

Walter Jr. Stands By The Word On New Album

~ Herman Fuselier, 12/25/09

Listeners to Walter Jr.'s new CD may not know whether to genuflect or call for another round of Budweisers. One tune shuffles with the bell-rubbing rhythm of zydeco king Clifton Chenier's French rocker *Calinda*.

But just as the Saturday night groove is reaching its peak, complete with wailing sax and organ, Walter Jr. and Bonnie Bramlett chime in with Sunday morning lyrics.

"Christ is calling/the Lord is calling you home. The Lord is calling/Christ is calling you home. No matter where you been/no matter where you gone."

King Clifton's *Calinda* becomes *Christ is Calling* on Walter Jr.'s latest disc, *Standing On The Word*. Music on the 15-sond CD sounds just like the blues, swamp pop, oldies and zydeco heard at any South Louisiana barroom or festival.

But the song titles and lyrics, such as *The Weight of the Cross*, *It's About Love*, *Our King Is Coming*, and *The Kingdom Is Within*, could come from any South Louisiana Mass or sunrise worship service. The CD is even packaged like a small Bible with a booklet of lyrics and Philip Gould's photography of stained glass artwork, musicians and other religious symbols.

Walter says the secular and sacred gumbo is reflective of his walk as seminarian and blues guitarist.

"The blues is a place that we naturally come to in the human condition," said the musician, who was born Walter Pousson, Jr., a 1970 graduate of Immaculata Seminary. "What we get is choice. How do we deal with it? Are we going to be victimized by it? Are we going to project it on other people or are we going to work through it? If we accept grace, then we can work through that. That's what the blues does. It doesn't try to go around it or over it or under it. It goes straight through it. I think that's what we're all called to do."

Walter believes the Bible and the Blues is what he was called to do. A philosophy graduate of USL, Walter is studying for a Master of Pastoral Studies degree from Loyola Institute for Ministry.

But Walter is also a guitarist majoring on the blues. *Standing On The Word* is the sixth CD of his career, which stretches from *The River Club*, a disc saluting juke joints of yesteryear, to *Learning To Love: Instrumental Improvisation for Relaxation, Meditation and Contemplative Prayer*.

"I just sit down and write," said Walter about his musical experiences. "I don't premeditate anything. With *Standing On The Word*, that music just started coming out and the sacred lyrics started coming through. Then the next thing you know, it all kind of happened at once and I was surprised. It was still funky and South Louisiana, yet the lyrics were scripturally based."

The new year continues Walter's funk with everything from the Washington D.C. Mardi Gras ball to a tour of clubs and churches around the region. He can still be found Friday nights at iMonelli's Restaurant on Johnston St. in Lafayette.

Standing On The Word is just starting to receive airplay, but Walter says the Spirit is already moving. "People are letting us know that their spirits are being lifted. They really find it a timely thing. With these times that we are going through, it's something that they embrace."