

## HEAVEN'S DRUMBEAT

(Reflections on the life of Rich Mullins - 10/21/55 - 9/19/97)

Thoreau observed that if a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps he is marching to the beat of a different drum. How beautifully this characterizes the life of the late Richard Wayne Mullins. As he marched to heaven's drumbeat he was obviously out of step with the world.

- Rich Mullins was a world renown musician, singer, and composer,
- He never sold anything, but gave away vehicles, books, and everything. At the time of his death the entirety of his possessions could be contained in an 8' x 10' storage building.
- He lamented the fact that many people buy things they do not need to impress people they do not like.
- Reed Arvin, who produced most of Rich's albums, said: "He separated himself from the careerists who thought it would be neat to make a little money out of Jesus".
- When Michael Fink of Reunion Records tried to track him down and tell him that one of his songs was # 1 on the charts, Mullins was on the street corner singing to a group of kids in Spain.
- In 1986 he was the opening act in Amy Grant's *Unguarded* Tour, but was so shabbily dressed that her staff wouldn't let him in the room for performers.
- He never sought fame, and on two different occasions told off executives of major recording studios and walked out of their offices.
- Dick Lewis remembers that when he was invited to Nashville to sign a big contract, he made them wait because he first wanted sing for young people at a camp in Michigan.
- At the pinnacle of his career he left Nashville to teach music on a Navajo reservation. To do this he enrolled in the Friend's University in Wichita to study music theory.
- He graduated from there with a B.A. in Music Education on May 14, 1995 and moved to Tse Bonito, N.M. and lived in a hogan on an Indian reservation until the time of his death.
- Mitch McVicker remembers driving with him through Albuquerque with all of its fancy movie theaters and Rich said: "Mitch, the things of the world just don't satisfy me".
- Rich determined to live on \$24,000 a year and give the rest away. At the time of his death he was living on less, and had the equivalent of four months salary that was not spent.
- Jim Dunning Jr. remembers that he never wanted to know just how much money he had, for fear that it would only make it harder to give it away.
- Eric Haut recalls: "Rich, by his own example, challenged me to live a life of simplicity and look beyond my own needs, to look not at what I can get but what I can give".
- In his song "One Thing" Rich lamented that most people only want "one thing . . . more." Knowing that the pure in heart would see God, he verbalized and put to music his prayer that his "One Thing" would always be God.
- At the funeral of Maurice Howard he sang a great hymn by J. R. Baxter with tears streaming down his cheeks. The name of that song was "This world is not my home".
- He always said that his song "Elijah" was a song about his own death. He wrote: "*I want to go out like Elijah with a whirlwind to fuel my chariot of fire*".
- On Sept. 19, 1997 Rich left Chicago to play at a youth rally in Wichita, Kansas. He died in a car wreck on I-39 north of Bloomington, Illinois.

These facts have been adapted from the book *Rich Mullins*, by James Bryan Smith.