

# PAUL SMITH SOLI DEO

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## *paul's bio*

**T**wenty-eight years is a long time to pursue the same thing, but for Paul Smith, the story continues. The native Texan was lead singer of The Imperials in the early 80's, a successful solo artist in the 90's, and is currently the Worship Pastor at First Baptist Church, Colleyville, Texas. Paul begins the year 2006 with his first solo recording in nine years, Soli Deo, which will no doubt launch an extended phase of ministry that has spanned three decades.

Paul's professional roots began during his days as a student at Baylor University in Waco. He entered college to become a sports broadcaster, but soon discovered a depth of music skills that caused him to pursue a career in professional music. During his Baylor days he appeared in a number of national musical theatre productions, and was a Regional winner of the Metropolitan Opera auditions in 1973. However, Baylor brought something into his life far beyond the pursuit of a career in music. "Baylor is where I met Christ," says Smith, "as God sent people into my life who loved me and cared for me at a time when I was difficult to love. It was firsthand evidence of someone sharing the gospel with someone, and that someone was me."

With a new focus and dynamic purpose for his music, Paul and his wife, Denise, answered God's call to ministry shortly after graduation in 1977, and he turned his talents toward singing contemporary Christian music. After three years of solo concert ministry, Paul was asked to join The Imperials, the number one contemporary Christian music group in the late 70's and early 80's. He recorded four albums with The Imperials, including the highly acclaimed Let the Wind Blow in 1984.

Paul left the group in 1985 to once again pursue a solo career, and recorded five solo albums, including Live & Learn, Back to Who I Am, and Extra Measure. An always popular and favorite radio voice, he wrote and recorded seven #1 Contemporary Christian Music songs, including "Bigger Than Life," "Never Be Another," and "Unimportant Things." He also wrote songs for other artists, including Larnelle Harris and Bruce Carroll. In 1984 he won Gospel Music's Dove Award for Songwriter of the Year for "How Excellent Is Thy Name," and in 1987 received another Dove for Country Gospel Song of the Year, "Above and Beyond," co-written with Bruce Carroll.

From 1994 to 2002, Paul served as a staff songwriter for Integrity Music, where his songwriting expanded to include praise and worship music and children's worship songs. It was during this time that his ministry changed direction from that of full-time concert artist to worship pastor. "Certainly the platform is different, but the needs and the message are the same...whether it is a concert venue or a Sunday morning service, God is trying to speak to someone. And if the end result is that a person finds life in Christ, then I'm where I need to be. The journey of becoming a worship pastor in a local church, seeing people grow daily in their walk with the Lord, and providing the worship music that helps them with that walk has given me some of the greatest blessings I have received in ministry."

Paul and his wife, Denise, base their ministry out of Grapevine, Texas. They have one daughter, Reji, who will be entering college soon. "Many changes and adventures lie ahead for us as a family, and this new project is very much a part of that adventure. I look forward to seeing what God is going to do."