleasant Douroux. Douroux has written music inspired by scripture, sacred religious seasons (Christmas and Easter), and by personal inspirations. “Her more than two hundred compositions range from anthems, hymns, and traditional gospel to modern and contemporary gospel styles.”<sup>7</sup> Taken together, these components ultimately argue that Douroux’s compositions have influenced religious and popular music in America and has become an essential medium for cultural and musical expression that expands far beyond the walls of churches and gospel music convention platforms.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This thesis is a scholarly assessment of Margaret Pleasant Douroux’s life, music, and impact on church music. It includes an examination of the composer’s most significant musical works and a broad analysis of her musical output. The sources of this broad analysis are songs, publications, and discography. It will be shown that Douroux’s works, inspired by biblical themes and the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ, exert a significant musical impact on African American church music. This dissertation ultimately argues that Douroux’s compositions have contributed greatly to the African American church and the genre of Black Gospel music in America and her music is an important medium of cultural and biblical expression.

This study seeks to give perspectives on impact, influence, musical content, and worship enhancements that emerged through the body of music from Margaret Pleasant Douroux. By examining the music of Douroux, gathering knowledge on her musical influences and

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<sup>7</sup> Birgitta Johnson. “Oh, For A Thousand Tongues to Sing-Music and Worship in African American Megachurches of Los Angeles.” (PhD diss., University of California, 2008), 230.

background, and exploring her inspirational composing, this thesis will yield information illustrative of the impact this music has had on the church. To illustrate these perspectives, the themes in the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux will be explored to examine its presence in the musical culture of the church and theological development of the African American Church.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to a small body of work by a composer who has greatly influenced African American gospel music and the evangelical church. By examining the relevance of Margaret Pleasant Douroux's work, this study offers a unique perspective on her influence, and it is my hope that this work will encourage continued study of the music of Douroux and many other African-American composers whose contributions to the gospel music genre have been significant; since several composers and artists are still contributors, they can, in turn, share their own personal stories for educational, musical and inspirational purposes.

Though the musical scores of Margaret Pleasant Douroux's compositions are written simply, so that any musician, with knowledge of music theory and piano, can play it, it also gives a musician the freedom and the liberty to improvise and be creative when playing any of her compositions. Douroux' lyrical content is mostly biblically based, and her writings are thought to be provoking and encouraging to the listener. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, when Douroux began composing, there were very few African American hymn writers; her writing is reminiscent of early African-American hymn writers, particularly of Thomas Dorsey, Kenneth Morris, Lucie Campbell, Doris Akers and a few others of the 1930-1950 era of hymn and gospel music writing. Their music told of their faith, belief, and experience. Douroux suggests, "Doris

Akers was a super writer. I think she was inspirational for my writing too. But it was a company [Manna Music] that I idolized because Doris Akers was there. She wrote things like "Sweet, Sweet Spirit;" "You Can't Beat God Giving;" and "God Spoke to Me!" My goodness! This woman was just super, super to me.”<sup>8</sup>

Though passionate, these compositions were not selfish. Margaret Douroux has lectured, “As a composer, we have the responsibility to tell the story of Jesus; music is probably one of the most powerful influences we have in our whole American culture. Music has the potential to describe almost any situation that we can experience. Black music gave black people an identity unique to itself.”<sup>9</sup> For nearly fifty years, since her first composition, “Give Me a Clean Heart,” in 1970, the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux has widely been incorporated into the African American worship service experience. Douroux’s music has transcended the boundaries of the traditional church and made its way into publications and recordings. Because of this, her work is deserving extensive study. It is these accomplishments that establish Margaret Pleasant Douroux as a symbolic figure in African American Gospel Music and beyond.

### **Research Questions**

To explore Dr. Douroux’s musical impact on Gospel Music, the following Research Questions will be considered in Chapter Four, and Conclusions offered in Chapter Five:

RQ1: How did the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux grow out of the gospel-music tradition?

RQ2: What were the childhood influences and how were the early musical talents of

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<sup>8</sup> Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje. *American Music, Vol. 11, No. 4*. Los Angeles Composers of African American Gospel Music: The First Generations. (University of Illinois Press, 1993), 432

<sup>9</sup> Margaret Douroux, “Gospel in Los Angeles,” UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology Collection 1961-November 18, 1997, accessed January 30, 2019, [https://archive.org/details/calauem\\_000071](https://archive.org/details/calauem_000071).



Margaret Pleasant Douroux developed?

RQ3: What characteristics of music are shared by Margaret Pleasant

Douroux and other hymn writers that can be identified in her musical contributions?

RQ4: What are the characteristics that set Margaret Pleasant Douroux' compositions apart from other writers of her era?

RQ5: In what ways has the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux impacted and/or influenced the African American church in the United States?

### **Hypotheses**

The hypotheses for this study include:

H1. Gospel music, as found in its historical record dating from at least 1850, is the foundation for the artistic development seen in the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux.

H2: The childhood influences and early music development of Douroux was fostered by her parents and the mentorship of Thurston G. Frazier, Minister of Music for Mount Moriah Baptist Church.

H3. The common musical characteristics shared by Dr. Douroux and hymn composers parallel to musical structure and form (ABA musical form) and lyrical content.

H4. Douroux began hymn writing during the new contemporary gospel music movement of the late 1960's.

H5. The musical output of Margaret Pleasant Douroux has not only been consistent but has evolved with the growth of the music industry and been reintroduced to new generations.

## Assumptions

It is assumed that the influence of Margaret Pleasant Douroux's music, from its origins in the African American church, is now far reaching. Further, it is assumed that examination of the life, musical catalog, commentaries and video interviews, of Margaret Pleasant Douroux, are compelling evidence for the significance of her contributions to gospel music.

## Definition of Terms

**Gospel Music:** "is both a repertoire and a style of singing. Gospel music can either be appropriated from a hymn or spiritual by a well-versed performance or it can be composed as a new song and performed in a variety of gospel styles."<sup>10</sup>

**Negro-Spirituals:** "as the enslaved in the United States heard sermons by the slave preacher that were based upon the Bible, they created songs in response. These songs, which we call spirituals, are record of a people who found the status, faith, values, order and harmony they needed to survive by internally creating an expanded universe and spiritual freedom."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Bernice Johnson Reagon, ed. *We'll Understand It Better By and By: Pioneering African American Gospel Composers*. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 4.

<sup>11</sup> James Abbingdon. *Let Mt. Zion Rejoice! Music in the African American Church*. (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2001), 82.



**Figure 1.** Margaret Pleasant Douroux. Reprinted with the permission of Robin Williams.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews literature concerning Margaret Pleasant Douroux' life, music, and the genre of gospel music. These sources are presented in two main categories: primary sources and secondary sources. The primary sources are in turn grouped as **prose works** by Margaret Pleasant Douroux and as **musical works** of Margaret Pleasant Douroux. In this latter section, her musical compositions are placed in three categories: 1) works based on The Bible, 2) works based on the birth of Christ and the Resurrection of Christ, and 3) inspirational works. The secondary sources are grouped as scholarly writing and research about Margaret Pleasant Douroux, and scholarly writing on the forms and styles Margaret Pleasant Douroux used. The remaining list is books related to the genre of gospel music, African American spirituals, worship and other historical aspects.

### Primary Sources

#### Prose Works by Margaret Pleasant Douroux

Although Margaret Douroux is best known for her Gospel songs, she has also authored books, booklets, and delivered lectures at workshops. The following list includes books she has written and her Ph.D. dissertation:

Douroux, Margaret. *About My Father's Business: The Ministry of Reverend Earl Amos Pleasant*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Earl Pleasant Publishing. 1977.

Douroux, Margaret. *Why I Sing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Earl Pleasant Publishing. 1983.

Douroux, Margaret. *Things That Grow Together: Church Decadence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Earl Pleasant Publishing. 2013.

Douroux, Margaret. "Principles That Motivate and Enhance Education Among Black Children" Ph.D. dissertation, University of Beverly Hills, 1979.

Ethnomusicologist Birgitta Johnson suggests,

Douroux leads the most popular and largest classes in the Academic Division of the GMWA's annual national conferences. Each year, nearly two-hundred people pack the meeting rooms to attend her classes, some for the second and third time. Often teaching on the importance of worship, as well as the artistic elements of church music ministry, Douroux emphasizes the need for church musicians and writers to be literate. In the past two decades, the number of church musicians who read music has drastically decreased, leaving many aspiring writers dependent on others to notate their compositions or, in some cases, vulnerable to those who would steal their songs for themselves.<sup>12</sup>

Johnson speaks to a growing concern identified at the Gospel Music Workshop of America's (GMWA) annual conference. Douroux' lectures often emphasize the importance of music literacy for artistic longevity. Douroux daily teaches these classes and those attending are introduced to her music. The following paragraphs detail a some of the prose work from her lectures.

In "Music Ministry Marring," Douroux gives biblical insight on meaning of being marred and how it effects members of the music ministry. She proposes that the marring is critical to the shaping of the individual and subsequently effects the work of the individual. "The "marring " is the shaping of the person in the hands of the potter and how that should be the prayer of every Christian: to be made over again. The vessel was marred and before anything could go into the vessel, it had to be made over. Before the vessel could be used, it has to be re-constructed."<sup>13</sup> Douroux declares, "make us over again must become the prayer of the Christian. We certainly have been broken by the wind and the rain. We need to stop by the potter's house so that we can be made over again."<sup>14</sup> This booklet likewise contains the songs, "It Could Have Been Me," "I Thank You Lord," "Attitude of Gratitude," and "God Knows Just What He's Doing."

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<sup>12</sup> Birgitta Johnson. "Oh, For A Thousand Tongues to Sing-Music and Worship in African American Megachurches of Los Angeles." (PhD diss., University of California, 2008), 230-231.

<sup>13</sup> Margaret Douroux. *Music Ministry Marring*. (Los Angeles: Rev. E. A. Pleasant Publishing), 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

“What’s the Church Talking About?” highlights Douroux’ writes concerns of ‘the world versus the church,’ and what the church is not talking about relative to the secular world it desires to be an example to. Using the political stance versus the church, Douroux writes about what is concerning the church, what should be addressed by the church today, and how the music ministry speaks to that. She asks,” What is the church saying that would make the world pay attention? What has happened in the church that has called the attention to those outside the church doors? Yes, we’ve had some church scandals, some excessive spending scandals, attendance has drop off, more scandals and some inner church conflict. But who is paying attention to the church? Has the church said anything that would make an impact on the world?”<sup>15</sup> Douroux includes an essay entitled, “Platitudes versus the Beatitudes,” which is based on Matthew 5:11. The songs included in this prose work are Douroux’ “Only God Can Give Your Peace,” “Already Done,” and “God’s Promises Weigh More.”

“Things that Anchor, Things that Don’t” was written for the 2002 Heritage Music Foundation Conference in Los Angeles, California and later shared with the Gospel Music Workshop of America. Using Hebrew 12 as its foundation, Douroux first writes about the church and those matters that don’t secure us. She writes, “Surprisingly, much of what we do in the body of Christ won’t hold, won’t grip nor anchor. Sometimes the busyness of the church, church stuff, helps to delete the energy of the church.”<sup>16</sup> She gives special consideration to those things which seem to distract the church and distort the view causing members to lose grip and lack spiritual footing. Douroux uses Hebrews 6:19 for the basis of that which does anchor the believer. She believes God’s word, prayer and the ‘songs of Zion’ are factors that anchor the

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<sup>15</sup> Margaret Douroux. What’s the Church Talking About? (Los Angeles: Rev. E. A. Pleasant Publishing), 7.

<sup>16</sup> Margaret Douroux. Things that Anchor-Things that Don’t. (Los Angeles: Rev. E. A. Pleasant Publishing, 2002), 4.

Christian. “The songs of the people of God anchor them. As captives, the people of Zion were asked to sing, but they explained that they could not sing in a strange land. The songs were anchored to the God of their homeland and not the strange God of their captives.”<sup>17</sup> To illustrate her concept of that which “anchors,” Douroux includes the songs “When Ever You Pray,” “Trust Him,” and “What Would I Do?” in this work.

Douroux writes in “Music Without Flattery,”

the idea of flattery controls and commands the attitude of the minister of music and others in leadership roles. Title, influence, and high-paying positions do not prove that that position is what God has in mind, nor that a high position indicates who one is in Christ. There are times, in ministry positions, that we rely on the applause of man and from those in other leadership roles to validate who we are and what we do. That is not how God intends for it to be. Every day will not be perfect; there will be some struggles, and some situations may become unsuitable for God’s presence to be made known, even in the church. Douroux uses Genesis 39:1-2, the story of Joseph, as a biblical example of “the best place or most popular place may not be the best place for you.”<sup>18</sup>

Such as in the case of Joseph’s life, perhaps God moves us out of our comfort zone to places that are uncomfortable so that His glory will be shown. She provides influence for African American Gospel writers and musicians to be morally intentional in their efforts to serve the Lord’s church. Douroux uses the songs “Not in A Million Years,” “Last Night While Counting My Blessings,” “Personal Praise,” “Mercy That Suits,” and “I Got this Song” for this prose.

Douroux’ “Stolen Affection” was too written for the Heritage Music Foundation Conference. Its foundation is John 3:26-30. Douroux uses the passage to illustrate the concept of being chosen for what is essentially a marriage. It highlights the responsibility of the individuals who are a part of that ‘union.’ “The concept of being chosen to serve the Master by comparing the relationship of John and Jesus to that of a relationship of a bride, a groom and his friends or best man. He explains that everybody should know that the bride belongs to the groom and not to

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>18</sup> Margaret Douroux. *Ministry with Out Flattery*. (Los Angeles: Rev. E. A. Pleasant Publishing), 3.

the friends or to the best man. The friends and the best man are to be happy for the groom and ready to serve him, but they must realize that they have no rights to the bride.”<sup>19</sup> This recommends that everyone should know that the bride belongs to the groom and that affections should be dedicated to rightful places. This is the only work of prose with no original Douroux compositions.

“In Tune Music – No Competition,” is prose from Douroux’ lectures on the concept of competition in the church and asserts that those who are trying to compete are not “in tune” with the true meaning of worship and what God called us to do: to be as His disciples. Douroux’ premise is, “that there is no need and no time for competition when you’re working on the mission of the Lord. There is no competition when the source is the same. We all come from the same person and have been given very unique and different gifts.”<sup>20</sup> It includes Douroux’, “He Makes My Day,” “Bless Me Today,” “Remember Me,” “Move Mountain,” “I Thank You Lord,” and “God Say I Got This.”

In “Components of Worship,” Douroux teaches on the biblical elements of worship and how they are applicable to the Church today. It addresses those in music leadership who lead congregants in worship on a consistent basis. Douroux expresses, “the need for the church to worship is great, because there has been so much emphasis put on the “praise” perspective and not the true worship aspect. If there is going to be “praise,” then there must also be a time for ‘worship.’”<sup>21</sup> She suggests that they duality is necessary to the spiritual health of the congregants. The Douroux songs included in this booklet are those she considers pertinent for

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<sup>19</sup> Margaret Douroux. *Stolen Affection*. (Los Angeles: Rev. E. A. Pleasant Publishing), 2.

<sup>20</sup> Margaret Douroux. *In Tune Music – No Competition*. (Los Angeles: Rev. E. A. Pleasant Publishing, 2019), 5.

<sup>21</sup> Margaret Douroux. *Components of Worship*. (Los Angeles: Rev. E. A. Pleasant Publishing), 6.



worship and why we should worship, “The Lord Strong and Mighty,” “Count it All Joy,” “Remember Me,” “Let It Be,” “Grace and Mercy Covered Me,” “Trust God,” and “Trust Him.”

For her prose work “God’s Got Secrets,” Douroux indicates, “The word of God is filled with instructions given without an expected out-come. Often, God give gives instructions and He expects us, sooner or later, just to obey.”<sup>22</sup> Having true worship, Douroux, using John 4:11, emphasizes how the assignments of Job, Daniel and Abraham are modeled in the Old Testament for the believer and the worshiper. She also writes, “There are many precious promises in the Word of God that guarantees the believer the ability to move through the most indefinite and the most difficult assignment. We may not ever be able to determine how a situation could possibly turn out good, but we must latch on to the promise for dear life. But it about the promises of God and the ability of God. Christ has built in security for even the weakest and most feeble child of God to succeed.”<sup>23</sup> The songs included in this booklet are, “God’s Got Secrets” are Douroux’ “God’s Promises Weigh More,” “Jesus Gave Me a Light,” I Got This Song,” “Somebody, Somebody Touched Me,” and “God Made a Man.”

Finally, Douroux wrote the booklet “Morning Worship” to provide insight on the actual church service. She details facets of the worship service experience and its structure. Praise and Worship, Prayer and Encouragement, Anthem, Communion and Benediction are the focus points of “Morning Worship.” Douroux gives notes and instruction on approaching each of these areas for worship and its importance to the Church today. It is Douroux’ “belief that, “through the music ministry, particularly during the morning worship, music must be as biblically sound and relevant as possible to meet the needs of every person in attendance.”<sup>24</sup> For this prose, she

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<sup>22</sup> Margaret Douroux. God’s Got Secrets. (Los Angeles: Rev. E. A. Pleasant Publishing), 2.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>24</sup> Margaret Douroux. Morning Worship. (Los Angeles: Rev. E. A. Pleasant Publishing), 3.

includes songs tailored to each part of worship: Praise and Worship- “He Makes My Day,” for Prayer and Encouragement-“Through a Storm,” Anthem-“I Will Heal Your Land,” Communion- “Remember Me,” and for the Benediction- “Present Faultless.” The aforementioned booklets were collected at various Gospel Music Workshop of America conventions and Heritage Music Foundation conferences. Larry Gordon, of the L. A. Times, wrote of the 2006 Gospel Music Workshop of America in Dallas, Texas, “At a recent gospel convention in Dallas, more than 300 musicians lapped up her humorous, stern and deeply religious lectures like freshmen before a storied professor. Music experts on university campuses have included her and her traditional style of gospel in their research.”<sup>25</sup>



**Figure 2.** Margaret Pleasant Douroux lecturing at G. M. W. A. in 2019.

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<sup>25</sup> Larry Gordon, “A Place to Sing About,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 16, 2006, accessed September 25, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2006-oct-16-me-gospel16-story.html>.

## Musical Works by Margaret Pleasant Douroux

The original songs of Margaret Pleasant Douroux are characterized in three ways: 1) Works Based on the Bible, 2) Works Based on the Birth and Resurrection of Christ, and 3) Inspirational Works. More than one-third of Douroux' compositions are based on the Bible. Whether it is scripture by way of a sermon, at any time during a church service or her personal prayer/devotion/meditation, the Word of God has been a great influence on her writings.

Her songs, inspired by the birth and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, are among some of her most beloved contributions to gospel music. Douroux has even published booklets of music dedicated to these themes specifically during the liturgical Resurrection/Easter season. Douroux' contributions through her inspirational works are those songs inspired by sermons, personal and cultural experiences. They are the testimonies and reflections from the everyday life of ordinary people expressed through music.

Concerning works based on the Bible, Douroux states, "After finishing my PhD., I took college level biblical classes. During the 80's, it was especially reflected in my music."<sup>26</sup> The late 1970's and the 1980's are when most of the songs below were written. During this time Douroux wrote collections of music to commemorate the death and the birth of Christ. (Please see the appendix for the detailed years.)

Although there are, by her estimate, more than two hundred of her original compositions (both words and music), research for this thesis has only ascertained and verified a little more 170 songs that can be physically located or are in publication. They are shown in the following list, grouped by the previously identified topics. (Titles **in bold** are published in hymnals and songbooks.)

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<sup>26</sup> Margaret Douroux. Heritage Music Foundation National Conference. October 2001.

## 1. Works Based on the Bible

Blessed Be the Lord (Psalm 72:18)  
Blessed Is He (Matthew 5: 3-13)  
Bow at Your Command (Psalm 95:6)  
Chosen (Revelation 17:14)  
**Count it All Joy (James 1:2)**  
**Day and Night Praise (Psalm 113)**  
**Follow Jesus (Luke 9:23)**  
**Give Me a Clean Heart (Psalm 51:10)**  
Glory Be to The Father (Philippians 4:20)  
God Made A Man (Genesis 1:27)  
Good to Praise (Psalm 92)  
Grace and Mercy Covered Me  
(Hebrews 4:16)  
He Decided to Die (Matthew 27:41)  
He Prepareth a Table (Psalm 23:5)  
Hide Your Word (Psalm 119:105)  
**High Praise (Psalm 146:2)**  
**How Can You Recognize A Child  
of God? (Exodus 12:21)**  
How to Pray (Matthew 6:10-13)  
I Have Never Seen the Righteous Forsaken  
(Psalm 37)  
I Will Heal Your Land (II Chronicles 7:14)  
I Will Never Leave Thee (Hebrew 13:5)  
I'm Glad (Genesis 1:27)  
Is There Anything Too Hard for God?  
(Genesis 18:14)  
Is Your Lamp Ready? (Matthew 25:1-8)  
Jesus Gave Me a Light (Matthew 5:14-16  
and Daniel 6:10)  
Let It Be (Matthew 26: 36-45)  
Like a Tree (Psalm 1:3)  
Mercy That Suits (Titus 3:5)  
**Move Mountain (Matthew 17:20)**  
My Will Is Your Will (Luke 22:42)  
Only God Can Give You Peace (Isaiah 26:3)  
Out of His Way  
Perfect Peace (Isaiah 26:3)  
Personal Praise (Habakkuk 3:17)  
Praise Round  
Present Faultless (Jude 1:24)

Remember Me (Luke 23:42)  
Resting Place (Matthew 11:30)  
Rivers of Joy (Psalm 46:4)  
Simple Praise  
Sing at Midnight (Acts 16:25)  
Sow in Tears (Psalm 126)  
**Stand Still (Exodus 14:13-14)**  
**The Angels Sang (Matthew 2)**  
The Joy of the Lord Is My Strength  
(Nehemiah 8:10)  
The Lord Lifted Me (Psalm 40:2)  
The Lord Strong and Mighty (Psalm 24)  
Though He Slay Me (Job 13:15; 14:14)  
Touch Jesus (Luke 8:43-50)  
**Trees (Judges 9:8-15)**  
Trust Him (Proverbs 3:5-6)  
Wait I Say (Psalm 27:14)  
**What Shall I Render? (Psalm 116:12)**  
Worthy (Revelation 4:11)  
You're Mine (Isaiah 43:2)

## 2. Works Based on the Birth and Resurrection of Christ

### The Birth of Christ

**The Angels Sang**  
A Child's Christmas  
He is the Savior  
The Bethlehem Song  
Then Sing Glory  
I Bow  
Rejoice  
High Praise

### The Resurrection of Christ

He Decided to Die (Matthew 27:41)  
Let It Be (Matthew 26: 36-45)  
Out of His Way  
Touch Jesus (Luke 8:43-50)  
God Is Not Dead  
Remember Me (Luke 23:42)  
Since He Died for Me  
Look at What They Did to My Jesus

(Section 3 are the Inspirational Works of Douroux. These songs are written from the personal experiences and the spiritual arrangements.)

### 3. Inspirational Works

A Better Place  
**A Place**  
All These Blessings Are  
    Mine  
Already Done  
An Instrument for Thee  
Another Chance  
Attitude of Gratitude  
Because I Love Him  
Bless Me, Lord  
Bless Me Today  
Blessing In this House for  
    You  
Deep Water  
Do Something  
Don't Wait Too Late  
Easy This Morning Shook  
Everything's All Right  
Go to God  
God is Still Passing Out  
Blessings  
God Knows Just What  
    He's Doing  
God Said I Got This  
God Will Take You There  
God Will Take You  
    Through  
God's Promise  
God's Promises Weigh  
    More  
He Brought Me  
The God I Serve  
**The Lord Is Speaking**  
There are No Impossible  
Through A Storm  
Trade All I Have

He Makes My Day  
Here I Am (Prayer)  
Here I Am (Wonderment)  
Hold Me Close  
Hold On  
Hold On (Spiritual  
    Arrangement)  
Holy  
Home Over the Mountain  
How Dare You  
How're You Gonna Make  
    It?  
I Asked the Lord  
I Can Not Forget My Own  
Child  
I Can't Deny It  
I Got This Song  
I Just Can't Thank You  
Lord  
I Need the Lord  
I Thank You Lord  
I Want to Be Used  
**I'm A Witness**  
I'm Gonna Take My  
    Burdens (Spiritual  
Arrangement)  
If I Had Wings Like A  
    Dove  
If You Counted All Your  
    Blessings  
In the Hands of Jesus  
Trust God  
Until I Reach My Home  
We're Blest  
What We Yet May Be

It Could Have Been Me  
It Took Me So Long  
It's a Joy  
Just Knowing Him Is  
Enough  
Just Say Yes  
Last Days  
Last Night While Counting  
My Blessings  
Live Again  
Love Song  
Loves Me Just the Same  
Miracles  
No Match  
No Trouble at the River  
    (Spiritual Arrangement)  
Nobody Knows Me Like  
    the Lord  
**One More Day**  
Only God  
Show Me Heaven  
Show Me the Way  
Somebody, Somebody  
Touched Me  
Sooner Than Right Now  
Strengthen Me, Lord  
Take the Time  
Teach Me How to Love  
The Glow of Glory  
  
What Would I Do?  
Whatever It Takes  
Whenever You Pray  
Who Kept Us?  
Why Do You Cry?

## **Comments on Musical Works of Margaret Pleasant Douroux Discussed in This Thesis**

The following works are all original compositions from Margaret Pleasant Douroux. Her composition, “Just Knowing Him Is Enough,” was composed with deceased Houston, Texas writer musician, and pastor Rev. Andrew Berry. This is the only composition Douroux ever wrote with another composer. Douroux and Berry described this composition, in D-flat major, as a moderate, ballad-like song. The composition was published by Musicoe Publications of Houston, Texas, in 1976.

“Glory Be to the Father” is a biblically inspired work based on Philippians 4:20. This song was published in 1981 by her publishing company, Earl Pleasant Publishing. The words of this song express Douroux’ theological understanding of worship: “If I sing, I sing for the glory of God.”<sup>27</sup>

The popular “He Decided to Die” is based a sermon preached by the Rev. Jesse Jackson, noted leader of the Civil Rights Movement, as stated on the sheet music. This biblically inspired song is based on Matthew 27:41-42. This song, published under Earl A. Pleasant Publishing Company in 1976, has since become one of Douroux’ most popular songs. It has crossed generational and racial lines to influence and encourage Christian believers regardless of socio-economic, educational, and any other backgrounds. “He Decided to Die” has been recorded by several artists. The most significant recordings are those of the Rev. James Cleveland and the G. M. W. A. Mass Choir, and The Rev. Donald Vails Choraleers.

“If It Had Not Been for the Lord” is another biblically inspired song by Margaret Pleasant Douroux. This song is based on Psalm 124 and was published in 1980 by her company,

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<sup>27</sup> Margaret Douroux, “Glory Be to the Father.” (Los Angeles: Earl Pleasant Publishing, 1981)

Earl A. Pleasant Publishing. This song is too among some of her most popular. “If It Had Not Been for the Lord” has been published in several hymnals and recorded by several artists.

“I’m Gonna Take My Burdens,” written in 1981, was Douroux’ first attempt at writing a song in the negro-spiritual dialect. The song is in the key of D minor and has many characteristics of a folk spiritual. Published by the Earl A. Pleasant Publishing Company, this song was later recorded by the Voices of Watts Choir of Los Angeles, California. It was subsequently produced on an album under the Savoy Record Label by Rev. James Cleveland.

“Move Mountain” was composed in 1984 and was published by Earl A. Pleasant Publishing. It is a biblically inspired song based on Matthew 17:20. Unlike most of Douroux’ songs, it is written with a verse (or two) and a chorus; “Move Mountain” has two verses, a chorus and a special ending. This song was recorded by Rev. Clay Evans and the Fellowship Church Choir on the Savoy Record Label in Chicago, Illinois in 1984.

“Sooner Than Right Now” was composed in 1988 and published by Earl A. Pleasant Publishing Company. The song is written in the classic Margaret Douroux style: a verse and chorus. Set in the key of C major, the verse has a memorable tagline:

“I said, ‘Lord, I am sick.’ He said, ‘I am a healer.’  
“I said, ‘Lord, I am lonely.’ He said, ‘I am a company keeper.’  
“I said, ‘Lord, I have no food.’ He said, ‘I’ll prepare a table. Whatever you need me to do, I am able.’  
“Sooner than right, faster than immediately, the Lord answers prayers.”<sup>28</sup>

Douroux recorded “Sooner than Right Now,” several years later, with the Heritage Music Foundation Mass Choir.

A few songs by Margaret Pleasant Douroux have been published by companies not directly related to her endeavors. These include:

Like A Tree (arr. by Lon Berry) – BriLee Music Publishing (UIL Piece)

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<sup>28</sup> Margaret Douroux. Sooner Than Right Now. (Los Angeles, CA: Earl A. Pleasant Publishing, 1988).

God is Not Dead (arr. by Braxton Shelley) - GIA Publications  
 I'm Glad (arr. by Brandon Waddles) – GIA Publications  
 Day and Night Praise – GIA Publications  
 Count It All Joy – GIA Publication

### **Recordings of Works of Margaret Pleasant Douroux**

The music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux has been recorded by many artists and choirs. The following recordings are recognized for their Grammy, Dove or Stellar Awards nominations.

**Table 1.** Recordings nominated for awards that feature Margaret Pleasant Douroux' music.

<b>Recordings Nominated for Awards that feature Margaret Douroux's Music</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Album Title</b>	<b>Artist</b>	<b>Nominated For</b>
1979	He Decided to Die	The Donald Vails Choraleers	Grammy Awards
1979	Truth is the Power	The Mighty Clouds of Joy	Grammy Awards
1980	True Victory	Keith Pringle and Pentecostal Community Choir	Grammy Awards
1980	If You Move Yourself	The Donald Vails Choraleers	Grammy Awards
1997	Already Done	Heritage Mass Choir	Stellar Awards
2000	Helen Baylor ... Live	Helen Baylor	Dove Awards
2000	Helen Baylor ... Live	Helen Baylor	Stellar Awards

(See Full Discography of Margaret Pleasant Douroux Music in Appendix B)

## **Secondary Sources**

### **Scholarly Writing and Research About Margaret Pleasant Douroux**

James Abbingtion's book, *Let Mt. Zion Rejoice: Music in the African American Church*, is a guide for the African American Worship service. His work is an incredible resource for the African American church, and essentially, the church- at- large as it references music ministry and decorum. Abbingtion devotes several chapters, of this book, to the relationship of the pastor



and musician as their roles are pertinent to the planning and preparation for worship experiences. There is much for each person to learn should they embrace that harmony that can exist between pastor and musician. Their work, together, enhances the worship experience and enriches and uplifts the people of God. Abbington likewise lists significant African American hymn writers such as Thomas Dorsey, Lucie Campbell, Roberta Martin and Margaret Douroux in his work. He suggests, “Hymns provide the congregations with opportunity to express their beliefs about faith and doctrine and their experience of the Christian life. To be an authentic expression of faith, the beliefs embodied in the hymns must be true, based on scripture, and in keeping with the doctrine of the congregation.”<sup>29</sup> *Let Mt. Zion Rejoice: Music in the African American Church*, is a book intended for those who take the ministry of music seriously and have committed themselves, regularly, to study, preparation, and presentation of musical excellence in worship.

Musicologist James Abbington’s has also written *Let the Church Sing On! Reflections on Black Sacred Music*; this prose gives definitions for gospel music terms and history of the genre. He writes about the lost art of congregational singing in the African American church. Abbington has the book divided into three sections: The Spiritual, The Pioneering and Contemporary Hymn Writers and Pastoral Considerations, and Worship Resources. He writes about Bishop Charles Price Jones, a moderately-known composer of the hymn “I Will Make the Darkness Light,” on Charles Tindsley, the “Father of African-American Hymnody,”<sup>30</sup> with his contributions to early Gospel hymn writing, and about Margaret Pleasant Douroux. Abbington gives suggested interpretations for three of her gospel hymns, “Count It All Joy,” “Follow

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<sup>29</sup> James Abbington. *Let Mt. Zion Rejoice: Music in the African American Church*. (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2001), 56.

<sup>30</sup> James Abbington. *Let the Church Sing On! Reflections on Black Sacred Music*. (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2009), 47.

Jesus,” and “No Trouble at the River.” He provides the reader with a glimpse into the mind of the composer and her approach to these compositions. These Douroux works are reproduced in facsimile with notes from the composer on the interpretation and the distinct characteristics of each song. Abbington hailed Douroux as “the Reigning Queen of African American Gospel Hymnody.”<sup>31</sup>

*Readings in African American Church Music and Worship* also by James Abbington describes twenty-first century developments and trends in the worship and music of black Americans. These essays are written specifically on early to present day hymns, hymnody, praise and worship, and other topics specific to the African American Church. In the chapter entitled, “If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side,” is dedicated to the influence of Margaret Pleasant Douroux’ composition with a parallel title. Although Abbington does not specifically talk about Margaret Douroux or her contributions to gospel music, in this chapter, it is clear that her work had an influence on his. His chapter, entitled with the name provided by Douroux, gives an overview of the hymns of the church today,

Hilary Clay Hicks, writer for the LA Sentinel, acknowledges, in her article title, “Douroux retires after 64 years in local church music.” It was on March 12, 2015 that the retirement of Margaret Pleasant Douroux was commemorated. The author highlighted the life, work and significant compositions of Douroux and provided information on the retirement celebration, honoring Douroux, held in Los Angeles, California, March 19, 2015. “On Thursday, March 19, at 7 p.m., the living legend retires from 64 years of local church music ministry. This occasion will be commemorated with a Retirement Celebration at the Mount Moriah Baptist Church, 4269 South Figueroa in Los Angeles, as part of the Legacy of Gospel Music Festival.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 59.

An enormous mass choir will be on hand as people stream in from all over Southern California and the nation to join in the celebration. The public is welcome. Dr. Douroux was minister of music and adult choir director for the Mount Moriah Church in Los Angeles and minister of music and choir director for the Greater New Bethel Baptist Church in Inglewood for more than 30 years.”<sup>32</sup> The announcement of this celebration was more than an ad for the church Douroux so diligently served and dedicated her life to. It was, indeed, an acknowledgement of her labor and contributions to the African American church community and gospel music genre. Her celebration would individuals, from around the United States who celebrated such a milestone in ministry.

A short video presentation of Margaret Pleasant Douroux speaking entitled, “Dr. Douroux’s Birthday Tribute from Quaford Coleman,” was made in March of 2010 to commemorate the birthday of Margaret Pleasant Douroux. In the video footage, Douroux is recorded speaking about Pastor James Cleveland of Los Angeles, California and the impact and influence he had on her music. Douroux says, “Thanks to Pastor James Cleveland for the avenue of the Gospel Music Workshop of America who helped discover the music God has given me.”<sup>33</sup> The video ends with a clip of the Rev. James Cleveland and the Cleveland Singers singing Thurston Frazier’s arrangement of “Oh To Be Kept by Jesus.”

Bill Carpenter’s book, *Uncloudy Days: The Gospel Music Encyclopedia*, provides a short paragraph about Margaret Pleasant Douroux, and her father, Earl Pleasant, The paragraph also

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<sup>32</sup> Hilary Clay Hicks. Douroux retires after 64 years in local church music. Los Angeles Sentinel. March 12, 2015. Accessed January 23, 2019. <https://lasentinel.net/douroux-retires-after-64-years-in-local-church-music-ministry.html>.

<sup>33</sup> Margaret Douroux, “Dr. Douroux’s Tribute from Quaford Coleman”, March 2010, accessed January 8, 2020, <https://youtu.be/bjEnTiq0rpo>

includes some of her titles as, “noted gospel historian, performer and songwriter.”<sup>34</sup> There is likewise a list some of Douroux’ significant compositions and the recordings her work has been featured on are listed as well. Carpenter describes the Heritage Music Foundation founded by Margaret Douroux and her role as Minister of Music at Greater New Bethel Baptist Church in Los Angeles, California. It also contains a section written on Rev. Donald Vails and the Donald Vails Choraleers, highlighting a popular Douroux song, “He Decided to Die.”

Rev. Donald Vails and his Choraleers made a name for themselves with their 1979 rendition of Margaret Douroux’s composition “He Decided to Die.” It’s been said that the Grammy-nominated album song sold 500,000 copies and made the Choraleers one of the most in-demand gospel groups of the early 1980s.<sup>35</sup>

C. Michael Hawn, in an article for the *Discipleship Ministries* column “History of Hymns” (Sept. 17, 2005), discussed “If It Had Not Been for the Lord.” The article includes a biography of Margaret Douroux, quotes from an interview, scriptural references, and information about the Heritage Music Foundation. C. Michael Hawn writes,

Given the African American experience in the United States, both historically and currently, it is easy to see why this community would be drawn toward Psalm 124. The refrain of the song – “kept my enemies away” – draws heavily on the first verse of the psalm. The first line of stanza one captures the spirit of much of the remainder of the psalm. The rest of the stanza, however, turns to hope and comfort.<sup>36</sup>

Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje and Eddie Meadows’ book, *California Soul: Music of African Americans in the West*, highlights the contributions made to music by singers, musicians, and songwriters from California. There are significant passages written about some of the earliest

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<sup>34</sup> Bill Carpenter. *Uncloody Days: The Gospel Music Encyclopedia*. (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2005), 124.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 421.

<sup>36</sup> C. Michael Hawn. History of Hymns: “If It Had Not Been for the Lord” *Discipleship Ministries*, September 17, 2015, accessed September 13, 2019. <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-if-it-had-not-been-for-the-lord>.

contributors to gospel music in the West. There is also information on the early beginnings of Rev. Earl A. Pleasant concerning his career and ministry, the contributions to gospel music by Margaret Pleasant Douroux, and the early mentoring, publishing and partnership that Douroux enjoyed with Thurston Frazier and Rev. James Cleveland. This book especially notes “the opportunities that Hines and Lightner gave Frazier and Goodson [helped] them to become innovators, just as the support that Frazier provided Margaret Pleasant Douroux and Andraé Crouch furthered their careers as composers.”<sup>37</sup>

Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje wrote, in Volume 1 of *Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, a short biography of Margaret Pleasant Douroux. This biography lists significant information on her life, family background and education. DjeDje writes, “Douroux acquired much of her religious training in her father’s church (Mount Moriah Baptist Church) where she was greatly influenced by contacts with Los Angeles musicians Thurston Gilbert Frazier and Gwendolyn Lightner.”<sup>38</sup> This article also lists some Douroux’s most popular songs, major musical accomplishments and awards given and award nominations. It simultaneously highlights other accomplishment, by Douroux, including the establishing of the Heritage Music Foundation, the purpose and the goals of the organization. Lastly, DjeDje has a discography listing of early recordings by Margaret Pleasant Douroux.

In a letter to William Dale, a college student in Alabama, written January 22, 1980, by Margaret Douroux, she writes about her earliest experiences in church music and her recent accomplishment of finishing her PhD. She details playing for various programs in church at an early age after being taught by her mother. These early experiences in ministry were the

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<sup>37</sup> Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje and Eddie Meadows, ed. *California Soul Music of African Americans in the West*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 158.

<sup>38</sup> Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje, “Margaret Pleasant Douroux”, *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1993), 353.

foundation for all she would do, as an adult, in ministry and why she was so motivated to do church ministry. Douroux also, takes the time to encourage this student about his work and his educational goals and accomplishments as she was a continuous supporter and advocate of those desiring to and actively working in church music leadership.

On November 18, 1997, Margaret Douroux lectured at the University of California in the video entitled “African American Music Heritage.”<sup>39</sup> Douroux gives pertinent information on the state of gospel music. She also speaks on the role of songwriters in 1997 and the message the writer is called to give. In the video, Douroux plays the piano and lectures about the use of spirituals in the African American Church. She continues by lecturing, the class of students, on the importance of the early history of gospel music and the role that it played in society.

Lecture notes taken from the Douroux’ speech, about her earliest experiences in gospel music at the National Conference for the Heritage Music Foundation, on October 25, 2001 at Greater New Bethel Baptist Church, Inglewood, CA, reveal the role that Thurston Frazier played in her ministry; His willingness and passion to teach her original songs to the National Convention of the Gospel Music Workshop of America, for her, was humbling. She also spoke about her Grandmother, also named Margaret, encouraging her to pray for the members of Mount Moriah Baptist Church and how it ultimately led her to compose “Give Me a Clean Heart.” Douroux highlights some of her significant compositions, “Give Me a Clean Heart,” “He Decided to Die,” and “If It Had Not Been for the Lord on my Side” and other recordings and performances that made them popular. She lastly spoke of her friendships with musicians Rev. James Cleveland, Rev. Donald Vails and the Rev. Andrew Berry.

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<sup>39</sup> Margaret Douroux, “Gospel in Los Angeles,” UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology Collection 1961-November 18, 1997, accessed January 30, 2019, [https://archive.org/details/calauem\\_000071](https://archive.org/details/calauem_000071)

Blackgospel.com lists a biography of Margaret Pleasant Douroux signifying her importance to the tradition. The biography catalogs many facts about her life, parents, role in the church and contributions to gospel music. The biography also lists some of her significant songs: “Give Me a Clean Heart,” “Trees,” “If It Had Not Been,” and “Mercy That Suits.” Douroux spoke about the ministry of music and the role music has in the church today. This article also provides information on Douroux’ founding of the Heritage Music Foundation, her role as the leader of the organization and the events the organization held for its community.

Larry Gordon’s *Los Angeles Times* article, “A Place to Sing About,”<sup>40</sup> was published October 16, 2006. Gordon observed a choir rehearsal, conducted by Margaret Douroux, at the Greater New Bethel Baptist Church, and interviewed her as a result. Douroux provides Gordon with a brief history of her life, a brief naming of original songs and details of her early ministry at her father’s church, Mount Moriah. In the interview, she also speaks candidly about the death of her father, the family leaving Mount Moriah and starting a new church ministry. Douroux continues the interview by explaining the Heritage Music Foundation’s objective to build a “Gospel House” in the city of Los Angeles. This article follows Douroux to the Gospel Music Workshop of America-2006 in Dallas, Texas, and the writer observes the class Douroux teaches each year at the convention. The author would also interview, writer author Cogdell DjeDje for and she adds, “Every Sunday morning, some church somewhere in the United States is singing a Margaret Douroux song. She is that prominent.”<sup>41</sup>

Birgitta Johnson’s doctoral dissertation entitled, “O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing: Music and Worship in African American Megachurches of Los Angeles” was done through at

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<sup>40</sup> Larry Gordon, “A Place to Sing About,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 16, 2006, accessed September 25, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2006-oct-16-me-gospel16-story.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.,

the University of California.<sup>42</sup> In this dissertation, the researcher identifies the history of gospel music and worship of the African American Church in the city of Los Angeles, CA. Johnson writes, in great detail, about Margaret Douroux' father, Rev. Earl Pleasant, his early contributions to Los Angeles gospel music scene and on Thurston Frazier, the minister of music of Mount Moriah, who encouraged and pushed Douroux. Her dissertation gives historical facts on the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux, her professional relationship with recording artist Rev. James Cleveland, a listing of some of her most significant music as well as pertinent information and Douroux' contribution to the establishment and operation of the Heritage Music Foundation.

Emmett Price's book, *Encyclopedia of African American Music*, published in 2011, offers a short biography on Margaret Douroux. This biography gives simple details on the life of Douroux, her early musical contributions and some of her more popular songs. She is also listed among black hymnist and psalmist 1968-present. The *Encyclopedia of African American Music* includes a timeline which lists significant moments in African American Music history. The only listing for the year 1970 states, "Margaret Pleasant Douroux composes gospel music classic, "Give Me a Clean Heart." *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* adds gospel music as a category."<sup>43</sup> There is also mention of Margaret Pleasant Douroux in the passages written about Rev. James Cleveland. This encyclopedia has information on many of early originators of gospel music, those who contributed greatly to the genre and listings of their significant compositions and recordings.

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<sup>42</sup> Birgitta Johnson. "Oh, For A Thousand Tongues to Sing-Music and Worship in African American Megachurches of Los Angeles." (PhD diss., University of California, 2008), 225.

<sup>43</sup> Emmett G. Price, ed. *Encyclopedia of African American Music*. (Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood, 2011), xlv.



Gwendolyn Sim Warren's book, *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit*, tells of the African American musical heritage. It opens with the spirituals, gospel hymns, Euro-American hymns and the contemporary songs of the time, with history of the composition, the writer's life and printed musical scores. Warren highlights the lives of some of the most significant gospel music composers of the 20th and 21st centuries. She writes about the history of the songs and gives printed music for many of the early songs of the African American genre of gospel music. Warren also dedicates a section of the book to highlighting Margaret Douroux' life and her accomplishments. Warren wrote, "Douroux is also founder and CEO of Heritage Music Foundation and serves as minister of music at (Greater) New Bethel Baptist Church in Los Angeles. Her songs have been recorded by singers such as the Mighty Clouds of Joy, the Gospel Music Workshop of America, and writer/poet Nikki Giovanni."<sup>44</sup> A copy of the score and writing on the song "Give Me a Clean Heart" is also included in this book.

Raymond Wise wrote his Ph.D. dissertation, "Defining African American Gospel Music by Tracing Its Historical and Musical Development From 1900 to 2000," at Ohio State University.<sup>45</sup> This century's-long acknowledgment, details the historical and musical development of gospel music, over the period, from early spirituals, first written gospel songs and to the present. There is also an in-depth look into the development of recording gospel music and the recording industry. Wise writes about the Gospel Music Workshop of America from its inception in 1968 to 2002. There is a substantial amount of information about Rev. James Cleveland and the early forming of the convention and the first classes and recordings. Wise also give significant information of the contributions of Margaret Douroux and the role her

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<sup>44</sup> Gwendolin Sims Warren. *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit: 101 Best-Loved Psalms, Gospel Hymns, and Spiritual Songs of the African American Church*. (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1997), 298.

<sup>45</sup> Raymond Wise, "Defining African American Gospel Music by Tracing Its Historical and Musical Development From 1900 to 2000." (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2002), 131.

compositions played in GMWA and in gospel music at-large. Finally, there is also a listing of several of Douroux' popular songs and other writers whose careers were enriched by their participation in the Gospel Music Workshop of America. This thesis helps the reader to understand the roles that many of the early composers played in the formation of gospel music as it is known today among each generation of music per and post radio.

Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje describes in, *American Music, Vol. 11, No. 4. Los Angeles Composers of African American Gospel Music: The First Generations*, the first accounts of Gospel Music in Los Angeles, California. DjeDje writes of the contributions of Rev. Earl A. Pleasant upon moving to Los Angeles and becoming acquainted with the Gospel Music of the city. This article explores the offerings of Thurston Frazier who was among one of the early and leading trailblazers, in the Los Angeles Gospel Music Community, and his friendship and partnership with the Rev. James Cleveland. DjeDje also interviewed Margaret Douroux and the composer stated, "The reason the music grew as it did is because my father [Earl A. Pleasant], who was an evangelist, took it every place he went. Thurston took it every place he went. Finally, they were calling for me to teach the music I had written. And I took it every place I went. So, my music is still basically mine."<sup>46</sup> This article gives great insight into Margaret Douroux' early beginnings as a writer and publisher.

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<sup>46</sup> Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje. *American Music, Vol. 11, No. 4. Los Angeles Composers of African American Gospel Music: The First Generations*. (University of Illinois Press, 1993), 432

## **Scholarly Writing about Musical Forms and Styles that Margaret Pleasant Douroux Worked In**

Horace Clarence Boyer's book, *How Sweet the Sound: The Golden Age of Gospel*, is a historical look into gospel music. Boyer's book begins with the African American sacred folk music beginning in 1755 and builds to the conclusion from 1965 and beyond. He writes, in his book, about the migration of musicians and singers to Los Angeles, CA. One of those who migrated was Earl A. Pleasant the father of Margaret Douroux,<sup>47</sup> "Smallwood also organized, along with Earl A. Pleasant, the Interdenominational Chorus, the venerable Smallwood Singers, and a music school with James Lewis Elkins." Boyer also writes of the contributions of Thurston Frazier, the mentor of Margaret Douroux, and writes, "The most important California gospel choral conductor after J. Earle Hines was Thurston Gilbert Frazier (1930-74). Frazier was widely praised for his ability to direct and command gospel choirs of five hundred voices."<sup>48</sup> Thurston's significance to Douroux is not surprising and neither is the outcome of the mentorship he had with Douroux. Many of his attributes, as a director, are exuded through the work of Douroux.

Melva Wilson Costen's book, *African American Christian Worship*, focuses on the history and the theology of the African American worship experience. She uses this book to clarify some of the ritual use of music in the African American worship experience. Costen writes on the Common Stylistic Elements (Arts) of Worship, the importance of vocal music in worship is evidenced by acknowledging that one of the first published liturgical documents by and for African American worshipers was a hymnal. Costen writes, "There is no doubt the elements of African American worship exist in gospel music, which is now a global

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<sup>47</sup> Horace Clarence Boyer. *How Sweet the Sound – The Golden Age of Gospel*. (Washington, D.C.: Elliott & Clark Publishing, 1995), 207.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 209.

phenomenon, and Spirituals, now included in Protestant and Roman Catholic hymnals, as well as the unique chanting style of gospel hip-hop. Thus, the origin, theological foundations, and early developing stages of African American worship history is vital for the current generation as well as future interpretation by students of worship.”<sup>49</sup> Douroux’ contributions, though not all printed in a hymnal, still some have been printed for use in hymnals that cross denominational lines. This too makes her contributions to the genre extremely significant.

Robert Darden’s book, *Nothing but Love in God’s Water – Black Sacred Music from the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement*, provides considerable information of the African American sacred musical experience from the Civil War Era to the Civil Rights Movement. Darden explores how songs and singers helped African Americans challenge and overcome slavery, subjugation and suppression. This book gives evidence on the impact that music had during the periods of blacks enslaved in cotton fields to protests for civil rights. Darden considers the importance of the singing of gospel music and the role it played in survival during such a malicious and dark era. He writes, “It was during the Montgomery bus boycott that the tradition of singing black sacred music in mass meetings took hold and became one of the significant tools of African-Americans in their search for civil rights in this country.”<sup>50</sup> Much of African American folk songs and gospel music of this time was not simply written to encourage the heart and increase the faith of blacks in America, but it was also used as encrypted communication that would lead some to freedom.

*Encyclopedia of African American History, 1896 to the Present from the Age of Segregation to the Twenty-First Century Volume 2*, written by Paul Finkelman, provides

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<sup>49</sup> Melva Wilson Costen. *African American Christian Worship*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 12.

<sup>50</sup> Robert Darden. *Nothing but Love in God’s Water – Black Sacred Music from the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement*. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), 134.

information on the earliest forms of music. The encyclopedia is informative and highlights the contributions of early gospel music post-slavery in the African American Church. The developments of gospel music were important to society during the Great Depression and was the anchor for the Civil Rights Movement. “The early part of the nineteenth century saw the conversion to Christianity of much of the slave population of the United States and with that conversion an upsurge in the creation of sacred songs, many of them thematically bound to the stories of the Old Testament.”<sup>51</sup> As with Douroux’s songs that sought to influence the faith of those who listened, her compositions have foundations in Old and New Testament scriptures.

Anthony Heilbut’s *The Gospel Sound: Good News and Bad Times* is a literary work that gives a historical account of the ups and downs of gospel music over a period of fifty years. Heilbut acknowledges gospel greats of the era that include Clara Ward, Joe Mays, Thomas Dorsey and Edwin Hawkins. There is significant information written about the formation of the Gospel Music Workshop of America and its first conventions and officers. It likewise contains information on the life, career and death of its founder, Rev. James Cleveland. Heilbut writes, “James Cleveland, for three decades, the King of Gospel Music and certainly its most innovative figure, died at the age of 60.”<sup>52</sup> Heilbut gives accounts of some of the most momentous moments in gospel music history within the fifty-year period. He has written many accounts from first-hand knowledge of those who were present during the early gospel music movement.

Bob Kauflin’s book, *Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God*, offers four parts to illustrate the imperative nature of worship. This book details the importance of the leader, the task, healthy tension and the relationship to worship and why those

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<sup>51</sup> Paul Finkelman, ed. *Encyclopedia of African American History 1896 to the Present from the Age of Segregation to the Twenty-First Century Volume 2*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 316.

<sup>52</sup>Anthony Heilbut. *The Gospel Sound Good News and Bad Times*. (New York: Limelight Editions, 1997), 350.

roles are important. The teaching, guiding, and learning, in this book, provides the reader with the “what” and “why” of worship matters. He suggests, “Worship matters. It matters to God because He is ultimately worthy of worship. It matters to us because worshipping God is the reason we were created.”<sup>53</sup> Kaulfin’s book gives a clear definition and description on worship and the value that all should place on it. It also offers a practical perspective on corporate worship with biblical principles and real-world experience and understanding.

Robert M. Marovich’s wrote a book entitled *A City Called Heaven: Chicago and the Birth of Gospel Music*. A tribute to the history of Chicago gospel music, the work details the city’s influences on the past and present of the genre. In this book, the author gives insight to the early contributions of music in Chicago, Illinois by gospel composers. These early composers established the tone and the pace for African American gospel music. The creation of publishing houses, gospel choirs, and choir recordings were birthed from some of these earliest composers in the Chicago area. This book gives essential evidence of the early birth of gospel music, through the pen of Thomas A. Dorsey and the formation of the gospel nucleus with the formation of Chicago Gospel Church Choirs and the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses (NCGCC). The contributions of Dorsey led the way for many composers through his publishing house and earliest performances of Gospel Music. Because of Dorsey, the talents of Sallie Martin, Mahalia Jackson and Roberta Martin were showcased in Chicago bringing them into the national forefront of Gospel Music, in its earliest days, all leaving lasting impression on the art form.

In *Go Down, Moses: A Celebration of the African American Spiritual*, by Robert Newman, the origins of the Negro Spiritual are explored. This book offers an over 200-song

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<sup>53</sup> Bob Kaulfin, *Worship Matters Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 19.

collection of one of the oldest forms of American Music. The Spiritual is the poetry and captivity songs of the slave. This book contains printed sheet music and lyrics to some of the earliest, common and uncommon, negro spirituals. The poetry, sacredness, faith and struggle of the spiritual are all examined in this book of musical history. Newman, a noted Harvard scholar, placed these songs within their historical context of folk hymns of worship, songs of social protest, songs of hidden messages about resistance and escape, and deeply personal and poignant songs about the struggle and dreams of countless slave poets.

Bernice Johnson Reagon's *If You Don't Go, Don't Hinder Me: The African American Sacred Song Tradition* explores the sacred song tradition of the African American culture. The spirituals of the slaves and slave work songs are detailed in the book. The contributions this earliest musical form made to music is studied in *this book*. The author uses the themes of gospel music, congregational song, spirituals and freedom songs to tell the story of the spiritual past and present. Reagon writes, "One word, "freedom," documents the time period. One would not have been able to sing freedom during the time when slavery was an integral part of this country. By the twentieth century, the 1960s, we had cleared enough space with our living and struggling and dying and going on that, no matter what, we could say and sing; "I want my freedom now!" When we sang this song during the sixties, we were talking about marching in our local communities, which might result in our arrest, leading to time in jail, beatings, or worse."<sup>54</sup>

Bernice Johnson Reagon's book, *We'll Understand It Better By and By: Pioneering African American Gospel Composers*, gives historical facts on gospel music and the earliest contributors. This book details the lives and musical careers of the initial contributors of gospel music including, William Brewster, Thomas Dorsey, Lucie Campbell, Roberta Martin, and

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<sup>54</sup> Bernice Johnson Reagon, *If You Don't Go, Don't Hinder Me – The African American Sacred Song Tradition*. (Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 2.

Kenneth Morris. Reagon interviewed many of the singers that worked with these musicians to have first-hand account of events and significant details about their lives, ministry and travels around the world. The book gives many references for moments in history, definitions to terms, printed sheet music and musical analysis from each composer. There are also historical pictures to accompany the book. Reagon's research is done in tandem with the Smithsonian Institution Research Project which was a seven-year study on the development of African American Gospel Music. The book was also accompanied with live performances of the music of the composers--some from the original artists that recorded and performed the music forty or fifty years before.

Eileen Southern wrote *The Black Perspective in Music* (1979) to give account of the contemporary gospel music movement. This book details contributions of Edwin Hawkins and the success of the "Oh Happy Day" record and its impact on gospel music during the 1970s. The infusion of contemporary gospel music was the catalyst for change in the Black church. Southern writes,

By 1969, the entire United States and part of Europe were rocking, shouting and dancing to an ole black Baptist Hymn called, "Oh Happy Day." A young holiness pianist and singer from California named Edwin Hawkins had rearranged the song and recorded it with the Northern California State Youth Choir, and it "hit the charts."<sup>55</sup>

Hawkins and the group would go on to change the face of music as it had been known, with their song crossing over to secular radio stations and nightclubs. "Oh Happy Day" was the turning point in gospel music and there was no turning back after its inception. He paved the way not only for other writers but also for his family; the Hawkins family would become one of the most prominent families in gospel music. With their writing and recordings, they all helped revolutionize the sound of contemporary gospel music.

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<sup>55</sup> Eileen Southern. *The Black Perspective in Music*. (Cambria Heights, NY: The Foundation for Research in the Afro-American Creative Arts, Inc., 1979), 9-10.



In the book *Somebody's Calling My Name: Black Sacred Music and Social Change*, Wyatt Tee Walker discusses the sacred music of the African American. It is the belief of Walker that music played a significant role in social change. The African American culture is built on unity and uses music as a conduit. Walker states, "In the historic Black churches, music plays a crucial role in the worship style and is a key mobilizing force. A common dictum in Black church circles is, "You can't organize Black folks for anything without music."<sup>56</sup> Walker wrote of the drawing power of music and its appeal to the African American not only in the church but as a culture. He traces the musical expressions of the Black religious tradition from its roots in Africa, to the "invisible church" of the slave society and to its influence upon the black religious experience today.

Vernon Whaley's book *Called to Worship* is a resource tool for the study of worship. *Called to Worship* is a biblical overview of worship from the Book of Genesis through to Revelation. Whaley captures the aspects of worship throughout scripture and how they were interpreted and executed during biblical times. Whaley writes, "Above all, you will read about God's love for you, demonstrated through His repeated revelation of Himself to mankind."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Wyatt Tee Walker. *Somebody's Calling My Name Black Sacred Music and Social Change*. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1979), 22.

<sup>57</sup> Vernon Whaley. *Called To Worship*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009), xxi.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODS**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the qualitative descriptive study is to examine the life and music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux and her significant contributions to the genre of Gospel Music. African American Gospel Music research needs accurately documented information on individuals who have made a transformative impact on the genre. The absence of this has encouraged this thesis. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology used to conduct this qualitative descriptive study - an in-depth study of an individual or group of individuals. This chapter will address the process of gathering information, resources and analysis in an effort to answer research questions.

### **Research Design**

This qualitative descriptive study was used to identify and assess the life and music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux. The research design used to clarify the bias that Creswell states in Research Design is Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach. Creswell writes, “Qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning individuals and groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data.”<sup>58</sup> This approach in the research design entails the gathering and collection of data and resources used to examine the life and music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux. This research design was used to form research questions and hypotheses for

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<sup>58</sup> John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5 th edition (Los Angeles: Sage, 2018), 4

those questions. Data and resources were collected to validate the bias for the premise of this thesis.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions addressed in this study are:

RQ1: How did the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux grow out of the gospel-music tradition?

RQ2: What were the childhood influences and how were the early musical talents of Margaret Pleasant Douroux developed?

RQ3: What characteristics of music are shared by Margaret Pleasant Douroux and other hymn writers that can be identified in her musical contributions?

RQ4: What are the characteristics that set Margaret Pleasant Douroux' compositions apart from other writers of her era?

RQ5: In what ways has the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux impacted and/or influenced the African American church in the United States?

### **Hypotheses**

The hypotheses for this study include:

H1. Gospel music, as found in its historical record dating from at least 1850, is the foundation for the artistic development seen in the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux.

H2: The childhood influences and early music development of Douroux was fostered by her parents and the mentorship of Thurston G. Frazier, Minister of Music for Mount Moriah Baptist Church.

H3. The common musical characteristics shared by Dr. Douroux and hymn composers parallel to musical structure and form (ABA musical form) and lyrical content.

H4. Douroux began hymn writing during the new contemporary gospel music movement of the late 1960's.

H5. The musical output of Margaret Pleasant Douroux has not only been consistent but has evolved with the growth of the music industry and been reintroduced to new generations.

### **Process of Gathering Data**

The process of gathering data began with the identification, selection and review of relevant sources that would address African American Gospel Music and the contributions of African American composers. Creswell writes,

a qualitative observation is when the researcher takes field notes on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site. In these field notes, the researcher records, in an unstructured or semi-structured way (using some prior questions that then inquirer wants to know), activities at the research site. Qualitative observers may also engage in roles varying from a nonparticipant to a complete participant. Typically, these observations are open-ended in that the researchers ask general questions of the participant allowing the participant to freely provide views.<sup>59</sup>

The process to gather data on Margaret Pleasant Douroux includes numerous copies of sheet music, songbooks, hymnals, books, notes taken at various gospel music conventions, newspaper articles, journal articles, YouTube videos, dissertations, and thesis that were examined. Sources that contained sheet music, songbooks, and hymnals were studied first--followed by examination of books, dissertations, and newspaper articles that addressed Margaret Douroux, James Cleveland and the Gospel Music Workshop of America and the Los Angeles Gospel Music Community. Additionally, video sources from YouTube.com and notes were examined that had been taken at various Heritage Music Foundation gatherings, Gospel Music Workshop of America, and National Convention of Choirs and Choruses conventions (2001-2019).

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<sup>59</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*, 186-187.

After a thorough and complete study of the sheet music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux, the hymnals that contained music composed by her, the chronological list, discography of recorded songs a listing was formed. The primary source for the collection of this material was the sheet music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux. The gathering of this material gave the foundation for this study. Next, sources were gathered and reviewed regarding the books, articles, and encyclopedia commentaries on the life and music of Margaret Douroux, background of African American music in North America post slavery, and books specifically on Gospel Music, Rev. James Cleveland and the Gospel Music Workshop of America along with other early contributors to Gospel Music. Gathering and examining these materials assisted in addressing the life and musical contributions of Margaret Douroux and the formation of Gospel Music post-slavery to present.

The final step was gathering and examining notes taken from Gospel Music Conventions where Douroux taught, reviewing books, and pamphlets collected at conventions where she also lectured. In addition, watching YouTube recordings of Douroux lecturing and teaching at various places around the country, as well as recordings of various choirs singing the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux, were used. Finally, research regarding the performance and recording of Margaret Douroux' music, by various ethnic populations and secular artists was identified and studied--particularly the music recorded by Tammy Faye Bakker, Bill and Gloria Gaither, Helen Baylor, and Kelly Price for its crossover appeal.

### **Data Analysis**

Creswell suggests that data analysis “involves segmenting and taking apart the data (like peeling back the layers of an onion) as well as putting it back together.”<sup>60</sup> The data used for this

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<sup>60</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*, 190-191.

thesis was selected and then “organized and prepared for data analysis.”<sup>61</sup> Organizing the resources, as listed above, and making notes is consistent for each source. After the sources were prepared, a “look at all the data”<sup>62</sup> for common themes and grouping purposes to complete the observational research and support the thesis was completed. This process was useful in determining the scope of the thesis and acknowledging the limitation and bias that has occurred in the recording of early African American gospel music.

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

### **Results of Research Question 1: The Gospel Music Tradition and Margaret Pleasant Douroux**

The first research question asks, how did the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux grow out of the gospel-music tradition? The term gospel music “is both a repertoire and a style of singing. Gospel music can either be appropriated from a hymn or spiritual by a well-versed performance or it can be composed as a new song and performed in a variety of gospel styles.”<sup>63</sup> Gospel music has been one of the primary mediums of communication for the African-American church and found its way into the hearts and souls of believers through the hymns of the Church in the 1930’s and 1940s. For Margaret Pleasant Douroux, gospel music has been no different; it has been one of the greatest expressions of God’s love and grace.

Her love for music was nurtured by her parents and grandparents, at an early age, through the singing of hymns and early gospel songs. Her father, Earl Amos Pleasant, also a singer, traveled with gospel singer and great Mahalia Jackson during the early days of the genre. Her mother, Olga Pleasant, was a pianist and choir director. Douroux has preserved this sacred style of religious music, taught to her during her childhood, by utilizing the same tools and techniques as Thomas Dorsey and many other early gospel music composers of Los Angeles. Douroux was the beneficiary of the early gospel music of Los Angeles at the hands of her parents and mentor, Thurston Frazier. Ethnomusicologist Jaqueline DjeDje wrote, “As Douroux so aptly states, “The contributions of the first generation made an era. If each person were not integrally interwoven with the other, the era wouldn't have the impact that it's had.” The post-1960 generation, in turn, may have produced more songs and recordings than the generations that preceded them;

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<sup>63</sup> Bernice Johnson Reagon, ed. *We'll Understand It Better By and By, Pioneering African-American Gospel Composers*. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 4.

certainly, they have received far more recognition for their work. But they stood on the shoulders of gospel giants.”<sup>64</sup>

Following the release of her first composition, “Give Me a Clean Heart,” the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux found its way into countless hymnals and musical supplements. These arrangements are published by various companies, recorded by both gospel and secular artist and performed regularly in church services, conventions, conferences and institutions of public and private education.

Noted African American historian and professor Wyatt Tee Walker wrote in his book, *“Somebody’s Calling My Name”: Black Sacred Music and Social Change*,

In the historic Black churches’ music plays a crucial role in the worship style and is a key mobilizing force. A common dictum in Black church circles is, “You can’t organize Black folks for anything without music.”<sup>65</sup>

Music is one of the most powerful mediums of expression and for the African American Church community; the expressiveness of music is the voice of a people. From biblical history, to the African slave trade of the United States of America, the voices of enslaved people could be heard through songs passed down from generation to generation. And at the helm of this music was the Christian aspects of a sovereign God, faith in that God, better days to come, forgiveness and salvation through His Son. Humankind held on to their Christian beliefs to overcome atrocities of the world and music was its driving force and strongest ally.

How they chose to worship God mattered to them and to God. Bob Kauflin writes, in the book *Worship Matters*, “Worship matters. It matters to God because He is ultimately worthy of

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<sup>64</sup> Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje. *American Music, Vol. 11, No. 4*. Los Angeles Composers of African American Gospel Music: The First Generations. (University of Illinois Press, 1993), 433.

<sup>65</sup> Wyatt Tee Walker. *Somebody’s Calling My Name Black Sacred Music and Social Change*. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1979), 22.



worship. It matters to us because worshiping God is the reason we were created.”<sup>66</sup> Whether or not they knew their worship mattered to God, they were persistent in their worship of Him with hope and expectancy. For the slave, faith was found in worship to God. It was the language of a people who understood the need of a higher power in a seemingly powerless position.

As a previously enslaved people, the African American culture has nurtured and preserved a great love for music. Music was the slave’s way of survival and their physical, mental and emotional way of escape. During slavery, it was the negro spiritual, also called “slave songs,” “work songs” or “plantation songs,” that sustained enslaved blacks. Though slaves were forbidden to read or write, they used their music as encouragement; it was a way to hold on the promise of freedom, cultivate a relationship with God and a way of escape.

These songs were not only for religious use, telling of a better day and hope for a better tomorrow, but they were also used by the slaves as a form of communication one to another. The enslaved used these songs to give instructions for escape while hiding their true meaning from their oppressors, slave masters and overseers. These uneducated enslaved men and women used songs they heard-- some while listening to the church services of their masters and created their own songs and sound. The slave then passed these songs down from person-to-person, generation-to-generation weaving the paths to escape and freedom. These hidden messages, in song, served a great purpose for the enslaved and they gave a voice to those who became voiceless:

The African American oral tradition is full of stories about the use of spirituals like “I Couldn’t Hear Nobody Pray,” “Wade in the Water,” “Steal Away,” and “Run Mourner Run” as signal songs of escape in general or, more specially, with the efforts of those working the Underground Railroad. These stories tell of how the songs and the singing serve the survival of the community. Spirituals were songs created as leverage, as salve,

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<sup>66</sup> Bob Kaulfin, *Worship Matters Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 19.

as voice, as a bridge over troubles one could not endure without the flight of song and singing.<sup>67</sup>

For the slave, discretion was a weapon. Those who often dreamed of and desired freedom understood the importance of creating their own language as a means of survival and a path to freedom.

The spirituals of the slaves not only sustained them as a people, but it taught them basic biblical principles and biblical stories. These songs ultimately helped encourage an exodus from the bondage of their oppressors and were used in their worship services. The account of Reverend Lewis C. Lockwood, a young YMCA employee sent by the American Missionary Association, provides this perspective relative to the worship service,

Lockwood arrived on September 3, 1861, and heard spirituals sung on his very first day at a prayer meeting where a lay preacher delivered an impassioned prayer asking that God who “brought Israel out of Egypt, Jonah out the mouth of the whale, and Daniel out of the den of lions would deliver the slaves “spiritually and temporally.” Lockwood then told those gathered of his mission and the audience of freed slaves responded with “deep, half-uttered expressions of gladness and gratitude.” Then they sang, and Lockwood jotted down the words, “Go down to Egypt – tell Pharaoh/ Thus saith the servant, Moses/ Let my people go.” Lockwood noted that the singers sang with an “accent on last syllable, with repetition of the chorus.” To Lockwood, the style of singing caused the words “every hour to ring warning note in the ear of despotism.” His account of what he saw and heard that night was printed in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* on October 12, 1861.<sup>68</sup>

Slaves used this as their expression of hope, praise and adoration to God. The negro spiritual is the first musical offering of the African American worship experience and is the musical foundation for the African American Church. Concerning the Negro Spiritual types, Dr. James Abbingtion shares a clarification on the two types in that,

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<sup>67</sup> Bernice Johnson Reagon, *If You Don't Go, Don't Hinder Me – The African American Sacred Song Tradition*. (Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 74-75.

<sup>68</sup> Robert Darden. *Nothing but Love in God's Water – Black Sacred Music from the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement*. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), 13.

There are two types of Negro spirituals, the first being the folk spiritual. The folk spiritual is characterized by hand clapping, foot-stomping, call and response, demonstrative behavior, and heterophonic singing. The second type of spiritual is called concert or arranged spiritual. This type of spiritual was first popularized in 1871 by the Fisk Jubilee Singers.<sup>69</sup>

The folk spiritual type seemed to be the standard structure, not just for many church songs, but for those songs that carried the hidden messages in melodies. Freedom fighters like Harriet Tubman, who led at least 70 people to freedom, during slavery using the underground railroad, are great examples of this method. Harriet Tubman's personal copy of *Gospel Hymns No. 2* by P.P. Bliss and Ira D. Sankey is on display at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. Tubman wrote, "One achievement of the spirituals was to offer the nation its first authentic African-American music and lyrics."<sup>70</sup>

### **From Thomas A. Dorsey to the Gospel Music of Today**

The music in the African American experience did not expire with slavery; the freed African American, with education, became just as musically inclined as their Caucasian counterparts and made the negro spiritual an American musical art form. Music became ever popular in the church, schools, dance halls or wherever there was a gathering. One historian suggests, "The Great Depression was a momentous event in the history of African American sacred song."<sup>71</sup> Thomas Andrew Dorsey (1899-1993), one of the early contributors of the genre of gospel music, is given credit for developing the gospel music genre. A preacher's son, blues pianist, and songwriter, Dorsey settled in Chicago, Illinois. For his work, he is called the "Father

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<sup>69</sup> James Abbingtion. *Readings in African American Church Music and Worship*. (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2014), 120.

<sup>70</sup> Robert Newman. *Go Down, Moses: A Celebration of the African American Spiritual*. (New York: Clarkson Potter Publishers, 1998), 25.

<sup>71</sup> Paul Finkelman, ed. *Encyclopedia of African American History 1896 to the Present from the Age of Segregation to the Twenty-First Century Volume 2*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 317.

of Gospel Music.”<sup>72</sup> Dorsey made two significant contributions to gospel music that are still relevant to this day. The first is his composition “Precious Lord, Take My Hand” composed in 1932. This song, written out of grief and sorrow over the sudden death of his wife and newborn baby, changed the landscape of black gospel music. “The Depressions depth created an audience eager for Dorsey’s hopeful messages and though there was some resistance to his blues-tinged gospel, it soon crumbled in the faces of Dorsey’s growing popularity and influence. His songs and organization brought sweeping change to African American sacred music. The free-form congregational singing of the 1920s was supplanted by arranged choral singing, which facilitated by the black gospel song publishing and recording industry, created a definitive gospel style that survived well into the 1960s.”<sup>73</sup> “Precious Lord” is one of the most recorded gospel songs in history and it helped create the gospel music sound and development of the church choir even as we know it today.

Dorsey’s second most significant contribution was the founding of the first African American gospel music convention: The National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses, Inc. (NCGCC):

In 1933, Dorsey, Martin (Sallie), and their friends, Theodore Frye, Magnolia Lewis Butts, and Beatrice Brown founded the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses, the annual convention’s main purpose was to introduce and teach Dorsey’s songs to choir conductors who could take them back to their churches and popularize them with those local congregations. Hence, the idea was the amateur church musician would then buy sheet music in order to learn to play the songs.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Bernice Johnson Reagon, ed. *We’ll Understand It Better By and By: Pioneering African-American Gospel Composers*, 37.

<sup>73</sup> Finkelman., *Encyclopedia of African American History*, 317.

<sup>74</sup> Bil Carpenter. *Uncoloudy Days: The Gospel Music Encyclopedia*. (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2005), 122.

In addition to Dorsey, there were several composers who made significant contributions to the gospel music sound and bringing the genre to large masses from 1930-1960. One contributor was music educator Mrs. Virgie Carrington Dewitty (1913-1981) from Austin, Texas. As a graduate of the Juilliard School of Music, Mrs. Dewitty was the Director of Music for the National Baptist Convention of America and for the Missionary Baptist General Convention of Texas. Her duties included traveling to cities, ahead of the convention, to teach and prepare the music for the convention's opening musical and music for the services. She is known for her four to six-part anthems, "One Church, One Faith, One Lord" and "Magnify the Lord." She is also known for introducing the music of other composers to the convention choirs that had, at times, as many as over two thousand voices. For the singers and musicians who didn't attend a gospel music convention such as the NCGCC, Dewitty and others like her offered them a chance to be exposed to new music and introduced it to their churches and communities.

Fellow early hymn writer Lucie Campbell of Memphis, Tennessee composed such songs as "Something Within Me" and "He'll Understand and Say, Well Done," as she used her position, with the National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., Inc., as a music director, to introduce gospel music to the masses. "Miss Lucie," as she was called, came to be known as one of the most influential women with the Convention, the largest African-American organization in the world, having a membership of more than six million."<sup>75</sup> Her work also influenced other Baptist conventions that were created. These entities too learned of and learned from her knowledge and creativity in the genre of gospel music.

Last among the early contributors to gospel music was Roberta Martin of Chicago, Illinois. Martin and the Roberta Martin Singers are responsible for such songs as "God

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<sup>75</sup> Gwendolin Sims Warren. *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit: 101 Best-Loved Psalms, Gospel Hymns, and Spiritual Songs of the African American Church*. (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1997), 170.

Specializes” and “Only A Look.” Martin, a mentee of Thomas Dorsey, was able to develop the Dorsey gospel sound further growing the genre: “When you heard Thomas Dorsey, you knew that was honky-tonk; that was blues. But with Roberta Martin, we had the beginnings of a distinctive gospel idiom. Roberta Martin transformed Dorsey’s gospel music into an art form.”<sup>76</sup> Ms. Martin, and her group, traveled the United States and Europe singing gospel music and are credited as one of the earliest professional gospel recording groups from Chicago, Illinois. A proficient pianist and singer herself, she was a great influence on many prominent gospel artists of that time, specifically, a young James Cleveland. The gospel music contributions of these writers, during the 1940’s, became an essential part of church music and their songs became standards of the church during the early beginnings of gospel music.

Music for the black church was also a part of social change. “More than perhaps any other musical form, gospel became the rhythmic arm of the civil rights movement in the United States.”<sup>77</sup> It was the music of the African American church community that became a part of the fabric of the Civil Rights Movement of America in the 1950’s and 1960’s. The struggle for equality was not won without the spirituals, hymns, and early gospel music of that time. The Civil Rights Anthem, “We Shall Overcome,” was taken from the song, “I’ll Overcome Someday” by Rev. Charles Albert Tindley, a writer, Methodist pastor, and social activist who is known as the “Father of African-American Hymnody.”<sup>78</sup> There is no doubt that the music of the church helped fuel blacks in their struggles and gave them the hope of a better day through song.

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<sup>76</sup> Robert M. Marovich. *A City Called Heaven: Chicago and the Birth of Gospel Music*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 160.

<sup>77</sup> Finkelman, *Encyclopedia of African American History*, 319.

<sup>78</sup> James Abbingdon. *Let the Church Sing On! Reflections on Black Sacred Music*. (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2009), 47.

The gospel music of the Civil Rights Movement was not only performed in church during the rallies, but also at the marches and during protests. “Though many of the traditional hymns and spirituals sung during the movement were explicitly about civil rights and freedom, they nevertheless became potent freedom songs. They included “Go Tell It on the Mountain,” “This Little Light of Mine,” “Get on Board, Little Children,” and “Guide My Feet.”<sup>79</sup> This music was inspirational and encouraging for those in the movement, but it was also strength to withstand the harshness, mistreatment and abuse during the movement’s marches, protest and rallies. It helped to empower the masses and mobilize social change. Through the leadership of Civil Rights leaders like Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rev. Ralph Abernathy and others, the Civil Rights Movement was a transformative and the Civil Rights Act, and other laws were passed in an effort to create change, for blacks, in America.

The Post-Civil Rights Era not only saw great change in the United States of America, for the African American, but also change and growth in Gospel Music. The 1960’s saw a great resurgence to the Dorsey concept of the church choir. Three men of this era, Rev. James Cleveland, Andraé Crouch, and Edwin Hawkins, revolutionized gospel music. James Cleveland (1931-1991) was born in Chicago, Illinois and sat on his grandmother’s lap at the choir rehearsals of the Pilgrim Baptist Church in Chicago where Thomas A. Dorsey was the Minister of Music. Later in his youth, James Cleveland worked with the youth choir of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses founded by Thomas Dorsey.

In 1962, Cleveland recorded his first masterpiece with Rev. Lawrence Roberts’s First Baptist Church Choir in Nutley, New Jersey. The LP “Peace Be Still” sold 800,000 units within the year and transformed Cleveland virtually overnight into a gospel superstar at a time when it was rare for any black music (gospel or otherwise) to sell many LPs.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Finkelman, *Encyclopedia of African American History*, 319.

<sup>80</sup> Carpenter, *Uncolored Days: The Gospel Music Encyclopedia*, 88.

Cleveland had such great success as a gospel songwriter, choir director and organizer that by 1968, he, like Thomas Dorsey, thirty-five years before him, founded a convention. “Cleveland’s greatest contribution, again like Dorsey, was the organization of a gospel music convention.”<sup>81</sup> Cleveland was able to form the Gospel Music Workshop of America Inc.-- a week-long convention, held yearly, with some of the most talented musicians and recording artists ever assembled. Its landscapes include conventions held in major cities across the United States in some of the largest convention centers and concert halls.

In the convention’s peak years, there were as many as 20,000 in attendance and a mass choir of over 2,500 voices, and smaller choirs were taught by the “who’s who” of gospel music. Many well-known musicians and songwriters have introduced music to the convention including: John P. Kee, Lanny Wolfe, Kurt Carr, Kirk Franklin, Donald Lawrence and Darryl Coley. Cleveland teamed with his record label, Savoy Records, and began to produce recordings of the convention’s choirs. Cleveland’s Gospel Music Workshop of America was one of the greatest contributions 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century African American Gospel Music. During the time James Cleveland was starting his convention, two gospel songwriters made their own significant mark in the genre of gospel music: Edwin Hawkins and Andraé Crouch.

Edwin Hawkins (1943-2018), was a young, energetic songwriter, and pianist from Northern California’s Bay Area. He composed an arrangement of the hymn, “Oh Happy Day” which changed the course of gospel music as we know it. With the arrangement of “Oh Happy Day,” the landscape of gospel music changed from a traditional to a contemporary music sound almost overnight. Horace Boyer wrote in *The Black Perspective in Music*,

By 1969, the entire United States and part of Europe were rocking, shouting and dancing to an ole black Baptist Hymn called, “O Happy Day.” A young holiness pianist and

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<sup>81</sup> Horace Clarence Boyer. *How Sweet the Sound: The Golden Age of Gospel*. (Washington, D.C.: Elliott & Clark Publishing, 1995), 248.



singer from California named Edwin Hawkins had rearranged the song and recorded it with the Northern California State Youth Choir, and it “hits the charts.” Since the diction on the record was comparable to that of most vocal recordings, and since gospel music generally evokes an emotional rather than an intellectual reaction, most non-churchgoers missed that it was in fact a hymn. Hence, popping fingers and dancing was a physical reaction to it. When it was discovered that “Oh Happy Day” was a gospel song and yet evoked this kind of reaction, a great cry went up for more of the same.<sup>82</sup>

The “crossover appeal” that came with “Oh Happy Day” transformed music. It was played on secular radio stations, in night clubs and it became a hit song. This new sound forced the church to accept new standards and forced the secular world to take notice of the church. After “Oh Happy Day,” music was never the same. Hawkins’ choir changed its name from the Northern California State Youth Choir to Edwin Hawkins and the Hawkins Singers earning Edwin, the title of “the father of contemporary gospel music,”<sup>83</sup> for his contributions and success in gospel music. Edwin Hawkins, like James Cleveland, started his own gospel music conference. The Edwin Hawkins Music and Arts Seminar was started in 1979 by Hawkins and his brother, pastor, musician and songwriter, Walter Hawkins.

Lastly, Andraé Crouch (1942-2015), was a young pianist and son of a pastor in Southern California. Andraé Crouch, like Edwin Hawkins, gained “crossover appeal,” but unlike Hawkins, it wasn’t with radio; Crouch’s “crossover appeal” came from the acceptance of his music by white audiences. “Andraé Crouch and the Disciples” was a male group built around his crooning vocals, ballad compositions, and soul music arrangements. In the mid-60s, he was discovered by a white Pentecostal evangelist and signed a record contract with Light Records, a white religious label.

The late sixties produced the twin movements of Jesus freakery and charismatic revival: Crouch fit securely into both. He adopted the hip, street-smart language and the informal

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<sup>82</sup> Eileen Southern. *The Black Perspective in Music*. (Cambria Heights, NY: The Foundation for Research in the Afro-American Creative Arts, Inc., 1979), 9-10.

<sup>83</sup> Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje and Eddie Meadows, ed. *California Soul Music of African Americans in the West*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 146.

wardrobe of the ex-junkies and switched-on saints who comprised his new audience. His biggest hits, “I Don’t Know Why Jesus Loved Me” and “Through it All,” combined the traditional messages with melodies redolent of pop music.<sup>84</sup>

Andraé Crouch grew the group from an all-male group to a co-ed group of singers who sung and recorded popular music through the 1970s and 1980s. Crouch would become one of the most influential African American songwriters and musicians in the world of Contemporary Christian Music (CCM). He helped usher in the Praise and Worship movement in the African American church. Fifty years later, his songs are still highly regarded in the music worlds of both African American and Caucasian music cultures.

### **Gospel Music Today and Margaret Pleasant Douroux**

Hymns, Anthems, Gospel Music (Traditional and Contemporary), and Praise and Worship Music have all grown out of the experience of the slave. It was the Negro-Spiritual that was the beginning of the African American musical experience and those songs are the foundation of the African American church 400 years later. Even today, Gospel Music has remained relevant to the church and not just the African American church but churches of all denominations and ethnicities. This music has grown from the cotton-fields of the slave plantations in the South and has left handprints across the world. As Costen suggests,

African American Christians gathered and engaged in worship, regardless of denomination, share any things in common. First and foremost, they gather to offer thanks and praise to God in and through Jesus the Christ, and to spiritually fed by the Word of God! In response to God’s call and by God’s grace, communities of faith gather to affirm God’s providence and power. Under the power of the Holy Spirit, African Americans express their corporate and personal belief that God in Jesus Christ continues to work for the good in every aspect of their lives.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Heilbut. *The Gospel Sound Good News and Bad Times*, 247.

<sup>85</sup> Melva Wilson Costen. *African American Christian Worship*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 1.

Historically, we've gathered in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost to express our faith, love, admiration, hopes, joys and sorrows through the medium of gospel music. When we had nothing else to give and when we couldn't even gather our words together for prayer, the African American had a song and it is that song, or those songs, that have carried a people for over four centuries in the United States of America. And it is this music that is still teaching, sustaining and encouraging humankind.

And the gospel music world can thank Margaret Pleasant Douroux for such a contribution that too teaches, sustains, and encourages today. UCLA's ethnomusicology department chair, Professor Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje says, "Every Sunday morning, some church somewhere in the United States is singing a Margaret Douroux song. She is that prominent."<sup>86</sup> For nearly fifty years now, Margaret Pleasant Douroux has given her life to the music that God entrusted her with. From the very first song, "Give Me a Clean Heart," there was a significant divine plan attached to her work and music. Douroux once recalled her grandmother's prophesy: "your 'doctrine' will go around the world and probably without you."<sup>87</sup> The two of them, not knowing or fully understanding the future, could not have imagined the impact Margaret could have on this world.

Douroux' music is featured in many hymnals and music supplements and it is difficult to actually attain an accurate count of them all. There are songs published in Baptist, Church of God in Christ, Methodist, Catholic, Presbyterian and Non-Denominational hymnals and supplements all over the country. Her grandmother was correct because the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux has crossed racial lines, genres and generations. After nearly 50, "Give Me a

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<sup>86</sup> Larry Gordon, "A Place to Sing About," *Los Angeles Times*, October 16, 2006, accessed September 25, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2006-oct-16-me-gospel16-story.html>.

<sup>87</sup> Margaret Douroux. Heritage Music Foundation National Conference. October 2001.

Clean Heart” is still largely sung in the churches today. During the Resurrection/Easter liturgical seasons “He Decided to Die” has been a favorite selection, and “If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side” is regularly sang as a congregational hymn, for the invitation to Christian discipleship selection, solo and/or even as a choral selection.

Douroux herself has settled into the life of retirement as a wife, mother, grandmother and newly great-grandmother in her Agoura Hills, California home. Still making music a primary focus, she is the CEO for the Heritage Music Foundation (HMF), and states “Classical music has Carnegie Hall and country music has the Grand Ole Opry. Gospel music needs a museum and theater: The Gospel House.”<sup>88</sup> Building a gospel house is still a priority for Douroux and the board members of HMF. It is her plan to give gospel music a second home, outside of the church, for the world to experience too.

Douroux is also the author of “About My Father’s Business,” which details the life of her late father, Gospel music pioneer and pastor, Rev. Earl Pleasant, a founder of the West Coast Gospel music movement, and of “Principles That Motivate and Enhance Education Among Black Children” (an excerpt from her Ph.D. dissertation), “Why I Sing” (a book about music ministry); and “Seek The Kingdom,” a Christian growth pamphlet.<sup>89</sup>

In 2013, she published, *Things That Grow Together: Church Decadence*. Douroux is still in great demand for conducting music workshops, teaching music and classes on music ministry in conventions and lectures.

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<sup>88</sup> C. Michael Hawn. History of Hymns: “If It Had Not Been for the Lord” Discipleship Ministries, September 17, 2015, accessed September 13, 2019. <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-if-it-had-not-been-for-the-lord>.

<sup>89</sup> Christopher Heron. “Dr. Margaret Douroux Biography.” BlackGospel.com. Accessed September 13, 2019. <http://www.blackgospel.com/bios/drmargaretdouroux/douroux.txt.htm>.

## **Results of Research Question 2: Margaret Pleasant Douroux: Childhood Influences**

As one of the most influential African American female gospel music composers of the last half-century, Margaret Pleasant Douroux had many childhood influences and considerable early musical development. Douroux, born Margaret Jean Pleasant, on March 21, 1941, is the second of six children (five daughters and one son), and “the daughter of esteemed Baptist pastor and singer Rev. Earl A. Pleasant and musician Mrs. Olga Pleasant in Los Angeles, CA.”<sup>90</sup> Her mother, Olga Williams Pleasant (1920-2006), was an accomplished pianist and choir director. Douroux wrote, “the foundation on which I am now on as an adult was began when I was a child. My mother taught us to play our first songs when we were still elementary students. I played for the Sunday School and Baptist Training Union (BTU) as a very young child.”<sup>91</sup> Her father, Earl Amos Pleasant (1918-1974), had been an early pioneer of gospel music in the Los Angeles Area before becoming a pastor. Her father sang with gospel great of that time, Mahalia Jackson, and Jackson was a family friend and visited the family home often. Douroux’ father made a name for himself in the 1930’s when he moved to Los Angeles, “Arthur Atlas Peters, Eugene Douglass Small-wood, and Earl Amos Pleasant, all of whom migrated to the city between 1936 and 1939, not only became directors of gospel choirs and regularly performed in solo concerts, but also formed a group called the Three Sons of Thunder. They traveled from church to church throughout the city, singing and selling printed copies of gospel music.”<sup>92</sup> Other gospel artists during that time and friends to the Pleasant family included singer/composer Joe May, hymn composer Doris Akers, and gospel pioneer and publisher Sallie Martin. The

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<sup>90</sup> Carpenter, *Uncloudy Days: The Gospel Music Encyclopedia*, 124.

<sup>91</sup> Margaret Douroux, letter to William Dale, January 22, 1980.

<sup>92</sup> Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje. *American Music, Vol. 11, No. 4*. Los Angeles Composers of African American Gospel Music: The First Generations. (University of Illinois Press, 1993), 414.

Pleasant household was a meeting place for some of the gospel greats of the 1940s. In 1945, prominent singer turned preacher, Earl Pleasant, founded Mount Moriah Baptist Church in Los Angeles, California. The development of the Mount Moriah Church and the church's music ministry would nurture the love for music, for all of the Pleasant children, initiated by their mother.

It was at Mount Moriah where Margaret would meet her mentor in gospel music Thurston Gilbert Frazier. Thurston Frazier was one of the premier choir directors of that time; he was charismatic, energetic, and had the ability to command a choir. Frazier, along with Mount Moriah musician Gwendolyn Lightner, organized the Voices of Hope Choir and recorded several albums. Their 1966 album "*Walk on By Faith*" featured an arrangement of "Peace Be Still" very reminiscent to that of James Cleveland's recording of the song released some years earlier. Frazier also introduced to the masses the hymn "Only What You Do for Christ Will Last" composed by Raymond Rasberry and his arrangement of "Oh to Be Kept by Jesus." Frazier can be heard, on the recordings, commanding the singers and exhorting them in praise and worship of God.

Frazier was very influential among the musicians of Los Angeles community and was close friends with gospel artist turned pastor, James Cleveland. Thurston Frazier, with James Cleveland, started the Frazier-Cleveland Publishing Company.

Because of his training, Frazier was often called upon to arrange songs for songwriters. In the 1960's, Frazier and James Cleveland formed the music publishing firm Frazier-Cleveland and Company and were responsible for publishing Andraé Crouch's "The Blood (It) Will Never Lose Its Power," a gospel standard found in many church hymnals.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje and Eddie Meadows, ed. *California Soul Music of African Americans in the West*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 166.

Thurston Frazier was also one of the founding members of James Cleveland's Gospel Music Workshop of America in 1968. More than this, Frazier was Minister of Music for the Mount Moriah Baptist Church. He was noted for exposing the music ministry of Mount Moriah to a diverse repertoire of music: anthems, spirituals, traditional gospel music and, for that time, contemporary gospel music. Thurston Frazier also had a profound impact on the musical training of young Margaret Pleasant; he allowed her to accompany choirs, during her youth, at the church. "Frazier was absolutely the ultimate for me in gospel music"<sup>94</sup> Douroux says.

Margaret attended Los Angeles Public Schools graduating from Los Angeles High School in 1959. A confessed "C average" student, she surprised her parents with the decision to attend college and major in music. "I had been encouraged by a school counselor to take a typing course after graduation and perhaps become a secretary."<sup>95</sup> But Margaret had her own thoughts and plans. She first attended Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Before returning home to Los Angeles, California and completing her education.

During the three years that Douroux attended Southern University (Baton Rouge, Louisiana) in the 1960s, she was actively involved in the civil rights movement sit-ins. Douroux later received her B.A. in music from California State University, Los Angeles. Her master's degree in education and educational psychology were earned at the University of Southern California. She would later receive a doctorate in educational psychology from the University of Beverly Hills. During her thirteen-year career in the Los Angeles school system, she served as elementary teacher, guidance counselor and psychologist.<sup>96</sup>

Margaret went on to marry Donald Douroux in 1963; the wedding was held at Mount Moriah Baptist Church, in Los Angeles. Margaret and Donald welcomed to their new family a daughter, Mardone. It was also during this time that young Margaret, a severe asthmatic, was healed of the

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<sup>94</sup> DjeDje, *American Music*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 432.

<sup>95</sup> Margaret Douroux. Heritage Music Foundation National Conference. October 2001.

<sup>96</sup> Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje. "Margaret Pleasant Douroux." *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1993), 353.

disease while praying and crying to God, one night, as she struggled to breath and get air. At that very moment, Douroux says was healed and never suffered with asthma again.

In the late 60s, Margaret joined a singing group formed by Alexander Hamilton. (Hamilton would later become the choir director for one of gospel's best-selling albums, Aretha Franklin's *Amazing Grace*, produced by James Cleveland). Douroux assumed a position on the music staff at her father's church as Director of The Young People's Choir and Orchestra under the watchful eye of her mentor, Thurston Frazier.



**Figure 3.** The Pleasant Family in the Late 1960s. Margaret is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> row to the right next to her parents. Reprinted with permission of Earl A. Pleasant Publishing.



Around 1970, at the encouragement of her grandmother (also named Margaret), Douroux was told to pray for the people of Mount Moriah. Margaret was having a difficult time understanding and loving the people of the Mount Moriah Baptist Church –particularly as it related to her feelings toward them and their cruelty to her parents and family. Her grandmother encouraged her to pray for them and ask God to “create in her a clean heart and renew a right spirit.” Through the urging of her grandmother and prayer, she received the inspiration that gave birth to her first song. “Give Me a Clean Heart,” based on Psalm 51:10, was composed in 1970; Margaret gave the composition to Thurston Frazier who, in her words, “brought the song to life with his conducting and execution.”<sup>97</sup>

Frazier also shared the song with his friend, James Cleveland and the two gave the song its first national debut at the new and blossoming convention: The Gospel Music Workshop of America. Raymond Wise writes,

The convention was also known for the many composers who wrote and presented gospel songs at the yearly conventions that became popular throughout the nation. One composer who was extremely significant was Margaret Douroux. Margaret Pleasant Douroux, the daughter of the late Rev. Earl A. Pleasant, one of America’s greatest gospel preachers, evangelists, and composers, composed such songs as “Give Me A Clean Heart,” “Don’t Wait Too Late,” “If It Had Not Been For the Lord On My Side,” “Come Unto Me (Resting Place),” “Trees,” “I Need The Lord,” and “He Decided To Die.” Most of these songs were initially presented at the Gospel Music Worship of America. Douroux started a trend among Black gospel composer during the 1960s for writing “word based” songs. “Word based” suggested that the songs contained thought provoking lyrics aimed at the transformation of the listener. While Brewster was known for his poetic use of text in gospel songs, Douroux and others such as Andraé Crouch, Robert Fryson, Carol Antrom, and Michael McKay represented members of the younger generation who carried on the tradition started by Brewster. Their texts were so thought provoking that their songs were easily distinguishable.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Margaret Douroux. Heritage Music Foundation National Conference. October 2001.

<sup>98</sup> Raymond Wise, “Defining African American Gospel Music by Tracing Its Historical and Musical Development From 1900 to 2000.” (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2002), 131.

The introduction of this composition to the musical community, and subsequently the church, brought her national attention and solidified her as a songwriter. When the Gospel Music Workshop of America recorded the convention's first album, at the 1971 convention in Dallas, Texas, it featured Rev. James Cleveland singing lead on Margaret Pleasant Douroux' "I'm Glad," with Thurston Frazier conducting the mass choir. Thurston taught and presented all Douroux' earliest compositions to the convention's mass choir until 1974.

The Mount Moriah Baptist Church produced the first recordings of Douroux' compositions, in 1972, during a revival led by the Rev. E. Victor Hill of Los Angeles, California. The album was entitled, "*Revival from The Mount*" and was recorded by K-CALB Productions. The recording featured the songs "God is Speaking," later renamed "The Lord is Speaking," "Give Me a Clean Heart," "Teach Me How to Love," "For the Lord," "Go Down, Moses," and "I'm Glad." All of the songs were the earliest compositions of Margaret Pleasant Douroux.

In 1974, Douroux, a new and promising songwriter, was asked to serve as the Minister of Music for the Mass Youth Choir for the Rev. Billy Graham's 25th Anniversary Crusade at the Hollywood Bowl. As exciting as this was for her, 1974 would be a year that would too bring its challenges and it also brought about a great change for the Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Margaret Pleasant Douroux and the Pleasant Family. On Monday, March 4, 1974 in Los Angeles, California, the beloved Minister of Music, Thurston Gilbert Frazier, was killed in a tragic accident. This left a tremendous void in the life of the church and the music community.

In tribute to one of his best friends, Rev. James Cleveland, at the 1974 Gospel Music Workshop of America Convention in Cleveland, Ohio renamed the convention's Alumni Chorale

the Thurston G. Frazier Memorial Chorale<sup>99</sup>, whose repertoire of classical and choral pieces are presented at the opening communion service for the convention each year. After the death of Frazier, Douroux would begin attending the Gospel Music Workshop of America and teaching her own music, a task that Frazier had done since her first composition.

The death of Frazier didn't adequately prepare the church and Pleasant family for its next major shift: the death of the beloved founding pastor Earl Amos Pleasant on Thursday, October 31, 1974. Reverend Pleasant died after battling cancer and following his death, Douroux would dedicate every composition in his memory. The death of Pastor Pleasant created a serious shift in the dynamics of Mount Moriah Baptist Church and the Pleasant family. Douroux herself describes her father's death as, "It was like a bird pushing us out of the nest."<sup>100</sup> And after years of painful rifts with the members of the church and the grief of losing their husband and father respectively, the entire Pleasant Family would leave the church that their father founded and built. The family found themselves living out the words from the composition Margaret had written several years earlier, "Give Me a Clean Heart." This song was the prayer that they found themselves praying during such a difficult time.

Douroux, along with her relatives and many members from Mount Moriah Baptist Church, and supporters of the Pleasant Family, left the church and followed the younger brother of Douroux, Earl Alfred Pleasant, who had become a preacher. Rev. Earl Alfred Pleasant founded the Greater New Bethel Baptist Church in Inglewood, California, in 1975, with his sister Margaret as a partner in ministry; she served as the church's first Minister of Music. Douroux

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<sup>99</sup> Thurston Frazier Memorial Chorale, accessed September 19, 2019, <http://gmwanational.net/auxiliaries/thurston-g-frazier-memorial-chorale/>.

<sup>100</sup> Larry Gordon, "A Place to Sing About," *Los Angeles Times*, October 16, 2006, accessed September 25, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2006-oct-16-me-gospel16-story.html>.

would build the music ministry of the church and her music would be the catalyst for having a profound impact on the choir and the church.



**Figure 4.** Margaret Pleasant Douroux and Andraé Crouch. Reprinted with permission of Earl Pleasant Publishing.

### **Results of Research Question 3: Common Musical Characteristics**

As an African American female composer, of the genre of Gospel Music of the twentieth century, the common musical characteristics shared by Margaret Pleasant Douroux with other hymn writers was used to penned classic hymns and gospel songs such as “I’m Glad,” “We’re Blest,” “God is Not Dead,” “Follow Jesus,” and “Rivers of Joy.” Her compositions “Give Me a Clean Heart,” “He Decided to Die,” and “If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side” have become standards of the African American church choral repertoire for decades. Gospel music historian and author James Abbingtion labeled Douroux “The Reigning Queen of African American Gospel Hymnody.”<sup>101</sup> Following in the footsteps of African American hymnwriters and gospel music composers like Lucie Campbell, Roberta Martin, and Doris Akers, the music of Margaret Douroux stretches across many generations, denominations and genres.

The common musical characteristics shared by Margaret Douroux and early hymn composers are musical structure and form. The songs are composed in an ABA musical form (chorus and a verse and with the chorus returning through to the end) giving the performer the freedom to perform the verse and chorus as many times as they deem necessary. Also, the lyrical content of Douroux’ compositions and early hymn writings are like that of Thomas Dorsey or Lucie Campbell who composed thirty years before Douroux. The lyrics of Douroux’ music, like that of Dorsey and Campbell, are personal reflections, joys and aspirations of the African American population and speaks to their experience.

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<sup>101</sup> James Abbingtion. *Let the Church Sing On! Reflections on Black Sacred Music*. (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2009), 59.

#### **Results of Research Question 4: Personal and Unique Characteristics in Composing**

The characteristics that set Margaret Pleasant Douroux' compositions apart from other writers of her era include the fact that Douroux' writings were not primary livelihood. Because composing music has not been her only job, she did not depend on revenue from its success. Douroux worked several years in the Los Angeles Public School System and for over 60 combined years, she served on the staff of Mount Moriah Baptist Church and Greater New Bethel Baptist Church. Douroux did not write music to sustain her livelihood, however, she passionately composed through inspiration from God, after listening to sermons from her father and brother, biblical scripture, conversations, and her everyday life. Douroux wrote in the song, "Glory Be to the Father" her reason for writing was, "If I sing, I sing for the glory of God."<sup>102</sup> Her catalogue is a testament of her musical and lyrical genius for turning scripture into song and fusing personal inspiration to tell the story of God and His son, Jesus Christ.

Douroux says, of her songs, there are three songs that could be characterized as her most popular. Douroux says, "'Give Me a Clean Heart' was the first song I wrote and gave me a lot of attention in the early 70s. 'He Decided to Die' was another song that God took and used to give a new perspective to the death of Christ. And, 'If It Had Not Been' became very popular because of Tammy Bakker singing it on their show."<sup>103</sup>

Birgitta Johnson has written,

(James) Cleveland was a prolific writer and composed over five hundred songs for himself and other gospel artists and groups. In addition, he recorded and promoted the music of other L.A. gospel composers. His recordings of Margaret Pleasant Douroux' "Give Me a Clean Heart," "If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side," and "He Decided to Die" launched her career as one of the most prolific composers in gospel

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<sup>102</sup> Margaret Douroux. *Glory Be to the Father*. (Los Angeles: Earl Pleasant Publishing, 1981).

<sup>103</sup> Margaret Douroux. Heritage Music Foundation National Conference. October 2001.

music history. Today, Douroux' songs are featured in hymnals and church song books all over the world.<sup>104</sup>

The hymn “Give Me a Clean Heart” is a standard of the African American church as well as in other ethnic congregations along with “He Decided to Die” and “If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side.” Douroux has had the ability to compose songs that have become timeless to the church and have transcended style, race, denomination, genre and cultural boundaries. Of all the songs that Douroux has composed, these three songs are possibly the most significant as it relates to recording, publishing, and popularity. These songs have not only become standards of the black church, but some of these songs have become standards of the church period-- black or white.

Beginning in the 1970s, in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement, there was a shift in Gospel Music that led to the birth of the Contemporary Gospel Music Movement, it became the path to another change in music. It was during this time of change that a new generation of musicians and songwriters came into ownership of this new music. One of those musicians was the young Margaret Pleasant Douroux and, in rare form, her first song would be destined for greatness. One of the most influential songs of Margaret Douroux was “Give Me a Clean Heart,” her first composition, written in 1970. After passing the composition to Frazier, who taught it to the G. M. W. A., James Cleveland and the Southern California Community Choir recorded the song in 1970 for the Savoy Records album entitled *Give Me A Clean Heart*. “Give Me a Clean Heart” (or “Clean Heart,” as it is sometimes called) was recorded at least four times by different choirs and groups between 1970 and 1972.

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<sup>104</sup> Birgitta Johnson. “O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing: Music and Worship in African American Megachurches of Los Angeles.” (PhD diss., University of California, 2008), 225.

One of those 1970-72 recordings of “Give Me a Clean Heart” was by The Gospel Keynotes, recorded in 1971 for Nashboro Records. Milton Brunson and Thompson Community Choir, a popular Chicago community choir, recorded it in 1972 on the HOB/Specter label. Still another recording was done by the Mount Moriah Baptist Church Choir in 1972 by the K-CALB Productions label. The song was introduced to the National Baptist Convention of America by Virgie Carrington Dewitty in 197, and when the National Baptist Convention’s Publishing Board issued the denomination’s first-ever hymnal in 1977, “Give Me a Clean Heart” was included.

### **Analyses of the Three Most Influential Songs of Margaret Pleasant Douroux**

“Give Me a Clean Heart” was not only recorded and published, it was and still is widely sung in churches across the country. The song, in the key of E-Flat major, in the form of two verses and a chorus, is simply written and can be easily sung, but the meaning and connotation transcends anything written on the paper. In the musical structure of the song, the verses and the chorus all end with a perfect authentic cadence (a V7 chord resolving to a I chord) as observed in Figure 5. The first five measures serve as an introduction beginning with the chorus or A section in measure 6. The chorus is sung, through measures 22-23 where it ends with a perfect anthemic cadence.

Character of the lyrics to “Give Me a Clean Heart” express a prayer of repentance set to music. It is a prayer that every believer, at one time or another, will pray. Author Gwendolin Sims Warren wrote,

Give Me a Clean Heart,” is the request made repeatedly throughout these verse and chorus. That very request is Margaret’s focus here, the message of the song. And yet it is interesting to note that, in the midst of her humility (I’m not worthy of all these blessings), she comments indirectly in the social and cultural status of the time: “I’m not asking for the riches of the land. I’m not asking for the proud to know my name.” Although these lines are in keeping with the authors expression of humility, they also



seem to indicate the ongoing struggle of the African American for success and recognition, both materially and socially.<sup>105</sup>

Much like the Word of God that withstands the test of time, this song, based on scripture, has also stood the test of time. In its 50-year span, this song has been recorded at least 14 by choirs, small ensembles, groups and soloists. The R & B group Xscape sang it in a concert that was aired on the Bravo television show, *Xscape: Still Kickin It* in 2017. As previously noted, the book *Encyclopedia of African American Music* includes Douroux in its timeline of the significant moments in African American Music, stating, “Margaret Pleasant Douroux composes gospel music classic, “Give Me a Clean Heart.” *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* adds gospel music as a category.”<sup>106</sup> “Give Me a Clean Heart” single-handedly made one of the largest impacts on Gospel Music. Since its introduction to the church, the song has been in print continuously, having been published in over 18 hymnals. And there are recordings by uncounted choirs, groups and soloists in various performance and recording projects over the past fifty years.

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<sup>105</sup> Gwendolin Sims Warren. *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit: 101 Best-Loved Psalms, Gospel Hymns, and Spiritual Songs of the African American Church*. (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1997), 298.

<sup>106</sup> Emmett G. Price, ed. *Encyclopedia of African American Music*. (Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood, 2011), xlv.

**Figure 5.** “Give Me A Clean Heart” Chorus. Reprinted with permission of the composer.

**Give Me A Clean Heart**  
Psalm 51:10

Words and Music  
Margaret Pleasant Douroix

Moderato (Very deliberate)  $F^{\sharp}$   $A^{\flat}$   $A^{\flat}M^{\flat}$   $B^{\flat}$

Piano

6  $A^{\flat}m^{\flat}$   $E^{\flat}6$   $A^{\flat}m^{\flat}$

Give me a Clean Heart so I may serve

11  $E^{\flat}6$   $A^{\flat}6$   $Gm^{\flat}$   $F^{\sharp}$   $B^{\flat}$

Thee. Lord fix my heart so that I may be used by Thee. For I'm not

17  $A^{\flat}m^{\flat}$   $E^{\flat}6$   $A^{\flat}6$   $F^{\sharp}6$   $Cm^{\flat}$

worth - thy of all these bless - ings. Give me a Clean Heart

22  $A^{\flat}6$   $A^{\flat}M^{\flat}E^{\flat}6$   $B^{\flat}$   $Gm$   $Fm$   $Gm$   $E^{\flat}7$   $Gm$

— and I'll fol - low Thee. I'm not ask - ing for the rich - es of this  
I am up and some - times I am

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Douroux' second most influential song, post-1960s Gospel Music, is "He Decided to Die." The song was composed after hearing a sermon while Douroux was working with Operation Push. An important leader of the Civil Rights Movement, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, delivered a sermon in 1976, based on the death of Jesus Christ, on the cross at Calvary. This is the inspiration from Matthew's gospel:

In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. (Matt. 27:41-42)<sup>107</sup>

The first verse of the song that tells the story of Jesus Christ making the decision to stay on the cross and die to save humankind. "When Jesus hung on Calvary, people came from miles to see. They said, "If you be the Christ, come down and save your life. But Jesus never answered them, He knew that Satan was tempting him. If He had come down from the cross, then my soul would still be lost."<sup>108</sup> *He would not come down from the cross just to save himself, He decided to die just to save me.* The chorus repeats and inverts twice by repeating the poignant words, "He would not come down from the cross just to save himself. He decided to die just to save me."<sup>109</sup>

The song, is written in C Major, the musical structure of a song is defined by both the chorus and the two verses ending with a perfect authentic cadence (a V chord resolving to a I chord) as observed in figures 6.1 through 6.3. Figure 6.1 starts with a pickup note to measure 1 beginning the verse. The verse lasts through figure 6.2, and, in figure 6.2 measures 30-32, the verse ends with the perfect authentic cadence. The chorus begins with a pickup note to measure 33 in figure 6.2 with perfect authentic cadences appearing in figure 6.3 measures 40-41, 49-50 and 60-61. Over time this structure would come to typify many of Douroux' compositions.

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<sup>107</sup> Matthew 27: 41-42

<sup>108</sup> Margaret Douroux. *He Decided to Die*. (Los Angeles, CA: Earl A. Pleasant Publishing, 1976).

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

“He Decided to Die” has been recorded several times. Some of the significant recordings of “He Decided to Die,” other than Gospel Music Workshop of America’s Mass Choir recording in 1976, are that of The Donald Vails Choraleers in 1978, and the recording of it at the Houston G. M. W. A. Convention 1981. This song then fell into neglect until Rev. James Cleveland revived it years later. In his new interpretation, instead of singing the verse, Cleveland masterfully speaks the verse --- almost as if preaching it --- and had the choir sing the chorus. LaBarbara Whitehead of Detroit, Michigan (who sang lead on the Donald Vails recording years earlier) sang lead. 2008 would lead Atlanta-based artist Latanya Moore to record the song on the New Day Distribution label boosting the revival of this early Douroux song even further.

In 1974, before composing “He Decided to Die,” Douroux composed “God Is Not Dead” after listening to a sermon preached by her father. “My dad said in a sermon, “If God is dead, who can show me where His body is?”<sup>110</sup> Donald Vails and the Choraleers recorded, “God Is Not Dead” on the same album with “He Decided to Die.” Douroux says, “These two songs became very popular for the Easter Season. But “He Decided” is the more popular of the two”.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Margaret Douroux. Heritage Music Foundation National Conference. October 2001.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

Figure 6.1. "He Decided to Die." Reprinted with permission of the composer.

# He Decided To Die

As spoken by  
Jesse L. Jackson - PUSH

Words and Music by  
MARGARET PLEASANT DOUROUX

1. When Je - sus hung on Cal - va - ry. ———— Peo - ple  
2. When Je - sus comes in - to ———— your life ———— Peo - ple

came from miles ———— to see. ———— They said if You be ———— the  
come to cri - ti - cize. ———— But I am con - vinced you will

Christ ———— come down ———— and save ———— Your life.  
find ———— He'll give ———— you peace ———— of mind.

But Je - sus nev - er ans - wered them ———— He  
Like Je - sus when Sa - tan tempt - ed ———— Him

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**Figure 6.2.** “He Decided to Die.” Reprinted with permission of the composer.

The musical score is written for voice, piano, and guitar. It consists of four systems of music. The first system has a guitar part with chords G7 and C. The second system has piano accompaniment and a vocal line with chords C and F. The third system has piano accompaniment and a vocal line with chords C, G, and C. The fourth system is the chorus, with piano accompaniment and a vocal line, and a guitar part with chords C, Dm, C, C, Dm, C, C, Dm, C, Cm, and Cm6. The lyrics are: "knew that Sa - tan was tempt - ing Him. If don't waste time trying to ans - wer them. He had come down from the Cross, My soul would still be lost. CHORUS (Each chord is accented) He would not come down from the Cross just to save Him - self He de -".

G7 C

knew that Sa - tan was tempt - ing Him. If  
don't waste time trying to ans - wer them.

C F

He had come down from the Cross, My

C G C

soul would still be lost.

CHORUS (Each chord is accented)  
C Dm C C Dm C C Dm C Cm Cm6

He would not come down from the Cross just to save Him - self He de -

He Decided - 3

**Figure 6.3.** “He Decided to Die.” Reprinted with permission of the composer.

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It consists of five systems of music. The piano part is in the left hand, and the vocal melody is in the right hand. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various chords and melodic lines, with some measures containing multiple notes in the piano part. The lyrics are: "ci - ded to die just to save me. He would not come down from the Cross just to save Him - self, He de - ci - ded to die just to save me. He would not come down from the Cross just to save Him - self, He de - ci - ded (Repeat as felt) He de - ci - ded to die just to save me."

ci - ded to die just to save me. He would not come

down from the Cross just to save Him - self, He de - ci - ded to

die just to save me. He would not come down from the

Cross just to save Him - self, He de - ci - ded

(Repeat as felt)

He de - ci - ded to die just to save me.

He Decided to Die

Douroux' third most influential song, "If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side," was composed in 1980. The words are based on Psalm 124:

If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say; If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us: Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: Then, the proud waters had gone over our soul. Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.<sup>112</sup>

Douroux' interpretation of these verses from the Bible are a great interpretation of the words of David. Douroux stated, "I composed "If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side" on my way to choir rehearsal one night while driving. While in meditation on the word of God, God gave me the song and I resolved to teach it that night to the choir. It was nobody but God, it was God ordained."<sup>113</sup> She dedicated the song to Pastor Melvin Wade and the congregation of Mount Moriah Baptist Church, of Los Angeles as shown in Figure 7, below. The one-sheet piece of music, in the key of E flat major, is consistent with the writing style of Douroux-- it consists of a chorus and two verses in the musical form of ABA. In figure 7., there is a V7 to I cadence which occurs in measures 6-8. Measure 6 consist of the V7 chord, measure 7 has passing chords, leading to the I chord in measure 8. A common characteristic in the writing of Margaret Pleasant Douroux seen in Figures 6-8 is the ABA form--the writing of a verse or two and a chorus. In the performance of the song observed by this writer, the songs are performed as verse then chorus and, in some, chorus then verse and ending with a chorus. This is observed in many of the songs of Margaret Pleasant Douroux. It is the content of the song that is most important to those

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<sup>112</sup> Psalm 124 A song of ascents of David.

<sup>113</sup> Margaret Douroux. Heritage Music Foundation National Conference. October 2001.



delivering the message or those hearing the message. C. Michael Hawn, author of “History of Hymns: If It Had Not Been for the Lord,” writes,

Given the African American experience in the United States, both historically and currently, it is easy to see why this community would be drawn toward Psalm 124. The refrain of the song – “kept my enemies away” – draws heavily on the first verse of the psalm. The first line of stanza one captures the spirit of much of the remainder of the psalm. The rest of the stanza, however, turns to hope and comfort.<sup>114</sup>

Douroux recorded the song with the Gospel Music Workshop of America’s National Mass Choir at the 1980 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Convention. The Savoy Records recording of the song is eight minutes and four seconds long.<sup>115</sup> One of its most popular recordings is that of Helen Baylor-- a Rhythm and Blues singer who turned to Gospel music. Baylor gave a testimony about being addicted to drugs and how her grandmother prayed for her and asked her to sing a song once she was delivered. The song Baylor’s grandmother requested was Margaret Douroux’ “If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side.”<sup>116</sup> The album *Helen Baylor ... Live*, on Zomba Records, received airplay around the country and was a crossover success.

Baylor’s recording of Douroux’s song not only appealed to the black church but also to white audiences as well. The song has been recorded nine times, by various artists, black and white, choirs, groups and solo artists. It is a favorite among many because they can testify: *if it had not been for the Lord on their side, they don’t know where they would be*. Douroux went on to write, “He (the Lord) kept my enemies away, and He let the sunshine through a cloudy day.

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<sup>114</sup> C. Michael Hawn. History of Hymns: “If It Had Not Been for the Lord” *Discipleship Ministries*, September 17, 2015, accessed September 13, 2019. <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-if-it-had-not-been-for-the-lord>.

<sup>115</sup> Gospel Music Workshop of America National Mass Choir, “If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side,” by Margaret Pleasant Douroux, recorded August 1980. Philadelphia, PA, Savoy Records 7058. Streaming Audio. Accessed September 20, 2019. [https://youtu.be/S5vJOuN8\\_KI](https://youtu.be/S5vJOuN8_KI).

<sup>116</sup> Helen Baylor, “If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side,” by Margaret Pleasant Douroux, recorded 1999, Verity Records/Zomba Recordings. Streamed Audio. Accessed September 20, 2019. <https://youtu.be/rLQF7m9sScM>.

He rocked me in the cradle of His arms, when He knew I had been battered and scorn. So, if it had not been for the Lord on my side, tell me, where would I be.”<sup>117</sup>

These three compositions were so popular and such hit songs with the Gospel Music Workshop of America, when the convention celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 1993, they recorded the best songs of the convention’s history. They celebrated the music of Margaret Douroux by performing the “Margaret Douroux Medley” which consisted of the songs “Give Me a Clean Heart,” “He Decided to Die,” and “If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side.”<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Margaret Douroux. *If It Had Not Been for the Lord*. (Los Angeles, CA: Earl A. Pleasant Publishing, 1980).

<sup>118</sup> Gospel Music Workshop of America National Mass Choir, “Margaret Douroux Medley,” recorded August 1993, Chicago, IL, Verity Records/Zomba Recordings, CD.

**Figure 7.** “If It Had Not Been for the Lord.” Reprinted with permission of the composer.

**If It Had Not Been For The Lord.**  
*(Dedicated to Rev. Melvin Wade and Mount Moriah Baptist Church)*  
 Words and Music by MARGARET PLEASANT DOUROUX

PSALMS 124

If it had not been for the Lord on my  
 side, tell me where would I be, where would I be.  
 He kept my en - i - mies a - way; He let the  
 He ne - ver left me all a - lone; He gave the  
 sun shine through a clou - dy day. He rocked me in the cra - dle of His  
 peace and joy I'd nev - er known. He an - swered when I knelt to real - ly  
 arm pray, when He knew I had been bat - tered and scorned, so if it  
 and in vic - fry the Lord brought me His way

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Aside from the Gospel hymns and traditional Gospel songs composed by Margaret Pleasant Douroux, one may be shocked that she also composed other forms of Gospel Music. “Douroux literally grew up with and in Mt. Moriah. In addition to being exposed to gospel through her father's work with the Three Sons of Thunder, the Hall Johnson Choir, the Interdenominational Chorus, and Mt. Moriah's radio and television broadcast, she was mentored

by the church's legendary music directors, Gwendolyn Cooper Lighter and Thurston Frazier from the 1950s to the 1970s.”<sup>119</sup> This exposure would influence Douroux as well, “Thurston, was masterful at presenting music and giving it life, not only to my songs but to everything he touched. And we sang, anthems, spirituals and the great gospel songs of that day.”<sup>120</sup>

### **Arrangements of Spirituals**

The modern-day spiritual arrangements are reminiscent of those songs of the slave sung during captivity. Many of the songs were code songs that carried a deeper message intended for its listener. The first spiritual Douroux composed was “I’m Gonna Take My Burdens” (1980). The sixteen-measure composition in Figure 8 is in the key of D minor. The song starts with eight measures in unison and continues with a pickup chord on A major; the remainder of the song is in three-part harmony. The musical structure uses V7 to i cadences. The minor key, setting in “I’m Gonna Take My Burdens,” gives the listener the feeling of the “dark sound” associated with Negro spirituals. The song is written in the Douroux song form of two short verses and a chorus. This song was recorded by James Cleveland and The Voices of Watts in 1981 for release on the Savoy Record label.

Composed in the dialect of the negro spiritual:

I’m gonna take my burdens, Lord, and leave them at Jesus’ feet.  
I’m gonna take my burdens, Lord, and leave them at Jesus’ feet.  
I’ll take my burdens there; only Jesus cares.  
I’m gonna take my burdens, Lord, and leave them at Jesus’ feet.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Birgitta Johnson. “O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing: Music and Worship in African American Megachurches of Los Angeles.” (PhD diss., University of California, 2008), 225.

<sup>120</sup> Margaret Douroux. Heritage Music Foundation National Conference. October 2001.

<sup>121</sup> Margaret Douroux. I’m Gonna Take My Burdens. (Los Angeles, CA: Earl A. Pleasant Publishing, 1980).

**Figure 8.** “I’m Gonna Take My Burdens.” Reprinted with permission of the composer.

**I’m Gonna Take My Burdens**

Words and Music by  
**MARGARET P. DOUROUX**

**Solo or Unison**  
Dm Dm7 Dm/A A7 Dm

1. I’m gon - na take my bur - dens, Lord, and leave them at Je - sus’ feet.  
2. I’m gon - na take my troub - les, Lord, and tell him what folks done me.

Dm7 A

I’m gon - na take my bur - dens, Lord, and leave them at Je - sus’ feet.  
I’m gon - na take my troub - les, Lord, and tell him what folks done me.

**Choir**  
Dm A7 Dm

I’ll I’ll take my bur - dens there; On - ly Je - sus cares.

Dm7 Dm/A A7 Dm

I’m gon - na take my bur - dens, Lord, and leave them at Je - sus’ feet.

### Praise Anthems

As previously stated, at Mount Moriah, Douroux was introduced to many different styles and forms of music. Douroux used this influence in Figure 9. “Worthy” is Douroux’ first anthem based on Revelation 4:11, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”<sup>122</sup> Douroux labeled the composition a *Praise Anthem*. The short ten-measure anthem, written for soprano, alto, tenor, bass and soprano soloist, in the key of A minor, repeats throughout the song: “God is worthy, worthy to receive glory and honor.” In the musical structure of the song, rhythms consist of perfect authentic cadences (V chord to i chord).

<sup>122</sup> Revelation 4:11.

Figure 9. "Worthy!" Reprinted with permission of the composer.

# Worthy!

REVELATIONS 4:11  
(Praise Anthem)

Words and Music by  
MARGARET PLEASANT DOUROUT

*pp* Thou art wor- thy, thou art wor- thy to re- ceive

*pp* Thou art wor- thy, thou art wor- thy to re- ceive

*mf* glo- ry and hon- or, glo- ry and hon- or, oh Lord.

*mf* glo- ry and hon- or, glo- ry and hon- or, oh Lord.

©Copyright 1982 by Margaret Pleasant Douroux

**Figure 10.** “Just Knowing Him Is Enough.” Reprinted with permission of the composer.

**Just Knowing Him Is Enough**

Words and Music by  
REV. ANDREW W. BERRY and  
MARGARET PLEASANT DOUROUX  
*Arr. by Jessie Mae Berry*

*Moderate (ballad like)*

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 6/8 time signature. The tempo/style marking is 'Moderate (ballad like)'. The piano accompaniment starts with a series of chords in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand. The vocal line enters in the second measure. The lyrics are: '1. Just know - ing that trials are sure to come, just know - ing that a (2.) trials will make us strong and make us do\_\_'. The piano accompaniment continues with a steady rhythm. The lyrics continue: 'race has to be run, just know - ing that a friend is here to right in - stead of wrong, just know - ing that\_\_ af - ter each heart -'. The piano accompaniment concludes with a final chord. The copyright notice at the bottom reads: 'Copyright © 1976 Andrew W. Berry Musicoe Publications'.

1. Just know - ing that trials are sure to come, just know - ing that a  
(2.) trials will make us strong and make us do\_\_

race has to be run, just know - ing that a friend is here to  
right in - stead of wrong, just know - ing that\_\_ af - ter each heart -

Copyright © 1976 Andrew W. Berry Musicoe Publications

Of the many compositions Douroux has written, only one song has been identified as having a co-writer. In 1976, she composed “Just Knowing Him Is Enough” with a minister from

Houston, Texas--the late Rev. Andrew Walker Berry. Berry and Douroux were longtime friends. He was an organist for the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc., where Douroux' father, and later her brother, held leadership roles. The two composed "Just Knowing Him is Enough" as a ballad-like song in the key of D Flat major. They co-wrote the words:

Just knowing that trials are sure to come,  
just knowing that a race has to be run,  
just knowing that a friend is here to share,  
just knowing someone really cares.  
That just knowing Him is enough.<sup>123</sup>

Douroux states, "This song was written many years ago from our personal inspiration of our knowledge of God. Andrew was one of my best friends. Though we were hundreds of miles apart, we spoke often."<sup>124</sup> The two remained friends for many years. Douroux came to Texas, in late 1989, and conducted a musical workshop at the Avenue L Baptist Church in Galveston, Texas where Andrew Berry was pastor. That was the last time they would see each other. Rev. Andrew Berry had a massive heart-attack and died in January of 1990.<sup>125</sup> The song, "Just Knowing Him Is Enough" is no longer in printed form or distribution and was never recorded by Douroux or Berry.

### **Results of Research Question 5: Margaret Pleasant Douroux' Impact on the African American Church in the United States**

Margaret Pleasant Douroux has composed an estimated two hundred gospel hymns, anthems, traditional gospel songs and spiritual arrangements. The music of Douroux impacted the church through several avenues. Her music was recorded innumerable times by an array of

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<sup>123</sup> Margaret Douroux and Andrew Berry. Just Knowing Him Is Enough. (Houston, TX: Musicoe Publications, 1976).

<sup>124</sup> Margaret Douroux. Heritage Music Foundation National Conference. October 2001.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.,



artists and has been published in countless hymnals and songbooks for almost 50 years. Her music has also been recorded by Bill and Gloria Gaither, The Donald Vails Choraleers, Helen Baylor, Tammy Faye Bakker, Rev. James Cleveland and the Southern California Community Choir and the Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choirs. Her music has also appeared on television and in film scores.

The late 1970's brought great success and notoriety for Margaret Pleasant Douroux. The composition "He Decided to Die" was written and introduced to the Gospel Music Workshop of America's Mass Choir in 1976 at the National Convention held in Kansas City, Kansas. The recording of the song, on the Savoy Record label, lasted nearly ten minutes. This song would undeniably become one of Margaret Douroux' most popular songs of her own admission. The music of Douroux was of great influence to Donald Vails. Vails would record many of her compositions, on several different albums, throughout his professional recording career. Vails was a composer himself, but on many of his recordings, recorded the music of Margaret Douroux. The Rev. Donald Vails, of Detroit, Michigan, would record the song with his group, The Choraleers, in 1978, on the album *He Decided to Die*, released on the Savoy Records label.

Bill Carpenter has reported,

One of the traditional black church's brightest music directors of the '80s, Rev. Donald Vails and his Choraleers made a name for themselves with their 1979 rendition of Margaret Douroux' composition "He Decided to Die." It's been said that the Grammy-nominated album song sold 500,000 copies and made the Choraleers one of the most in demand gospel groups of the early 1980s.<sup>126</sup>

The Vails group also recorded two other songs by Douroux, "God is Not Dead" and "Through a Storm," on the *He Decided to Die* album with songs written by Thomas Dorsey and James

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<sup>126</sup> Bill Carpenter. *Uncloudy Days: The Gospel Music Encyclopedia*. (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2005), 421.

Cleveland, among others. The album was nominated for a Grammy Award during 1979. The same year, The Mighty Clouds of Joy were also nominated for a Grammy Award for their album *Truth is the Power* featuring the Douroux song “God is Not Dead.”

The music of Margaret Douroux would be included in another Grammy nominated album, this one by Keith Pringle, protégé of James Cleveland, and also crossing over and being recorded by the televangelist Tammy Faye Bakker. Pringle recorded the song “Trees,” with words based on Judges 9:8-15. “In 1979, Pringle formed the Pentecostal Community Choir and Savoy Records gave them a recording deal. Their debut LP *True Victory* featured smash hit “Call Him Up,” which won a Grammy nomination.”<sup>127</sup> Tammy Bakker would record one of Douroux’ earliest compositions, “We’re Blest,” on the album *We’re Blest* on the PTL Club and Records label. Douroux says, “Tammy Bakker’s recordings and performances of my songs, gave me exposure to the masses that watched the popular Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker *Praise the Lord Hour*.”<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 342.

<sup>128</sup> Margaret Douroux. Heritage Music Foundation National Conference. October 2001.



**Figure 11.** Margaret Pleasant Douroux, circa 1975. Reprinted with permission of the composer.

Douroux suggests, “The reason the music grew as it did is because my father [Earl A. Pleasant], who was an evangelist, took it every place he went. Thurston (Frazier) took it every place he went. Finally, they were calling for me to teach the music I had written. And I took it every place I went. So, my music is still basically mine.”<sup>129</sup> By the 1980’s, Margaret Pleasant Douroux was in great demand, conducting music workshops around the country and writing

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<sup>129</sup> Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje. *American Music, Vol. 11, No. 4*. Los Angeles Composers of African American Gospel Music: The First Generations. (University of Illinois Press, 1993), 432

more music. Douroux' songs were growing in popularity and more artists were contacting her to record them. During this time, Douroux was able to leave her teaching position, with the Los Angeles Public School System, and focus full-time on music ministry, writing more songs and other publications specific to music ministry. Douroux says, "After finishing my PhD., I took college level biblical classes and during the 80s especially its reflected in my music."<sup>130</sup> Many of the songs Douroux composed during this period were influenced through her theological trainings.

In 1980, Tammy Faye Bakker would record another album, *The Lord's On My Side*, on the PTL Club and Records label, with five Douroux songs on it: "If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side," "Deep Water," "Home Over the Mountain," "Take the Time," and "Rivers of Joy." The Donald Vails Choraleers were nominated for another Grammy in 1980 for the album *If You Move Yourself*. The title track was composed by Douroux and the album included her songs "Take the Time" and "Rivers of Joy." In 1981 after a decade of composing gospel music, Douroux produced the first recording of Greater New Bethel Baptist Church entitled, *Margaret Pleasant Douroux and the Greater New Bethel Adult Choir: The Way of the Word*.<sup>131</sup> The album featured "Hide Your Word in My Heart," "If I Had Ten Thousand Songs," "Home Over the Mountain," "It Took Me So Long," "Jesus Gave Me a Light," and "God's Promise." All of these were composed by Douroux. Further, the song "Memories" would be recorded by Houston composer and Douroux protégé Varn Michael McKay (who later would become a noted Grammy and Dove Award Winning songwriter for Yolanda Adams, Tramaine Hawkins and Brian Courtney Wilson). Her brother, Pastor Earl Pleasant, lead the congregation in singing her

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<sup>130</sup> Margaret Douroux. Heritage Music Foundation National Conference. October 2001.

<sup>131</sup> Margaret Pleasant Douroux and the Greater New Bethel Adult Choir, "The Way of the Word," Greater New Bethel Baptist Church LBR-001, Vinyl.

hymn “Savior, Lead Me.” *The Way of the Word* was Douroux’ songbook in album form for the church.<sup>132</sup>

There would be several recordings, in the 1980’s, by various artists that would introduce new music, and added flair to some of the older songs. Some of the most relevant were the great gospel singer Shirley Caesar, who also recorded a Margaret Douroux song in 1981. She too recorded a version of “Give Me a Clean Heart” on the album *Go*. The Donald Vails Choraleers would record a moving version of “Home Over the Mountain,” previously recorded by Douroux. With Vails changing the meter of the song and singing the verses as a solo, it contrasted with Douroux’s version, in which the verse was sung by the alto section. The two-disc vinyl album entitled *We’ve Come to Praise Him* consisted of 13 songs; Vails would sing lead on the Douroux songs “Follow Jesus” and “Show Me the Way.”

Douroux’ song “We’re Blest” was featured on the 1982 film, *Say Amen, Somebody*, (telling the story of Thomas A. Dorsey, Willie Mae Ford-Smith and the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses), by the Chicago-based group The Barrett Sisters. And in 1984, Donald Vails teamed up with Rev. Clay Evans and the Fellowship Choir of Chicago and recorded a version of Douroux’ “Move Mountain” on the Savoy Records label. The Fellowship Church Choir, under the direction of LouDella Evans-Reid, hosted Douroux as the music workshop clinician and recorded several of her songs throughout the years. The choir recorded “Trees,” “Somebody Touched Me,” “If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side,” “The Angels Sang,” and “All These Blessings are Mine.” Still it was the “Move Mountain” recording that was hailed as one of the most popular recordings for the Fellowship Church Choir and received airplay around the country. The album entitled *What He’s Done for Me* peaked at No. 3 on the

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

charts.<sup>133</sup> “Move Mountain” was written based on Matthew 17:20, “He replied, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”<sup>134</sup> Composed in the classic Douroux tradition, it includes a chorus and two verses but has a special ending that Douroux marks as optional. Margaret Douroux also presented songs at the Gospel Music Workshop of America continuously throughout the 1980’s; some of the recordings have become standards of the church, most notably “Count it All Joy,” “Don’t Wait Too Late,” and “I’ve Never Seen the Righteous Forsaken.”

In 1986, she produced an independent recording project entitled *The Gospel According to Margaret Douroux Presents Signs of the Advent!* It featured her songs “I Need the Lord,” “A Better Place,” “The Angels Sang,” “Is Your Lamp Ready?,” “Don’t Wait Too Late,” “What We Yet May Be,” “Last Days,” “Show Me Heaven,” and “Everything Is Alright” for the recording label A Pleasant Production. Douroux, along with her choir, was featured on the popular television show 227, starring actress Marla Gibbs. In the episode “The Sing Off,” televised in 1988, the choir sang two Douroux compositions, “Go to God” and “Jesus Gave Me a Light,” as she conducted the choir.

In 1989, Detroit singer Vanessa Bell Armstrong released her fifth recording, entitled *Wonderful One*, on Jive Records, and recorded Douroux’ 1975 piece “What Shall I Render?” The album was a success, with standout songs “Something Inside So Strong” and “What Shall I Render?” receiving national airplay. In August of 1989, Douroux participated in the last

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<sup>133</sup> Adrienne Gibbs, “Gospel Icon and Civil Rights Pioneer Rev. Clay Evans Dies,” *Forbes.com*, November 28, 2019, accessed December 1, 2019. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/adriennegibbs/2019/11/28/gospel-icon-and-civil-rights-pioneer-rev-clay-evans-dies/#2893f33e5420>.

<sup>134</sup> Matthew 17:20 (NIV).

convention that the Rev. James Cleveland would attend for his beloved convention, the Gospel Music Workshop of America, in New Orleans, Louisiana. During this convention, the National Mass Choir sang Douroux' "High Praise." It is a short praise song that begins in unison, with each part (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) entering in a round musical form and a climactic ending. The 2,000-voice mass choir delivered a stunning performance. The six minute and fifty second recording was released on the Savoy Records label.<sup>135</sup> Rev. Cleveland would become too ill to attend the convention the following year.

For two decades, her music had become standards in the church and would still be in demand. In 1991, "James Cleveland, for three decades the King of Gospel Music and certainly its most innovative figure, died at the age of 60."<sup>136</sup> Margaret Douroux represented the Heritage Music Foundation as one of the speakers at the funeral of her dear friend who, for more than 20 years, had not only presented her to the Gospel Music Workshop of America audiences of thousands each year, but recorded countless numbers of her songs on various projects. Douroux stated,

as a gospel music composer, I think that one of the first lessons I learned early is that people around you are least affected by your music until someone important actually pays attention to it. I remember having written, "Give Me a Clean Heart" one of the first songs and my church sang it and I guess we took it as a light-hearted first contributions. But Pastor James (Cleveland) through the Gospel Music Workshop allowed us to record it as Thurston Frazier conducted it and it became one of the classics of America. And each song that I introduced to Pastor James Cleveland and he allowed me to record through the Gospel Music Workshop of America has ultimately become one of the classics of America. I thank God for his availability in allowing us to record and introduce music to thousands of people around the country. That allowed my music to grow and now become nationally known as gospel music thanks to Pastor James Cleveland for the

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<sup>135</sup> Gospel Music Workshop of America National Mass Choir, "High Praise," by Margaret Pleasant Douroux, recorded August 1989. New Orleans, LA, Savoy Records 7100. CD.

<sup>136</sup>Anthony Heilbut. *The Gospel Sound Good News and Bad Times*. (New York: Limelight Editions, 1997), 350.

avenue, the Gospel Music Workshop (America) who helped discover the music God has given me.<sup>137</sup>

Since the first GMWA recording in 1971, the convention has, “recorded more than 275 compositions by composers, Dr. Margaret P. Douroux, Steven Roberts, Dr. Robert Fryson, V. Michael McKay, Rev. Quincy Fielding, Jr. and Evangelist Myrna Summers.”<sup>138</sup> Savoy Records released a tribute album, in memory of James Cleveland, *The Best of Rev. James Cleveland and the Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir*. It featured Douroux’ “He Decided to Die,” which Cleveland recorded at the 1981 G. M. W. A. Convention, in Houston.

Other memorable Douroux songs, of the 1990s, were “One More Day,” “Trade All I Have,” “Mercy That Suits,” “I Can’t Deny It,” and “Like a Tree.” The latter three songs were recorded by G. M. W. A. Mass Choir. In 1994, Donald Vails would record his final project, *A Sunday Morning Songbook*, on the Savoy Records label. On this album, he revived Douroux’ “In Deep Water.” He recorded this song with his group, the Donald Vails Choraleers, in 1976. Douroux said of her friendship with Rev. Donald Vails, “Donald Vails would often call to Thousand Oaks, California, from Detroit, Michigan, seeking new music. I would play the piano and sing my latest compositions and then overnight the sheet music to him.”<sup>139</sup> A supporter of the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux, Donald Vails, would record her songs with many different choirs. Vails would pass away in 1997.

The 21st century would expose the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux to a new generation, new genre and new believers. In 2002, Douroux’ “If It Had Not Been for The Lord On My Side” was recorded by famed Christian songwriters Bill and Gloria Gaither on the album,

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<sup>137</sup> Margaret Douroux, “Dr. Douroux’s Tribute from Quaford Coleman”, March 2010, accessed January 8, 2020, <https://youtu.be/bjEnTiq0rpo>

<sup>138</sup> The Best of the Rev. James Cleveland and The Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir, Savoy Records, 1993. CD.

<sup>139</sup> Margaret Douroux. Heritage Music Foundation National Conference. October 2001.



*God Bless America - Live From Carnegie Hall With Bill & Gloria Gaither And Their Homecoming Friends* on the Spring House Music Group record label. Helen Baylor's album, recorded in 1999, was nominated for various Stellar and Dove Awards in the year 2000. But Baylor would not be the only rhythm and blues singer-turned-Gospel singer to record Douroux songs. Singer Ann Nesby, who had received recognition for being lead singer with the group Sounds of Blackness, recorded Douroux' "If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side" in 2006 on the Shanachie Records label. Also in 2006, Kelly Price, an R & B singer, who sang background and collaborated with R & B and pop artist Mariah Carey, Sean "Puff Daddy" Combs, and Faith Evans, recorded Margaret Douroux' "God Is Not Dead" on the GospoCentric/Somba Gospel Records label. The music of Margaret Douroux was not just in the choir lofts or convention halls, but it was traversing America on radio for R & B, pop, and gospel genres. And "Hold On," a spiritual arrangement composed by Douroux, was performed in Tyler Perry's 2006 film, *Madea's Family Reunion*.

### **Heritage Music Foundation**

Aside from her writings, one of the most significant contributions Douroux made to music in the 1980's was the creation of the Heritage Music Foundation (HMF). "Heritage," as it is fondly called, is an organization founded by Margaret Pleasant Douroux in 1985.

The primary objective of the Foundation is to establish and operate a permanent, year-round public facility to be named the Gospel House in Los Angeles area of Southern California. It will be available as a performing arts center for the world community to host performing arts events, educational functions, awards celebrations, and community functions. The proposed complex will house the world's finest Gospel music history and education center. Closely tied into this mission is the vision to mentor young people. The mentoring vision of Heritage is to teach performing arts to younger generations of Americans while teaching them appreciation for the legacy of Gospel Music. By doing so

we will help them to establish pride in this unique art form and develop an appreciation for the performance of Gospel Music.<sup>140</sup>

Birgitta Johnson wrote,

HMF holds events seven months of the year. While the GMW A has moved more towards assisting aspiring gospel recording artists and professionals enter the record industry, HMF serves church musicians by offering workshops on musical repertoire for the Christian and church music calendar (e.g., Easter, Christmas, Communion, Thanksgiving, Mother's Day, etc.). New composers are invited to present at workshops and conferences. HMF has even helped and hosted big names in contemporary gospel such as Kirk Franklin, Kurt Carr, and Richard Smallwood early on in their professional careers. HMF's annual conference attracts attendees from its many satellite chapters in northern California, Arizona, Texas, Mississippi, Ohio, Florida, New York, Rhode Island, Nebraska, Washington, Oregon, and Washington, D.C.<sup>141</sup>

Douroux has given her life to the nurturing and preservation of Gospel Music. She would take the Heritage Music Foundation further in 1997 as the Heritage Mass Choir recorded a live album entitled, *Already Done* on the JDI Records label at the Mount Moriah Baptist Church in Los Angeles, CA. The title track was composed by Douroux and the album featured songs written by rising gospel artist, Kirk Franklin, and veteran writers Varn Michael McKay, and Glen Burleigh. The project was nominated for a Stellar Award for Traditional Mass Choir in 1997 for *Already Done*. In an age where CD's were taking the place of cassette tapes, a new generation of music and musicians were coming of age. Douroux's music and cause for the Heritage Music Foundation would be on the forefront with the changing of the guards for gospel music. Douroux would end the last years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century at legendary status, and after 30 of composing music, she hadn't lost her touch and was still producing more songs.

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<sup>140</sup> "Heritage Music Foundation," accessed September 29, 2019. <https://www.hmfgospel.org>.

<sup>141</sup> Birgitta Johnson. "O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing: Music and Worship in African American Megachurches of Los Angeles." (PhD diss., University of California, 2008), 231.

In 2015, after serving as Minister of Music for Greater New Bethel Baptist Church, and working with her brother, Pastor Earl Pleasant, to build the church, Douroux decided to retire.

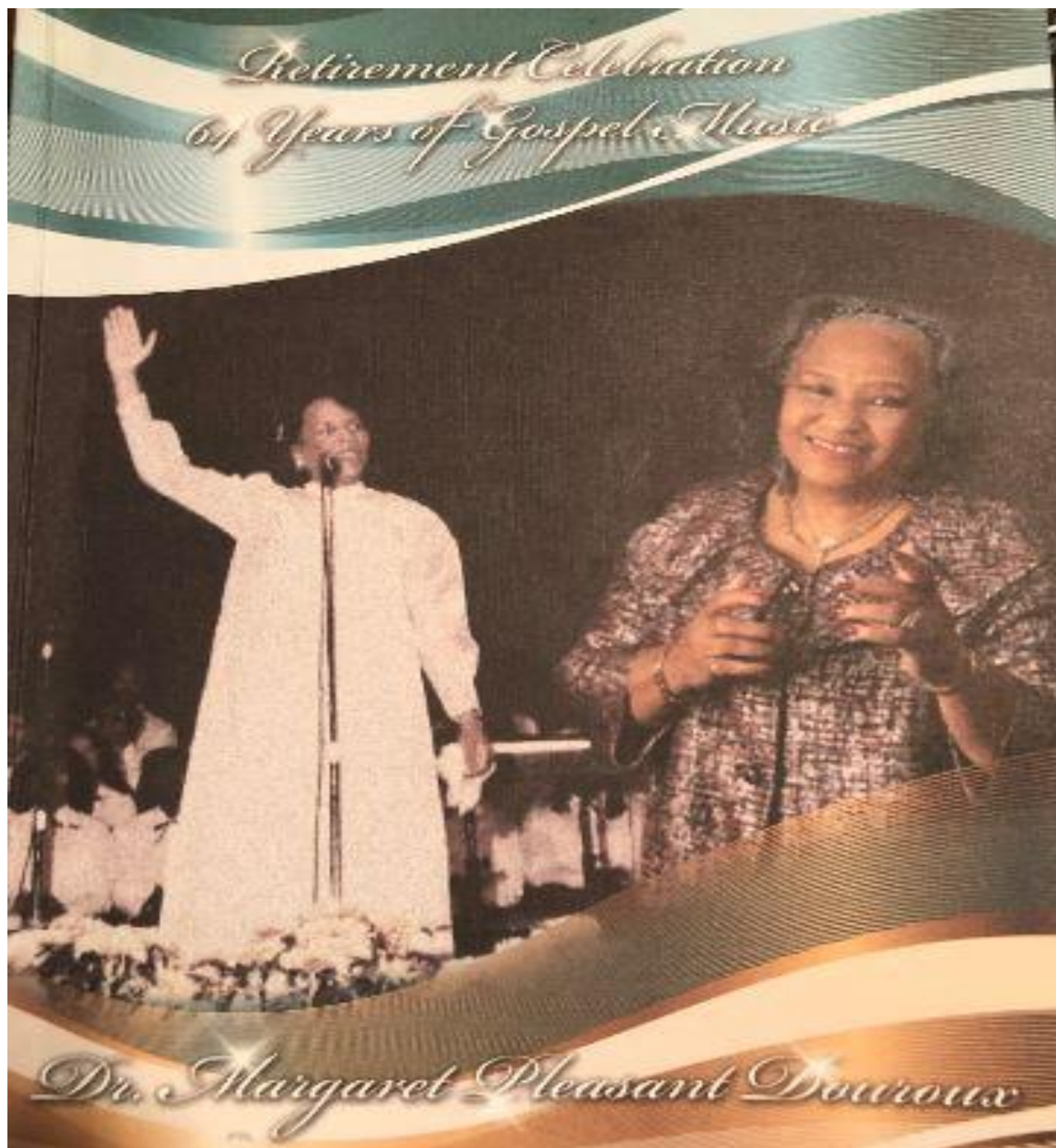
Hicks noted in a Los Angeles *Sentinel* article on March 12, 2015,

On Thursday, March 19, at 7 p.m., the living legend retires from 64 years of local church music ministry. This occasion will be commemorated with a Retirement Celebration at the Mount Moriah Baptist Church, 4269 South Figueroa in Los Angeles, as part of the Legacy of Gospel Music Festival. An enormous mass choir will be on hand as people stream in from all over Southern California and the nation to join in the celebration. The public is welcome. Dr. Douroux was minister of music and adult choir director for the Mount Moriah Church in Los Angeles and minister of music and choir director for the Greater New Bethel Baptist Church in Inglewood for more than 30 years.<sup>142</sup>

On Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup> of that year, there was a banquet held in honor of Dr. Margaret Pleasant Douroux in the ballroom of the Los Angeles Western Airport Hotel. Below is the cover from the more than two-hundred-page souvenir book. The souvenir book is filled with congratulatory messages and well wishes from personal friends, musical partners and churches from around the country.

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<sup>142</sup> Hilary Clay Hicks. Douroux retires after 64 years in local church music. Los Angeles Sentinel. March 12, 2015. Accessed January 23, 2019. <https://lasentinel.net/douroux-retires-after-64-years-in-local-church-music-ministry.html>.



**Figure 12.** Margaret Pleasant Douroux Souvenir Book Cover. Reprinted with permission of Earl Pleasant Publishing.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusions**

Margaret Pleasant Douroux undoubtedly is an exceptionally talented composer, but the environment in which she grew up and matured had a profound impact on her musical development. The Los Angeles area gospel scene was one of the most active areas for gospel music development from 1950-1960. Margaret was able to study at the feet of Thurston Frazier and Gwendolyn Lightner who worked with the music ministry of Mount Moriah Baptist Church. She was able to meet and know singers like Joe Mays, Sallie Martin, and the hymnist Doris Ackers. For Douroux, this background worked together to produce musical contributions that were significant in building her music ministry.

While the magnitude of Douroux' musical legacy is rich in the knowledge of her music in the African American Church and beyond, the acknowledgment within the academic domain is scarce. Over the last decade, there have been numerous books written on gospel music and its contributions to the African American culture and society. There have been no scholarly works devoted to the life and music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux. The results of this observational research presented in Chapter Four, suggests that a re-appraisal of the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux' music, as well as her contributions to African American Gospel music generally, are necessary. As referenced in Chapter 2, in the musical listing of Margaret Douroux, Douroux' ability to write biblically sound and soul-stirring music, with uplifting and thought-provoking lyrics is hard to explain. Her musical output is consistent in her over 200 compositions. The chronological catalogue and discography of Douroux's work gives a clear outlook on the body of music inspired from the Bible; it is music that is inspired from the birth and resurrection of Christ and other culturally writings.

### **Conclusions Concerning the Literature Review**

Further research should be considered for focusing on African American gospel music composers. Margaret Pleasant Douroux is among the list of a generations of composers and artist whose music has contributed to and heavily influenced the genre of Gospel Music. Still in the world of academia, their stories have yet to be told or celebrated. There have been books written about the gospel singers Mahalia Jackson and early composer Thomas A. Dorsey and rightfully so, but there are other composers who made significant contributions to gospel music and there is no single scholarly research dedicated to them. Rev. James Cleveland, Andraé Crouch, and Edwin Hawkins are just a few of the prominent composers and contributors to African American gospel music and these men deserve more focused and detailed examinations of their musical contributions, influence and performance practices along with Margaret Pleasant Douroux.

### **Conclusions Concerning Research Question 1**

Based on the information and sources for this thesis, Margaret Pleasant Douroux undoubtedly is an extraordinarily talented composer and the environment in which she grew up and was matured had a profound impact on her musical development. As stated in research question 1; the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux grew out of the gospel music tradition, that had been passed down from generation to generation. Ultimately those traditions were passed from her parents, grandparents and musical mentor Thurston Frazier. Douroux, herself, wrote, “the foundation on which I am now on as an adult was begun when I was a child. My mother taught us to play our first songs when we were still elementary students. I played for the Sunday School and BTU (Baptist Training Union) as a very young child.”<sup>143</sup> First learning from her

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<sup>143</sup> Margaret Douroux, letter to William Dale, January 22, 1980.

mother and then having the opportunity to explore these traditions in church lead Douroux to exposure to gospel music and encouragement to compose.

### **Conclusions Concerning Research Question 2**

Based on research question 2, the Los Angeles gospel music scene as a childhood influence and played a part in the musical development of Margaret Pleasant Douroux. The Los Angeles area gospel scene was one of the most active areas for gospel music development from 1950-1970. Douroux had the opportunity to study music with Thurston Frazier and Gwendolyn Lightner, who were pioneering Los Angeles musicians who worked with the music ministry of Mount Moriah Baptist Church. This, coupled with the opportunities she had to meet and know singers like Joe Mays, Sallie Martin, and the hymnist Doris Ackers, worked together to produce musical contributions that were significant in building her music ministry.

### **Conclusions Concerning Research Question 3**

Margaret Pleasant Douroux, to date, has composed an estimated two hundred compositions, many which are found in many hymnals, songbooks and recorded works dating almost fifty years. As many of the early composers before her, Douroux pioneered as a self-publisher in an age where self-publishing and promotions were not easy. Ethnomusicologist DjeDje wrote, “Most Los Angeles composers who decided to publish their own music went into business by themselves, rather than in partnership.”<sup>144</sup> She formed the Earl Pleasant Publishing Company and it gave complete control of her music for publishing or recording rights. As a result, Douroux has remained a success story amongst generations of writers whose music has

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<sup>144</sup> Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje. *American Music, Vol. 11, No. 4*. Los Angeles Composers of African American Gospel Music: The First Generations. (University of Illinois Press, 1993), 427.

struggled to be heard and remain viable in a generation that has moved from vinyl records and printed sheet music to downloading sheet music and MP3's. While cultivating and managing her own publishing company, Douroux has developed a music reign that has endured almost 50 years and appealed to the American gospel music industry. Her music can be called "timeless or ageless" because of its relevancy to church music and gospel music, regardless of the generation, denomination or ethnicity.

#### **Conclusions Concerning Research Question 4**

Douroux writing of hymns since "Give Me a Clean Heart" and beyond sets her aside from other writers during the 1970s and beyond. The introduction to "contemporary gospel music," just as Douroux began to write in 1970, didn't deter or persuade her to abandon what she had studied from her parents and mentor Thurston Frazier. The influences of Doris Akers, Thomas Dorsey, Sallie Martin and others had made an impact on her. Douroux has successfully written many compositions that are hymns and have found their way into countless hymnals, as highlighted in Chapter 2 in the listing of Douroux' songs (also see Appendix C).

#### **Conclusions Concerning Research Question 5**

The compositions of Margaret Pleasant Douroux has impacted the African American church for more than 50 years. Douroux' consistent output of music has evolved with the growth of the music industry and been reintroduced to generation after generation. For more than 50 years, the African American church in the United States of America has sang, recorded and preserved the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux. The music of Douroux is present in the pews of many of these churches via the hymnals: Total Praise, African American Heritage Hymnal, The National Baptist Hymnal and many other hymnal publications.



Just as a Thomas Dorsey or a James Cleveland before her, Douroux also founded the Heritage Music Foundation. Above her musical contributions, it will leave as lasting legacy to the preservation of African American Gospel Music in the United States. Because of the commitment of Heritage to “nurture and preserve” Gospel Music, educational opportunities through its many satellites around the country, this organization could sustain for several generations to come. The seminars and conferences held by the Heritage Music Foundation acknowledge those who have contributed to the genre of Gospel Music as a tool for educating those withing the genre. Also, the incorporation of activities inviting younger musician, as well as the more seasoned musicians, could aid the operation of the conference for years to come.

### **Recommendations**

The research and conclusion presented in this thesis challenges those who write about American gospel music. If figures like Dorsey, Cleveland, Gaither, and Crouch are American gospel music icons and some of the greatest contributors to the genre, surely Margaret Pleasant Douroux is the female equivalent. Her music has been recorded numerous times, published in countless hymnals, and sung by millions. After 50 years, her music has remained relevant and widely performed by many generations, ethnicities and religions. Margaret Pleasant Douroux, labeled by author and historian Dr. James Abbingtion, “The Reigning Queen of African American Gospel Hymnody”<sup>145</sup> has had a ministry that has not fit into one era or time frame of music. Certainly, this is one of her greatest legacies. Within music and the genre of gospel, when artists and writers have come and gone, Douroux has remained a consistent figure in the care and creation of gospel music. The gospel hymn has been nurtured through the writing of “Give Me a

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<sup>145</sup> James Abbingtion. *Let the Church Sing On! Reflections on Black Sacred Music*. (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2009), 59.

Clean Heart” and similar songs. The Easter/Resurrection season of the Black or protestant church at-large has been forever changed with songs like “He Decided to Die” and the approach to writing theologically sound music was challenged with songs like, “If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side.” Though these three songs are significant, they are not the whole of the music of Douroux and the sphere of her contributions is vast and far reaching.

Further research should be considered for focusing on Margaret Pleasant Douroux. There is nothing solely written to highlight her life, music or achievements. The stories behind her music could serve as a guide or reference to be explored for higher education and for the aspiring writer. The story of her life, ability to maintain relevancy and business strategies should be explored and studied by future generations for knowledge and understanding of the music industry and independent promotions and publishing.

Douroux’ legacy of the Heritage Music Foundation Inc., should be continued for future generations to study the art of gospel music. HMF’s goal to nurture and preserve gospel music should not stop with Douroux but continue for many years to come As Heritage grows and a new generation is influenced, the goals of the “Gospel House” being built and funding should be investigated and expanded upon. The influence of the Heritage Music Foundation doesn’t serve to promote the music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux but serves to promote, protect and preserve all gospel music.

It is further recommended that a compilation compact disc of Douroux’ music could be assembled. Several record companies have recorded the music of Douroux via her own recordings and that of others. Savoy Records, in particular, recorded all of the albums of The Donald Vails Choraleers, many of the recordings Gospel Music Workshop of America prior to 1992, the entire catalog of Rev. James Cleveland and Keith Pringle. Many of these albums and

more bear witness to the works of Margaret Pleasant Douroux. The recordings of Savoy Records alone could produce a compilation of Douroux's song and attest to musical contributions of over 30 years.

The contributions of Margaret Pleasant Douroux, to the genre of American Gospel Music should not remain overlooked. It is my hope that through this thesis, those who may not have had knowledge of her, but have been indirectly influenced by her work, will be encouraged to acquire it, and grow in appreciation of her life, musical contributions and legacy. The name Margaret Pleasant Douroux should be known, while she is alive, celebrated and appreciated.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A. Margaret Pleasant Douroux Song Catalogue

- |     |                                    |     |   |
|-----|------------------------------------|-----|---|
| 1.  | 1970 Give Me a Clean Heart         | 36. | 198? Easy This Morning Shook            |
| 2.  | 1970 I'm Glad                      | 37. | 1980 God is Still Passing Out Blessings |
| 3.  | 1971 We're Blest                   | 38. | 1980 God's Promise                      |
| 4.  | 1972 Teach Me How to Love          | 39. | 1980 Holy                               |
| 5.  | 1972 For the Lord                  | 40. | 1980 Home Over the Mountain             |
| 6.  | 1972 The Lord Is Speaking          | 41. | 1980 I'm Gonna Take My Burdens          |
| 7.  | 1972 What Have You Done for Jesus  | 42. | 1980 If It Had Not Been for the Lord    |
| 8.  | 1973 God Is Not Dead               | 43. | 1980 It Took Me So Long                 |
| 9.  | 1973 If I Had Wings Like A Dove    | 44. | 1980 Somebody, Somebody Touched Me      |
| 10. | 1973 Show Me the Way               | 45. | 1980 When I See Jesus                   |
| 11. | 1973 There Is God                  | 46. | 1981 A Child's Christmas                |
| 12. | 1974 My Help Cometh from The Lord  | 47. | 1981 Blessed Be the Lord                |
| 13. | 1974 Only God                      | 48. | 1981 Follow Jesus                       |
| 14. | 1974 Strengthen Me, Lord           | 49. | 1981 Glory Be to The Father             |
| 15. | 1975 An Instrument for Thee        | 50. | 1981 He Is the Savior of The World      |
| 16. | 1975 Deep Water                    | 51. | 1981 Hide Your Word                     |
| 17. | 1975 God Made A Man                | 52. | 1981 If I Had Ten Thousand Tongues      |
| 18. | 1975 Love Song                     | 53. | 1981 Jesus Gave Me a Light              |
| 19. | 1975 The Lord Lifted Me            | 54. | 1981 The Angels Sang                    |
| 20. | 1975 What Shall I Render           | 55. | 1982 Here I Am (Prayer)                 |
| 21. | 1975 Whatever It Takes             | 56. | 1982 Here I Am (Wonderment)             |
| 22. | 1976 A Place                       | 57. | 1982 I Need the Lord                    |
| 23. | 1976 Everything's All Right        | 58. | 1982 Last Days                          |
| 24. | 1976 He Decided to Die             | 59. | 1982 Touch Jesus                        |
| 25. | 1976 Just Knowing Him Is Enough    | 60. | 1982 Who Kept Us?                       |
| 26. | 1976 Rivers of Joy                 | 61. | 1982 Worthy                             |
| 27. | 1976 Take the Time                 | 62. | 1983 Go to God                          |
| 28. | 1977 Nobody Knows Me Like the Lord | 63. | 1983 Hold On                            |
| 29. | 1977 Through A Storm               | 64. | 1983 I Am All I Am                      |
| 30. | 1978 I Asked the Lord              | 65. | 1983 Let It Be                          |
| 31. | 1978 Until I Reach My Home         | 66. | 1983 Move Mountain                      |
| 32. | 1978 You Don't Know Me Yet         | 67. | 1983 Since He Died for Me               |
| 33. | 1979 Trees                         | 68. | 1984 Blessing In this House for You     |
| 34. | 1979 Why Do You Cry?               | 69. | 1984 Count it All Joy                   |
| 35. | 198? All These Blessings Are Mine  |     |   |

- |      |   |      |  |
|------|---|------|--|
| 70.  | 1984 I Just Can't Thank You Lord              | 110. | 1990 My Will Is Your Will                |
| 71.  | 1984 I'm A Witness                            | 111. | 1990 Perfect Peace                       |
| 72.  | 1984 If You Counted All Your Blessings        | 112. | 1990 Personal Praise                     |
| 73.  | 1984 In the Hands of Jesus                    | 113. | 1990 Praise Round                        |
| 74.  | 1984 Out of His Way                           | 114. | 1990 Simple Praise                       |
| 75.  | 1985 Blessed Is He                            | 115. | 1990 Tho He Slay Me                      |
| 76.  | 1985 I Have Never Seen the Righteous Forsaken | 116. | 1991 Trade All I Have                    |
| 77.  | 1986 Another Chance                           | 117. | 1991/1992 Worship the Creator            |
| 78.  | 1986 Don't Wait Too Late                      | 118. | 1992 I Want to Be Used                   |
| 79.  | 1986 He Prepareth a Table                     | 119. | 1992 I Will Never Leave Thee             |
| 80.  | 1986 I Thank You Lord                         | 120. | 1992 Live Again                          |
| 81.  | 1986 I'll Do It                               | 121. | 1992 Sow in Tears                        |
| 82.  | 1986 Is Your Lamp Ready?                      | 122. | 1993 God Will Take You There             |
| 83.  | 1986 Just What You Do                         | 123. | 1993 Is There Anything Too Hard for God? |
| 84.  | 1986 The God I Serve                          | 124. | 1993 Now Lord                            |
| 85.  | 1986 Wait I Say                               | 125. | 1993 One More Day                        |
| 86.  | 1987 Glorify You                              | 126. | 1993 The Joy of the Lord Is My Strength  |
| 87.  | 1987 How're You Gonna Make It?                | 127. | 1994 No Trouble at the River             |
| 88.  | 1987 Jesus Is His Name                        | 128. | 1994 Remember Me                         |
| 89.  | 1987 No Match                                 | 129. | 1995 A Better Place                      |
| 90.  | 1987 Rejoice                                  | 130. | 1995 Attitude of Gratitude               |
| 91.  | 1987 Resting Place                            | 131. | 1995 Bless Me Today                      |
| 92.  | 1987 Sing at Midnight                         | 132. | 1995 I Can't Deny It                     |
| 93.  | 1987 The Bethlehem Song                       | 133. | 1995 Is It Enough                        |
| 94.  | 1988 Bless Me Lord                            | 134. | 1996 Already Done                        |
| 95.  | 1988 How Can You Recognize A Child of God     | 135. | 1996 God Will Take You Through           |
| 96.  | 1988 How Dare You                             | 136. | 1996 He Brought Me                       |
| 97.  | 1988 Loves Me Just the Same                   | 137. | 1996 Just Say Yes                        |
| 98.  | 1988 Miracles                                 | 138. | 1996 Mercy That Suits                    |
| 99.  | 1988 Sooner Than Right Now                    | 139. | 1997 Good to Praise                      |
| 100. | 1988 The Glow of Glory                        | 140. | 1997 Hold On                             |
| 101. | 1989 Because I Love Him                       | 141. | 1997 I Can Not Forget My Own Child       |
| 102. | 1989 Chosen                                   | 142. | 1997 Like A Tree                         |
| 103. | 1989 High Praise                              | 143. | 1998 God Knows Just What He's Doing      |
| 104. | 1989 It's a Joy                               | 144. | 1998 I've Been Washed in the Blood       |
| 105. | 199? Stand Still                              | 145. | 1998 Present Faultless                   |
| 106. | 1990 Day and Night Praise                     | 146. | 1999 He Makes My Day                     |
| 107. | 1990 God Can Change That                      | 147. | 1999 I Worship You as God                |
| 108. | 1990 Hold Me Close                            |      |  |
| 109. | 1990 How to Pray                              |      |  |



148. 1999 Last Night While Counting My Blessings  
 149. 1999 You're Mine  
 150. 2000 Hallelujah  
 151. 2001 I Bow  
 152. 2001 I Will Heal Your Land  
 153. 2001 There are No Impossible  
 154. 2001 What Would I Do?  
 155. 2002 Trust Him  
 156. 2002 Whenever You Pray  
 157. 2005 Think About the Good Things  
 158. 2007 Bow at Your Command  
 159. 2009 The Lord Strong and Mighty  
 160. 2010 God Said I Got This  
 161. 2010 It Could Have Been Me  
 162. 2013 Grace and Mercy Covered Me

163. 2015 Trust God  
 164. 2019 In the Name  
 165. \*\*\*\* Do Something  
 166. \*\*\*\* God's Promises Weigh More  
 167. \*\*\*\* Look at What They Did to My Jesus  
 168. \*\*\*\* Only God Can Give You Peace  
 169. \*\*\*\* Show Me Heaven  
 170. \*\*\*\* Simple Hallelujah  
 171. \*\*\*\* Then Sing Glory  
 172. \*\*\*\* What We Yet May Be  
 173. \*\*\*\* I Got This Song

\*\*\*\* Year of publication unknown.

## Appendix B. Discography of Margaret Pleasant Douroux Music

Discography of Margaret Pleasant Douroux Music			
Year	Douroux Songs	Artist	Record Label
1970	Give Me a Clean Heart	James Cleveland and the Southern Community Choir	Savoy Records
1971	Give Me a Clean Heart	The Gospel Keynotes	Nashboro
1971	I'm Glad	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Savoy Records
1972	Give Me a Clean Heart	Milton Brunson and the Thompson Community Singers	HOB/Scepter Records
1972	Give Me a Clean Heart	Mount Moriah Baptist Church	K-CALB Productions
1972	God is Speaking	Mount Moriah Baptist Church	K-CALB Productions
1972	Teach Me How to Love	Mount Moriah Baptist Church	K-CALB Productions
1972	For the Lord	Mount Moriah Baptist Church	K-CALB Productions
1972	I'm Glad	Mount Moriah Baptist Church	K-CALB Productions
1972	The Lord Is Speaking	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Savoy Records
1973	I'm Glad	Nikki Giovanni	Collectables Records
1973	I'm Glad	The Voices of Christ	Savoy Records
1975	Give Me a Clean Heart	Straford Memorial SDA Gospel Choir	III AM Records
1976	Deep Water	The Houston Mass Choir	Creed Records
1976	What Shall I Render?	Rev. Clay Evans and The Fellowship Choir	Jewel Records
1976	He Decided to Die	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Savoy Records
1976	In Deep Water	The Donald Vails Choraleers	Savoy Records
1976	In Deep Water	The Voices of Christ	Savoy Records
1977	God Is Not Dead	Mighty Clouds of Joy	ABC Records
1977	He Decided to Die	Greater Metropolitan Church of Christ Choir	Savoy Records
1977	What Shall I Render?	The St. James Choir:	Sound of Gospel
1978	God Is Not Dead	Vernard Johnson	Glori Records
1978	Give Me a Clean Heart	Marietta Wolfe	Impact Records
1978	He Decided to Die	The Donald Vails Choraleers	Savoy Records
1978	God Is Not Dead	The Donald Vails Choraleers	Savoy Records
1978	Through A Storm	The Donald Vails Choraleers	Savoy Records

1979	Take the Time	Rev. Clay Evans and The Fellowship Choir	Jewel Records
1979	Trees	Rev. Clay Evans and The Fellowship Choir	Jewel Records
1979	We're Blest	Tammy Faye Bakker	PTL Club Records
1979	I Asked the Lord	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Savoy Records
1979	Trees	Keith Pringle and the Pentecostal Community Choir	Savoy Records
1979	What Shall I Render?	James Cleveland and the Triboro Mass Choir	Savoy Records
1980	If It Had Not Been	Tammy Faye Bakker	PTL Club Records
1980	Deep Water	Tammy Faye Bakker	PTL Club Records
1980	Home Over the Mountain	Tammy Faye Bakker	PTL Club Records
1980	Take the Time	Tammy Faye Bakker	PTL Club Records
1980	Rivers of Joy	Tammy Faye Bakker	PTL Club Records
1980	If You Move Yourself	The Donald Vails Choraleers	Savoy Records
1980	Take the Time	The Donald Vails Choraleers	Savoy Records
1980	Rivers of Joy	The Donald Vails Choraleers	Savoy Records
1980	Through A Storm	The Sweet Singing Cava-Leers	Savoy Records
1981	Hide Your Word	Margaret Douroux and Greater New Bethel Adult Choir	Greater New Bethel
1981	God's Promise	Margaret Douroux and Greater New Bethel Adult Choir	Greater New Bethel
1981	If I Had Ten Thousand Tongues	Margaret Douroux and Greater New Bethel Adult Choir	Greater New Bethel
1981	Jesus Gave Me a Light	Margaret Douroux and Greater New Bethel Adult Choir	Greater New Bethel
1981	Home Over the Mountain	Margaret Douroux and Greater New Bethel Adult Choir	Greater New Bethel
1981	It Took Me So Long	Margaret Douroux and Greater New Bethel Adult Choir	Greater New Bethel
1981	Give Me a Clean Heart	Shirley Caesar	Myrrh
1981	He Decided to Die	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Savoy Records
1981	Easy This Morning Jesus Shook Me	The WYCB Community	Savoy Records
1981	If It Had Not Been	The WYCB Community	Savoy Records
1981	Hide Your Word	The O'Neal Twins and The First Baptist Church	Savoy Records
1981	Hide Your Word	James Cleveland and the Los Angeles Chapter of GMWA	Savoy Records
1981	I'm Going to Take My Burdens	James Cleveland and the Voices of Watts	Savoy Records
1982	Somebody Touched Me	Rev. Clay Evans and The Fellowship Choir	Jewel Records
1982	If It Had Not Been	Rev. Clay Evans and The Fellowship Choir	Jewel Records
1982	If It Had Not Been	Phyllis Kennedy and New Children of Christ	Jewel Records

1982	Blessed Be the Lord	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Malaco Records
1982	All These Blessings Are Mine	Donald Vails & The Voices of Deliverance	Malaco Records
1982	God Is Not Dead	Mighty Clouds of Joy	Myrrh
1982	Home Over the Mountain	The Donald Vails Choraleers	Savoy Records
1982	Follow Jesus	The Donald Vails Choraleers	Savoy Records
1982	Show Me the Way	The Donald Vails Choraleers	Savoy Records
1982	It Took Me So Long	The Florida Mass Choir	Savoy Records
1983	If It Had Not Been	Calvin Bridges and The Faith Tabernacle Voices	Birthright Records
1983	The Angels Sang	Rev. Clay Evans and The Fellowship Choir	Jewel Records
1983	All These Blessings Are Mine	Rev. Clay Evans and The Fellowship Choir	Jewel Records
1983	Follow Jesus	Keith Pringle and the Pentecostal Community Choir	Savoy Records
1983	Rivers of Joy	The Cathedrals Quartet	
1984	Count It All Joy	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Savoy Records
1984	Move Mountain	Rev. Clay Evans and The Fellowship Choir	Savoy Records
1985	Never Seen the Righteous Forsaken	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	King James Records
1985	Give Me a Clean Heart	Willie Neal Johnson and the Gospel Keynotes	Malaco Records
1986	I Need the Lord	Margaret Douroux and Friends	Pleasant Production
1986	A Better Place	Margaret Douroux and Friends	Pleasant Production
1986	The Angels Sang	Margaret Douroux and Friends	Pleasant Production
1986	Is Your Lamp Ready?	Margaret Douroux and Friends	Pleasant Production
1986	Don't Wait Too Late	Margaret Douroux and Friends	Pleasant Production
1986	What We Yet May Be	Margaret Douroux and Friends	Pleasant Production
1986	Last Days	Margaret Douroux and Friends	Pleasant Production
1986	Show Me the Way	Margaret Douroux and Friends	Pleasant Production
1986	Everything Is All Right	Margaret Douroux and Friends	Pleasant Production
1986	Don't Wait Too Late	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	King James Records
1987	Glory Be to The Father	Ludovic DeBarboza and the Wailers	Ludo Records
1988	The Glow of Glory	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Savoy Records
1989	What Shall I Render?	Vanessa Bell Armstrong	Jive Records
1989	High Praise	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Savoy Records
1989	He Prepareth a Table	Northern and Southern California of GMWA	Savoy Records
1989	How Dare You	Louisiana Mass Choir of the GMWA	Testament Records

1989	Teach Me to Sing at Midnight	Mighty Clouds of Joy	Word Records
1989	There's A Blessing in This House	The Moye Ensemble featuring Donald Vails	Unknown
1990	Chosen	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Savoy Records
1991	Give Me a Clean Heart	Adoration N Prayze	Truth Ministries
1993	One More Day	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Benson Music Group
1993	Trade All I Have	Betty Griffin Keller	Gospel Centric Records
1993	He Decided to Die	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Savoy Records
1994	Trouble at The River	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Benson Music Group
1994	Deep Water	Donald Vails and the DC Choral Kaledidose	Savoy Records
1995	I Can't Deny It	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Benson Music Group
1995	We're Blessed	Mighty Clouds of Joy	Epic/Sony Music
1996	Douroux Medley	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Arrival Records
1996	Like A Tree	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	CGI Records
1996	Mercy That Suits	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Intersound
1996	I Need A Blessing	Los Angeles Chapter of GMWA	Savoy Records
1997	Already Done	Dr. Margaret P. Douroux & The Heritage Mass Choir	JDI Records
1998	God Is Not Dead	Karen Briggs	Dimi Music Group
1998	Rivers of Joy	Bill and Gloria Gaither and Their Homecoming Friends	Gaither Music Group
1999	You're Mine	Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir	Unknown
2002	Give Me a Clean Heart	Kim Sledge	Malaju
2002	If It Had Not Been	Bill and Gloria Gaither and Their Homecoming Friends	Spring House Music
2003	High Praise	Chicago Mass Choir	New Haven Records
2003	Give Me a Clean Heart	5 Young Men	Starr Vision 2
2004	The Joy of the Lord	Heritage Mass Choir	HMF Records
2004	Last Night	Heritage Mass Choir	HMF Records
2004	What Would I Do?	Heritage Mass Choir	HMF Records
2004	God's Promise	Heritage Mass Choir	HMF Records
2004	The Glow of Glory	Heritage Mass Choir	HMF Records
2004	I Will Heal Your Land	Heritage Mass Choir	HMF Records

2004	Sooner Than Right Now	Heritage Mass Choir	HMF Records
2006	God Is Not Dead	Kelly Price	GospoCentric/Somba Gospel
2006	If It Had Not Been	Ann Nesby	Shanachie
2007	God Is Not Dead	Mighty Clouds of Joy	Compendia Music Group
2007	I'm Glad	Bill and Gloria Gaither and Their Homecoming Friends	Spring House Music
2007	Give Me a Clean Heart	LaShaun Chaney	Unsigned Artist
2008	He Decided to Die	Latanya Moore	New Day Distribution Label.
2008	The Lord Be Praised	Oakwood University USM	Oakwood University
2009	I'm Glad	Nikki Giovanni	Collectables Records
2012	Blessing in The House	Kirisma Evans	CD Baby
2016	Douroux Medley	Gospel Pioneer Reunion	Gaither Music Group
2017	Give Me a Clean Heart	Treva Jones	Chezmusicque
2019	Through A Storm	Harlem Gospel Travelers	Colemine Records
UN	He Decided to Die	Progressive Baptist Church Choir and Chorus	Savior Records
UN	God Is Not Dead	Progressive Baptist Church Choir and Chorus	Savior Records
UN	Until I Reach My Home	Southwood Baptist Church Choir	Unknown

## Appendix C. Hymnals That Include the Work of Margaret Pleasant Douroux

The Music of Margaret Pleasant Douroux Published in Hymnals issued between 1977 and 2018				
Song	Hymnal	Publisher	Hymn No.	Year
<b>A Place</b>	Free Spirit	National Baptist Publishing	56	1979
<b>Follow Jesus</b>	Lead Me, Guide Me	GIA Publications Inc	630	2012
	Total Praise	GIA Publications Inc	540	2011
<b>Give Me a Clean Heart</b>	Songs of Zion	Abingdon Press	182	1981
	African American Heritage Hymnal	GIA Publications Inc	461	2001
	Lead Me, Guide Me	GIA Publications Inc	625	2012
	This Far By Faith	Augsburg Fortress	216	1999
	Zion Still Sings	Abingdon Press	116	2007
	For the Living of These Days	Smyth & Helwys Publishers	28	1995
	The New Century Hymnal	Pilgrim Press	188	1995
	Sing the Faith	John Knox Press	2133	2003
	The Faith We Sing	Abingdon Press	2133	2001
	New National Baptist Hymnal	Triad Publications	545	2001
	New National Baptist Hymnal	National Baptist Publishing	349	1977/1994
	Chalice Hymnal	Chalice Press	515	1995
	Lift Every Voice and Sing II	Church Publishing	124	1993
	Lift Up Your Hearts	Faith Alive Christian Resources	621	2013
	Psalm for All Seasons	Baker Publishing Group	51C	2012
	Sing! A New Creation	CRC Publications	64	2002
	One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism	GIA Publications Inc	162	2018
	Total Praise	GIA Publications Inc	467	2011
<b>High Praise</b>	African American Heritage Hymnal	GIA Publications Inc	181	2001
	Lead Me, Guide Me	GIA Publications Inc	454	2012
	Zion Still Sings	Abingdon Press	37	2007
	New National Baptist Hymnal	Triad Publications	25	2001
	Total Praise	GIA Publications Inc	180	2011
<b>How Can You Recognize</b>	African American Heritage Hymnal	GIA Publications Inc	266	2001
<b>I Am All I Am</b>	Total Praise	GIA Publications Inc	370	2011
	New Wine in Old Wineskins	GIA Publications Inc	26	2010
<b>If It Had Not Been</b>	The Covenant Hymnal	Covenant Publications	848	1996
	The Faith We Sing	Abingdon Press	2053	2001
	Song The Faith	John Knox Press	2053	2003

	For the Living of These Days	Smyth & Helwys Publishers	13	1995
<b>Move Mountain</b>	New Wine in Old Wineskins	GIA Publications Inc	40	2010
<b>One More Day</b>	African American Heritage Hymnal	GIA Publications Inc	538	2001
	Lead Me, Guide Me	GIA Publications Inc	485	2012
	New National Baptist Hymnal	Triad Publications	548	2001
	One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism	GIA Publications Inc	76	2018
	Total Praise	GIA Publications Inc	523	2011
<b>Stand Still</b>	New Wine in Old Wineskins	GIA Publications Inc	54	2010
	New National Baptist Hymnal	Triad Publications	519	2001
<b>The Angels Sang</b>	New National Baptist Hymnal	Triad Publications	99	2001
<b>The Lord Be Praised</b>	African American Heritage Hymnal	GIA Publications Inc	115	2001
<b>The Lord Is Speaking</b>	New National Baptist Hymnal	Triad Publications	169	2001
	New National Baptist Hymnal	National Baptist Publishing	149	1977/1994
<b>Trees</b>	Songs of Zion	Abingdon Press	191	1981
	Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ	Church of God in Christ	318	1982
<b>What Shall I Render?</b>	Songs of Zion	Abingdon Press	190	1981
	African American Heritage Hymnal	GIA Publications Inc	389	2001
	Lead Me, Guide Me	GIA Publications Inc	659	2012
	This Far By Faith	Augsburg Fortress	239	1999
	Zion Still Sings	Abingdon Press	211	2007
	Free Spirit	National Baptist Publishing	25	1979
	One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism	GIA Publications Inc	180	2018
	Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ	Church of God In Christ	346	1982
	Total Praise	GIA Publications Inc	403	2011