

We've Come This Far by Faith Annual Giving Campaign 2021

Story Behind “We’ve Come This Far by Faith” Hymn

*We've come this far by faith,
Leaning on the Lord,
Trusting in his holy Word
He has never failed me yet.*

This stirring and powerful hymn was written by Albert A. Goodson, an African American who grew up in Los Angeles in the 1930s and 1940s. Reared in the Pentecostal tradition, Albert stated, “I started my interest in music as a child. However, my parents were too poor to buy a piano, so I would take a wooden board and pretend to play on it as if it were a keyboard.” Goodson received his only formal music education from musicians at Los Angeles’ St. Paul Baptist Church whose 200 voice choir was a profound inspiration for the young boy who lived just down the street.

The talented young pianist was mentored by the choir director, Gerald Hines, who introduced Albert to some of the greatest African American musicians living at that time, including Mahalia Jackson and Nat King Cole. However, it was during a time of deep despair that Goodson sat down at the piano of a friend and began to play the melody running through his mind. As he wrote the melody and lyrics, Goodson felt that God was speaking directly to him. First published in 1956, “We’ve Come This Far by Faith” became an immensely popular hymn much to the surprise of its author. The text affirmed God’s saving power in the past, as well as giving hope for the future. The message, that with confidence in the Lord’s help we can go forward and face whatever lies ahead, continues to resonate to this day.

Goodson was one of the most talented gospel artists of his generation and helped to establish Los Angeles as a center of gospel music in the African American tradition.