

CCM

NATALIE GRANT

STRONGER THROUGH
THE STORM

+

(RE)INTRODUCING
ROYAL TAILOR

44 DOVES,
1 GREAT NIGHT

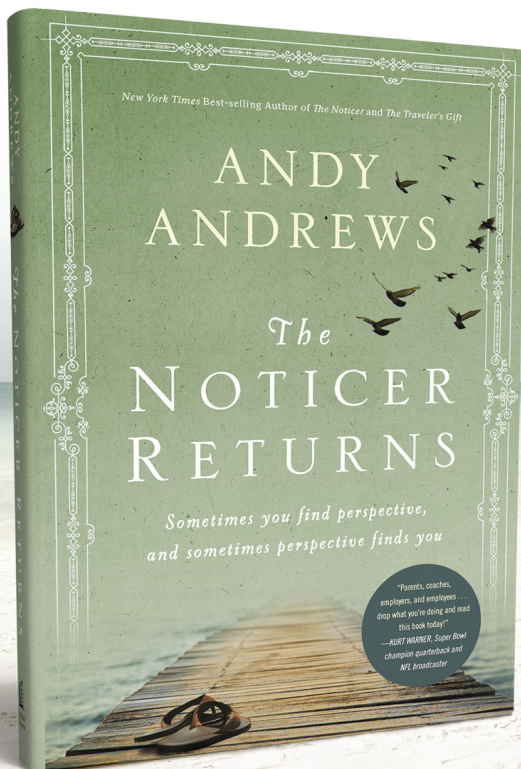
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ANDY ANDREWS

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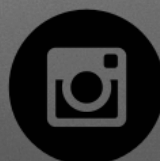
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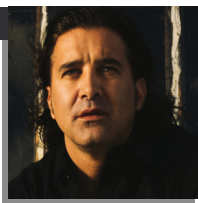
ON THE COVER:

Natalie Grant In the Eye of the Storm

Photo: Dominick Guillemot

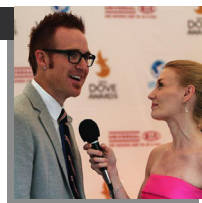
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A Common Creed



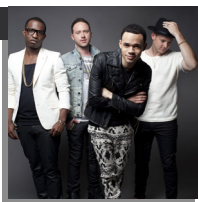
Dove Awards 2013

A Night to Remember



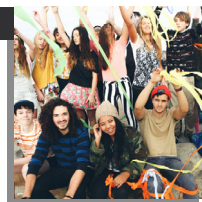
Royal Tailor

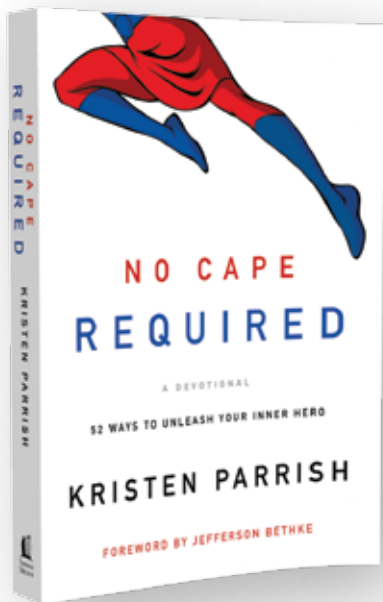
A (re)Introduction



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UNLEASH YOUR INNER HERO

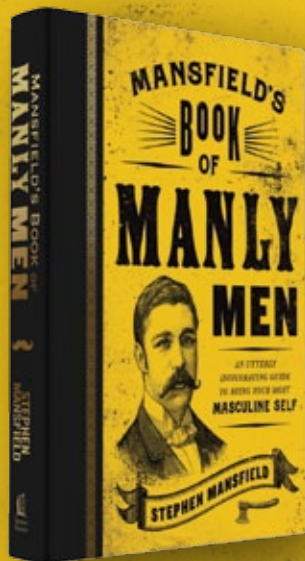
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Dara Maclean

YOUR HOME — Love and the
Outcome

YOUR HEART — Excerpt from
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Charlotte Gambill

YOUR WORLD —

Adoption Awareness Month
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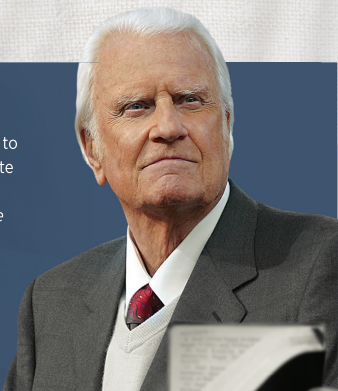


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Two years ago, my entire family was at my home to enjoy Thanksgiving dinner. As I was about to serve the turkey, my water broke. However, I wasn't entirely sure that had happened...so I went about the holiday. The following Monday (five full days later!) I learned that I'd essentially been in labor since Thanksgiving and ended up having my second child that night.

I'll clarify—I ended up having my *healthy* second child that night. Despite what could have been an extremely dangerous scenario for both the baby and me, God had His hand on us, keeping infection and other potential dangers at bay.

As I look back on my life, I see a similar pattern throughout the years. Whenever I've put myself in danger out of ignorance or stubbornness, God has caught me. And He always will. That doesn't mean life is sunshine and rainbows. He didn't promise us that. But He did promise us His presence...and that He has overcome this world and all the evil in it. That's where I find my gratitude. Not in the circumstances, but in the redemptive love of the One who pulls me through.

This year, I pray that Thanksgiving can be a genuine experience of gratitude for you and your family. Even if circumstances are hard or even terrible...life is hard. And it will always be hard one way or the other. But it's not a road we're walking alone. If nothing else, let that be your gratitude this holiday and beyond.



Caroline Lusk

Caroline Lusk
Editor, CCM Digital



Andy Argyrakis is a Chicago-based entertainment writer/photographer who appears in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Illinois Entertainer*, *Hear/Say Magazine*, *Concert Livewire* and more.



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Matt Conner is a music writer for the *Indianapolis Star*, *Relevant* and *Metromix* and the founding editor of *StereoSubversion.com*.



Andrew Greer is a graduate of Belmont University. A former employee of Rockettown Records, he now enjoys life as a writer and musician in Nashville, Tennessee.



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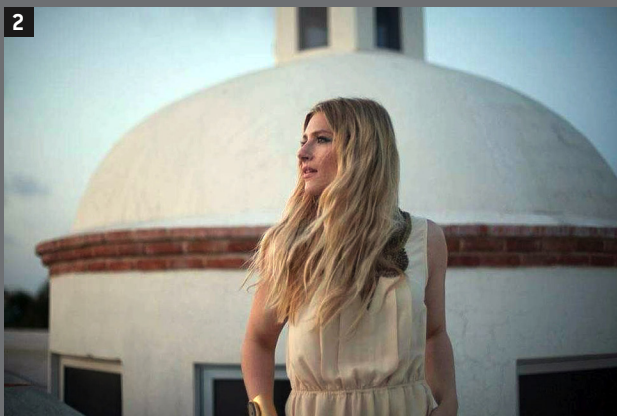
LEARN MORE

1



1 Bethel Music worship leaders are pictured on the coast of Northern California on the photo shoot set for their first studio album *Tides*.

2



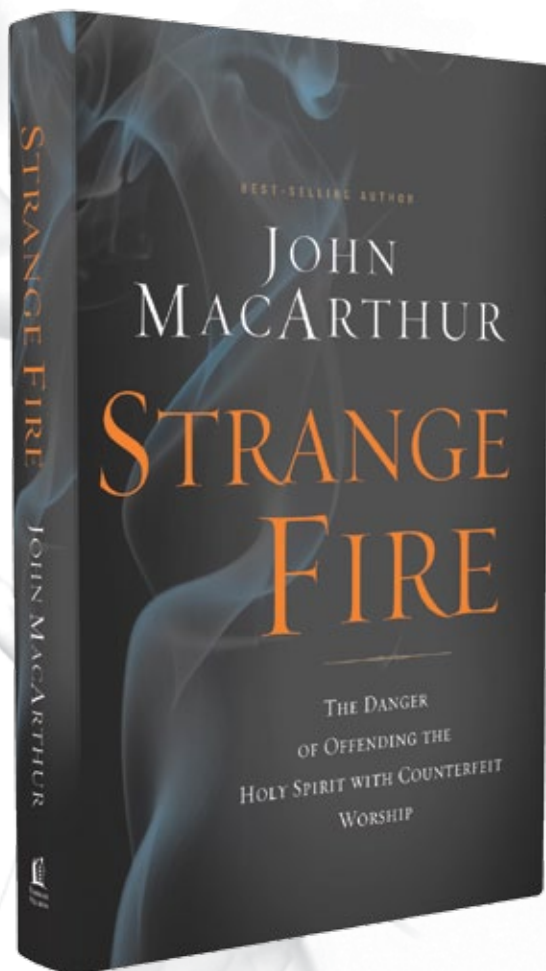
2 Soulful singer Dara Maclean soaks up the atmosphere while snapping shots for her brand new record *Wanted* (Fervent Records) in Isle Mujeres, Mexico.

3 After signing their management deal, pop-rockers Hardie Avenue visit with Michael Smith (left) from the Nashville-based Michael Smith & Associates (who has represented such artists as Jaci Velasquez, Salvador, Yancy and Restless Heart).

3



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4 Singer/songwriter Holly Starr visits Peru with *Never The Same Missions*. In addition to performing, she helped share the Gospel, distribute Bibles, pray with people who committed their lives to Christ and visit with local children.

5 When Jason Castro is not on the road or in the studio recording, he cherishes his time at home with his wife, Mandy, and beautiful daughter, Madeline.



6 Legendary vocalist John Schlitt (left) records his Christmas CD with producer/musician Dan Needham (right), who aside from being his son-in-law, has played percussion with Amy Grant, Peter Cetera and Michael McDonald.

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7 & 8 Christian rock pioneer Mylon LeFevre makes a guest appearance on the Elvis Week Main Stage with host Tom Brown and also poses with his wife Christi in front of Graceland. Mylon was just 17 years old when Elvis Presley discovered him and recorded the first song he ever wrote, "Without Him."



9 Skillet's Korey Cooper strikes a pose for her daughter Alex at Soulvest before the modern rockers' highly anticipated headline gig.

10 Reflection Music Group artist Tony Tillman and his wife Candice take a breather on the set of his "Show Me" music video, directed by Marco Villalobos.

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SWITCHFOOT

FADING WEST TOUR

COPERNICUS CENTER/ CHICAGO, IL

Photos by Andy Argyrakis

Leave it to Switchfoot to go the unconventional route on its latest tour, which doesn't just find the band performing a concert, but also giving fans a screening of its rock n' surf-centered documentary *Fading West*. Cut from a similar cloth as U2's *Rattle And Hum*, the flick chronicles members' travels in pursuit of music, community and their lifelong dedication to catching some serious waves.

Without giving too much away (considering a digital release of the movie is planned in December), the film provides a compelling look at literally every angle of Switchfoot and the endless pursuit to shatter their comfort zones, which coupled with a soundtrack of the band's life-affirming tunes, suggests their quest to continually shape culture won't go unnoticed.

Additional evidence came from the slightly too short but still solid show itself, which spent an hour blending a handful of hits, rarities, plus previews from the forthcoming *Fading West* album (currently available as an abridged EP, but due out in its entirety on January 14).



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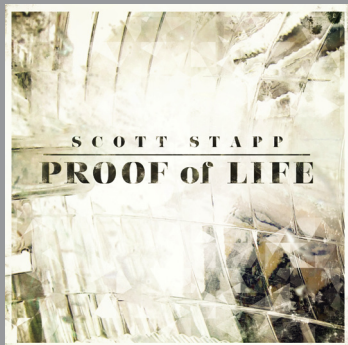
The band was as empowering as ever, diving straight into the melodic pop smash “Dare You To Move,” the stripped down “The Shadow Proves The Sunshine,” and a little later, gritty rockers like “Dark Horses” and “The Sound (John M. Perkins’ Blues).” Come “Restless,” front man Jon Foreman made his signature pilgrimage into the crowd, physically symbolizing the personal connection Switchfoot always seeks out of its audience.

Brand new tunes like “Love Alone Is Worth The Fight” and “Who We Are” were cloaked in the same rallying tradition as the grand finale “Where I Belong,” which only added to the fact that the latest season of Switchfoot’s storied career could very well be among its most meaningful. **CCM**



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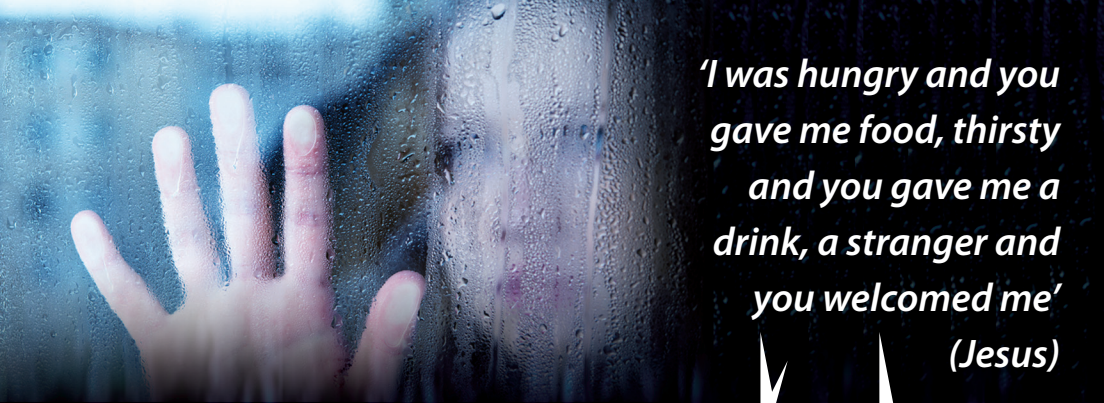
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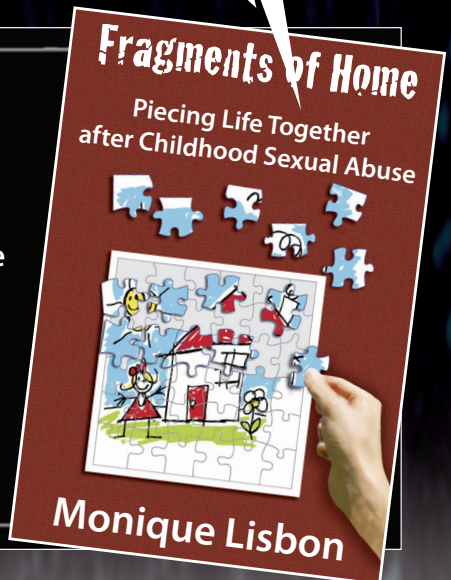
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ARTIST: SCOTT ENGLAND

What do you get when you combine an über-talented musician with a passionate heart for the kingdom? You get Scott England...or, as he is often called, a musicianary. The worship leader is Atlanta-based, but his music has carried him to Central America, England, Mexico and beyond. While in other countries, he and his band conduct "Worship Workshops," equipping musicians and worship leaders in those countries with the tools necessary to keep the worship momentum going long-term.

"I've made it a personal goal to develop ongoing partnerships with churches, ministries and individuals to help them carry out their goals and calling," share Scott. "For me, music is the medium that God uses to open the door for these opportunities. It's the universal language and an excellent barrier breaker."

Most recently, Scott has released a new project, *Redeemed and Brave*, that takes his heart for worship and for the church to new heights, beautifully translating his own language of worship and reverence of and for God.

"Although worship through music is an obvious passion for any Christian musician and many believers, it's important that we make an intentional effort not to devalue WORSHIP to merely a song, or that thing we do when gathered with believers in a building (church) on that specific day of the week," says Scott.



+ CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SCOTT AND TO CHECK OUT *REDEEMED AND BRAVE*.

TOUR: WINTER JAM 2014

The country's biggest tour is back and better than ever! On October 28, artists, media and others gathered to hear the star-studded lineup for the 2014 tour. Artists include Colton Dixon, Newsboys, Lecrae, Tenth Avenue North, Thousand Foot Krutch, Plumb, Newsong, Love & The Outcome, Everfound and Derek Minor, plus returning speaker, Nick Hall. The tour, which was begun and is still hosted by Newsong, will commence in January with dates in 47 cities across the country.

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FLAME

No stranger to the hip-hop scene, Flame releases his latest project, *Royal Flush*, making him the youngest hip-hop artist to release 7 full-length studio albums. Inspired by 2 Peter 1:3, FLAME dove deep into the depths of God's love and provision. "In the game of poker, the highest hand you can receive is a royal flush, which is a ten, a jack, a queen, a king and an ace," the rapper explains in reference to the album's title. "When I thought about the concept, it reminded me about what Christ has done in the life of a Christian. He set us up to win. We've got the highest hand."

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RYAN STEVENSON

It might have taken more time than Ryan Stevenson wanted, but the journey has been well worth it. Now that the songwriter's smart, snappy pop settled into the perfect home with Gotee Records, Stevenson can appreciate the lessons learned and enjoy the success at a much deeper level.

After years of trying to make it in the music industry and watching friends like Paul Wright and Mat Kearney earn record deals, Stevenson plied his trade locally in the Pacific Northwest while working as a paramedic, among other things, for several years. A last-ditch effort at a battle of the bands led to a victory that earned him studio time. The rest can be heard on his new EP *Holding Nothing Back*.

"I was just going along doing my thing for several years and was just about to give up," says Stevenson. "I was going to hang up the cleats. Then all of a sudden, all these things started happening, and all these connections I'd had for years just started rising to the surface at the same time."

Those connections eventually led Stevenson to meet up for a writing session with Jamie Moore, producer and songwriter



for TobyMac and Jamie Grace, among others. That session led to the final version of "Speak Life", a song that would end up on TobyMac's No. 1 album *Eye On It*. Even more, it would bring Stevenson into the fold at Gotee.

Interestingly enough, Stevenson said he was going to cancel his initial meeting with Moore since he was tired of constantly meeting new people and reaching for opportunities that never appeared.

"One day on my calendar it popped up with this notice that I had a cowrite scheduled with Jamie Moore," said Stevenson. "I called my manager up and said, 'Cancel this.' He said he would do it, yet as I sat there afterward, I heard that

still small voice again, almost immediately, say, 'Don't cancel this.' So I called him right back and said, 'Don't cancel this. I'm just gonna go.' The funny thing is, he was gonna cancel on me, too. He had called his publisher and said, 'I can't do this one today.' But then he just said, 'You know what? I'll just do it, since the guy's already on his way here.'"

That fateful meeting became the beginning of a fruitful friendship, one that birthed Stevenson's new EP. Featuring four songs like the hit single "Holding Nothing Back", it's intended to introduce Stevenson to fans before a full-length arrives early in 2014. With meaningful and personal lyrics wrapped in dynamic pop arrangements, the EP is an ideal fall soundtrack that whets the appetite for more.

Through the ups and downs of chasing his dream, Stevenson says the ride has been worth it if only to see God's plan and power come through in his weakest moments.

"The things that are happening right now, it makes me emotional because I could never have made it happen," says Stevenson. "It's always at the eleventh hour, as though God is saying, 'You're finally at the end of yourself. And it's not going to be you doing this, because you're going to know that I'm the one doing it.' That's the only way it can be. I know what I can do, but when I let go and see massive things blow my mind then it's like, 'Wow, God, you're real and I'm so sorry for ever doubting you.'" **CCM**



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THE EYE OF THE HURRICANE

NATALIE GRANT FINDS PEACE AND
ASSURANCE IN THE STORM

BY CAROLINE LUSK

(Photos by Dominick Guillemot)

IN 1953, the National Hurricane Center began naming hurricanes. Throughout the years, if any one storm is exceedingly destructive, that name has been retired forever. Katrina was such a storm. With a death toll close to 2,000 and damages in the range of \$91 billion, it is officially the costliest hurricane to strike the US.

Ironically, the city that suffered the most, New Orleans, had prepared for such a storm. Levees were in place, emergency services were on alert and a mandatory evacuation was issued. Despite the efforts, the storm surge and the aftermath left a wake of destruction that is still evident over 8 years later.

The scale of the tragedy made one thing abundantly clear—when it comes to a showdown between man and nature, man stands to lose.

The same could be said in life. A showdown between man and the chaos of life isn't a fair fight. Natalie Grant knows this as well as anyone.

"Our lives right now are just chaos," says Natalie. "People ask me how I organize and order it. I must be a good actress because most days I don't even know how I survive."

Survive seems a bit modest. A mother of three—twins (6) and younger daughter (3)—Natalie juggles motherhood and marriage with writing and recording, touring, fighting against human trafficking through the non-profit she founded, Abolition International and, most recently, launching a new movement called Dare to Be.

Such a load would overwhelm and exhaust most people, but Natalie derives strength and purpose by sharing the grace of a God who pulled her from a pit of

insecurity, uncertainty and fear.

"All of us struggle with insecurities," she says. "What we hear from culture or friends and family tries to define who we are even though those messages are so full of lies. It's time for us to rediscover who God says we are. The promises of God have no expiration date. As women really begin to digest the truth of who we are in Christ, we will change the communities and change the world."

For Natalie, that change starts at home.

"I want my girls to see a mom who loves them and is engaged with them and is thankful to be their mommy," she shares.

It doesn't take much for anyone to see how grateful both Natalie and Bernie [Herms, her husband] are to be parents.

"We were told we couldn't have kids," says Natalie.

More specifically, they were given a 3% chance of ever conceiving. After countless rounds of fertility treatments, the twins arrived. Shortly thereafter, Natalie found herself pregnant again. This time, however, it was unplanned and overwhelming.

"Sadie was the miracle I didn't know to ask for," she says. "I felt completely ill-equipped to be a mom to three kids and then had such guilt for even having those feelings. So many women struggle to ever have children. I know He'll never give you more than you can handle, but it seemed like God overestimated me!"

She says all this with a laugh today, but just a few months ago, laughter was the furthest thing from her heart and mind. Soon after the birth of their third child, Natalie slipped into post-partum depression.



"I didn't even know what it was," she says. "It was very real and lasted about 20 months. I was so quiet about it but everyone knew there was something not right."

Internally, Natalie was fighting to stay afloat in the midst of a storm that seemed to intensify each day.

"I had a nephew who was struggling with a heroin addiction and then my father was diagnosed with cancer," she shares. "I just thought, 'That's it. I've had it.' As the storm clouds kept pounding on my life, I felt so guilty. I didn't want people to think I didn't love my baby. I avoided people for a while thinking that it might go away."

"I began asking myself questions like, 'What kind of mother am I to struggle with this? What kind of Christian am I?' I knew I should be spending time with the Lord but it was the last thing I wanted to do. I knew the truth, but it wasn't working for me."

Or so she thought. After months of darkness, spiritual estrangement and an overall disconnect from truth and emotion, Natalie returned to the promises upon which faith is built.

"I cracked my Bible open for the first time in a long time and flipped to Matthew 14," she says. "I feel like the Lord gave me new eyes."

New eyes for a familiar story—Jesus walking on water.

"Jesus knew a storm was coming but insisted His disciples go ahead of Him into the storm."

Into the raging sea and storm the disciples went. And then, Jesus came to them—in the storm...upon the water. Jesus didn't stop the storm. But He came alongside to be with the disciples as the wind and water mercilessly ravaged the boat and rocked the faith of those on board.

"I had been begging God to stop the storm," she says. "I wanted out, but He came in. I was looking at a sea of impossibilities, but He eventually brought peace. The day after I read that, I wrote the song, 'Hurricane,' and a creative dam just broke. I was writing like I'd never written before."

From beginning to end, the album is upbeat, pop, positive...as Natalie says, "the antithesis of where I was. I wanted songs that reflected not where I was living, but where I was going."

The result is a collection of songs that inspire, challenge and transparently reveal Natalie's heart and life more so than any of her previous work. The vulnerability became the benchmark of the project.

"The last thing the world needs is just another singer and just another song," she says. "These have to be my stories and songs."

Over a period of 18 months, Natalie and Bernie built this project piece by piece in their home studio—a luxury they don't take for granted.

"I'm very blessed to create music with my best friend," she says. "To be able to go downstairs to the studio in my PJs was great. And, I'm learning more and more that writing is so risky. It's so important to have a safe environment to share those ideas."

As the music took shape, it became a personal refuge from the storms in



Natalie's life. Scripture became levees to hold the storm surge at bay. Prayer became a rescue from the raging wind and water. Much like

Katrina, though, the strongholds and preparations don't always prevent the storms from raging, but they provide a cornerstone to cling to in the midst.

"It's still chaos and one day at a time," she says. "I'm trying to not worry about tomorrow. I'm going to do my best to love and balance. And tomorrow, I'll wake up and try all over again. Chaos, doubt, fear, inadequacies are still there, but my hope is reignited like never before. I serve a God who knows my name. Who gave me my career and husband and non-profit. Who must have a lot of faith in me. I'm going to embrace who God is calling me to be."

Storms will come. Water will rise. Man will flounder.

Without Him, we don't stand a chance.

With Him, we can boldly say, "Bring on the storm."

The scope of destruction brought about by Katrina retired that name forever.

The scope and power of God against the struggles in our lives allows us to do the same.

Defeat has no place in hope.

Fear has no place in faith.

Insecurity is no more in the light of everlasting life, peace and love... **CCM**




VISIT NATALIEGRANT.COM FOR MORE



Common Creed

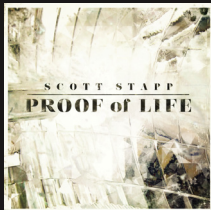
SCOTT STAPP

REDISCOVERS LIFE
THROUGH FELLOWSHIP
AND FAITH *By Matt Conner*



Very few artists could even imagine the roller coaster experienced by Scott Stapp over the last 15 years. As the iconic front man for the Grammy-winning rock band Creed, Stapp was recognizable on most continents due to global tours and album sales over 60 million strong. With 11 No. 1 hits, including “With Arms Wide Open” and “Higher,” Stapp was standing on top of the musical world.

Unfortunately, the mountaintop experience provided Stapp the highest place from which to fall. Band tensions and other factors precipitated the band’s breakup in 2004, and Stapp says everything spiraled out of control from that point on. From a documented suicide attempt to serious drug and alcohol addiction, Stapp’s emotional turmoil and physical behavior brought him to his lowest point. It was a hole Stapp thought might become his grave.



The good news is God was just beginning His redemptive work in Stapp’s life. Years later, Stapp has turned his life around and committed himself to telling the story of it all. In 2012, Stapp released his autobiography entitled *Sinner’s Creed*,

a tell-all that describes his downfall and how faith in God brought him back. *Proof of Life* is his brand new solo album, a musical accompaniment to the content in the book.

“It definitely wasn’t easy to get to this point,” says Stapp, “To get through the book, to get through this record, to get sober and clean, to bring healing and repair to the chaos and the hurt and the pain that not only I experienced, but that alcoholism and addiction can bring to those that you love. It holds them hostage in the torment that it can bring to their lives, and through all the destruction that follows.”

Stapp says he’s finally sober after going through rehab, and his faith community has helped restore his family life as well. Stapp says he’s both appreciative and anxious of the chance to share the message of getting on and off the destructive ride that led him to this point.

“I made it out,” he says. “I survived. It’s a miracle and I’m just thankful to God and by the grace of God that I’m alive,



and I'm really, really excited about this next season in my life. As a Christian, I'm excited about what God's doing in my life and what I'm going to be blessed to have the opportunity to do.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to give this back and share this in the hope that others who are going through some situations that are similar to what happened to me—whatever they're going through, anything that's holding them hostage and that they're a prisoner to—that there is hope. I can tell you because I lived it."

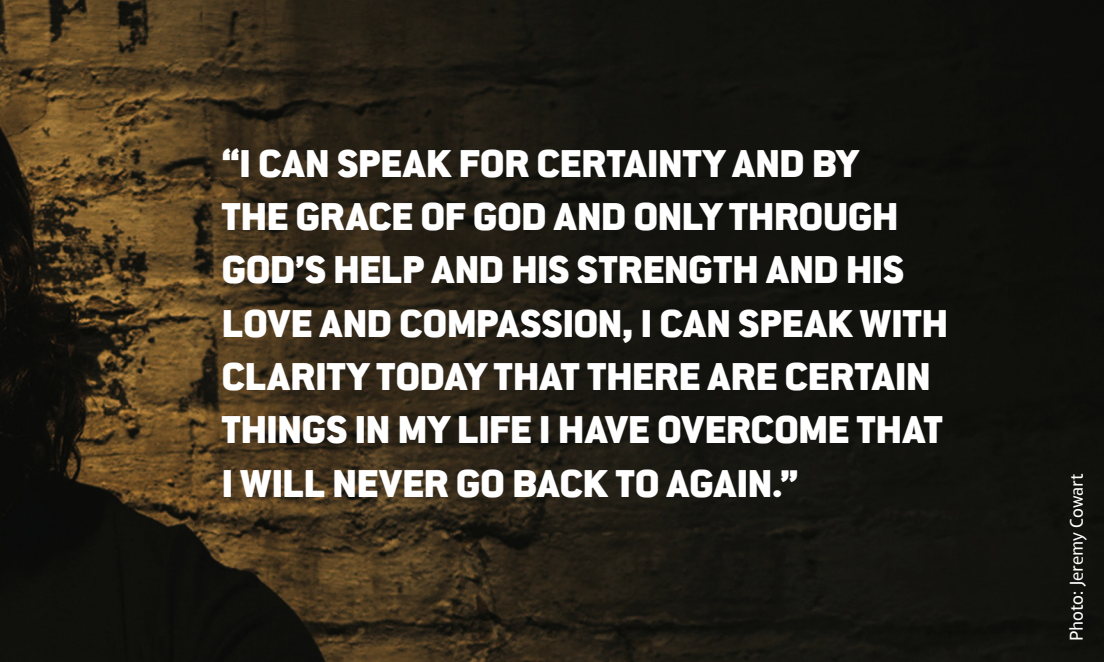
Stapp says that despite the hopelessness around him, the music was always there waiting to come out. Now his gifts have become the very vehicle for finding hope again.

"When I talk about the season being over—that season of all the negativity, the

addiction, the alcoholism, the abuse—I don't classify music and creativity as a season because that's who I am and that's going to be a part of me whether that's professionally or privately, so that's one thing that will remain constant.

"But this season in my life of going to that place where I went, I can never go there again. I can speak for certainty and by the grace of God and only through God's help and His strength and His love and compassion, I can speak with clarity today that there are certain things in my life I have overcome that I will never go back to again."

Longtime fans of Creed or Stapp's solo work might be surprised by the variety on *Proof of Life*. It's a testament to Stapp's new lease on life. He's a free man now, in more ways than one, which means the rock-and-roller might indulge other tastes if that's what he's interested in.



"I CAN SPEAK FOR CERTAINTY AND BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND ONLY THROUGH GOD'S HELP AND HIS STRENGTH AND HIS LOVE AND COMPASSION, I CAN SPEAK WITH CLARITY TODAY THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS IN MY LIFE I HAVE OVERCOME THAT I WILL NEVER GO BACK TO AGAIN."

Photo: Jeremy Cowart

"I felt like I had no boundaries," Stapp says of recording *Proof of Life*. "I felt like I was 100-percent free to create the platform, sonically, exactly based on that moment of inspiration and not be confined to a box. I didn't feel like, 'I have to write music this certain way because that's what I'm supposed to do.' Mainly I felt that before because of being in a band and knowing how other people feel. To be able to not have those constraints frees me to just be the artist that I am who loves a variety of music, from hard rock to country to pop."

While Stapp gives God the glory for saving him from his despair and depression, he also credits his fans for their steadfast support along the way. In fact, Stapp says his fans have often been the vehicle through which God has spoken to him to lift him up.

"My fans have been the most loving, supportive angels in my life," he says. "They're always there to say something at just the time I needed support, and they didn't even know what was going on behind the scenes. And then when things went public, they had my back. They didn't turn on me. They were there with compassion and understanding."

"I just have so much love for my fans, and it's genuine because it's a real relationship," he continues. "We've gone through a lot together and they've stood by me. At times they've almost been like instruments from God to me, to speak truth into my life and to speak love and support into my life when I needed it most. I just hope I can give back to them through this music what they've given to me." **CCM**

+ FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT SCOTTSTAPP.COM.



(RE) INTRODUCING ROYAL TAILOR

BY CAROLINE LUSK

Typically, it takes a band a few years to get their footing, build a fan base large enough to garner the attention of labels and promoters, and subsequently land a major tour. Suffice it to say Royal Tailor is atypical...in more ways than one.

Clearly, their talent, style and performance are on par with the biggest names in the business. But what distinguishes Royal Tailor from others is their foundational premise that music is ministry and ministry can change a hurting world. One of the few interracial groups in CCM history, they have been forthright and bold with their message of unity and love.

Their self-titled sophomore record (released Oct. 22) encompasses these passions with a sound that's relevant, contagious and on par with any artist in any genre. *CCM* sat down with the guys to hear more about the music and where they're headed next.

CCM: What prompted you to make your sophomore project self-titled?

We were really excited about our first album *Black & White*, but we feel like this new album really showcases who we are as Royal Tailor. So, what better way than to self-title and let the songs deliver the messages, themes and who we truly are!

CCM: You've garnered the attention and have had the privilege of working with some amazing people. What has been the most surreal experience you've had?

One that has been surreal for us was working with live show producer, Adam Blackstone, for our Winter Jam set. He has worked with everyone from JayZ to Rihanna and recently, Justin Timberlake. From there, Winter Jam, in itself, was something that was very surreal. To have the opportunity to play in front of more than 550,000 people around the US and help encourage them was something that can't be described.

CCM: You've said yourself that church is still the most segregated institution in the country (which it is). Do you feel that you guys can make a difference there? What are your goals in terms of equality and reconciliation?

We feel that we can play a huge part with our music in influencing today's culture.

Our new album is centered around tearing down the walls of politics, prejudices, etc. In saying that, it's also about building bridges so that we can all come together as a group of believers and better this world.

CCM: Having now performed in front of thousands, what do you think are some of the most pressing issues for young people today and what are you doing to encourage change?

We have found, from traveling around the world, that our culture is in a serious identity crisis and always searching for the next thing to fulfill its needs. We feel that our lyrics and lifestyle can help inspire people to be who God has called them to be—not what others claim they should be.

CCM: Where did your name come from?

There's a quote that says, "Jesus led with the heart of a servant, but served with the heart of a king." So with the name Royal Tailor, we give honor to God, who's the King of Kings and who constantly fixes, mends and adjusts our lives on His behalf. We are super blessed to be able to share our lives with our fans through this next

album and we hope that someone's life will be changed or inspired for the greater. That's why we are here and why we are doing this! **CCM**



+ FOR MORE, VISIT
ROYALTAILORONLINE.COM

DOVE AWARDS 2013

A HOMECOMING, A CELEBRATION, A
NIGHT TO REMEMBER **BY CAROLINE LUSK**

October 15 was a magical night in music city. After two years away, the Dove Awards returned to their home city, lighting up Allen Arena on the campus of Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn.

The sold-out show was an early indication of the hard work and passion the Gospel Music Association, as well as many other partners, including CCM, poured into the night. With a blockbuster performance from Colton Dixon to a multi-generation tribute to musical icon Bill Gaither to a show-stopping opener with TobyMac and special guest Britt Nicole, the show was one of the best in the history of the Doves.

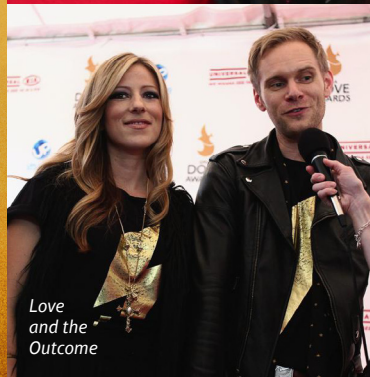
Beyond the stage show, however, the sense of camaraderie and fellowship was palpable on the red carpet, back stage and everywhere in between. As the artists you know and love gathered to celebrate each other and a year of ministry and Kingdom building, the event aligned itself with the original vision, as shared by GMA's Executive Director, Jackie Patillo.

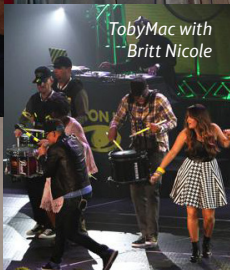
"I have been reminded of the verse saying we are a city on a hill and need to let our light shine for His glory."

The lights were dazzling, the music was electrifying and the homecoming was well worth the wait. Check out CCM's exclusive pictures of the evening, all courtesy of Thomas Dahrens (thomasdahrensp photography.com). **CCM**



TO CHECK OUT THE FULL LIST OF WINNERS, CLICK HERE







HILLSONG YOUNG & FREE

THE SOUND OF A NEW GENERATION

Given that it is the birthplace of the iconic worship song, “Shout to the Lord,” it should come as no surprise that Hillsong remains at the forefront of worship music through their various ministries and collectives. Young and Free is the latest offering from the Australian congregation. Committed to relevancy and authenticity in presenting the Savior to others, Young and Free represents the voice of a new generation—a generation seeking God, love and purpose. *CCM* got to chat with Alex Pappas and Melodie Wagner (singers/songwriters) about the movement, the mandate and the music.

CCM: How did this latest offspring of Hillsong come about?

Melodie: It’s been quite a long, drawn-out process. It’s been pretty natural—not really forced. It all started at a concert last Octo-

ber. We needed new songs for the youth ministry. Songs that would empower... something they could identity with. That’s how the song, “Alive” kind of came about.

CCM: What significance does the phrase, “Young and Free” hold for you?

Melodie: Young and free is our mandate. It’s what we believe, generation to generation. It says in the Bible—proclaim a message of Jesus throughout the world. Our prayer is to reach people who wouldn’t normally listen to worship music with this new avenue and new sound.

Alex: Actually, Brian Houston (Senior Pastor, Hillsong) wrote a blog about that—one generation shall declare your work to another. The album and youth ministry and songs have affected our church personally. The mandate is that we are young and free in the freedom found in Christ. I don’t know

about you, but in my faith I want to stay young and free.

CCM: *Given all of the variations of Hillsong bands/collectives, how did this particular group come together?*

Alex: We decided to launch the idea for this project just around a year ago. In terms of the key players, there wasn't any extraordinary addition. It's the people that serve in our youth ministry on a Friday night who are passionate about seeing the youth ministry grow. We finished doing our praise songs at the end. A pop song came up and they played music as people were walking out. The way the atmosphere shifted in that moment...our current generation was crying out for their own sound and their own way to express themselves.

CCM: *Why do you think young people will be drawn to Young and Free?*

Melodie: We love to dance and have fun. The youth will have dance parties and people can express themselves. Just over a year ago, some friends got together, excited to write something that was a bit more current and relevant. The response from the youth ministry was immediate—everyone loved it.

Media has never been as accessible. People are being bombarded with modern day messages like, 'you only live once...' I think that's why this message of freedom and the idea that church can be fun can be the best thing. This sound and this idea—this concept and new way of expressing worship on the same page—is helping people more easily connect with it. The message is coming across clearer.

Alex: Our senior pastors have done a great job adapting to the church's needs at the time. I think for us, we're a small part of that. You see United...they were serving the youth of their time. Now, they're serving the church in many directions and we've stepped up to kind of fill that youth-oriented gap.

CCM: *How does Young and Free represent the idea of worship and, in turn, invite people to engage in worship themselves?*

Melodie: Worship is not necessarily music. It's adoration of God. Music is one avenue of doing that. It's us trying to engage people and guide people. We want to keep the main thing, the main thing. Jesus—He created us to be, serve him and worship him. When we lose that, there's no real point.

Alex: Worship has been around all the way back from sounds of Gregorian chants to what it is today. The message has always been the same. It's monumental we've learned so much from the peeps who have gone before us. It's just incredible that we get this opportunity to share the message in a new format

Young and Free, as a whole, isn't a band. It's not a specific group of people. It is our youth ministry. It's who we are. Our prayer for the album and songs is that they will impact young people everywhere. Young Christians can show this album to their friends—the gospel would be reaching ears. **CCM**



**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
HILLSONG.COM/EN/YOUNGANDFREE**



THE STORY BEHIND MATT REDMAN'S “10,000 REASONS”

Matt Redman has been creating timeless worship songs for the church for years. His recent win at the Dove Awards for Song of the Year is a testament that he only gets better with time. “10,000 Reasons” is one of those songs that will be sung by generations to come. Below, read the story behind the powerful praise chorus.

After a long day of songwriting in a small chapel near his home in Brighton, England, renowned worship leader and songwriter Matt Redman had too many melodies running through his head to listen to one more. He, along with friends and cowriters Jonas Myrin (“Our God” and “You Alone Can Rescue”) and Jason Ingram (“Forever Reign” and “Always”) had spent hours working on songs that would be a part of Redman’s new album. “Jonas had kept saying to me ‘Hey, I have this melody,’” recalls Redman. He jokingly admits his initial reaction to Myrin was “I don’t want to hear it.”

But a couple of days later, Redman turned back to Myrin in the chapel and asked him about that melody; thus, the title track of Matt Redman’s live album 10,000 Reasons was born.

As soon as Myrin began playing the chords, Redman thought of Psalm 103: “Bless the Lord, O my soul,” which became the chorus for Myrin’s melody. Redman describes the song as simple. With piano as the only opening accompaniment, “10,000 Reasons” harkens back to the church music the original congregants of that Brighton chapel would have sung years ago. And its verse encourages the church to continue singing: *For all Your goodness I will keep on singing/10,000 reasons for my heart to find.* **CCM**



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MATT AND
TO CHECK OUT HIS LATEST ALBUM, YOUR
GRACE FINDS ME, VISIT MATTREDMAN.COM**



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WORSHIP

THE ROAD TO REVELATION

Worship creates an environment for God to speak. Over the years I have had many discussions with successful business people in our church. They all had been to numerous business seminars on how to improve their leadership skills. They also had been in creative business environments where sharp and creative people had trained and inspired them to be the optimum they could be. As helpful as these people, courses and environments had been, all of these successful people made essentially the same comment to me in different conversations over the years; they received their greatest ideas, new structures and breakthroughs in an environment of worship either at home in their personal devotion time or in corporate worship services. They all said they receive the greatest revelation for their success in these atmospheres or environments.

The Bible says in Matthew 28:17-19: *"When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted!"*

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

In a time of worshipping Jesus He gave them the blueprint for the rest of their lives. This was the culmination of their

past three years. As they worshipped, Jesus revealed to them their authority that comes through him, He then commissioned them to go make and disciple nations. Then he gave the method—baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Their worship of Jesus created an environment for their lifetime assignment to be revealed and how to go about it.

Worldly wisdom at times can be helpful, but nothing compares to the wisdom and revelation that comes from our Creator. I say to people all the time who are trying to discover what they were created to do, "Come and meet the one who created you. He has the blueprint for your life".

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

He has plans that He wants to reveal to us and I find many times they are revealed as we worship Him.

Our times of worship not only give us the answer for our lives and situations, they also bring blessings beyond our own immediate location.

Let's worship Jesus and see the answers revealed which we have been seeking! As the psalmist said in Psalms 34:3-4:

"Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears." CCM





❧

A FEW OF OUR

Favorite Things

❧❧❧

CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

2013

CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE 2013

LIVE FOREVER (HERITAGE BUILDERS PUBLISHING)



THIS BOOK IS THE TRUE STORY OF A SIMPLE UNEDUCATED KID FROM GEORGIA WHOSE DREAMS ALL CAME TRUE. From his lonely, angry childhood, he wrote and sang music as a way to express his deepest feelings. While in the army, at age 17, Elvis Presley recorded one of his songs which opened doors around the world to castles, stadiums, arenas, movies, TV and other venues. From then on, his life was a

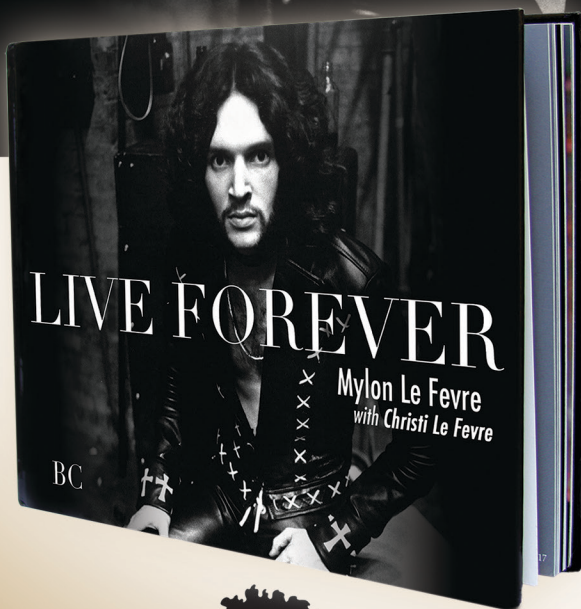
whirlwind of a rock-and-roll fantasy that he couldn't make up if he tried. This is Mylon's story, in its entirety, for the first time in print, with more than 100 photos and lyrics to 15 of his most popular songs. From playing stadiums, coliseums and getting high with some of the biggest rock stars in the world, to being strung out on heroin and cocaine, he was trapped in a seemingly hopeless pit of depression and loneliness. It's all here, the good, bad and the ugly. Mylon finally found what he was looking for, but it wasn't in drugs, money or fame. He found God—not religion—but rather a loving heavenly Father who forgave him and fulfilled him with purpose and hope.

This journey Mylon lays out is not only intriguing, but it could change your life. There are few stories that are so fascinating yet so graphic. You will be enraptured by the simple, easy-to-read writing style that really defines the man. At the least, this book will be a breath of fresh air.

➤ **CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO PURCHASE:**
HERITAGEBUILDERS.COM

LIVE FOREVER

The True Inspiring Story of Mylon Le Fevre



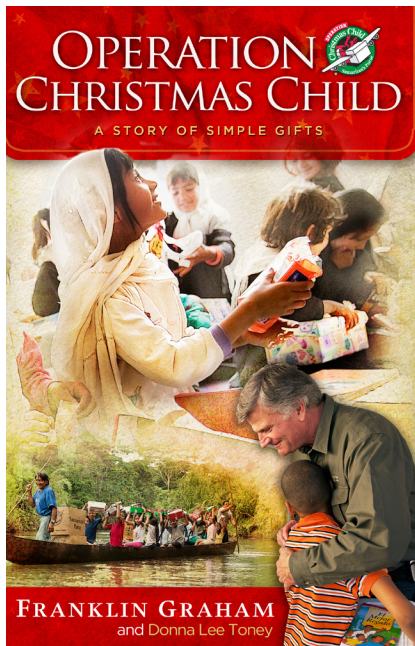
This is Mylon's story. It's all here with over 100 photos and lyrics to 15 songs. The true story of Mylon Le Fevre's career in Gospel Music to a whirlwind ride of rock and roll fantasy, strung out on drugs, depression, and loneliness until he found what he was truly looking for... he found God, a loving Heavenly Father, who forgave him and fulfilled him with purpose and hope. This book is a breath of fresh air and could change your life. | Hard cover 24.95



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CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE 2013

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD (B&H PUBLISHING)



IT WAS A SIMPLE IDEA THAT BECAME THE WORLDWIDE MINISTRY OF OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD—to minister to children in war-torn and famine-stricken countries. In two decades, it has inspired everyday people to provide more than 100 million gift-filled shoeboxes to needy children in 130 countries. This beautiful book weaves the moving, God-saturated story of the ministry's beginning with the stirring, Christ-exalting stories of lives that forever have been changed by a simple shoebox.

Operation Christmas Child is filled with full-color photos of children whose smiles help tell what is a thoroughly hopeful story. Samaritan's Purse President Franklin Graham provides insight as the incredible stories of life transformation are told.

Proceeds from *Operation Christmas Child* go to support the ministry it seeks

to celebrate and honor.

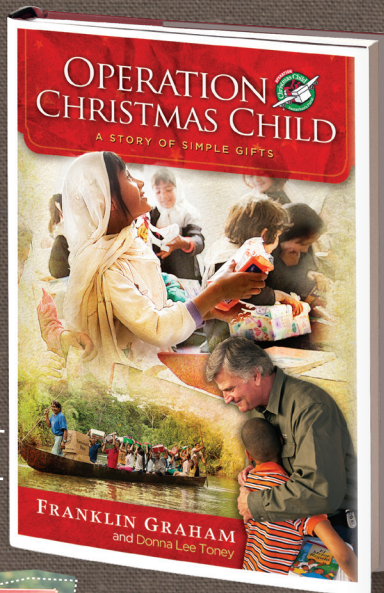
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BHPUBLISHINGGROUP.COM

IF YOU'VE EVER PACKED A SHOE BOX THIS IS YOUR STORY!

Proceeds from the book go to support the ministry it seeks to celebrate and honor.

A memory and photo-filled twentieth anniversary celebration of the Operation Christmas Child ministry that has inspired everyday people to provide more than 100 million gift-filled shoeboxes to needy children in 130 countries.

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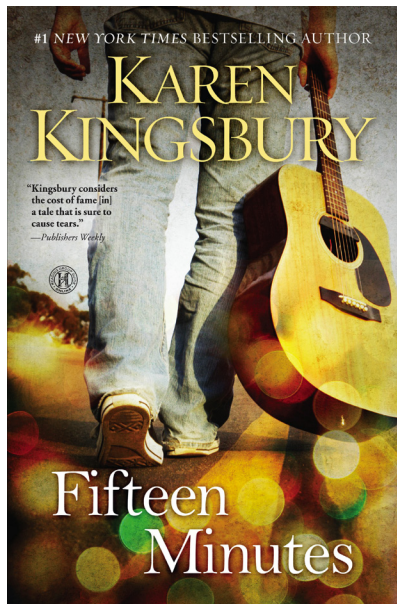


B&H

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CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE 2013

FIFTEEN MINUTES (HOWARD BOOKS)



ZACK DYLAN MADE A PROMISE TO GOD and his college sweetheart as he left Kentucky to compete on the popular reality television show “Fifteen Minutes”: If he makes it, fame won’t go to his head.

Overnight, Zack becomes the nation’s most popular contestant, a country singer with the looks and voice of a young Elvis. As his star rises, Zack is asked to compromise and quiet his beliefs, as well as something more.

Something Zack could never have imagined. Just as America is falling in love with Zack, just as he’s on the verge of winning it all, his choices lead him to the brink of personal disaster.

Meanwhile, Reese Weatherly, a therapeutic horse instructor, is no longer sure about her relationship with Zack or the wedding they had dreamed about. While

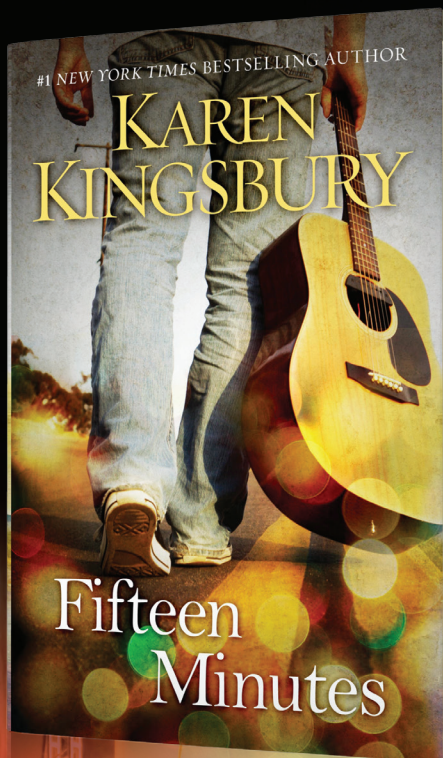
Zack advances from one round of the competition to the next, an offer comes to Reese—one that will take her to a home halfway around the world.

Then Chandra Olson, reigning diva pop star and one of the “Fifteen Minutes” judges, intervenes. Chandra has suffered so much public pain and private agony since her days as a “Fifteen Minutes” contestant. Now she wants just one thing: meaning.

Can Chandra’s private losses help Zack find his way, or will his newfound fame cause him to lose the life he once loved? *Fifteen Minutes* is a story of character, compromise and the cost of having it all, a story that raises the question: Who are the real winners?

➤ **CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO PURCHASE:**
FIFTEENMINUTESBOOK.COM

Who are the *real* winners?



From #1 *New York Times* bestselling author **Karen Kingsbury** comes a dramatic story about fame, true love, and the cost of having it all.

Zack Dylan travels from his quiet farm in Kentucky to the rush of the big stage on TV's favorite singing competition *Fifteen Minutes*. But will the ride cost him everything—and every one—that matters?



Karen Kingsbury has more than 20 million copies of her award-winning books in print, with many under development as major motion pictures. Her most recent bestseller, *The Chance*, is now available in paperback.

FifteenMinutesbook.com

Also available as an **audiobook** and **ebook**.

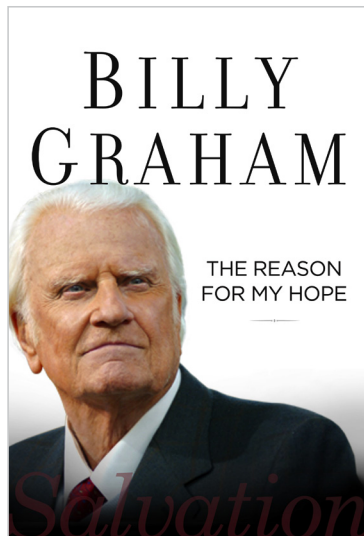


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CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE 2013

THE REASON FOR MY HOPE

(THOMAS NELSON)



HOPE IS A GIFT. Have you ever taken hold of such a prize that leads you out of uncertainty into profound assurance? If so, you have possessed hope. When hope arrives, despair departs.

Hope is the breath of nature that surrounds us every day.

Hope is seen in a sprig that shoots up from the crevasse of a sundried rock, proving the water of life within. **HOPE SUSTAINS US.**

Hope is the first ray of sunshine that peaks above the horizon—without fail—every morning with blazing truth, telling us we can make it through. **HOPE BRINGS US PEACE.**

Hope is dispatched when the moon rises in the dark night, foreshadowing that a new day will dawn. **HOPE BRINGS US PROMISE.**

Hope swells within a sea-weary drifter when he spots a distant speck of a ship that grows larger with each passing wave. **HOPE PERSEVERES.**

Hope headlines commencement addresses, inspiring graduates as they embark on the new life that lies ahead, as they step out on the pathway strewn with possibilities. **HOPE PERSUADES.**

Have you glimpsed the glow of hope? Strike a match and burn a candle. You will discover that the whisper of its flame brings life to a room, making the candle useful. Is your flame of hope alive and making a difference in the world? You see, **HOPE PIERCES THE DARKNESS.**

Hope is the absolute assurance that there is life after death. For those who have lost loved ones—and we all have—**HOPE BRINGS COMFORT** to our aching souls.

Hope removes fear.

Hope restores faith.

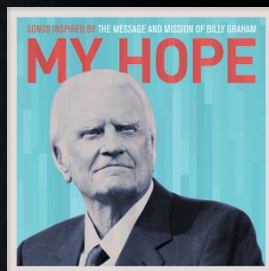
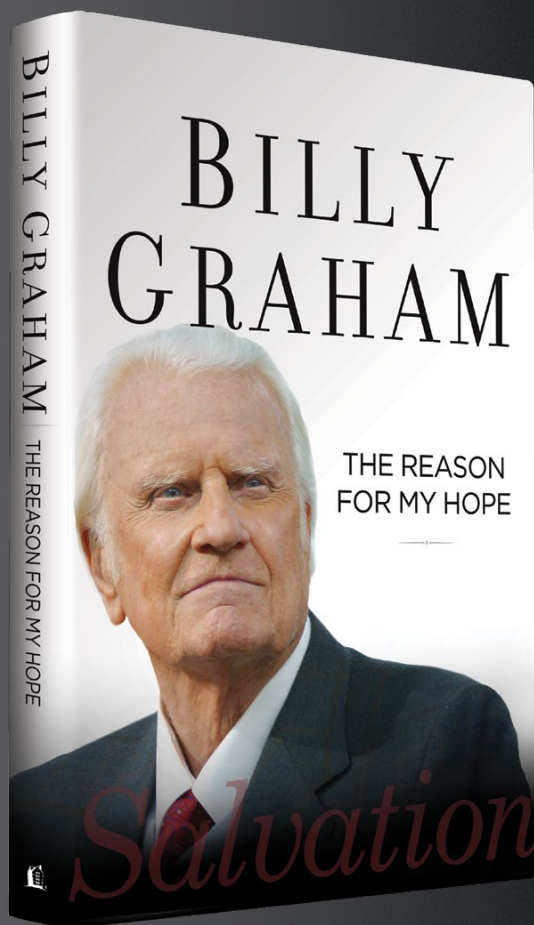
**Excerpted from the introduction of The Reason for My Hope by Billy Graham*

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— NEW THIS FALL FROM —

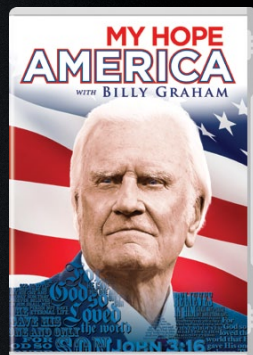
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DO YOU BELIEVE THAT GOD NOT ONLY LOVES YOU, BUT THAT HE ALSO LIKES YOU?

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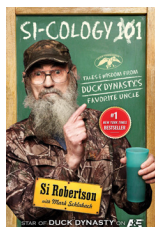
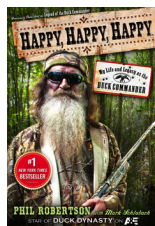
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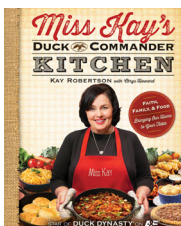


Hey Jack—do you know any **UNCLE SI** fans? In **SI-COLOGY 1**, *Duck Dynasty*® Uncle Si presents his signature tall tales, crazy exploits, and quirky one-liners all in one raucous collection!



Perfect for students and the whole family, **THE DUCK COMMANDER DEVOTIONAL** is available in Tan

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TALES OF FAITH, FAMILY, FOOD, AND FEATHER-BRAINED FOOLISHNESS

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HAPPY, HAPPY, HAPPY



This no-holds-barred biography chronicles the remarkable life of Phil Robertson, the original Duck Commander and patriarch on the *Duck Dynasty*® series on A&E®.

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Duck Dynasty® Uncle Si's tall tales, crazy exploits, and quirky one-liners, all in one raucous collection!

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The sassy, country-cookin' matriarch of the Robertson clan dishes up her fabulous recipes and stories. Photos throughout.

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Just in time for the holidays—the perfect gift for the die-hard *Duck Dynasty*® fan! A boxed set of all 3 bestsellers by Willie and Korie, Phil, and Si Robertson.

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CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE 2013

WHEN CALLS THE HEART (WORD ENTERTAINMENT)



WHEN CALLS THE HEART IS THE STORY OF ELIZABETH THATCHER

(Drayton), a young teacher accustomed to her high-society life, who receives her first classroom post in a prairie town in the western frontier lead by headstrong coalminer widows Abigail (Loughlin) and Frances (Smart). She is determined to prove to her family that she is brave enough to live on her own, but struggles with her own fears and doubts. When she discovers her late Aunt Elizabeth's (Grace) secret diary, Elizabeth learns she was a pioneer woman herself, a teacher in the frontier who struggled with prairie life and fell in love with a Royal Canadian Mountie (Amell). Inspired by her aunt's hopeful words and unfaltering

determination, Elizabeth decides to embark on her own adventure, using the diary as her guide, and family friend Edward, another Mountie (Sharman), as her support.

Based on Janette Oke's bestselling Canadian West Series, the film stars three-time Emmy® Award-winner Jean Smart ("Designing Women"), Lori Loughlin ("90210"), Maggie Grace ("Taken 2") Stephen Amell ("Arrow"), Daniel Sharman ("Teen Wolf"), and newcomer Poppy Drayton.

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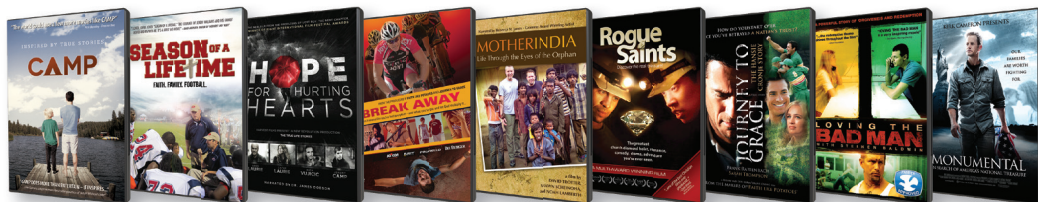


When Calls the Heart is the story of Elizabeth Thatcher, a cultured young school teacher in 1910 who, through the discovery of her aunt's secret diary, finds the courage to leave her big city home to accept a teaching position in a frontier coal mining town. And in the process, she also finds the potential for love with a handsome Royal Canadian Mountie

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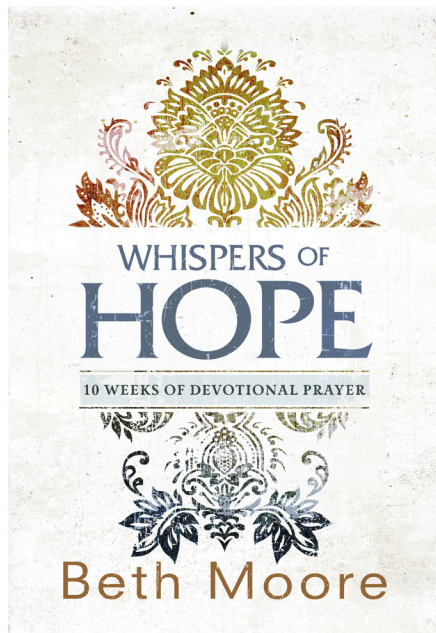


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WHISPERS OF HOPE
(B&H PUBLISHING)



SCRIPTURE TELLS US TO PRAY

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Whispers of Hope teaches the manifestation process of powerful Word-saturated prayer in response to a daily Bible reading. In turn, you will better understand how devotional reading and prayer are central to a stronger relationship with God.

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BETH MOORE'S PERSONAL METHOD OF PRAYER



WHISPERS OF HOPE

10 WEEKS OF DEVOTIONAL PRAYER



Beth Moore



Best-selling author Beth Moore guides readers through the process of offering Scripture-saturated prayer to God in response to a daily Bible reading; includes 70 devotionals.

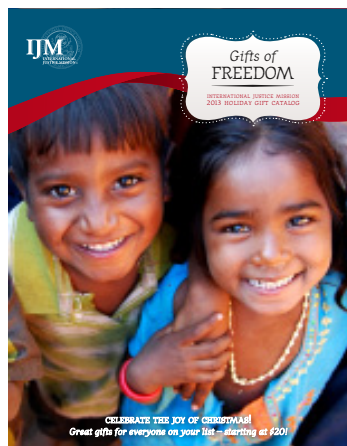
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Holiday shoppers can make their spending matter with IJM's 2013 holiday gift catalog.

For everyone on your list, share the spirit of the holiday season and give the gift of freedom via the International Justice Mission.

The *IJM 2013 Holiday Gift Catalog* (IJM.org/GiftsofFreedom) features options that directly assist in the rescue and restoration of lives of people around the world. IJM workers tackle cases of sex trafficking, slavery and other forms of violent oppression and injustice by working to ensure immediate victim rescue and aftercare, prosecute perpetrators and ensure public justice systems protect the poor.

With gifts starting at \$20, more than 30 options are available to give in someone's honor. Each gift

comes with a personal story of a client assisted by IJM and a free customizable e-card or mailed gift card.

Gifts include:

- **Aftercare Package for a Sex Trafficking Survivor—\$30**
Provided to girls on the night of rescue; includes clothing, toiletries, hair accessories, bedding, bag, stationery and a stuffed animal for younger survivors.
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- **Defend Vulnerable Widows and Orphans—\$25**
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- **Share of a Sex Trafficking Rescue Operation—\$100**
Helps fund the cost of one rescue operation to free victims and document proof to be used in court against traffickers.

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CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE 2013

DUCK THE HALLS: A ROBERTSON FAMILY CHRISTMAS (UNIVERSAL MUSIC)



The Robertsons, Louisiana's bearded, camouflage-clad entrepreneurial family, not only run the multi-million dollar Duck Commander Sporting Empire but also is a talented musical family. Growing up singing in church, the Robertsons will be showcasing their talents, as well as their special brand of Southern down-home sense of humor, on *Duck The Halls: A Robertson Family Christmas*. Produced by Buddy Cannon, the Christmas album features performances by the Robertson family along with special guests Alison Krauss,

George Strait, Josh Turner and Luke Bryan. Original Christmas songs such as "Hairy Christmas," "Ragin' Cajun Redneck Christmas" and "Duck the Halls" join classics, including "I'll Be Home for Christmas," "Baby, It's Cold Outside" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" on the 14-track album.

The Robertsons, Louisiana's favorite first family, don't live in the governor's mansion but in the backwoods, where their rags-to-riches story still is unfolding. A homegrown mom-and-pop operation, Duck Commander has become a sporting empire by fabricating top-of-the-line duck calls and decoys from salvaged swamp wood. It's also expanded into a line of products that includes hunting apparel, cooking products, DVDs, CDs and novelty items bearing their brand. In 2012, A&E premiered "Duck Dynasty," which features the lives of the Robertson family and their booming family business.

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The Duck in the Halls

A Robertson Family Christmas



Special guests include Alison Krauss, George Strait,
Josh Turner and Luke Bryan

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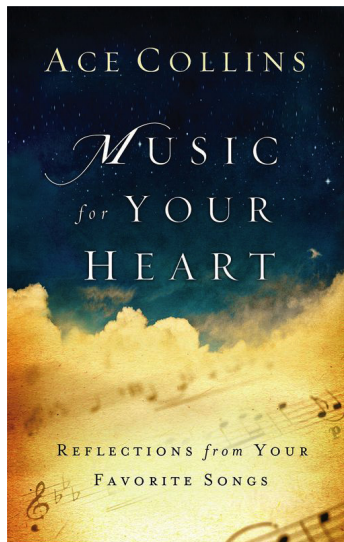
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MUSIC FOR YOUR HEART

(ABINGDON PRESS)



THE STORIES BEHIND THE SONGS THAT STICK IN YOUR MIND AND WARM YOUR HEART

Did you know the classic song “Over the Rainbow” was almost cut from the final edit of *The Wizard of Oz*?

“The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” a song Abraham Lincoln called the most uplifting composition he had ever heard, was adapted from a depressing ballad frequently chanted by Civil War soldiers trudging home from battle.

“Tie a Yellow Ribbon,” which has become a patriotic anthem for military families, originally told the story not of a soldier coming home from war but of a newly released prisoner and his fear regarding whether he would be welcomed upon his return.

Master storyteller and bestselling author Ace Collins takes you behind the lyrics and the notes to show you the people, places and events that brought these songs into being. As you journey through faith, pop culture and history, you’ll cross paths with Dolly Parton, Elvis Presley, Paul McCartney, The Beach Boys, Simon and Garfunkel, and others.

“Behind every song is a story. Ace Collins’s meticulous research and wonderful writing have shown me how my favorite gospel songs came to be.”—Joe Bonsall, The Oak Ridge Boys

“You’ll thrill at the stories behind the songs: who wrote them, when and why. It’s all here and you’re gonna love it.”—Don Reid, The Statler Brothers

“Ace Collins is my favorite writer and the best storyteller I have ever known.”—Louise Mandrell

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Music for Your Heart

Reflections from Your Favorite Songs

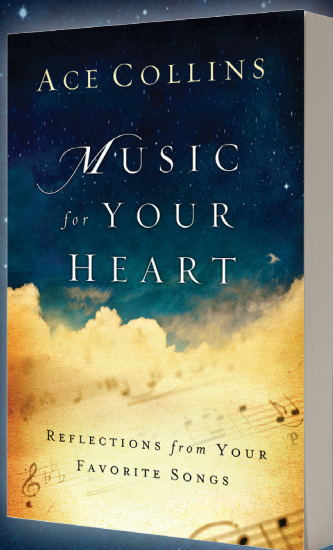
By Ace Collins

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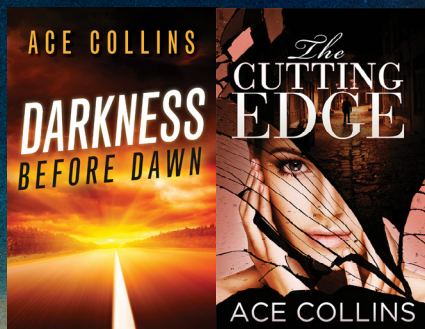
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Master Storyteller Ace Collins



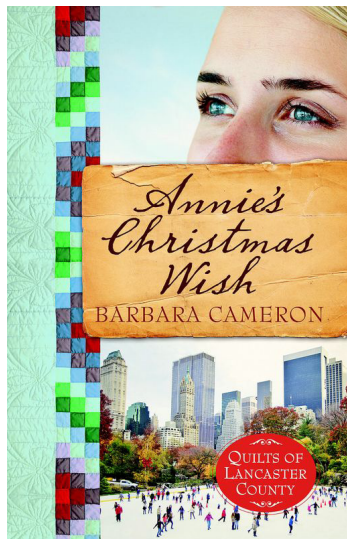
“Behind every song is a story. Ace Collins’s meticulous research and wonderful writing have shown me how my favorite inspirations and gospel songs came to be.”—**Joe Bonsall**, The Oak Ridge Boys

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CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE 2013

ANNIE'S CHRISTMAS WISH (ABINGDON PRESS)



WILL NEW YORK CITY LURE ANNIE AWAY FROM HER HOME...AND THE POSSIBILITY OF LOVE?

Ever since her step-mom brought her a snow globe of the New York City skyline, Annie has wanted to visit the beautiful, big city. Because it's nearing the time of Annie's rumschprunge—the time when Amish youth experience English life to make a decision whether to live in that world or become baptized into the Amish faith—the family decides a visit is a good idea. They watch the Macy's Christmas Parade, admire the decorated store windows, skate at the Rockefeller Center Rink and—Annie's favorite—get a glimpse of a writer's life while visiting the *New York Times* building.

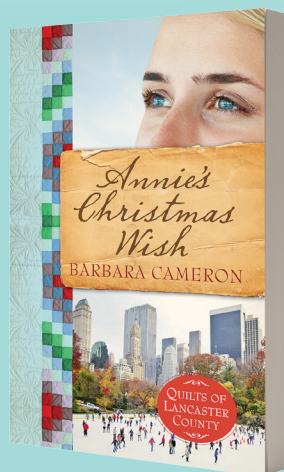
However, others aren't as thrilled with Annie's lure to the Big Apple. Aaron long has been attracted to Annie and is sure he's in love. As he watches her engage in the big city, he grows concerned that she won't want to return to their quieter life. Will Annie follow Aaron back home, or stay and pursue her dreams? Competing for her attention, Aaron sets out to show Annie that Christmas isn't about the glitz and glamour, but about family, love and the birth of Jesus.

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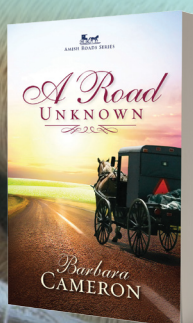
The Exciting Conclusion to the Quilts of Lancaster County Series by Popular Amish Author **BARBARA CAMERON**

Annie's Christmas Wish

Ever since her stepmother brought her a snow globe of the New York City skyline, Annie has wanted to visit the city. With Christmas approaching, now is a good time to visit, to see the sights, to admire the decorated store windows, and to skate at the Rockefeller Center rink. But as Aaron watches Annie's excitement, he grows concerned that the woman he loves won't return to their quieter life, especially after an unexpected offer threatens to change all their lives. Will New York City lure Annie away from her home and family . . . forever?



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WORSHIP

MUSIC



MATT REDMAN

Your Grace Finds Me (Six Steps)

FOR FANS OF: Chris Tomlin, Matt Maher

★★★★

Matt Redman has provided numerous gifts to the church with each new album he's released. From early favorites like "The Heart of Worship" to last year's Grammy Award-winning "10,000 Reasons (Bless Your Name)," Redman's songs have resonated for 20 years. *Your Grace Finds Me* is his latest album and it comfortably fits in the catalog as another loaded live offering that includes certain future favorites like the title track and the powerful "Come And See."

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Your Grace Finds Me"



PHIL WICKHAM

The Ascension (Fair Trade Services)

FOR FANS OF: Rend Collective Experiment, Shane and Shane

★★★

Phil Wickham has already proven he is a masterful songwriter, and gifted worship leader. *The Ascension* is no different. He soars vocally on the title track, and also tones down his vibrato for a gorgeous hymn-style song, "When My Heart Is Torn Asunder." His only misstep is on "Wonderful," which feels a bit obligatory.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "When My Heart Is Torn Asunder"



LAURA STORY

God of Every Story (Fair Trade Services)

FOR FANS OF: Kari Jobe, Meredith Andrews

★★★

Laura Story's lovely voice and songwriting are enough to carry the title track and the inspiring, "I Can Just Be Me," to solid heights. The rest of the album emanates from a place of vulnerability, borne from her husband's health issues and the birth of their first child. The songs certainly span the gamut of life's ups and downs, though not quite as seamlessly as her previous work. "You Gave Your Life" hearkens to vintage Amy Grant, alluding to Laura's own developing status as a CCM icon.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "I Can Just Be Me"

ADULT CONTEMPORARY

MUSIC


STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN
The Glorious Unfolding

(Reunion Records)

 FOR FANS OF: Michael W. Smith,
 Matthew West, Chris Tomlin

★★★★★

On his first album of all original tunes in seven years, Steven Curtis Chapman sure has plenty to share when it comes to life, love, loss and longing. Even with 57 Dove Awards and 47 chart-topping singles, the veteran is still at the top of his game, once again redefining the contemporary pop sound he practically invented, alongside contemplative ballads that provide a strikingly vulnerable view of the singer/songwriter's soul.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Together"


NATALIE GRANT
Hurricane (Curb Records)

 FOR FANS OF: Kari Jobe,
 Francesca Battistelli, Nichole
 Nordeman

★★★★★

Listening to something like *Hurricane* is simply a joy. It's a well-curated collection of jewels, with Grant's signature voice breathing life into songs like "Burn Bright" and the moving lullaby, "When I Leave the Room." A few surprising additions include duet, "Born to Be," featuring Gary LeVox of Rascal Flatts, and the bluegrass-tinged, "In The End," both of which are stellar, proving that Natalie Grant just gets better with time.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "Born To Be"


DARA MACLEAN
Wanted (Fervent Records)

 FOR FANS OF: Plumb, Brooke
 Fraser

★★★

Few pop artists are as diverse as Dara Maclean, whose new album, *Wanted*, shows off as many facets of her talent as her breakthrough 2011 debut, *You Got My Attention*. The title track starts out the album with a positive upbeat note reminiscent of Mandisa's new hit "Overcomer." "Blameless" keeps up a gospel feel, while "Love Is" sounds like a Brooke Fraser outtake. Elsewhere, Maclean shows off solid rock chops alongside tender ballads in a total package with something for everyone.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Love Is"

ROCK

MUSIC

**ICON FOR HIRE***Icon for Hire* (Tooth & Nail)

FOR FANS OF: TFK, Evanescence

★★★★

Two years ago, Icon for Hire made Tooth & Nail history with the label's highest-charting debut, *Scripted*. Expectations are understandably high for the band's new self-titled album, but Ariel Bloomer and company are clearly up to the challenge. "Cynics & Critics" is a strong, highly-charged opener, and "Nerves" rides a nice rock groove. "Watch Me" sounds like a dark Top-40 pop outtake and reveals another side of a well-rounded band. It's clear the best is yet to come from Tooth & Nail's young anchors.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Cynics & Critics"

**STRYPER***No More Hell To Pay*

(Frontiers Records)

FOR FANS OF: Petra, Motley
Crue, Poison

★★★★

There's no better way to celebrate a 30th anniversary than with all four original members turning in one of their hardest-rocking and most spiritually powerful records to date. Just as aggressive as it is melodic, *No More Hell To Pay* is pumped full of massive guitar solos, layered harmonies and an intentional nod to Stryper's early days without ever coming across as dated.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Saved By Love"

**ROYAL TAILOR***Royal Tailor*

(Provident Label Group)

FOR FANS OF: TobyMac, Brian
Littrell, newsboys

★★★

Royal Tailor took the industry by storm with their debut release. Their self-titled sophomore project looks to maintain that momentum. The slick vocals from Tauren Wells and the solid electronica-pop songs are fun and upbeat. The addition of TobyMac on "Jesus Fire" doesn't hurt! While the lyrical landscape didn't stray far from their previous album, the sonic maturity is clear and indicative of a very promising future.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "Give Me Faith"



ROCK SPOTLIGHT

NINE LASHES

In just under two years, Nine Lashes went from basically being a regional, Alabama-bred act with a small but steady army of fans to major players on the national alternative rock/metal circuit, touring alongside RED and I Am Empire, amongst others. The story of Thousand Foot Krutch front man Trevor McNeven passing on a demo to Tooth & Nail Records (who quickly signed the group) continues to be a beacon of hope to young bands starting out, as is Nine Lashes' enormous growth on its second CD *From Water To War*. Front man Jeremy Dunn recently gave CCM a glimpse into the hard-hitting and honest project, alongside an intimate window into his spiritual journey as of late.

CCM: *To what extent does **From Water To War** fall in line with Nine Lashes' past and what are the newer elements?*

Jeremy Dunn: We really pushed ourselves to add to our sound with this album. We really wanted to take the digital aspect of our sound from the last album, like the "Anthem" intro or "The Intervention," and expand upon it. I think we ended up with a really well-rounded album.

CCM: *What are the greatest examples of personal growth you've encountered between last year's **World We View** and the new album?*

Dunn: Personally, it was when I finally gave up trying to make God fit into my idea of what my life should look like. I hadn't even realized I was doing it. So many times I had told God I would follow Him, not yet recognizing that my heart had conditions that still had to be met. God patiently worked on my stubborn heart until those conditions faded. But the work's not over. It takes waking up everyday and deciding to want His way instead of my way. And some days, I admittedly don't. Thank God that He's full of mercy.

CCM: *Did the group feel any pressure while working on this project, considering this is your sophomore outing on a national level?*

Dunn: We really tried to block out that pressure. We wanted to really focus on growth. If you let the wrong kinds of pressure push you, then I feel like you end up with something less than genuine. At the end of the day, we just want our hearts to come through, unfiltered and raw. That's what people relate to: realness.

—Andy Argyrakis

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT NINELASHES.COM

INDIE

MUSIC

**DEREK WEBB**

I Was Wrong, I'm Sorry & I Love You (Fair Trade Services)
FOR FANS OF: Caedmon's Call, Sola-Mi

★★★★★

Ten years after his solo debut, Derek Webb returns to his acoustic confessional roots on his new album, *I Was Wrong, I'm Sorry & I Love You*. Webb spent the last few albums exploring and expanding his musical interests and theological ideas. Now that he's come full circle, he's given us his masterwork—an album armed with the wisdom that only comes from such travels.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Eye of the Hurricane"

**JENNY YOUNGMAN**

The Girl with Good Intentions (Independent)
FOR FANS OF: Sara Groves, Jill Phillips, Audrey Assad

★★★★

Ablly produced by Andrew Osenga (Andrew Peterson, Matthew Perryman Jones), *The Girl* issues ten thoughtful tunes of justice, image and personal faith along the musical backdrop of acoustic-driven singer-songwriter pop. Brimming with handcrafted lyrics of home and heart, Youngman's everyday song scenes create a simple, yet effective musical prose—especially for spiritually seeking moms.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "To Be Brave"

**DAVID GLENN**

Relentless (Evident Music/
Elevate Entertainment)
FOR FANS OF: Passion, NewSong, Matt Redman

★★★★

He's led worship, recorded and toured for more than a decade, but believe it or not, *Relentless* marks David Glenn's official national introduction. Given his history, it's no surprise to find plenty of seasoned songwriting crafted in the vertical tradition, while warm and inviting vocals fit snugly within powerhouse production from frequent Third Day collaborator, Scotty Wilbanks.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "We Are One (Stand United)"



INDIE SPOTLIGHT

THE CHOIR

Nearly three decades have passed since The Choir debuted with *Voices in Shadows*. While most of their colleagues have long since called it quits, the celebrated alt-rock band continues to circle back again and again for new meaningful releases. A new Kickstarter campaign means another studio and live album are both on the way.

We recently caught up with Steve Hindalong and Dan Michaels to find out a bit more about the details and what it means to still make music after all these years.

CCM: Fifteen albums since the mid-'80s is just an incredible feat over an astonishing amount of time. Do you ever talk together as a band about how rare it is to still make music together?

Steve Hindalong: Well, we know we're lucky and blessed. Every song, every recording has been firmly fixed in the urgency of the "here and now." We've recorded most of our albums with the mindset that it would be our last, because that's what we truly suspected. We've never had a dispute that I can recall over money, because we've never been about that—even though we've each been desperately broke at times. Sure, we annoy each other and have our disagreements as families do, but ultimately we extend one another grace. The music we make is more important than the success of the band. And our friendship is more important than the music.

CCM: Are there elements of songwriting and performing that remain true no matter how long you're in the business? For example, is the joy of making music the same?

Steve: It's always more joyful, personally speaking, to write songs from the heart rather than trying to meet someone else's expectations. In the early years the process was more exciting perhaps, but also more stressful due to the tension of learning to work together and the pressure we felt to succeed.

After decades of what we consider to be artistic success and commercial failure, we don't expect a windfall. But we've gained confidence in our own abilities and our mutual respect for each other has deepened; so the creative process is definitely more peaceful. It has become increasingly gratifying to offer what we feel are emotive songs to individuals who will carry them in their hearts.

CCM: The response on Kickstarter has been strong. Are you surprised?

Dan Michaels: Short answer? Yes. We remain humbled by the generosity of our close tribe. But after 30 years, we've enjoyed getting to know many of our supporters to a place where we consider them close friends. And these are the kind of friends we have come to realize will have our backs when we need them.

—Matt Conner

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT THECHOIR.NET

URBAN

MUSIC

**FLAME*****Royal Flush*** (Clear Sight Music)

FOR FANS OF: KB, Derek Minor, Da' T.R.U.T.H.

★★★★

A #1-selling *Billboard* artist, actor and seminarian, gospel hip-hopster, FLAME, packs trendy tracks with sound theology, providing the issue-oriented genre with Kingdom-seeking solutions. Joining Christ's all-in salvation sacrifice as the all-time trump, the Grammy-, Dove- and Stellar-nominated artist interpolates hard-hitting hip-pop with impactful sermonettes to create an effective ministry of rhyme and rhythms—featuring genre peers like KB and V. Rose.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "Start Over" (ft. NF)

**VICKI YOHE*****Free Worshipper: A Praise and Worship Experience***

(Shanachie)

FOR FANS OF: Martha Munizzi, William McDowell, The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir

★★★

A long-respected and in-demand worship leader, the Dove- and Stellar-nominated songstress fills her latest tracks with verses proclaiming God's power, aptly administered by her renowned soul vocal. Though her delivery errs on performance with vocal tricks aplenty, Yohe is musically at home in this live setting and translates her passion for praise to tape with deep conviction.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "God is Good"

**BRYAN POPIN*****You Can Make It*** (eOne Music)

FOR FANS OF: Israel Houghton, Tamela Mann, Martha Munizzi

★★★★

A singer-songwriter-musician veteran with song cuts by 'NSYNC, collaborations with Chaka Khan and now high-profile production and guest slots (Tamela Mann, Martha Munizzi) on his national debut, Popin could easily captain a relevant mainstream gig. Instead the burgeoning worship leader harnesses a corporate-leaning set list with finely tuned gospel/R&B musical skills, polished pop production and accessible—but convicted—lyrics. Popin's debut is a uniquely attractive package start to finish.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "I Can Make It" (ft. Byron "Mr. Talkbox" Chambers)

A black and white portrait of Bryan Popin, a man with a mustache, looking directly at the camera with his hand near his ear.

URBAN SPOTLIGHT

BRYAN POPIN

Ten years ago, singer-songwriter Bryan Popin was reveling in highfalutin musical collaborations and industry attention. But after a season of no work, no money and little hope, Popin went back to his spiritual roots. Rediscovering God rejuvenated his desire to encourage folks through music, spawning his debut worship-urban project—*You Can Make It* (eOne Music), released last month, featuring gospel collaborations with Tamela Mann and Martha Munizzi and producer credits by Ira Shickman, Bryan Lenox and Myron Butler. Here Bryan shares with CCM about his long journey back to musical center.

CCM: Your musical and spiritual journeys started as a pre-teen. How did you finally end up here with the release of *You Can Make It*?

Bryan Popin: In 2001, I was surrounded by a season of God's favor. I was writing with Chaka Khan, having dinner with Stevie Wonder and Justin Timberlake and N'SYNC recorded a song I cowrote. But shortly after, I went through a nine-year dry spell. I almost went bankrupt. I almost lost my marriage. We were living in areas that were not safe. I felt like I was in a battle to just exist. I made a decision to press in to God deeper than ever before. Through personal worship, I started to rebuild my life on faith and trust in His love for me, and that He would take my failures and bless them. *You Can Make It* is a life journey of songs I wrote that helped me get through. He has been so faithful. In this record, people will feel my heartbeat.

CCM: As a worship leader and artist with significant performance poise and creative sensibilities, how do you define "worship" music?

Bryan: My heart is that worship music be simple enough the congregation can let go of life circumstances and just spend time giving God the one thing He wants—us. For me, worship is encouraged through music. But I don't have to play the piano or be involved in a huge, beautiful musical atmosphere to worship God. I've learned to give Him worship in the car, while cooking, while running. Worship has become a way to simply exist.

CCM: What do you hope to accomplish through sharing your personal song storybook?

Bryan: I love people and want to see them win in life, in ministry and with their families. I never want to forget all the things God has allowed me to go through and spared me from. I know God is a real God. He helped me make it. And with all of my heart I know that you can make it.

—Andrew Greer

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT BRYANPOPIN.COM

CROSSOVER

MUSIC

**JONNY LANG*****Fight For My Soul*** (Concord)

FOR FANS OF: Robert Randolph & The Family Band, Rhett Walker Band, Mike Farris

★★★★

After a seven-year gap between trips to the studio, guitar prodigy/blues hero Jonny Lang dives even deeper into his spiritual journey and once again turns in a set of uplifting tunes sure to tear the house down. The 32-year-old's soulful vocals sound like they're literally on fire as he belts out bold but relatable evangelistic lyrics, while his six-string skills have only refined with time.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Blew Up (The House)"

**SANDI PATTY*****Everlasting*** (Stylos)

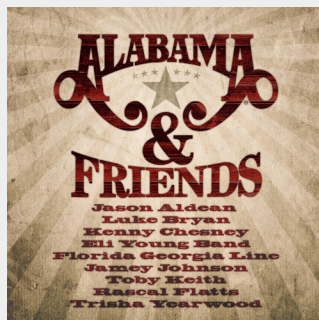
FOR FANS OF: Kathy Troccoli, Point of Grace

★★★★

With three Platinum albums and five Grammy Awards for her name, Sandi Patty is the most celebrated female vocalist in Christian music history. Her latest album, *Everlasting*, lends her magnificent vocal ability to familiar staples like "10,000 Reasons (Bless The Lord)," "In Christ Alone" and "Revelation Song." While the entire album is a pleasant listen, Vince Gill's "Go Rest High on That Mountain" is the album's dusty cornerstone.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Go Rest High on That Mountain"

**ALABAMA & FRIENDS*****Alabama & Friends***

(Show Dog/Universal Music)

FOR FANS OF: Toby Keith, Jason Aldean, Florida Georgia Line

★★★★

The recently reunited inspirational country act earns turns in two new tunes intermingled with tributes from Jason Aldean, Luke Bryan, Rascal Flatts, Toby Keith, Kenny Chesney and Trisha Yearwood (among others). Considering so many of these old hits are bedrocks of the entire genre, it's hard to improve upon them even as spirited covers, though Alabama's pair of current, deeply introspective ballads prove the band is well on its way back.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "All American"



CROSSOVER SPOTLIGHT

ELLIE HOLCOMB

If you're already familiar with Ellie Holcomb, it's likely due to her role alongside her husband in Drew Holcomb and the Neighbors. Yet the talented vocalist has been penning her own beautiful melodies for some time, and *With You Now* is the latest batch of evidence. The six-song EP is a moving collection built around Holcomb's delicate vocal.

CCM: *Given that you are involved with other projects, including the band with your husband, what sort of expectations and hopes do you have for your own music?*

Ellie: That's a great question. I think at the end of the day, I have no clue what it will look like, logistically, in terms of managing, playing, recording my own things in addition to playing in the band. But I can tell you this—the reason that I'm interested in making music on my own at all would be that I hope the stuff that I write would refresh the hearts of saints.

The reason I write music with God's Word woven in is that I forget all the time what's true. I just forget, and so I write the songs I do to remind myself of what's true. And also I want to be real and honest because for a long time I didn't know you could be real. Growing up in a church, I was taught you had to be perfect, and I'm learning that's not what it's about at all. It's about God's goodness.

CCM: *So it's about sharing what you've learned then?*

Ellie: If anything I write can encourage a weary heart along the way, or refresh, renew or remind someone of how good God is and how much He loves them, that would be my hope for this music. I know you've got to pay for recording and for marketing, but I would just love for people to be encouraged by these songs. I'd love for as many people to hear them as possible. That's sort of the hope.

CCM: *You recently went to Africa. Do you feel like a different person after the experience?*

Ellie: I knew I would be impacted, but what I learned when I was there was it's not us helping them doing things through FashionABLE or Mocha Club—and Mocha Club says that all the time—it's really just all of us. We're all human and we all struggle and we overcome. So there was this beautiful connection with a bunch of humans over there, and it's just this beautiful experience of realizing that I might actually need to know them more than they need to know me. I think they might have more to offer me than anything I can offer them, but what a beautiful thing that we get to offer grace and love and kindness to each other.

—Matt Conner

VISIT ELLIEHOLCOMB.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION

FILMS

ENTERTAINMENT



GRACE UNPLUGGED

Christian filmmaking has come a long way in the last few years.

As story lines have become more believable, dialogue more palpable and production more on par with mainstream filmmaking, Christian film is coming into an era in which the viewer is not as distracted by production quality and can invest in the message of the film.

Such is the case with *Grace Unplugged*. The premise is not the most original—Hollywood star finds redemption away from the spotlight

and lives a happy life until his daughter sees the glimmering lights of stardom in the distance and heads that way.

In this particular story, however, the daughter on the verge of stardom and temptation is completely believable as a starlet on the horizon. AJ Michalka not only has the look of a star; she has the vocal chops to back it up.

Surround that with a supportive cast consisting of James Denton and Michael Pollack, and *Grace Unplugged* is easily the most appealing family film at the box office this year.

Beyond the casting and production, *Grace Unplugged* makes a major right move with its soundtrack. Reading like a who's who in current Christian music, the set list behind the film includes Chris Tomlin, Jamie Grace, Thousand Foot Krutch, Nine Lashes, and, of course, several tracks from the leading lady herself.

CCM caught up with Jamie Grace on the Dove Awards red carpet, where she shared her experience of not only being on the film soundtrack, but of making her big-screen debut as an actress.

"It was an incredible experience," says Jamie. "To work with the cast and crew...it was different than just doing the music thing, but so much fun."

Given her performance, it's a safe bet to assume that *Grace Unplugged* is but the first of Jamie Grace's film experiences.

Likewise, given the return at the box office, *Grace Unplugged* seems to have ushered in a new era of Christian filmmaking ... one that doesn't settle for second-rate production; one that doesn't shy from the truth of the faith; one that will begin to do what we are called to do—share the love and truth of Christ with the world.

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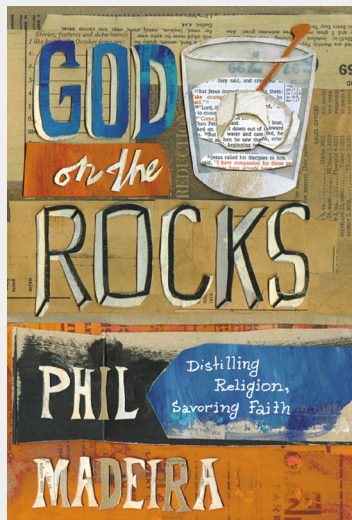
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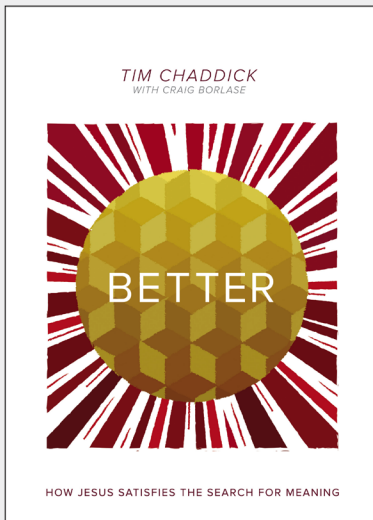
ENTERTAINMENT

**GOD ON THE ROCKS**

Author: Phil Madeira

Publisher: Jericho Books

Phil Madeira is a celebrated musician who has played with some of the biggest names in the industry. However the songwriter is also a talented writer with an endearing, vulnerable new memoir entitled *God on the Rocks*. As Madeira opens up about his journey on “the long ride to Somewhere,” he invites the reader into intimate places of freedom and fear. It’s a meaningful read that will encourage the reader to look past stale religion to find real faith.

**BETTER**

Author: Tim Chaddick with Craig Borlase

Publisher: David C. Cook

Tim Chaddick, the founding pastor of Reality L.A., takes on familiar topics in his new book *Better*, as he calls Christians to seek God with their life. Using the wisdom found in Ecclesiastes, Chaddick utilizes his engaging, youthful style to speak to issues of worry, money, life and death. *Better* probes the wisdom of Solomon with contemporary eyes, and Christians will be better for reading it.

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IN THE STUDIO WITH GORDON MOTE

Album Title: *All Things New*

Label: New Haven Records

Release Date: August 27, 2013

Recording Studio: Ocean Way and Sony Tree, Nashville, TN

Producers: Frank Rogers, Wayne Haun and Russell Mauldin

Number of Songs: 13

Gordon Mote's lauded keyboard skills have landed him on the road and in the studio with music biggies like Alan Jackson, Carrie Underwood and Lionel Richie. But it is his heartfelt story of overcoming his lonely early days growing up blind to share his faith in God on stages worldwide that has earned him respect and love throughout the industry. His latest solo project, *All Things New* (New Haven Records) features collaborations with a diverse roster of

friends like Josh Turner, Matthew West, Darius Rucker and the Gaither Vocal Band. Here's a sneak peek into the studio brain of one of the industry's leading musical geniuses.

SONG SOIREE: I love so many different styles of music, and as a result *All Things New* runs the musical gamut. It certainly has a good bit of country influence, and at the same time a little New Orleans feel, big power ballads, and of course a worship sound with faith-driven lyrics. –*Gordon Mote*

PRODUCER TO THE STARS: A good producer can get the best players and singers, give them a little direction, and listen to them come up with ideas you never could have thought of. It's crazy when you get that kind of talent in one room! I have great respect for every guest on this project. They are not only incredibly gifted musicians, they are fantastic people. I'm grateful to have had the chance to work alongside each one. –*G.M.*

VULNERABLY SPEAKING:

As I'm listening to songs or writing, I ask myself, *Is this something I would say if I were having a conversation with someone?* It is important that I'm honest with my audience about my faith and my struggles in life. I want them to listen saying, 'That guy is just a normal person who happens to play and sing.' –*G.M.*



IN THE STUDIO WITH GORDON MOTE

MUSIC OF THE HEART: This is my ninth solo project and I love the entire recording process. As a solo artist, I'm able to share my heart with the listener. I'm grateful that God has called me to sing about Him. I'm hopeful that the music and lyrics will lead people to Christ and the wonderful salvation He offers them. -G.M

+ FOR MORE INFORMATION ON GORDON, VISIT GORDONMOTE.COM



GEAR GUIDE

DIGITAL AUDIO WORKSTATION



As a consumer in the digital world, the growth of new formats and products can either make life great or difficult for end users. Many subscribe to monthly online publications, downloading issues in PDF format to print out, or to read on portable devices when they are released. However, I and others still prefer the traditional mailed hard copy of a magazine. I believe there's something special about holding a mag in your hands, thumbing through the pages soaking in the content.

Discovering new companies as they emerge trying to outdo the competition with trumped up specs and claims, and deciphering what is fact or fiction can make one's head spin! Their colorful large ads with tiny descriptions send us gear heads to the www to learn more about their product and read experiences of others. Online forums are often loaded with love and loathe for a particular product, which I find helpful since money is hard to invest into a home project studio these days. The unfortunate part of buying today means it will likely be obsolete tomorrow. This is why we wait like kids on Christmas Eve wondering what's inside the box under the tree! It's part of the fun of having

G.A.S., better known as Gear Acquisition Syndrome!

Thank God, with technology we have new ways to capture tone to tape without having to turn the amps up to 11, have the police called, and be in the doghouse! With today's DAW (Digital Audio Workstation), they come standard with plugins that can make George Benson sound like Eddie Van Halen without needing to change genres! There are also third-party plugins you can try before you buy to see if they do the trick for you. They are usually called "LE" for "Light Edition" that can be downloaded and installed without having to deplete your cash reserves or run up your credit card.

So let's plug that guitar into an audio interface connected to your computer and launch an amp simulator. Finally you have the wall of sound you could have never achieved in the past while mic'ing up an amp. Plus, you're not getting into spouse trouble to boot. That's always a bonus.

As you tweak the plugin interface, switching out amps, cabinets and effects, you will come to learn something important. It sounds like a digital amp simulator. Which may be what you are after,

GEAR GUIDE

DIGITAL AUDIO WORKSTATION

but I want to tell you there is another way to get that fat, warm, luscious, creamy, crunchy (insert whatever adjective you want here).

If you have the means of sending a track from your DAW, providing playback through a multi-out audio interface and a tube pre-amp, then you are good to go. Most tube mic pre's have both options of XLR input or the 1/4 inch instrument input. The 1/4" will give you a better sound. Connect and add the guitar amp simulator of choice in your DAW. Once you have it dialed in, bypass the amp simulator, and just work on the input of the pre that your guitar is connected to. Bypassing the amp simulator allows you to hear the way the pre responds when soft or hard strikes are played on the connected guitar. Adjust the preamp gain to just under the distortion point. If your pre has a built-in compressor, try using a 4:1 ratio, fast attack, medium release and -3dB of reduction on the threshold.

Now that you are dialed in, check the input on the amp simulator plugin and set it up to just under clipping. Try choosing a typical Fender or Mesa Boogie amp setting and start on the low end of the gain. Increase until desired results. In tracking like this, I find that my guitar tone is richer, fuller and even has more dynamics than the straight-in approach. Sometimes a -6 narrow notch at 2k helps remove some nasal honkiness, but I would also do this

with real amps to get my sound.

The advantage to recording this way is that you are recording your instrument dry, with only the color and tone of the tube pre being printed. This will let you track the perfect take, but you are not stuck with the chosen amp simulator sound. Once you blend your new recorded track in the mix you can now switch amps, effects and adjust gains, equalizer, and compressors. If the client says the guitar appears too thin or too dark sounding, it's a quick fix and you do not have to re-track the perfect take. This is called Re-Amping.

If you're looking for a recommended product for a tube pre-amp, I suggest the DBX 376 Mic Pre. I have used different ones, but this particular model I use for this purpose only, and the people I work with always ask me how did I get that sound? Well there you go, I just gave you my first secret:) CCM

Glenn Thomas is the owner of ITune Audio, a production studio in Newfoundland. Glenn is making a name for himself by providing impeccable services for songwriters, artists and bands.



ITUNE AUDIO.COM

INDUSTRY INSIDER

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

I've been busy lately writing a book called *MISSION:POSSIBLE*. It's something I have been meaning to do for a while, but just haven't had enough time, or desire, or both to get around to it. However, recently, I have a new sense of urgency to write my book and communicate the mission and vision of my Indieheaven organization. I have received quite an education on the importance of telling the story of your mission.

For musicians and artists, telling your story can open doors of opportunity, draw new friends and fans your way and help you connect with people in a more personable manner. As we all know by now, music is everywhere. There has never been a time in history where music has been more embedded into the fabric of culture. Music is like water. If you are thirsty, you find a water fountain, press the button and out it comes. Same goes for the Internet. Everywhere you go, there is music to check out. There are more artists than ever promoting their music online. Everyone wants to be the next big thing. So, how does an artist stand out among the rest?

The answer is by telling your story. We all have a story. We are all part of His Story. I know what you may be thinking... "So what about my story? There isn't anything about my story that people would like." Don't sell yourself short. Our story is our testimony. It is a documentation of how God has worked in our lives. By telling your story,

you are being vulnerable, transparent and authentic. This is what draws people to artistic creatives these days.

I believe people are drawn to artists who are creating compelling content that breaks industry rules and serves others by enriching their lives. Songs can certainly communicate vulnerability, transparency and authenticity to a listener. A blog, a post on a social network, or even a "tweet" on Twitter can also attract people to you, who can then turn into a fan of your music and engage you on a personal level. Engagement is the name of the game for anyone on a mission to increase the scope and breadth of their influence online.

I have seen this firsthand in my experiments on Twitter and Facebook. What I have found is that people will engage me as I share thought-provoking posts, blogs and articles. This is what draws artists to join my Indieheaven organization, or someone to Indieheaven to see what it's all about. Now, I am not the most language-savvy writer—I joke that I took English as a foreign language in high school. And that's OK! You don't have to be a brainiac in order to draw people your way. Simply let what's on your mind or in your heart flow out. Most often, what flows out spontaneously is the sweetest nectar. It's after nitpicking yourself that "analysis paralysis" sets in, and the sweetness of what you shared is lost.

So, let's get back to telling our story. I have found it to be a challenging exercise

INDUSTRY INSIDER

to write my story in as few words as possible, yet with enough content to communicate the most important parts. When sharing your story, stick to important

events, and life lessons you have learned. Be careful not to go off on bunny trails and tangents that will cause people to tune out and move onto something else. Make the

ordinary extraordinary by the word choices and the cadence of your sentences. Be artistic, be creative and be compelling! Don't allow "you know who" to tell you your story isn't important and that people won't care. I challenge you to take time to write out your life story and share it with people. You might be surprised by the response. You just might gain some new friends, fans, and followers! Have fun and keep up the excellent faith-work! CCM

Keith Mohr is founder/president of Indieheaven.com, an organization for independent Christian musicians, song writers and artists.

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STORY BEHIND THE SONG

“PAINTING PICTURES OF EGYPT” & “ALL RIGHT HERE”

ARTIST: SARA GROVES

ALBUM: *SARA GROVES
THE COLLECTION*



Sara Groves has been weaving deep, substantive lyrics around memorable melodies for years, distinguishing her as a soulful, introspective and

wise songwriter and storyteller. Her most recent release, *Sara Groves The Collection*, features 20 of Sara's all-time favorite songs, along with four new tracks. Below, check out the story behind two of Sara's most compelling songs.

“PAINTING PICTURES OF EGYPT”

It's about the way we romanticize the past even though it wasn't the best thing for us. I was reading about the Israelites in the desert and was trying to think about how I would have responded in their place. I think my tendency is to want to go back to what I know instead of waiting for the promise. But the key line is “the places that used to fit me cannot hold the things I've learned.” You can't go back anyway, so trust in God and move on.



“ALL RIGHT HERE”

This is just a simple observation song. When I talk to you, I'm talking to all your experiences. We're all carrying stuff around and our history leaks out whether we want it to or not. I believe we have to incorporate all that happens into who we are because that's our story. And God's going to use it to bring glory to Himself. CCM

+ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SARA AND THE COLLECTION, VISIT SARAGROVES.COM.

From Author Jane Kirkpatrick

NEW YORK TIMES

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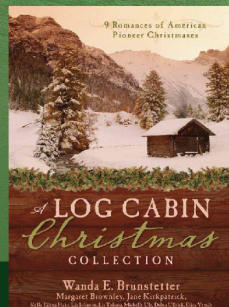
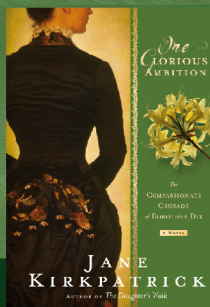
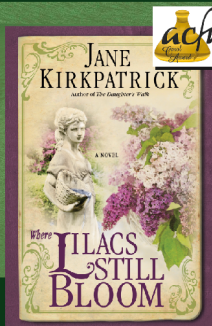
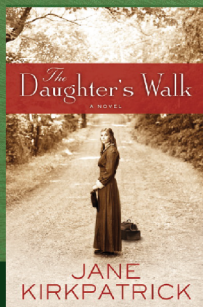
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DARA MACLEAN

THE NEWLYWED REFLECTS
ON FAITH, GRATITUDE AND
ANSWERED PRAYERS

I am so thankful to say that I am five months newly married and in love with every step of the process. We have much to learn, but are so aware of how blessed we are to have each other to get to learn with. The Bible says “one can put a thousand to flight, but two can put ten thousand to flight.” We believe God’s plan for marriage is that you would see multiplication and protection happen in every area of your life and you would be able to do more for the Kingdom of God together than apart. We are so humbled because daily, we have seen that happen. My husband and I just accepted a Young Adults Pastoral position at our church. I assist him in that, and am also involved as a Worship Pastor, in addition to what I do as an artist.

This happened within the last few months and was the answer to an exact prayer that we prayed when we were engaged and preparing for marriage.

“God, we want to do ministry together for the rest of our lives. We are asking you to make a way for that.”

He so beautifully has and it’s just the start. We know we are nothing without

Him, but every child of God has access to His very best for the sake of His glory and building the Kingdom. We are determined to walk in all He has for us and show the world around us that they can too. The icing on the cake is the fact that my sophomore record *Wanted* just came out. I have no idea what it’s like to have a child and won’t for a while, but metaphorically, I feel like I’ve been in labor for two years. It was an intense process, with lots of tears and having to surrender perfectionism and pressure. Yet somehow, looking back, it feels like there was an overflowing abundance of grace to write, create and walk through every step of this second record process. I am so humbled by it all because I know it’s right, I know it’s who I am and I trust that God gave it to me. If I keep giving it back to Him and say, “just use this and show off Your goodness through it,” I believe that God my father will answer and as He is lifted up, draw many to Him through the avenue of music. This record and this season as a whole, have been the most incredible gifts to me. I remain on my knees thankful and in childlike wonderment of God’s continual faithfulness. CCM



WHY WE SAY THANKS...

For many Christian artists, the holidays are extra special...they often mean a short break in touring or recording, and time to spend with their families. For some, it may be the only season they truly get to relax! We caught up with some of your favorite artists to hear first-hand what this season of thanks means to them.

For more holiday tradition and spirit, check out our Christmas album rundown as even more artists put the sentiment of the holidays in their own words.

For **Jonny Diaz**, a few years ago, the holidays brought a bit of loneliness. "With plans to go back home for Christmas (we had just moved to Nashville), a trip to Florida for Thanksgiving just wasn't in the budget. I was nervous about how my wife would respond. I mean, she had come to Nashville with me to pursue my career and my dreams. I had visions of us just sitting alone at a table for two, thankful for all we had, but feeling very alone in our new town. Praise God this wasn't the case. Our friend, Ryan, and his wife, Nina, invited us over for dinner. Those guys and their

wives were all there and we quickly learned how much we had in common. They too had moved to Nashville to pursue music. They too had left everyone they knew back home to chase after where God was leading them. This was the beginning of our love for a town where people understand exactly what you do, and where you're coming from. The Thanksgiving dinner at Ryan's (with Hawk Nelson) has become an annual tradition. We're so grateful for the ways God has blessed us!" *(Left photo)*

Wes Willis, lead singer of Rush of Fools, has fond memories of past years and is now enjoying celebrating new traditions with his kids. "Who doesn't love Fall?" he says. "It's beautiful in Alabama, my home state, during that time of year. I love it. I used to think my favorite memory was being gathered around my grandmother's kitchen table with our whole family preparing to devour everything on the table. While that's still an amazing memory, my new favorite has to be going to the pumpkin patch with our daughter and two little boys. Blow-up, bouncy inflatables, carnival food and

picking the best pumpkins around. Truly my favorite fall-time memory!"

Jason Gray shares a poignant Thanksgiving memory, made shortly after he returned from a missions trip. "I had been to Africa before and had trouble with the excess of the American lifestyle when I returned," he shares. "That year, our second trip to Africa would have us coming home three days before Thanksgiving and I wondered if, having just spent time with children orphaned by AIDS and communities ravaged by numbing pain and poverty, I would have a hard time celebrating Thanksgiving. Would I feel guilt? Disgust? Sadness? What I felt, in fact, was the deepest sense of gratitude. We are blessed here in our part of the world with laws, infrastructure and freedom that allows for human flourishing. What better symbol of the bounty of our blessings than a heaping feast on our table and a shared meal with those we love? My time among the poor helped me to better see what I have to be grateful for and a vision of what to work for on behalf of all those who bear God's image."

Third Day guitarist **Mark Lee** recalls the best "gift" he received during Thanksgiving as a child. "Thanksgiving gives me something to be thankful for here on earth, yes, but even more so eternally! When I was about nine years old, I was playing video games with my cousins after finishing our Thanksgiving meal. Somehow, the conversation was steered away from 'important kid things,' like how to win at Frogger, to eternal things. Conversations that came up consisted of topics like why

God made us and what happens when we die. One of my cousins had just become a Christian, and I kept asking him questions about it. That night I prayed and received Christ in my heart. Each Thanksgiving I am reminded to be thankful to Jesus for all He's done for me, beginning with my salvation." *(Center photo)*

Francesca Battistelli's favorite memory revolves around her love for cooking, time with family and the iconic Thanksgiving parade. "I've watched the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade every year for as long as I can remember. It is the very definition of the holiday season for me. It brings me back to Thanksgivings growing up in Florida. Mom would be in the kitchen working on the feast (my contribution was always the cranberry sauce, made with real cranberries), and Dad and I would sit and watch the parade together, with my mom only poking her head into the living room for the Broadway numbers. And every year, without fail, one of us comments on how freezing those poor Rockettes must be!"

Mark Graalman of Sanctus Real remembers one Thanksgiving feast in particular, that held more meaning than his family could have known. "Probably the best Thanksgiving we celebrated was with my dad. It was before we realized it would be our last one with him. I made a turkey for the first time and when he (Mark Sr.) went to carve it, he found a plastic bag with all the turkey innards in it! I forgot to take it out! Oops! It was a great laugh, we were surrounded by our family and we were so full of joy that day!" *(Right photo)* CCM

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THE SOUNDS & SOUL OF THE SEASON

It's almost a rite of passage in the life of a musician. It can be both the easiest and the hardest album to create—a Christmas album. Easy because of the familiarity of the songs and a universal spirit of jovialty and celebration; hard because of the familiarity of the songs and the universal spirit of joivalty and celebration. Everyone has a preconceived idea of what Christmas music should be, sound like and say. Everyone has a classic version of carols and other Christmas songs that they grew up with. When an artist tackles a Christmas project, they have to somehow select, write or amend songs so as to find a place withn the Christmas celebrations of listeners, while putting their own artistic stamp upon the song—never easy! Below, check out some of the 2013 Christmas season records that do just that. The holiday and message are consistent. The frame, phrasing and language, unique.

And so, in their own words, here's your 2013 Christmas music lineup.

RELEASES

NORTH POINT MUSIC
NORTH POINT CHRISTMAS: LET THERE BE LIGHT
NORTH POINT

JOHN SCHLITT
CHRISTMAS TBA
INDIE

THE ROBERTSONS
DUCK THE HALLS: A ROBERTSON FAMILY CHRISTMAS
UNIVERSAL/CAPITOL

PAUL BALOCHE
CHRISTMAS WORSHIP
INTEGRITY MUSIC/PROVIDENT

ANDREW GREER
ANGEL BAND: THE CHRISTMAS SESSIONS
INDIE

JASON AHLBRANDT
CHRISTMAS CLASSICS
INDIE

LUKE MCMASTER
MERRY CHRISTMAS, BEAUTIFUL
CHP/CAPITOL

SAM LEVINE
CHRISTMAS BY THE FIRE
CHP/CAPITOL

MARVIN SAPP
CHRISTMAS CARD
RCA INSPIRATION/PROVIDENT

FOR KING & COUNTRY
INTO THE SILENT NIGHT EP
FERVENT RECORDS/WORD

ALL THINGS NEW
CHRISTMAS EP
BEC RECORDINGS/NEW DAY

BRANDON HEATH
CHRISTMAS IS HERE
REUNION RECORDS/PROVIDENT

JONATHAN BUTLER
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU
RENDEZVOUS MUSIC/PROVIDENT

PHILLIPS, CRAIG & DEAN
HOPE FOR ALL THE WORLD
FAIR TRADE SERVICES/PROVIDENT



According to the U.S. Department of State, **HUMAN TRAFFICKING** is : the *recruitment, transportation, transferring, harboring or receiving a human by means of threat, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, or abuse of power, with the goal of forcing that human into prostitution, pornography, violence / sexual exploitation, forced labor, involuntary servitude, debt bondage, or slavery...*

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THE ORPHANS NEXT DOOR

FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION IN AMERICA

When most people think about adoption, their minds go to international adoption or domestic infant adoption—both of which often include long matching processes and large financial costs. In the United States there are over 100,000 orphans. They're not in orphanages—most are in temporary foster homes. Adoption through the U.S. foster care system is paid for almost entirely by the state. Three years ago when I started feeling a nudge toward adoption, I hardly knew anything about this third way to adopt.

In our country when parents are charged with abuse, neglect or abandonment, their children are relocated to a temporary safe home—a relative, friend or a foster home. The goal of foster care is family preservation—for the children to return to their parents when the dust settles—but sometimes it's not possible and the children need to be adopted. The logical choice is for foster parents to adopt the child.

Early in 2011, Jason [my husband] and I felt strongly that God was calling us to become foster parents and potentially adopt through the system. It's scary to think about jumping into parenting someone else's kids who have just experienced their worst nightmare—being separated from their parents—and likely other traumatic events as well. The Lord broke our hearts for these kids, somewhere

around half a million in the U.S., who are taken away from their families and everything familiar and moved to another home while their parents deal with their issues. These kids need substitute parents who are able to love and care for them for as long as necessary, cheer them on at soccer games, encourage their faith, help them process their grief and anger, take them to doctor's appointments, celebrate their birthdays and advocate for them and their future.

Since July 2011, Jason and I have parented three children, each with very different outcomes. Our first little girl was 1.5 and was with us only five weeks before moving in with an extended family member. She made us parents for the first time and we were very sad when she left. Several weeks later we accepted a call for two-month-old Alianna. After a long, crazy,

The Ahlbrandts on Alianna's adoption day, August 7, 2012.



Photo: BethRose.com

roller coaster process, we adopted her just after her first birthday. Our third child was a 2.5 year old boy who joined our family for three months last summer. His mom worked hard to fill all the requirements given to her by the state. She and her son love each other very much and we celebrated when they were reunited. We're

expecting a call any day for our next child. Whether it's for five weeks, three months or forever, we'll do our best to love him or her like the Father loves us. [CCM](#)

Martina Ahlbrandt is an art director at Salem Publishing and one of the designers of CCM. She blogs about her adventures in foster parenthood at [myMCMlife.com](#). Martina, Jason and Alianna live in Nashville, TN.

ANSWERING THE CALL

ARTISTS PROVIDE FOREVER FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD

BY CAROLINE LUSK

Over the years, several Christian artists have taken the scriptural mandate of caring for widows and orphans literally. Several families have adopted, helped others adopt and have aided in spreading adoption awareness around the world. Below are three stories of faith and family, attesting to the blessings that emerge upon adherence to this worthy calling.

You might say **STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN** is the unofficial torchbearer in the Christian music community when it comes to championing adoption. Following the adoption of their first daughter from China, Steven and wife Mary Beth founded Show Hope to offer support for other families called to adopt. They have adopted three daughters from China, Sheohannah, Stevey Joy and Maria Sue. To learn more about Show Hope and the work of the Chapmans, visit [showhope.org](#).

AUDIO ADRENALINE has gone through an incredible metamorphosis over the years. The current lineup includes Kevin Max, former member of dcTalk, in lieu of lead singer **MARK STUART**. Due to vocal problems, Mark had to step away from the microphone; but while doing so, he stepped directly into the role of helping orphans find homes and helping families to fill theirs. In 2004, he and fellow

band member Will McGinniss founded the Hands and Feet Project, originally inspired by their mega-hit, "Hands and Feet." Over time, the passion became much more focused and intentional towards the countless number of orphans created in the wake of the devastating Haitian earthquake. Having adopted children from Haiti themselves, the band reunited in 2012 with a new lead vocalist—Kevin Max—and a new mission—to support the work of the Hands and Feet Project. Visit [handsandfeetproject.org](#) to learn more.

MARK HALL, lead vocalist for **CASTING CROWNS**, and his wife, Melanie, adopted a little girl, Hope, from China. The child had been abandoned at an orphanage in China with life-threatening illnesses. She was 3 years old when Mark and Melanie met her, loved her and made her part of their forever family. Since then, Hope has undergone extensive medical treatments and surgeries to correct the problems. While none have been completely successful in undoing the damage, it's very clear to see that she would not have survived if not for the love and care from her mommy and daddy. Visit [CastingCrowns.com](#) for more information and updates from and about the Halls and the rest of the band. [CCM](#)

WHERE IS THE VOICE OF PROTEST?

From the outset, Jars of Clay has defied convention. From their sound to their hearts for social justice, they've joined an elite group of artists who, throughout the years, have used art as an agent of change. In 2002 they founded Blood:Water Mission to help combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa. The achievements of the organization are stunning. They've provided thousands of villages with access to clean water, medical services and more. Along the way, they've continued to blaze a trail of social awareness through their music. Dan Haseltine shares below the intent behind their music and the inspiration behind their mission.

It is an unfortunate confession that I must admit that music has not been surprising to me for some time. What I mean by this is, the experience of listening to music has not been startling in a way that makes me appreciate things

about the creative process that I had forgotten, until I did something that I had not done since I was a teenager. I bought a record player, and for the inaugural spin, chose, "Synchronicity," by The Police. I am not an audiophile, and I don't have the bandwidth to argue the merits of sound quality, etc. In the age of iPods, and unbridled ability to have control over every second of music with the freedom to skip songs, or re-sequence songs, it was a glorious moment when I found myself bound to the listening experience the artist intended for me to have.

Yes, it is possible to skip a song, but it takes more intentionality to precisely place the needle down. So, I let the album spin. I was surprised by my own reaction to the listening experience. I was transported back with the cracks and imperfections of vinyl as a medium, and rewarded by

the shape of the musical landscape that unfolded as I recognized how each song supported the next one as if it were telling a story. I was hooked. So began my quest to build a vinyl library.

As I began to research and build my list of recordings that I wanted to collect, I remembered the tone of the music from the late 70s and 80s. These were the songs of my musical education. As I began comparing the



voices of those past decades to the current musical voices, it became apparent that something important had been mostly lost. Protest.

Starting in the 1930's with Abel Meeropol's stunning composition, "Strange Fruit," with it's haunting description of lynchings in the south, to Peter Gabriel's dark anthem, "Biko," memorializing the anti-apartheid activists' untimely death, to U2's galvanizing masterpiece, "ONE," it was obvious that artists were taking seriously their role of looking at the world and describing it. I was surprised to see

that there was a steady decline in popular music's protest voices once we reached the 90s and those voices were all but extinct by the time we reached the new millennium. That is not to say they did not exist, but that in the mainstream pop music conscience, protest was a lost perspective.

Do we not still have things worth protesting? What has caused such a decline in the kinds of songs that open our eyes to the areas of our world where we can get our hands dirty? It would be hard to argue that we don't experience war, poverty, injustice, or political and religious conflicts anymore. So where are the songs that help us take the 24-hour news feeds and distill all the information back into a human story that we can imagine ourselves having a role in changing? **CCM**



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DARE TO BE GENEROUS

AN EXCERPT FROM *DARE TO BE DEVOTED*

"Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling His disciples to Him, Jesus said, 'I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.'" — Mark 12:41-44 NIV 1984

The last several years have been unprecedented when it comes to human tragedy. From September 11 to tsunamis and earthquakes to hurricanes and war,

people all over the world have endured horrendous conditions. Add to it an economy that has been, at best, unstable and, at worst, teetering on the edge of another great depression. Times have been tough. Despite the losses, however, people have come forward to help. Donations have been given, relief workers have been sent, heroes have emerged. In the throes of loss, generosity has poured forth. And thanks to technology, it's become increasingly convenient to give. A quick text to the Red Cross, and you've sent your ten dollars overseas. A click of a mouse and that shoebox is stuffed and sent around the world. And hear me when I say...these are all good things.



But what happens when the tragedies subside? What happens when the day-to-day resumes? Do you avert your eyes from the homeless man holding a sign? Do you dig through your purse, looking busy, waiting for the deacon and his offering plate to pass you by? What about your son or daughter who asks for your time and attention when you get home? Or your parent who merely wants a phone call? What happens once generosity is no longer convenient or popular?

In the gospels of Mark and Luke, we read the tale of the widow who gave two mites. Most of us know the story. While others were giving larger sums of money, she threw in the last two coins to her name. In and of themselves, they were practically worthless...worth less than pennies in today's currency. On almost any other day, she and her donation would probably have gone completely unnoticed.

But not that day.

Jesus noticed.

He noticed that out of all the money being given that day, that none gave so much as this woman. He knew that she had just given her entire livelihood. Despite having practically nothing, she chose to be generous. That wasn't convenient or popular or even advisable by the world's standards. But in terms of the divine, she could not have more purely demonstrated her understanding of her Savior and His heart. Her own generosity mirrored that of Jesus'.

Throughout His 33 years on this earth, He lived generously. He gave of His time. He gave of His power. He gave of His unwavering love for us. Much like the widow, He wasn't a man of great resources

when it came to material wealth. And yet over and over, we read that He who had nothing...she who had nothing...gave the most.

That is the kind of generosity I dare you to pursue. I dare you to give more than you feel comfortable. I dare you to give more than you think you can. Be it your money or time or love, I dare you to be lavish just as the Heavenly Father lavished redemption on the world through the sacrifice of His son. Tragedies will always exist. There will always be a relief effort in need of money and skill. And we should all continuously be mindful of and responsive to them. But don't stop there. Don't wait for a tragedy to prompt your heart. And don't separate the rest of your life from your giving. Within your family, your workplace, your church, live with your hands and heart open. Pray for opportunities to give of yourself. When those opportunities emerge, don't hold back. Dare yourself to be radically generous...not conveniently so.

Every life touched by tragedy around the world is in need of someone's selflessness. The same holds true for your family and community. Never underestimate the degree to which you are needed. And never doubt the blessings you in turn will receive. Even if no one is around...much like the widow, Jesus sees your heart. He sees what you give and what you withhold. He notices you. So, as the giver of all life and love has done, let your generosity be extravagant. Let your love be lavish...and let your life reflect the One who gave all. **CCM**



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LEAD ON

Jodi and Chris of Love and the Outcome answer questions about marriage, ministry and making it all work

When it comes to leadership in the home versus leadership in your profession, how do you both find a balance?

JODI: Leadership is service. Jesus modeled that so well. I married such a strong, yet servant-hearted man. We are very different people and have always valued each other's individuality. We lead together, listening to each other and to the Lord for wisdom. We never throw each other under the bus, so to speak; we always have each other's back in public and in private. I trust him completely, so when Chris feels strongly about something, I'll follow him and back him up. When it comes to the show, I can be pretty bossy! I've always been strong-willed and opinionated when it comes to the show. But I married a bass player, so he's never wanted the spotlight!

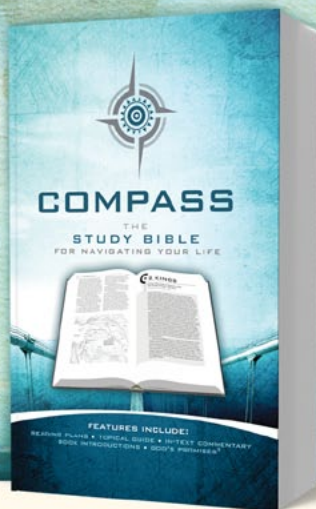


CHRIS: It really depends on the role that we're faced with. There are things that Jodi is naturally better at and things I'm more suited for. We have learned to listen to each other well, and that's really what helps us do this together. And sometimes it seems odd, because I'm a bit more detailed and organized, even though I'm the rock and roll side of Love & the Outcome, whereas Jodi is more free-spirited and communicative, but she loves well-crafted pop songs! I guess I've always been Jodi's biggest fan and I love watching how she engages with people from the stage, so I do whatever I can to make that happen! CCM



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