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winterjam 2014 NIGHT DIVINE

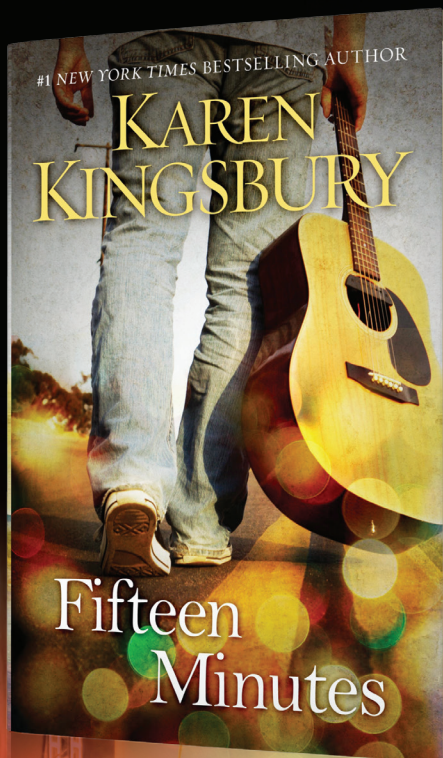
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SOMETHING
TO SAY*



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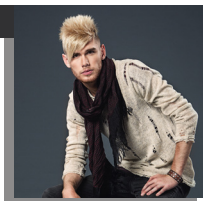
ON THE COVER:

Winter Jam Night Divine



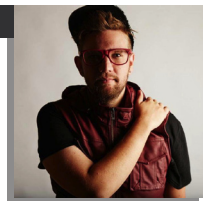
Listen Up!

Colton Dixon has something to say



Jonathan Thulin

No gray area here



A Year of Daily Devotions

The Bible

✠ 10 ✠

THE MANY BENEFITS OF THE PSALMS

Praise the LORD. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him! . . . He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (Psalm 147:1, 3)

A psalm imparts serenity to the soul; it is the author of peace, which calms confused and frantic thoughts. It softens the wrath of the soul, and reigns in what is uncontrolled. A psalm forms friendships, unites those separated, and pacifies those in dispute. What two people can be enemies who have together uttered the same prayer to God? Psalmody and choral singing, therefore, establish a bond toward unity, joining the people into a harmonious union of one choir, and produce the greatest of blessings, charity.

A psalm is a city of refuge from the demons, a means of getting help from the angels, a weapon against fears by night, a rest from toils by day, a safeguard for infants, an adornment for those at the peak of health, a consolation for the elderly, a most beautiful ornament for women. It comforts the lonely. It takes command of the passions.

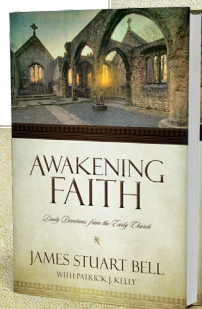
It is the elementary textbook of beginners, the improvement of those advancing, the solid support of the perfect, and the voice of the church. It brightens the feast days; it validates the sorrow that is in accordance with God. For a psalm calls forth a tear even from a heart of stone. A psalm is the work of angels, a heavenly institution, a spiritual incense.

Basil the Great

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CHAPTER

PURCHASE

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DEPARTMENTS

FROM THE EDITOR

COMING NEXT ISSUE

YOUR HEART — An excerpt from *He Walks Among Us* By Richard and Reneé Stearns

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Matthew West



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NEW ARTIST SPOTLIGHT
Seth and Nirva

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GLORIA GAYNOR



MUSICIAN'S CORNER INDUSTRY INSIDER

with Keith Mohr of Indie Heaven

GEAR GUIDE with Jason Ahlbrandt

STORY BEHIND THE SONG
"Walk on Water" by Shonlock

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If you're new to CCM, welcome! We're hoping 2014 is our best year yet, but we need you to help us out there. Let us know what you like and what you don't, what's working for you in the magazine and on the website, and what's not.

We've been blessed with 35 years of covering the greatest music in the world. And we're just getting started.

Happy New Year,



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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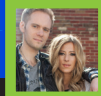


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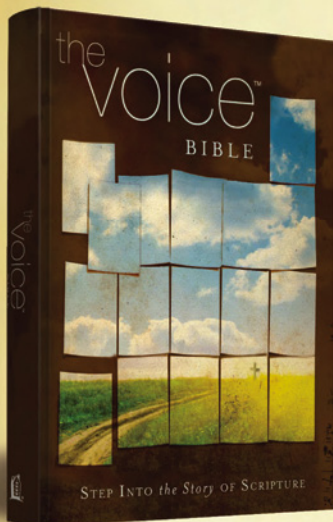


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MATTHEW WEST, SIDEWALK PROPHETS AND JASON CASTRO

INTO THE LIGHT TOUR CENTENNIAL CHAPEL OF OLIVET NAZARENE UNIVERSITY/ BOURBONNAIS, IL

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ANDY ARGYRAKIS

By the time Matthew West launched the latest leg of his *Into The Light* outing, he received over 25,000 letters from fans telling their intensely personal stories, which continue to spark ideas for his remarkably relatable songwriting. After all, there's no one better to tell a tale than the Chicago-bred/Nashville-based troubadour, who's newest, narrative-ripe Sparrow Records release helped usher this show to sold-out status.

After blasting off with previous pop hits like "The Motions" and "More," the incredibly interactive headliner dove in an even more ponderous direction, urging attendees to break free from comfort zone isolation during "My Own Little World" and calling for social justice on the Compassion International-themed "Do Something."



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Perhaps the night's most powerful moments came during "Hello, My Name Is" and "Forgiveness," respectively accompanied by big-screen testimonies of a recovered drug addict and a mother who forgave the drunk driver who killed her daughter. And when that very lady named Renee Napier stepped on stage to expand upon those sentiments, there wasn't a dry eye in the house, which coupled with West's compelling spoken and sung conversations, surely provided an enormous jolt of encouragement to all.

Supporting pop/rockers Sidewalk Prophets also served up several faith-elevating selections from their recent project, *Live Like That* (Fervent Records), including a stirring acoustic version of "Help Me Find It," featuring the whole band and opener Jason Castro gathered around a campfire-like circle.



Speaking of Castro, the "American Idol" star turned Word Records recording artist split his time between the show's favorite covers (like Judy Garland's "Over The Rainbow") and his current original release *Only A Mountain*, which further demonstrated his bountiful pipes, easygoing acoustics and meaningful songwriting.



1 & 2 Newly reunited inspirational country legends Alabama hit the road in support of their new release, *Alabama & Friends*, which includes collaborations with Rascal Flatts, Trisha Yearwood, Luke Bryan and many more.

3 Singer/songwriter Chris August takes some time out of The Only Name Tour with Big Daddy Weave and Unspoken to meet with faithful fans.

4 Group 1 Crew's Manwell Reyes visits an Unlikely Heroes anti-sex trafficking event in hopes of ending this modern-day slavery.

5 & 6 Troubadour Holly Spears hangs at the Dove Awards in Nashville with fellow artists, Francesca Battistelli and Switchfoot's Jon Foreman.

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SETH AND NIRVA UNITE!

BY MATT CONNER

While Seth and Nirva may be new names to most, chances are, if you're a concert-going CCM fan, you've probably seen them live! They both got their start singing background for various artists like TobyMac, Kirk Franklin and Chris Tomlin, just to name a few.

After years of ministry apart, however, the couple (who have been married for 7 years) felt the nudging of the Holy Spirit to walk in a different direction together. That path has led them to the forthcoming release of the first album, *I Need You*.

CCM got to chat with the duo about marriage, ministry and music...

CCM: *After such amazing solo gigs, how did this new moniker and EP come about?*

NIRVA: We've made careers of singing background for Christian artists and other

artists and have finally been afforded the opportunity to make this EP.

SETH: We've loved being a part of other people's ministries. After we got married, we decided to do ministry and travel together. We started working on stuff, but we have somewhat busy lives... It took five years to do six songs. But we're ready to jump in and get started!

CCM: *Given the diversity of the artists you've worked with in the past, how would you describe your sound?*

NIRVA: The collection of songs is pretty diverse. There's pop, funk, soul, hip-hop and R&B, all mixed together to create a message of hope.

SETH: When we started four or five years ago, I took a few songs she'd already been

1.7.2014

working on, looked at some of my songs, and started noticing there was a nice flow to the content thematically. Basically we laid it out and saw a theme of testimony—testifying to what He has done. In a sense, the album is that testimony. It goes in to free people. God sets us free through gospel and spirit.

CCM: *Is your personal testimony reflected here? What do your faith journeys look like?*

NIRVA: I didn't grow up in church. I was born again in college. I sang with a traveling ensemble group and one night we visited a church while they were having a revival. I ran to the altar before she was even done preaching. I found Jesus and began to work with him personally.

SETH: I did grow up in a Christian home. My parents were very dedicated with their relationship with Christ. It was a blessing. But when you go off to college, you have to make your faith your own. College was a struggle for me intellectually. That's part of what has motivated me to be in young adult ministry. I've been the young adult pastor at Crossing Church in Tampa, Fla., for two years. Tampa is one of the most un-churched cities in the nation. Around 60-80 percent of of young adults leave the church after high school. I thought it was an intellectual issue, but more times than not, realized it was relational. A lot of people feel like there's a lack of authenticity in the church, which is why you have to connect with people and get to know them. It's about being in life with people.

CCM: *On the relationship note, how have you two managed to work together creatively, while maintaining a happy marriage?*

NIRVA: We naturally get along well, which makes it a lot easier. We definitely work at it. It takes understanding and a willingness to work at even *knowing* how to work at it. It all comes down to God-given grace.

SETH: The further we get into this adventure, the more we're seeing some potential issues. We were working on a Christmas program once and I was in producer mode. I took the liberty to ask her to change some things she was doing. She then took the liberty to tell me to ask her if she wanted to change things.

NIRVA (LAUGHING): Whenever we are on stage together, it feels natural. I feel so much stronger and have so much more fun with him. **CCM**

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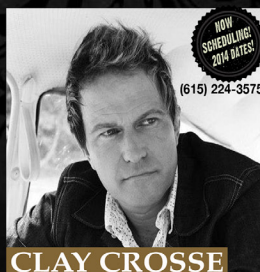
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OH NIGHT DIVINE

HOW GOD TOOK A SHOW AND LAUNCHED A MOVEMENT

A large crowd of people is seen from behind, looking towards a stage. The air is filled with a thick shower of white confetti, creating a festive and celebratory atmosphere. The scene is dimly lit, with some stage lights visible in the background.

BY NICK HALL WITH CAROLINE LUSK

Fifteen thousand people pack the seats across the arena. Thousands of voices join their favorite artists, singing the words they know by heart. In the middle of the noise and the excitement, I quietly pray. The words of Psalm 71 flow through my head like they have a thousand times:

As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more.

My mouth will tell of your righteous deeds, of your saving acts all day long—though I know not how to relate them all. I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, Sovereign Lord; I will proclaim your righteous deeds, yours alone. Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come.

Every night at Winter Jam, I get to share the truth of the Gospel. But before I step on that stage, before I open my mouth, I give it up to God one more time. Across the country, hundreds more are joining me in prayer through Facebook or Twitter.

Every night, the prayer is the same: “Lord, would You do it again?”

Jesus is the reason I speak. All my words need to point to Him.

In a way, Winter Jam is a glimpse of heaven. I mean, think about it—thousands of people from all backgrounds, coming together for one purpose. This is what we were made for—to stand alongside brothers and sisters in worship of Jesus.

Winter Jam is a family. It’s a place to admit that we don’t have it all together. In a room of thousands, there’s bound to be almost any struggle, sin, or situation imaginable. And Jesus offers a supernatural reset to each one of them.

Families come together. Churches invest in their youth groups. Leaders are encouraged. Every night, people are being poured into and transformed by the Gospel.

With all my heart I believe Winter Jam is a modern-day movement of God. People may come for bands or for a great concert experience, and they’ll get it. But every night, after the last note rings across the arena, something is different. Lives have been reset.

— **NICK HALL**, WINTER JAM PASTOR



HOW A MOVEMENT MOVES

When Eddie Carswell, founding member of Newsong and Winter Jam's founder, laughingly says, "this doesn't make sense," one is inclined to agree.

For the last three years, Winter Jam has been the No. 1 tour in the world for first-quarter entertainment across all genres. That means it topped Justin Bieber, Lady Gaga and even Taylor Swift.

How?

"It's all God," says Russ Lee of Newsong. "We've tried to hold this thing with open hands."

From those extended palms, God has poured enormous blessing on the effort and, as a result, has changed the eternal destinations of countless individuals.

This year, Winter Jam celebrates its 18th??? Year. Per usual, the lineup is second to none. The Newsboys snagged the headlining spot and are joined by Lecrae, Tenth Avenue North, Thousand Foot Krutch, Plumb, Everfound, Love & the Outcome, Derek Minor, Colton Dixon and, of course, Newsong.

"I think this is our fifth time out with Winter Jam," says Duncan Phillips of Newsboys. "The area shows are super fun. We're always thinking on the bigger scale with our live show."

When it comes to size, they're in the right place. It just doesn't get any bigger than Winter Jam. But unlike other massive tours and entertainment experiences, the numbers represent more than tickets sold. They also represent the number of souls that have been saved while attending.

"Over 100,000 people each year make decisions for Christ," says Nick. "It's pretty enormous numbers, but I don't credit that to what I'm saying. I don't try to be God in terms of what they're understanding. Our heart is to be a stepping stone to take that next step."

That intentionality has resulted in elevating the entire franchise. It's not just another tour. There's something special about it and the artists involved don't take that for granted.

"It's an honor," says Jeff Owen of Tenth Avenue North. "We had such a great time last time."

That sentiment is echoed by Colton Dixon, who is enjoying his first go-round with Winter Jam.

"I remember coming to Winter Jam when Steven Curtis Chapman headlined and Skillet was way back in the lineup," Colton says with a laugh. "It's one of the coolest things to meet these people. They've exceeded my expectations every time. It's crazy to be sharing a stage with them."

Another newcomer to the Winter Jam stage is certainly no new-comer to the Christian music industry; however, the last few years have seen them re-invent from label front-runners to indie artists, still racking up No. 1 placements on charts—Thousand Foot Krutch.

"We are very honored to be part of Winter Jam for the first time," says TFK front man Trevor McNevan. "We're excited to inject some rock into the spectacle. The big challenge with this one is deciding what you're gonna play in such a short amount of time. You've got to do something that

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represents the band—where we're going and where we've been."

That challenge is met with intense planning, practice and prayer from everyone involved. And above all, each artist, speaker and manager has been able to be a part of the magic of Winter Jam because they knew exactly who they're doing it for and how it's going to continue at this rate of success—complete surrender to God.

"For me, just the intentionality of experiencing of what God's been doing is key," says Nick. "This is what I sense is happening in the churches and with the students. We need to come alongside and really raise awareness."

Mike Donehey rounds that out by sharing a quote that sums up the heartbeat of this tour.

"Mother Teresa said, We can do no great things. Only small things with great love," Mike shares.

What started small has become great.

And it's become great because it's been intentional, focused and surrendered.

THESE THREE REMAIN: HOPE, FAITH AND LOVE

I still remember the night I heard the words, "Tonight, everything changed."

A girl approached me after Winter Jam, explaining her feelings of loneliness and hopelessness. She struggled with depression, and she told me about her history of abuse and self-harm. Then she stuck out her hand and dropped a necklace in my open hand. She had worn this necklace every day to remind herself that she was worthless. Attached to the necklace was a razor blade.

"I don't want to wear this anymore," she told me. "I don't want to see myself as the world sees me. I want to see myself as God sees me."

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It's easy to get caught up in the broad scope of Winter Jam—countless cities and hundreds of thousands of people from every walk of life. Yet, every crowd of 15,000 is made up of 15,000 people who need Jesus. Every note played and word said echoes the prayer that lives will be transformed. From loneliness. From hopelessness. From pain inflicted by others or by themselves.

Winter Jam has been an incredible way to call our nation back to Jesus, to reach this generation with the Gospel. Individuals are being brought into the body of Christ, welcomed as part of a family. More people have given up their razor blades. Consistently, we hear stories of God's children realizing that Jesus offers them freedom and healing from all their pain—a reset.

Everyone involved in Winter Jam plays their part in sharing the truth of the Gospel. We want to look in each person's eyes and say, "You—God loves YOU."

I am so blessed to be a part of a tour that lifts the name of Jesus high and ministers to all people. God is reaching this generation, and He's inviting all of us to be a part of it. [CCM](#)

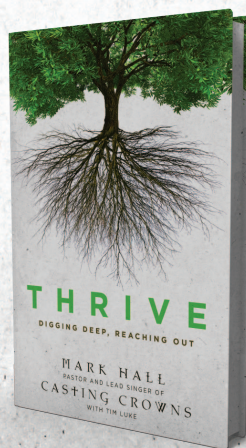


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DON'T JUST SURVIVE. **THRIVE.**

In his new book *Thrive*, pastor and Casting Crowns lead singer Mark Hall shows us that in order to grow as believers, we should imagine ourselves as a flourishing tree. We are able to branch out into the world and help others only by digging our roots deep into what we believe. **Available Feb. 2014.**





LISTEN UP!

COLTON DIXON HAS SOMETHING TO SAY

BY CAROLINE LUSK

It's every performer's worst nightmare.

You're center stage... the lights are down, save the spotlight on you...you start playing...you start singing...and nothing.

Mic's dead.

(Did we mention this is televised?)

No, this isn't just a psychological exercise to see how well you might handle stressful situations like this; it's what happened at the 44th Annual Dove Awards...and it couldn't have happened to a better artist.

A consummate professional, he kept playing while a black-clad stage runner finally delivered a live mic, inserting it not-so-discreetly into the boom mic (yes...still on tv!).

Surprisingly, this was not a veteran artist whose years of stage experience had prepared them for anything; rather this artist was a 22-year-old from Murfreesboro, Tenn., who had already weathered and survived some pretty harsh performance situations on national TV.

"Crazy as it was, musically and spiritually, it was God's initiation into music ministry and it was great," he recalls.

While "Idol" launched him into the lime-light of the music world, his talent and passion have kept him there.

"I started taking piano when I was 8," he says. "I remember learning 'I Can Only Imagine,' by Mercy Me. I was overwhelmed by the feeling that this was my true calling. I gave up baseball."

Good move. Between "American Idol" and the present, Colton has signed with Sparrow Records and he released his debut album, *A Messenger*, in 2013. The album re-releases January 2014, but he's already got his sopho-

"This was on my bucket list. Winter Jam has been my number one choice. I'm so excited. I remember coming to Winter Jam when Steven Curtis Chapman headlined and Skillet was way up in the lineup."

Of course, we're talking about Colton Dixon, who was one of the standouts on *American Idol*, Season 11.

Always a professional, he only laughs as we reminisce over the hiccup at the Doves. Of course, considering his life over the past few years, a little crazy-ness is par for the course.

"It has been crazy," he says. "I was going to do 'American Idol' with my sister."

At least that was the plan the first time around. Both Colton and his sister auditioned for Season 10, but neither made it all the way to Hollywood. This time, Colton went all the way. At least to number 7.

more record in the works.

"We started writing for record two this past summer and will be recording it this coming summer," says Colton.

Between now and then, Colton will be keeping himself busy with a stint on a little-known tour that happens to be the number one tour in the world—Winter Jam.

"This was on my bucket list," Colton says with a laugh. "Winter Jam has been my number one choice. I'm so excited. I remember coming to Winter Jam when Steven Curtis Chapman headlined and Skillet was way up in the lineup."

Things have changed a bit since then.



Newsboys are headlining the tour, alongside a lineup that includes Lecrae, Tenth Avenue North, Thousand Foot Krutch, Plumb, Newsong, Everfound, Love & The Outcome and Derek Minor and, of course, Colton. With the West Coast leg in full swing, Colton has already experienced a little idol fever himself.

"One of the coolest things has been meeting these people," says Colton. "They've exceeded my expectations every time. A lot of them were my idols growing up."

It's also a far cry from the American Idol experience.

"On 'American Idol,' you were so disconnected from friends and family," says

Colton. "That verse that says God will never leave you or forsake you—I realized it was Him kind of pulling me through the whole journey. It was a comforting time for me and something I felt needed to be shared. A lot of us are like kids, afraid of the dark. We want to jump up and turn the light back on. We need proof that the light is still there."

For one who's getting used to spotlights by now, Colton hasn't lost a bit of his desire to share the true light with the rest of the world.

And if the calm, cool professionalism he exhibited at the Doves is any indication, God's just getting him started. **CCM**

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A portrait of Jonathan Thulin, a man with a beard and short brown hair, wearing a brown and green tactical vest over a dark t-shirt. He is saluting with his right hand. The background is a bright yellow sun over a blue body of water.

JONATHAN THULIN

NO GRAY AREA HERE BY CAROLINE LUSK

BY the age of 1, most parents are celebrating the first steps, a birthday cake in the face and perhaps an intelligible word or two.


We'll just say Jonathan Thulin was advanced.

He started singing by age 1 and recorded his first album with his family by age 6.

Now that he's well into his 20s, the little boy who sang with his family alongside the Gaithers and Carman has decidedly come into his own.

Riding the success of his "Dead Come to Life" song, Jonathan is touting a new solo album and is still wrapping his head around the rest of it.

"When I left to go to Sweden on tour, 'Dead Come to Life' was number 29 on CHR," he says. "When I came back, it had gone to number one. It was amazing. I've gotten so many letters from people who have been impacted by the song. We wrote it in about 20 minutes. It was based off the story in



“White Room was a very personal record to write. A lot of times everything is focused on the positive and encouraging. But I had been through a difficult time in my life...I had to find Jesus for myself. And it’s going to be a process and journey for the rest of my life.”

the Bible of Ezekiel and the dry bones. It’s a relevant theme for people—God brings everything dead to life.”

The success of that song was a turning point for Jonathan and his ministry in more ways than one. Now, churches are calling him for booking and radio stations around the country are all over the song and the man behind it.

Now, that man has a new record...in more ways than one.

“*White Room* was a very personal record to write,” says Jonathan. “A lot of times everything is focused on the positive and encouraging. But I had been through a difficult time in my life. I had always been in ministry, but I didn’t really understand that you have to have your own relationship with God. Around age 20, I had to start all over with God. I learned you couldn’t live off ministry. I had to find Jesus for myself. And it’s going to be a process and journey for the rest of my life.”

It’s a journey that Jonathan is committed to sharing as transparently and creatively as possible.

“It’s a journey I’ll be on for the rest of my life,” he affirms. “It has to be real. I want to see and feel love for what it is. How do we know what’s right and wrong? There has to be a God and creator. Love is breathed into everything.”



As he has sought to translate that love into a language his heart can understand, he first has to go back to the beginning and acknowledge the influence of his surroundings—way back when and now.

“In Sweden, things are very different. It’s black and white. There’s no middle ground. You’re a Christian or you’re not,” Jonathan shares. “Here, there are so many denominations, it’s confusing and people completely lose track. I lived in so much guilt and shame trying to become a certain denomination or be what a certain church wants. In the Bible, you look at the woman who was caught in adultery. She knows who she is, what she’s done. But when she’s lying there, there’s just one voice left. The one person who could condemn her didn’t. He knew she was human. Love didn’t condemn her.”

“The plan for the new album, *The White Room*, includes a movie and book. It’s a metaphor for this little box we try to keep clean. But we can’t.”

As he recounts the familiar Bible stories, it’s easy to hear the artist gene inside of him—which plays out in his music videos, which are surprisingly quite long and very cinematic.

“My music videos are very long and very epic,” he says. “The plan for the new album, *The White Room*, includes a movie and book. It’s a metaphor for this little box we try to keep clean. But we can’t.”

With the creative wheels ever-turning inside his mind, it’s clear that Jonathan Thulin is just getting started. As his own creativity wraps around the epic stories of faith in scripture, chances are, his musings are well on their way to a screen near you.

And be it music, video, book or otherwise, Jonathan is committed to one thing regardless of medium—truth.

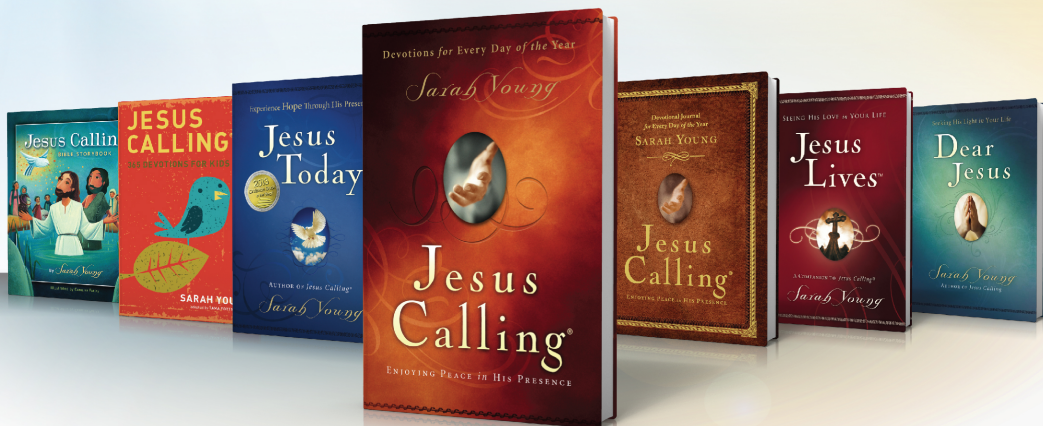
From the 1-year-old on the fast track to the 20-something with something to say, Jonathan is on fire spiritually, on point creatively and on pitch with his unwavering center focus—God. Love. Period. [CCM](#)



[LEARN MORE ABOUT JONATHAN HERE](#)

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LIVING SACRIFICE

BY ANDY ARGYRAKIS

Long before faith-flanked metal was accepted by the mainstream or even within the walls of the church, Living Sacrifice was blazing trails for future generations of alternative acts. Over two decades later, the group is still going strong, not only earning widespread acceptance amidst all audiences, but also boasting a past and present lineup of members who have also P.O.D., Evanescence, Demon Hunter and Norma Jean. These days, the veteran heavy rockers are applying a full-circle approach to *Ghost Thief* (Solid State Records/Tooth & Nail Records), and while everyone's clearly confident with their elder statesmen status, front man/guitarist Bruce Fitzhugh tells *CCM* there's still one more item left on his bucket list for the band.

CCM: How do you account for the group's longevity for over 20 years?

BRUCE FITZHUGH: I really

don't know. We are all really good friends and we enjoy playing together. I guess just a desire to keep writing and playing.

CCM: How has faith-based hard rock/metal evolved since you first began?

FITZHUGH: Well, when we first began, there were not many heavy Christian bands around to look to. Stryper was the biggest, and we were just so different from them. We were definitely mentored a bit by the guys in Believer and The Crucified. We are still friends with them today. What we were doing was shunned for sure by the larger metal community, but that seems to have subsided a lot with the popularity of bands like As I Lay Dying and Underoath.

CCM: What do you hope to add to the current scene with *Ghost Thief*?

FITZHUGH: We really hope that people can hear the place that we come from,

which is late 80s and early 90s thrash and metal. Stylistically there are not a lot of groups doing that anymore and almost none who call themselves a "Christian band." I hope we are filling a void for some dude or girl out there that loves this style of music.

CCM: The group's past and present membership truly reads like an all-star band.

How has having so many successful players enhanced the group?

FITZHUGH: It's been really amazing. All these dudes came out of Arkansas and toured the world on some of the biggest tours of the day for that time period. It's just crazy. I, not being one of the guys that went on to play and perform in a multi-platinum band, am just blessed to still jam with these guys and call them true friends. I am really proud of what we started and how everyone followed their passion in music and art.

CCM: What does the band hope to accomplish that it hasn't already?

FITZHUGH: We have no expectations really, though personally, I would love to do more shows internationally. It has to work out for everyone, though, and that is tough with each guy's obligations and commitments. If it's meant to happen, it will. **CCM**

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GLORIA GAYNOR

BY MATT CONNER

Gloria Gaynor was appointed Queen of Disco years ago with an incredible career built on the strength of singles like “I Will Survive” and “Never Can Say Goodbye.” After performing in 80 countries and receiving numerous awards, Gaynor has now turned her attention toward a gospel project that represents her heart for music and ministry.

We Will Survive is the latest release from Gaynor, and it captures fan responses to her biggest hit and how they’ve survived and overcome their own trials. An accompanying book brings it all together

and shows that Gaynor is not only surviving, but thriving after decades in the industry.

CCM: How long have you considered a gospel music project?

GLORIA GAYNOR: It’s something I’ve wanted to do for many years, but found it a bit difficult to get all the elements together to bring it to fruition.

CCM: The songs on the album come from fan responses to your music. Any common themes that have emerged?

GLORIA: I’ve had people tell me that the song encouraged and empowered

them to leave abusive relationships, but they found it difficult to forgive the perpetrator. Others have said they were inspired to make it through one dreadful illness or another, and they felt blessed to be given the strength to do so. Some have said that even after being inspired by the song and making it through something traumatic, they weren’t sure if they’d missed out on other opportunities because they’d procrastinated.

CCM: Did you always picture the project as a book as well? Or how did that idea enter the picture?

GLORIA: Although I’d wanted to record a Christian CD for years, the idea for the book came years before I actually did it and the idea for this particular choice of song lyrics came from the subject matter in the book.

CCM: Can you tell us what you have planned for 2014?

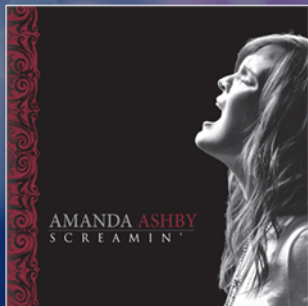
GLORIA: I plan to do more Christian music. I plan to write at least one more book. I plan to continue traveling and performing. I plan to continue working with “Toastmasters” to hone my abilities as a speaker because I’d like to lecture young parents on the importance of children having their fathers physically present in their lives. **CCM**

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on your 35th Anniversary!



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The Indies

Indie Artist – the phrase itself denotes something that is almost indefinable. It covers a vast expanse of singers, songwriters and groups that play the music they want to play, even though that music doesn't usually represent what is currently getting radio airplay.

Those we could select from to represent this group could literally number in the thousands. So, to give you a broad cross-section, we're presenting you artists spanning multiple genres and geographical locations. From two local Nashville groups we're very familiar with to a number of artists whose work has been submitted to us from around the country. We hope you find them entertaining.

THE OPPOSED



A Crossover Rock Band with a straight-ahead rock sound and Southern roots, The Opposed consists of passionate Christian musicians dedicated to creating a platform that allows them to influence and change the lives of all those that they encounter.

Based in Nashville, Tennessee, The Opposed brings a culmination of styles from their various backgrounds into a unique and progressive sound that is powerful and intense. Founded in 2007, and taking musical influence from bands like Switchfoot, Brian Welch, Sound Garden, The Black Crowes and Alter Bridge, The Opposed is now working on their third album, touring throughout the Southeast and appearing at multiple festivals.

The bands sound is established through the solid musicianship of bassist CJ Wheeler and drummer Jake Singleton, with gritty vocals driven by Nathan Wesley. Their sound is further accentuated with crafty rhythms and the tasteful guitar leads of Roland Price.

The Opposed continues to make themselves available for youth and regional church events that are within driving distance of the Nashville market.

www.TheOpposed.com
www.facebook.com/TheOpposed

MAGS



As both our only Canadian and our youngest Indie entry, 18 year-old Mags has already had two of her albums nominated for the Canadian Gospel Music Association awards (Best Seasonal 2010 and Best Pop/Contemporary 2013).

Mags has an honest, personal songwriting style that is mature beyond her years. On her latest release, *Missmatched*, she sings about her struggles with depression and how one can seek God through suffering and pain, even when it feels like He's the farthest away. The song *Lead Me to the River* was a finalist in the prestigious international 2013 John Lennon Songwriting Contest and her single, *Knock* hit #7 on the Canadian Christian Hit Radio Charts.

www.magsthesinger.com
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T-LISA



T-Lisa (Terri-Lisa) has always loved music and began writing songs at age ten. Although raised in a family scarred by divorce, God's love helped her dedicate her life to Christ and His work at a young age. God has since blessed her as a worship leader, singer and writer.

TLisa has been a member of the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir and worked with numerous musicians and worship leaders, acted as a choir director and even wrote a play, *Coming Home - The Christmas play*, that had a celebrated 5 year run of production.

TLisa's single, *No Other Hope*, is regularly heard on Internet radio and her new Album, *God of Love*, is available January 21st, 2014. Share it with someone who needs to know, or be reminded about His love today!

www.TLisamusic.com

ANNAGAIL



Fronted by husband and wife duo, Jared and Jennifer Adams, Annagail is equal parts singer, songwriter and rock band that can hold their own with both heavy hitters, or in an intimate setting leading worship. Annagail is an established act, with seven finished albums and 2 songs in the feature film *Decision*, (starring CCM artist Keith Follese' (Emerson Drive, Everfound, Faith Hill) - is a glimpse into their influences as electronic flourishes meet organic hooqs.

Annagail always defied and stretched genres, but their latest project - produced by Nashville hit-maker Keith Follese' (Emerson Drive, Everfound, Faith Hill) - is a glimpse into their influences as electronic flourishes meet organic hooqs.

After an intense season of life, Annagail laid their music on the altar and painfully agreed to never play another note - unless a divine hand intervened. How that restoration came about is a story worth asking them to tell, as they long to see that same restoration brought to others.

<http://www.annagail.net>

SHARON HOCK



Sharon's story is a testimony about how God takes a broken, wounded life and turns it into something beautiful bringing glory to himself. Learning to understand God's unconditional love and the abundant grace that He freely showers on us has miraculously brought her from being a survivor to an overcomer.

Sharon desires to use her music to bring people to a place of freedom, healing and changed lives as they encounter God's love in worship. This passion drives her to help teach others how important praise and worship is in their everyday lives and to inspire them to overcome anything!

Sharon just released two Christmas singles and her latest album, *A Resting Place*, communicates her journey to healing victory from events of the past.

www.sharonhock.com

JOE WAMSLEY



Starting his career as a rock and roll bass player, Joe was saved in 1993 and has now lead worship at his local church for over 12 years. A Christian musician and singer/songwriter from Ridgefield, New Jersey,

Joe expresses his faith through his song lyrics and sharing the journey of how his life is being used by the Lord.

Joe's newest release features the title track, *Can You Hear My Voice*, a song giving voice to those without a voice - the unborn. Joe proclaims the name of Jesus in, *I'm an Overcomer*, a song inspired by his ministry to help the handicapped and in, *There's An Answer*, which he penned about dealing with his alcoholic father.

People facing all types of hardships and abusive situations have connected with Joe's messages and felt God's love and compassion through them.

www.joewamsley.com

SPILLED



Spilled, a Positive Christian Rock group from Mesa, Arizona, is on a mission to share the love of Jesus through their songs and testimony. Their ministry goal is to get people excited about their Christian walk, to step out of their comfort zone and to start living a joyful life in Jesus Christ. Not because of who they are, but because of who He is!

In addition to providing praise & worship music for various church events, Spilled presents a positive Christian message to those outside the church by playing at coffeehouses and other community events. Their music is currently in rotation on Indieheaven.com Radio and their debut album, *The Plan*, was released in October, 2013 and is available on iTunes (search Spilled The Plan).

www.indieheaven.com/artists/spilled
www.spilledmusic.com



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AC

WORSHIP

**GARY CHAPMAN*****The Truth***

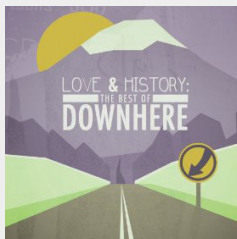
(Merf Music Group)
FOR FANS OF: John Hiatt, Russ Taff, Bruce Cockburn

★★★★

A little more than a decade is a long time to wait for an entirely new studio album, but Gary Chapman richly rewards faithful fans with 16 stellar tunes. The multiple Dove Award-winning solo artist, songwriter for other artists and part-time television star brilliantly blurs the lines between contemporary pop, country and gospel by sounding equally genuine on each, while sharing many enriching life lessons alongside famous friends like Alison Krauss, John Rich and Tanya Tucker.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: “If God Had a Front Porch” (featuring Alison Krauss)

**DOWNHERE*****Love & History: The Best Of Downhere***

(Centricity Music)
FOR FANS OF: The Afters, Sanctus Real, Queen

★★★★

Modern rockers Downhere may have called it a day, but the Canadian band's legacy lives on thanks to this multi-label career retrospective. Not only does it capture all the harmony-laden hits, but it traces the group's steady evolution from wide-eyed newcomers to confident veterans who were never afraid to experiment musically or let fans see the intimate sides of their spiritual journeys.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: “How Many Kings”

**CHRIS TOMLIN*****Burning Lights CD/DVD Deluxe Edition***

(sixstepsrecords/Sparrow Records)
FOR FANS OF: Matt Redman, Passion worship, Louie Giglio

★★★★

Sometimes the addition of a DVD can detract from the original music, but in this case, it truly enhances it. Chris Tomlin's live *Burning Lights* album is delightful to watch on DVD, with bits of humor interjected, as well as a moving message from speaker Louie Giglio. Tomlin's piano and vocal combination on “Sovereign” is well worth the price of this special edition all by itself.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: “God's Great Dance Floor”

**DUSTIN KENS RUE*****The Water & The Blood***

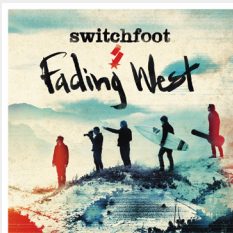
(Mars Hill Music)
FOR FANS OF: Thrice, The Modern Post

★★★★

Dustin Kensrue's entrance into worship music is a beautiful gift for the church for his striking clarity and imaginative approach. *The Water & The Blood* is another impressive release on Mars Hill music, and the Thrice front man has crafted a moving set of rock 'n' roll songs that speak of the greatness of God and the gift of Jesus. “Suffering Servant” is especially powerful for its portrayal of the work of Christ.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: “Suffering Servant”

**SWITCHFOOT*****Fading West*** (Atlantic)FOR FANS OF: Jon Foreman, Relient K
★★★★

The secret to Switchfoot's incredible success over the last near two decades is found in the heart of its front man, Jon Foreman. With keen insights and reflection on life and love, faith and doubt, Switchfoot has often been the soundtrack for the meaningful moments of life. Press pause on that. *Fading West* shows off a new Switchfoot—a SoCal band giving California vibes. Vocal experiments, synth treatments and several sing-along tracks make this the most fun and infectious Switchfoot album ever.

—Matt Conner

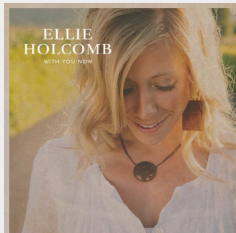
WE LIKE: "All or Nothing At All"

**FIVE IRON FRENZY**
Engine Of A Million Plots (Dept. of Biophysics)FOR FANS OF: The O.C. Supertones, Less Than Jake, Reel Big Fish
★★★★

After breaking up at the peak of success in 2003, Five Iron Frenzy spent most of the ensuing decade in silence, but after reuniting for select shows over the past few years, finally found the inspiration to record a full-length album. The results find the horn-heavy troupe recharged and raring to rock, reclaiming its witty songwriting muse and proving there's still a place for these ska scene shapers a generation down the line.

—Andy Argyrakis

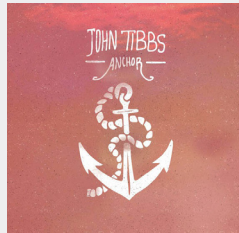
WE LIKE: "So Far"

**ELLIE HOLCOMB**
With You Now (Independent)FOR FANS OF: Drew Holcomb & the Neighbors
★★★★

Ellie Holcomb is most likely familiar as the female vocalist alongside her husband in Drew Holcomb & the Neighbors. However, the talented songwriter creates beautiful music on her own, and her new EP *With You Now* is proof positive. The title track is a simple yet exquisite acoustic number on an inspired album with several scriptural songs as well. "May The Words" is especially powerful.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "May The Words"

**JOHN TIBBS**
Anchor EP (Independent)FOR FANS OF: Gungor, Mumford & Sons
★★★★

It's astounding that a label hasn't swept up the bright young star in the worship universe known as John Tibbs. From his debut LP, *Swallowing... Life*, to his brand-new EP, *Anchor*, Tibbs is an original and compelling folk-rock voice in a genre that needs one. "Anchor" is a stomp-along folk romp, but Tibbs' rock vibe is his sweet spot. "Heaven Come Down" and "Abraham" are true gems here.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Heaven Come Down"

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WATER OF LIFE

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LECRAE *Church Clothes Vol. 2*

(Reach Records)
FOR FANS OF: Flame,
Canon, TobyMac

★★★★

These days, Lecrae is unquestionably towards the top of the positive hip-hop heap and he once again hits a home run on *Church Clothes Vol. 2*. Despite its title, the Grammy Award winner's latest is equally suitable for seekers thanks to its cutting-edge production, acrobatic rhymes and socially relevant lyrics. But make no mistake, Lecrae spouts plenty of substance throughout these Top 40-friendly sounds.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Round of Applause"



DONALD LAWRENCE *20 Year Celebration Volume 1: Best for Last*

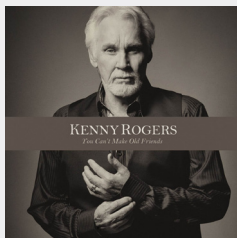
(Quiet Water Entertainment/eOne Music)
FOR FANS OF: John P. Kee, Fred Hammond, Hezekiah Walker

★★★★

To celebrate two decades of sales success, gospel artist-producer-songwriter-choir director Lawrence enhances his deep catalog of songs by pairing re-recordings of select favorites with a smattering of new contemporary gospel originals, backed live by his famous Tri-City singers. Music stars like Faith Evans, Natalie Grant and Yolanda Adams infuse the retrospective set list with new vocal collaborations—further highlighting the Grammy winners' famous prosperity verses.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "The Gift"



KENNY ROGERS *You Can't Make Old Friends* (Warner Bros. Records)

FOR FANS OF: Randy Travis, the Oak Ridge Boys, Dolly Parton

★★★★★

Seven decades into his career, Kenny Rogers is still singing his heart out and sounding spectacular, especially as he returns to his roots on this first new country collection since 2006. In addition to several storytelling songs revolving around good old-fashioned, but always applicable, family values, "The Gambler" reunites with Dolly Parton on the sure-to-be-classic ballad, "You Can't Make Old Friends."

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Turn This World Around"



BURLAP TO CASHMERE *From The Vault*

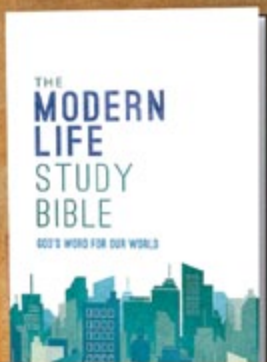
(Independent)
FOR FANS OF: Simon & Garfunkel, Cat Stevens, Mumford & Sons

★★★★

One of the most critically acclaimed bands of the past decade opens up its vaults for six unreleased tracks cloaked in the group's sophisticated phrasing and folksy pop/rock tradition. While it's designed for extremely dedicated followers, it could just as easily introduce the highly underrated act to a wider public currently consumed by Mumford & Sons and the Avett Brothers, though just for the record, Burlap To Cashmere was the original.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Middle Class Man"



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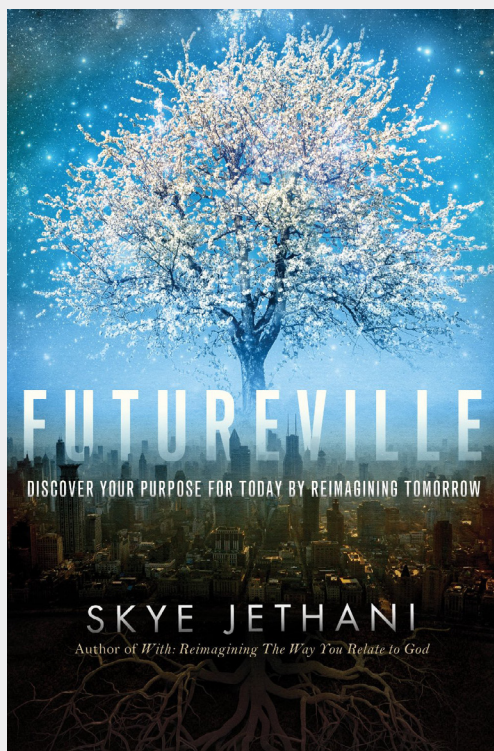
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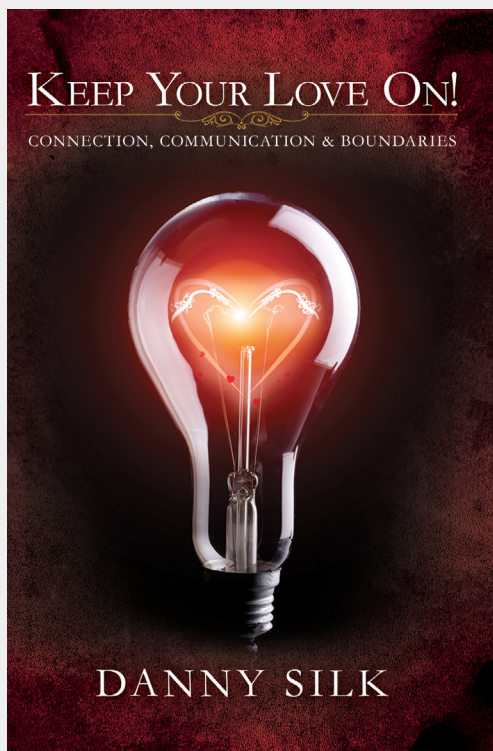


FUTUREVILLE

Authors: Skye Jethani

Publisher: Thomas Nelson

Skye Jethani has already demonstrated an invigorated imagination for the way we relate to God in his previous book, *With*. Now, he shifts his focus to the way Christians view and interact with the world around them in *Futureville*, his latest work. Jethani brings fresh analogies to help the church understand how to live a balanced, authentic and engaging faith in today's world to bring a better tomorrow. In the process, Jethani's personal stories and scriptural application help cultivate a balanced understanding and approach to a number of subjects from creation to work.



KEEP YOUR LOVE ON!

Authors: Danny Silk

Publisher: Red Arrow

Danny Silk, founder of Loving On Purpose and part of the Bethel Church leadership in Redding, Calif., brings all of his experience to bear in his new book on relational health and wholeness, *Keep Your Love On!* With a very simple, straightforward and practical guidebook, Silk portrays love as a learned skill and helps provide readers with tools and stories from his own experience. Helpful aspects include identification of passive-aggressive tendencies, conflict helps and tips for setting boundaries.

—Matt Conner

THE HANDS AND FEET OF CHRIST

"As You sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world." — Jesus in John 17:18

As followers of Christ, we bear the responsibility of demonstrating to the world what Jesus might look like were He to walk the earth today. Those who will never enter the door of a church or read a Bible or hear a sermon can still know Jesus by watching us! I'm not sure I always give others the right impression, but I met someone who does.

Tseghe, a 14-year-old Ethiopian girl, was abducted by a stranger as she walked to school.

Because the man lacked money to pay the bride price, he simply stole Tseghe from the

side of the road, intending to make her his wife. He took her shoes so she couldn't run and marched her miles from her home to a shack, where he bound and assaulted her.

Although everyone in the village heard what had happened, no one came to her aid. "She's damaged goods," they said. "Leave well enough alone. That's just the way things are. If you can't afford a bride, you just take one."

But Tseghe's grandmother was determined to find her, and she recruited Esatu, a World Vision staff member, to help. When Esatu first went to the police, they refused to act. But he persisted, and over the course of the next several days, Tseghe was found and returned home.



I asked the older woman what Esatu's efforts had meant to her. "It would have been enough," she said, "if he had just come alongside me and been my friend, but he did so much more."

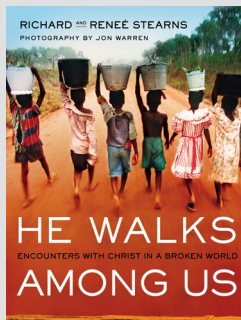
In that instant, my mind flashed to another desert in another country and a stable in a town called Bethlehem. Looking at the Creator of the universe lying helpless in a manger, some might say it would have been enough had Jesus simply come alongside us to be our Friend. But of course, that wasn't enough at all, because more than a friend to walk beside us, more than an example to follow, what we really needed was a Savior.

Esatu had already done plenty. He'd worked hard to provide for the needs of the community, and rescuing Tseghe wasn't his responsibility. But that thought never crossed his mind.

When Esatu came to the aid of a young girl and her desperate grandmother, he was just doing what Jesus would have done if He had been there on that terrible day.

And in a way, Jesus was. Esatu's hands were Jesus' hands; Esatu's heart was Jesus' heart. When wicked men sought to steal away a young girl's dignity and hope for the future, Jesus came to Tseghe's rescue in the person of a man named Esatu.

Is there someone you know who needs Jesus, someone to whom you can demonstrate through your friendship, your encouragement, your wise counsel, the love of the Savior? Look at the people around you. You just might be the only Jesus they will ever see. CCM



An excerpt from *He Walks Among Us* by Richard and Renee Stearns

God sees the poor as blessed. Rich and Renee Stearns show us why. We often separate ourselves from people who are different from us, sometimes even intentionally. This book is a great reminder of

all the things we share in common—hopes, dreams, heartaches—and most important of all, it reminds us that He walks among us. All of us. This book offers great perspective from our brothers and sisters around the world. He Walks Among Us features the award-winning photography of World Vision® photographer Jon Warren.



Richard Stearns has served as president of World Vision U.S. since 1998, having formerly been the CEO of Parker Bros. Games and Lenox, Inc. He and his wife, Renee, have five children of their own and millions more around the world.



Renee Stearns is a former attorney, mother of five and grandmother of one. She is active in church ministries, leading Bible studies, and speaking at

conferences and retreats. Renee is passionate about helping others broaden their worldview to include the great needs she sees in her travels with World Vision.



FOR HOPE

LUKE SMALLBONE FINDS GRACE IN THE DARKNESS

BY LUKE SMALLBONE

Illness doesn't discriminate. Around the world countless lives are wrecked by health problems. It doesn't matter who you are, what you do or even whose you are. Such as in the case of Luke Smallbone, one-half of for King & Country, Luke was struck with

an illness that could have ended his career or worse. But it was in the midst of this darkness that Luke experienced something he never had felt as purely, desperately and intensely—hope. Luke shares the journey and lessons learned below.

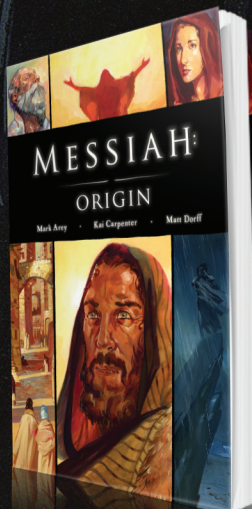
When I look back over the past year, it's certainly been a whirlwind of sorts. On Halloween 2012, I was diagnosed with a digestive disorder that, quite frankly, I didn't take that seriously, and sadly wasn't informed about the severity that could take place. I left the doctors not thinking much about my health, jumped in a van and headed out on

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From the fall tour into December shows, time kept flying by, and I wasn't getting any better. I finally came home before all the Christmas festivities to await our firstborn's arrival. The whirlwind just kept coming! I made it home just in time for my wife's water to break. My little boy was born on December 19, which, as we all know, certainly changes life (in the best possible way), but also takes a lot of energy that I started to realize, I didn't have. I had become so distracted with work that I didn't realize my health was diminishing.

About four months ago I got down to around 125 pounds. I had hit my lowest of lows, and for a guy that is 6-foot-4-inches and that frail, I truly looked like I just got out of a concentration camp. This obviously led to needing to come off the road and shut it down for a while to focus on my health. Up until that time I had never struggled with a serious health issue, and I found it very difficult to be still and rest. Little did I know that this would be one of the best things to ever happen to me.

God never wastes a pain. Even when we are still and when the "doing" stops, when we feel our weakest and maybe even feel like we have nothing to offer, we can actually hear Him when all that striving has died down. We are loved not for what we "do," but because

"I was bed-ridden and being taken care of like I was a child again [talk about humbling]. I wondered if I'd be able to be on the road again, let alone perform again. It felt like another lifetime away. On one particular night I cried out to God, asking Him why this was all happening"

—LUKE SMALLBONE



Introducing the debut album by singer-songwriter, lead worshipper



RADIANT YOU • Produced by Marshall Altman

"Radiant You is a shimmering introduction for Rebekah Maddux El-Hakam. The project is a good blend of giddy pop numbers, thoughtful ballads, and inspired worship songs. In fact, the album is so well-balanced that it's difficult to name a favorite song. What ties it all together is an uplifting, encouraging tone focusing on the faithfulness of a loving God.

"Rebekah and Altman have created a dazzling, remarkable record with a wonderful purity of heart...it's a record that absolutely must be heard." ★★★★★ -NewReleaseTuesday

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"We are met with 11 honest and beautifully crafted melodies with rich lyrics describing the faithfulness and unending love of our Saviour Jesus Christ... a compelling and brilliant debut." -Christian Music Zine

"Rebekah Maddux El-Hakam is a ray of light." -NewReleaseTuesday



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“AS GOD HAS A WAY OF DOING, HE TURNED THAT MOMENT INTO A MOMENT I WON’T FORGET. I FELT HIM SAY, ‘LUKE, NO MATTER HOW DARK THINGS MIGHT BE TODAY, NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT THINGS MIGHT BECOME, NO MATTER WHAT YOU’LL FACE IN LIFE, THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE IN ME!’”

—LUKE SMALLBONE

we are His children. That’s it. So simple, but so profound...

Throughout this time, I probably experienced the darkest period of my life, as I was in an awful lot of pain and struggled to sleep. I wasn’t able to hold my son, let alone be the father I wanted to be. I wasn’t able to be the husband I wanted to be. I was bed-ridden and being taken care of like I was a child again (talk about humbling). I wondered if I’d be able to be on the road again, let alone perform again. It felt like another lifetime away. On one particular night I cried out to God, asking Him why this was all happening. I was in such desperate need of comfort. As God has a way of doing, He turned that moment into a moment I won’t forget. I felt Him say, “Luke, no matter how dark things might be today, no matter how difficult things might become, no matter what you’ll face in life, there is always hope in Me!”

As I write this, I’m full of hope and even though I’m not in full remission yet, nor is everything perfect, and there are hard days, God has a way of working with imperfect people and imperfect situations, because our hope is in Him.

I can tell you one thing—I’ve never been so thankful in my life.

To anyone who might be struggling while reading this, trust me when I say, there is always hope. Sometimes we have to go through the strangest of journeys to discover real hope. Sometimes journeying into those depths gets you ready to climb great heights. Whatever journey you’re on right now, hold on to hope. **CCM**

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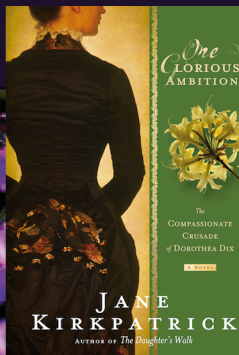
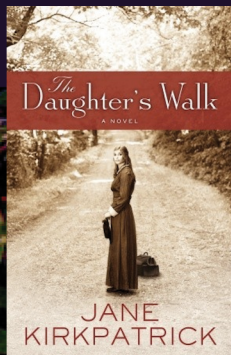
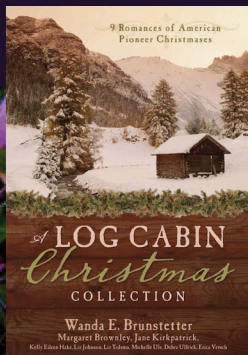
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JESUS: THE ORIGINAL VIRAL MARKETING GURU

AND WHAT THAT MEANS FOR YOUR CAREER

BY KEITH MOHR

Chances are if you're reading this, you have at least an inclination towards a career in music ministry. It's also probably a safe bet that you're wanting to know how you can actually make a living doing this thing you love. And while finances and fame should never be your primary motivation, there are certain ways to appropriate both of them to expand your personal music mission, as well as provide a life for yourself and your family. And it all comes down to (pardon the ancient, slightly-modified cultural pun) WDJD—What did Jesus do?

I'm not talking about Jesus and his garage band making it to the big time. I'm talking about how Jesus approached the thing that will make or break you as a musician—people. He knew his audience and He gave them content worth giving. It's about the importance of creating rich content, which will naturally draw people to you, whose lives you can then enrich, which will cause them to tell others about your ministry, which will in turn bring more people to you and the cycle continues. This is known today as viral marketing, and Jesus and His disciples had this strategy down to a T long before there was an i-Anything!

There was no richer content than the message Jesus brought to this earth. There was no better street team than the disciples who carried on the message of the cross after Jesus was crucified. These guys did not give up, they didn't buckle to rejection and they

ultimately gave their lives for their mission. How's that for commitment to the call?

You may wonder how this relates to the independent artist, musician and songwriter. The short answer—in every single way... We are to pattern what we do, why we are doing it and how we are doing it based on our example, Jesus. Everything Jesus did pointed outward. He never pointed inward. His mission was to bring to this earth content that changed everything for everyone, and he ultimately gave up his life fulfilling that mission.

If you feel God is leading you to Christian music, you should do nothing less in your mission than what Jesus did in His. I see quite a few indie artists out there who are not committed to the missional path God has them on. They dabble at it, they invest capfuls of work and thimbles of faith in their mission, and they wonder why God isn't "blowing them up!" From what I have read in the Word, God does not care very much for dabblers, or for those who are lukewarm. Matter of fact, He spits them out. Yuck! Who wants to be spit out of God's mouth?

So, what can you do to crank up the heat?

1- Be very sure your music mission is something you have time to pursue. If your life is not aligned in a way where you can invest resources, time and your talent, it may not be the time to pursue your mission full-time. If you have debt, mortgage, obligations

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or other burdens, do not pursue your mission full-throttle until these issues are dealt with and resolved. Your life needs to be set up to allow you the freedom to pursue your music mission. If it isn't, you will experience many trials and much strife because you simply cannot devote what it takes to build a music mission. You need to be 100% ready, 100% willing and 100% able to pursue your music mission full-time and expect to support yourself from your endeavor.

2- If you have started your music mission, be sure that the content you are producing has value to others. Christian artists, musicians and songwriters have a very tough time self-evaluating their content. Why is this? It is because they are highly attached emotionally to what they have created. That's logical. We should be attached to what we are creating with the Creator. However, I see many out there who settle for mediocrity and believe God will make up for their lack of quality, or they simply do not know they are mediocre. And, Christians are notorious for telling artistic creatives they are "anointed" or great because they are afraid to discourage them by telling them the truth about their content. I personally welcome truthful criticism and never discount it or blow it off as someone not getting what I am doing. There is always some truth to be gleaned. (I also say this knowing full well that creatives are, in general, sensitive and can have their feelings hurt or damaged to a level that becomes counter-productive and even destructive. If this is you, make that a matter of prayer. Ask

God to help you receive instruction, learn from it and not internalize it as an attack on your personhood or your life's goals.)

3- Be passionate about your mission. Passion draws people to you as much or maybe more than excellence. Don't be arrogant, or think you are God's gift to humankind. (Jesus had that all wrapped up a long time ago.) There is a fine line between holy boldness and prideful arrogance. That line is called passion! If you are too far off that line, you are either a limp noodle who doesn't believe in your mission, or an egomaniac who is un-teachable and filled with pride. (Neither one of which is particularly attractive or inviting.)

4- In everything you do, point outward and upward—not inward. This isn't about what you get; it's all about what you give! I say give to give and leave the getting up to God. God will provide for you as you invest in your mission and strive for proficient vision (provision). You can do it with God's help! Actually, you can *only* do it with God's help. He knows that. And as soon as you learn that, the sooner you can walk hand-in-hand with Him into the bounty of the mission field He has placed before you. **CCM**

Keith Mohr is founder/president of Indieheaven, an organization for independent Christian musicians, songwriters and artists. He has worked with over 2500 indies since 1997 providing services, consulting, production and lots of free money-back advice!



FOR MORE INFO, VISIT INDIEHEAVEN.COM.

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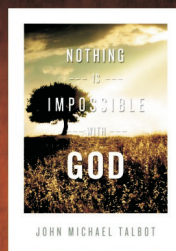
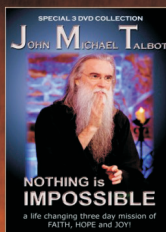
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FOR THE LORD

MISSION ENGINEERING REWAH PRO WAH PEDAL

BY JASON AHLBRANDT

Mission Engineering's ReWah Pro is a fresh new approach to the standard wah pedal. It rocks heel to toe very smoothly. With 4 switchable options (which can be mixed and matched simultaneously), this wah pedal adds a level of versatility for the serious guitarist. One of the challenges with some wah pedals is that they may only have the right characteristics for particular kinds of music. This pedal remedies that problem very well. Switch 1 increases gain and adds a bit of overdrive to the circuit. Switch 2 lowers the center frequencies slightly and reduces the width of the wah band. Switch 3 lowers the center of the filter band significantly for a bass-heavy wah. Switch 4 reduces the gain slightly, widening the filter for a broader response. I like this one especially for funk. To top this all off, the pedal is painted bright purple in a super durable chassis. **CCM**

Be sure to check out my video demo of the Mission Rewah Pro pedal in action



*Jason Ahlbrandt is a guitar soloist and session musician. He currently travels with Guy Penrod and has two solo acoustic guitar albums. He lives in Nashville, Tenn., with wife, Martina, and daughter, Alianna. Follow Jason Ahlbrandt on **Instagram**, **YouTube**, **Twitter**, and **Facebook***

PROS

- durable chassis
- smooth rock with adjustable tension
- Four switches for 16 different tonal variations
- hardwired true bypass
- higher frequency ranges than a typical wah pedal

CONS

- Switches aren't easily accessible

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“WALK ON WATER”

ARTIST: SHONLOCK

ALBUM: *A NIGHT TO REMEMBER*

BY RACHEL WILSON

From the first contagious beats to the last vibrations of a perfectly placed note, Shonlock's latest album, *A Night To Remember*, is not only Shonlock's personal journey to grace; it's a sweeping sonic tale, chronicling the journey of everyman as he or she makes their way to God.

"We all start somewhere. But we all eventually get to a point of saying, 'Ok, God. I'm tired. I can't do it on my own.' That is the heartbeat of the album...showing that we all go through the same highs and lows."

That sentiment laid the groundwork for the album's first single, "Walk on Water."

"Everyone has tear ducts," he says. "Rich, poor, high, low...we all experience pain. No one is exempt. That's not an uncommon theme, but more of a reminder that we all have highs and lows. The key is keeping your eyes on God, knowing He'll be with you."

"I wrote this song for a friend who was going through a hard time," he continues. "I wanted to remind them that they weren't alone and God had not forgotten them. Most people start their journey full of fight and strength, but seem to lose hope and steam as time goes on. I just want to encourage them that the shore is closer than they think... Don't let go." CCM



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