



This Dallas native's captivating story and personality bring joy to thousands of people in America and abroad.

Onstage, her voice ranges from the warm, conversational tone of a kindly grandmother to the rise-and-fall cadence of a passionate evangelist. Both are apt descriptions of Thelma Wells, a sought-after Christian speaker. Whether she's onstage or chatting with friends, she

often breaks into song or laughter—spontaneous responses of joy.

Author of several books, including *Girl, Have I Got Good News for You*, she is a wife, mother of three, and grandmother of five. Thelma also serves as founder and president of her own speaking business, A Woman of God Ministries. "It's really a mothering ministry," she says. "I give encouragement, a listening ear, scripture, or prayer."

Thelma's lessons about forgiveness and love draw thousands of people to hear her at jam-packed arenas across the country and abroad. "We talk about the issues that are most prevalent among women now—their families, health, time-management, stress, and money," says the Dallas native, who is one of the major speakers for Women of Faith conferences. Headquartered in Texas, the nondenominational conferences have attracted more than 1.5 million



top: Thelma's expressive face ranges from fierce to giddy, depending on the point she's making. When she's happy—which is most of the time—she glows. **above:** Her talks, often filled with wit, bring smiles and laughter to audience members.

people since they began in 1996. Thelma's engaging personality captivates crowds as she shares the podium with other Christian speakers.

"We address issues, not from a preachy perspective but from a gut-



A larger-than-life image of Thelma appears on-screen at Reunion Arena in Dallas.

level experience perspective," says Thelma. "We don't have a platform to do anything but ignite sparks of joy, hope, love, and peace."

A Rocky Beginning

In 1941, Thelma was born in Dallas to an unwed teenage girl who had suffered paralysis on her right side since her own birth. Unable to care for the new baby, the young mother let Thelma live primarily with her great-grandparents, "Daddy" William Harrell and "Grannie" Sarah Harrell. Grannie took the little girl with her to St. John Missionary Baptist Church in Dallas regularly.

For hours, Thelma sang in her sweet, clear voice "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," "Jesus Loves Me," "O How I Love Jesus," and "Jesus Loves the Little Children." Today, that voice propels her to far-flung places.

Although Thelma proclaims herself a Christian speaker, she says, "I cross all ethnic and religious groups.



Thelma relishes time spent with her five grandchildren.

I've spoken with Muslims and Jews." Audiences raptly listen as she shares how a girl from the projects reached the point of inspiring people all over the world.

Sabbath Remains a Day of Rest—and Family

On Sundays, Thelma worships at the same church she attended as a child.

bee buzz

Be aware of who you are.
Eliminate the negatives, and accentuate the positives.
Expect the best from yourself and others.
Success

Thelma Wells's business card

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After the service, a ritual unfolds. "Every Sunday, my family meets at our house for dinner," she says, referring to the home she shares with husband George. Although retired, George serves as the business manager for A Woman of God Ministries.

On this Sunday, the family arrives in waves. All five grandchildren get hugs from Grandma. Oldest daughter Vikki owns a company called Bee-TV

"It's really a mothering ministry."

Thelma Wells

Productions and helps design Thelma's book and album jackets. Youngest daughter Lesa owns a hair salon in DeSoto. She and Vikki travel with Thelma on occasion, performing a worship dance number during their mother's speech. Son George Fitzgerald travels frequently, but his wife and children join the crowd each Sunday. A sunroom at Thelma's home holds bumblebee gifts from her admirers.

"I've been wearing a bumblebee pin for over 20 years," says Thelma. "It's my logo." She explains the aerodynamically challenged insect's importance to her in her book *Bumblebees Fly Anyway*. "Like the bumblebee, I didn't come into the world equipped to fly," Thelma writes. "Nothing about my birth suggested anything but a future of disappointment. In the eyes of a racially segregated culture, I was doomed by my race, gender, and the circumstances of my birth. What could I expect to gain from life? What could I hope to achieve?"

Yet she daily defies the odds against her, traveling the world and inspiring people of all faiths, races, and creeds. "In Christ, you can be the best of what you want to 'bee,'" Thelma says.

NANCY DORMAN-HICKSON

For more information about Thelma's books, albums, and videos, call 1-800-843-5622, or visit www.thelmawells.com.



Lesa helps her mom with the after-church meal. The Wells clan gathers each Sabbath at the home of Thelma and George. "Every Sunday, there's a party," Thelma says.



The Windmill in Sunlight, 1908, oil on canvas, Gemeentemuseum of The Hague.
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Mondrian

1892-1914

The Path to Abstraction

AUGUST 18-DECEMBER 8, 2002

WITH OVER 100 PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS OF QUIETLY breathtaking beauty, this landmark exhibition, which will be seen only in Paris and Fort Worth, is the first devoted to Piet Mondrian's early career, from his student years in Holland, working as a painter of romantic landscapes, to his emergence as an artist of international renown in cosmopolitan pre-World War I Paris.

This exhibition was organized by the Réunion des Musées Nationaux, the Musée d'Orsay, and the Kimbell Art Museum, in collaboration with the Gemeentemuseum of The Hague.

Promotional support of this exhibition at the Kimbell Art Museum is provided by:

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3333 Camp Bowie Boulevard Fort Worth, TX 76107-2792
(817) 332-8451 Metro (817) 654-1034 www.kimbellart.org