

PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

06 .07 . 2025

For the Kingdom

Jimmy Swaggart was the first of two children born to Minnie Bell and Willie Leon Swaggart, a local sharecropper and preacher. Swaggart was also related to Jerry Lee Lewis, a pioneer of rockabilly.

In 1952, at the age of 17, Swaggart married 15-year-old Frances Anderson and later had a son named Donnie.

In Swaggart's autobiography, *To Cross a River*, he lived in poverty on an income of \$30, residing in church basements, pastors' homes, and small motels.

Jerry Lee Lewis had previously signed with Sun Records and was reportedly earning \$20,000 per week at the time. When Sun Records offered him a fantastic opportunity, Swaggart declined, stating that he was called to preach the gospel.

Swaggart took to the road, preaching from the back of trailers, and began preaching full-time as an evangelist in 1955. From this, he began revival meetings. In 1960, he began recording gospel songs, which were transmitted across various Christian radio stations. This ultimately led to his ordination by the Assemblies of God in 1961. Twelve months later, he founded his radio ministry and later his church called the Family Worship Centre, based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, which later became district-affiliated with the Assemblies of God.

In 1971, Swaggart expanded and transmitted weekly 30-minute telecast preaching, teaching and singing. His ministry continued to grow, and by 1975, his popularity had increased significantly. He grew even more, and by 1975, his growth had made him even more popular. By the 1980s, he had become a household name.

Swaggart was also a supporter of the South African-backed Mozambican National Resistance, aka RENAMO, which was accused of war crimes during the then-Mozambique 15-year civil war.

Known for his musical prowess, in 1981, Swaggart received a Grammy Award nomination for Best Gospel Performance, Traditional for his album Worship which marked a successful point in his ministry as both a preacher and a musician.

However, in 1986, Swaggart was accused of engaging a prostitute and again in 1988. On February 21, 1988, Swaggart delivered a speech on live TV entitled "I have sinned", which resulted in him being defrocked from the Assemblies of God.

During his life and ministry, Swaggart wrote numerous books and authored an Expositor's Study Bible, which includes over 30 biblical commentaries.

Swaggart, had one son, had three grandchildren and several great-grandchildren with four generations of preachers.

On June 15, 2025, it was reported that Swaggart had suffered a cardiac arrest, and on June 30, 2025, he was inducted as part of the Southern Gospel Hall of Fame Class of 2025 and passed the following day on 1st July 2025.

Jimmy Swaggart did great things for the Kingdom of God, and he also had failings, but he remained steadfast in his faith and to God. As David wrote, "I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread." Psalm 37:25.
