

MATT REDMAN | NICOLE C. MULLEN | JASON DUNN

CCM

A close-up, black and white portrait of Billy Graham, an elderly man with white hair, looking slightly to the right with a serious expression. He is wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a patterned tie. The background is a light blue with a subtle grid pattern.

**BILLY
GRAHAM**
HIS HOPE REMAINS

CHRISTMAS
SOUNDS OF THE SEASON

Superchick
A BITTERSWEET
DEPARTURE

2013
YEAR IN REVIEW

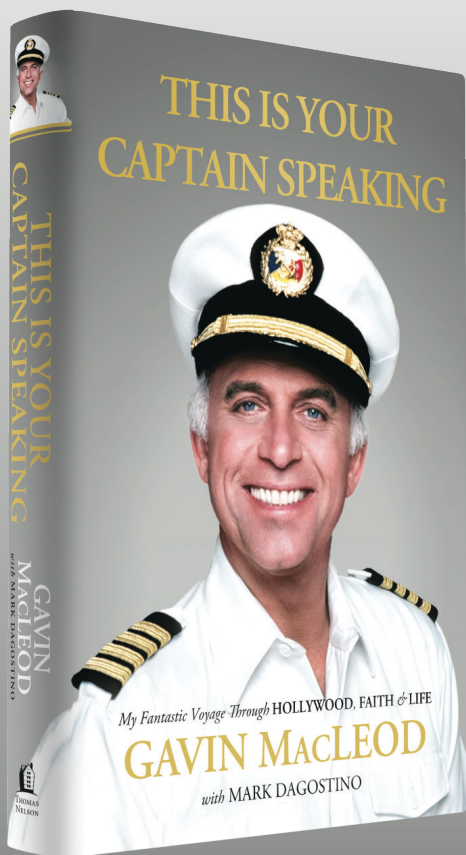
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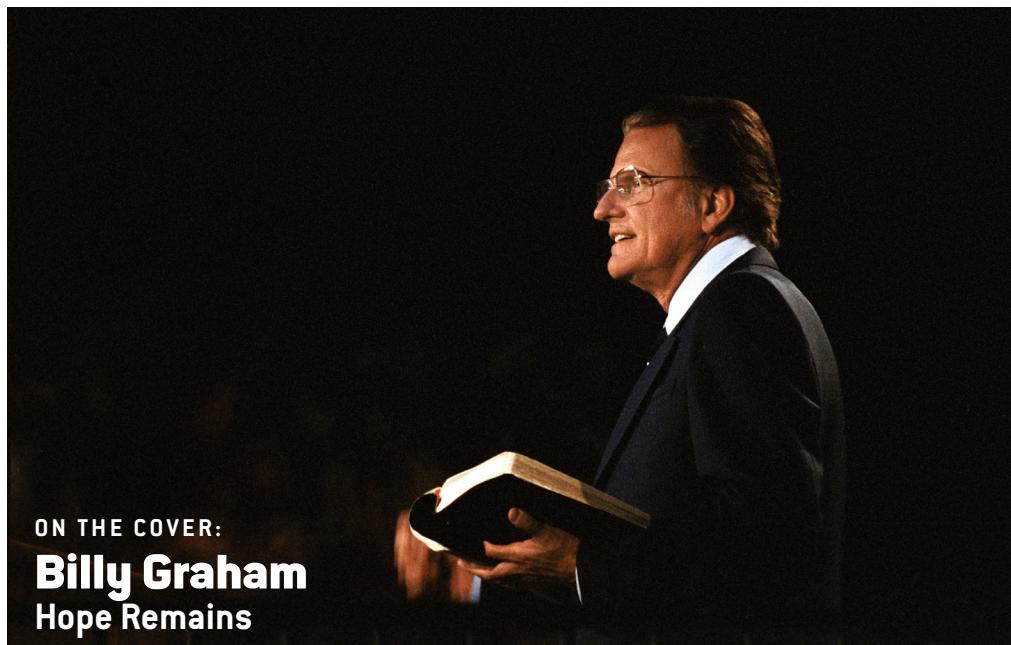
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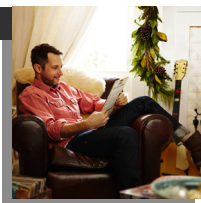


ON THE COVER:

Billy Graham Hope Remains

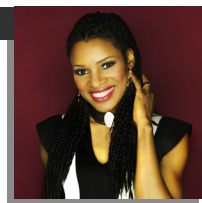
Christmas 2013

Sounds of the Season



Nicole C. Mullen

A Bridge Builder



Superchick

A Bittersweet Departure



Worship

Matt Redman: Finding
Grace
Pastor Russell Evans,
Planetshakers

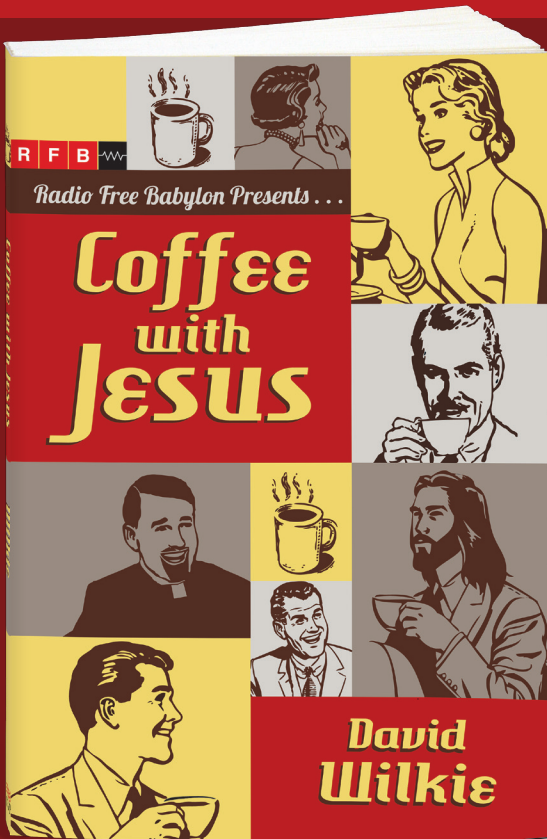


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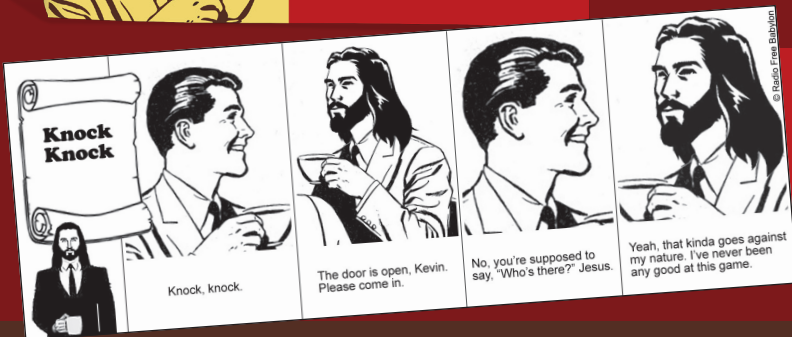
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DEPARTMENTS

FROM THE EDITOR

COMING NEXT MONTH

THEIR OWN WORDS

2013 Year in Review

YOUR HEART — Excerpt from
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YOUR WORLD —
Jason Dunn
Blood:Water Mission

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OUT AND ABOUT

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artists on the road, off the road
and at home

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Chris Tomlin



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URBAN — William McDowell

CROSSOVER

— A Thousand Champions

MUSICIAN'S CORNER

IN THE STUDIO

— Jonny Diaz & Lauren Diagle

STORY BEHIND THE SONG

Fuzed

CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

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It's the time of the year when expectations run

high, and time and energy run far too low. Christmas is a glorious time of the year and a stressful time. This year, however, maybe it's time we all step back and remember one of the most important truths about Christmas—it's not about us.

The trees and presents are lovely and the dinners we make are wonderful and inviting. But it's not about any of that. It's about a baby who was born in a dirty, crowded, smelly stable—a far cry from our cinnamon-scented candles and decorations.

Perhaps it's time to reframe our celebration—much like Paul Baloche did when incorporating elements of worship into his Christmas offering; much like Billy Graham did when he addressed the world one last time, with a reminder that our hope and joy doesn't lie in what is visceral and earthly. It is what lies beyond.

This year, celebrate Christmas from that perspective... and watch as the ticking clock seems to slow, the frantic pace of life seems to ease and stress fades to joy in the remembrance of the greatest gift ever given.



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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1 “American Idol” veteran Candice Russell celebrates her 21st birthday at the Disney California Adventure theme park in Anaheim.

2 Dove Award-winner Clay Crosse meets with keynote speaker Dr. Tim LaHaye after leading worship at the Adrian Rogers Center for Biblical Preaching Conference.

3 & 4 North Point Ministries worship leader, Casey Darnell, chats with Steven Curtis Chapman at the Momentum Conference in Orlando, followed by a full family visit with Mickey Mouse.



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7



8



5 Rock newcomers, Everfound, rehearse “God of the Impossible” with Governor Mike Huckabee on bass prior to an appearance on his television show.

6 & **7** Francesca Battistelli takes to the interview tent at Celebrate Freedom in Atlanta, but also gets back to business as she prepares to sing the National Anthem at LP Field.

8 Curb Recording act, No Other Name, ministers at the Atlanta Motor Speedway with NASCAR and Motor Racing Outreach.



9 & **10** Sidewalk Prophets' Justin Nace, Shaun Tomczak and Dave Frey enjoy a day off in San Francisco during the *Into The Light* Tour with Matthew West. Fellow member Ben McDonald and Frey also practice their hosting abilities while visiting ESPN Studios.

11 Family-friendly parody king "Weird Al" Yankovic (who's indeed a believer) keeps things squeaky clean, but still hysterical on the final leg of his *Alpocalypse* Tour.

11



Photo: Andy Argyrakis

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Photos by Andy Argyrakis

Following an overwhelmingly successful spring outing, Chris Tomlin made a second sweep through the States with his *Burning Lights Tour* to coincide with the deluxe edition of the project, expanded with the brand new *Live From Red Rocks* DVD.

No matter where Tomlin's leading praise, chances are he'll induce a sea of sing-a-longs, which was overwhelmingly the case during this particular mega-church stop intermingling the electronic raver "God's Great Dance Floor," the aggressive acoustics of "Lay Me Down" and the rap accompanied "Awake My Soul" (with Lecrae appearing via jumbotron).



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human trafficking *noun*



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Referring to the bold shift in direction, Tomlin promised he'd play "How Great Is Our God" and other more traditionally-minded cuts later in the night and he certainly obliged with modern worship classics like "Indescribable," "Holy Is The Lord," "Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)" and "God Of This City."

The evening ended with a remixed reprise of "God's Great Dance Floor," which found Tomlin and his talented band tossing out massive beach balls into the audience for a session of animated celebration and a call to carry that joy beyond merely this single show.



Additional messages of meaning came from renowned speaker Louie Giglio, who colorfully illustrated the Prodigal Son story with a multitude of cultural references, along with DJ Promote, the ultimate hype-man to not only get fans excited through a series of soulful grooves, but fittingly salute the most famous One of all.



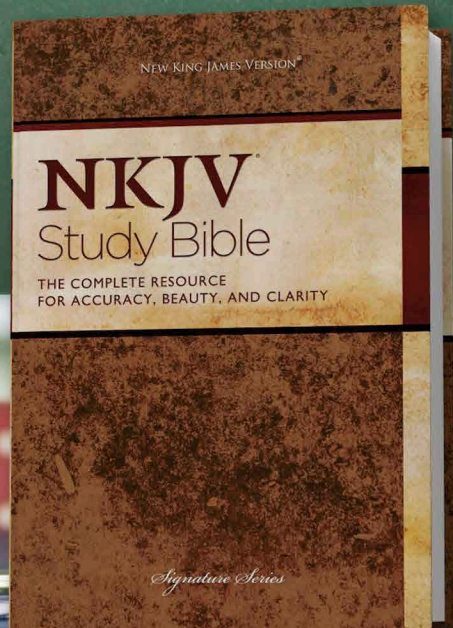
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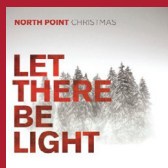
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Music is an integral part of our ministry because first and foremost, we want to call a generation to worship. Our primary objective is to be with God — and worship is at the core of intimacy. We are compelled to bring a generation into the Lord's presence, where they will experience His love and be healed and regenerated.

Worship is touching God and exalting His name.

This is the foundation of who we are. We are worshippers.

Our highest ambition is to continue releasing music that brings people into encounters with God. We also hope to encourage young worship leaders who desire to write songs of awakening and use anointed music to ignite revival.

Bryan and Katie Torwalt's newest project **"Kingdom Come"**
& Skyler and Kim Walker Smith's record **"Home"** are two of the newest offerings from Jesus Culture Music that capture this heart and mission. Both of these husband and wife duos are passionate to see people encounter Jesus and the Kingdom of God advanced.



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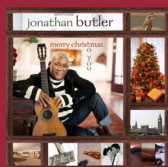
FOR KING & COUNTRY
INTO THE SILENT NIGHT EP
FERVENT RECORDS/WORD



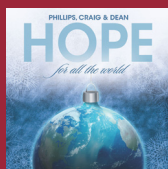
ALL THINGS NEW
CHRISTMAS EP
BEC RECORDINGS/NEW DAY



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FLAME

Seven albums in, Flame is still setting fire to hip-hop charts with his new release, *Royal Flush*.

Few artists can lay claim to the longevity and platform enjoyed by Flame, the celebrated rapper out of St. Louis. It's a testament to Flame's talent and focused vision to share the hope of the gospel. In short, it's his heart that keeps him going.

The good news is that the soil is ripe for a hip-hop artist like Flame to speak about spiritual things. Mainstream hip-hop releases are littered with gospel references, like Kanye West's *Yeezus*. Flame believes it's the ideal climate for an album like *Royal Flush*.

"The albums that are selling the most have something to do with God or Christ or Christianity," says Flame. "So I get to say, 'Hey, you're talking about Christ. You're talking about Christianity. Let me introduce you to it in its totality.'"

It doesn't hurt that the emcee is at the top of his game. Flame has always been celebrated across the board with Grammy, Stellar and Dove Award nominations; but with compelling tracks like the hopeful "Start Over (feat. NF)" and the gospel-centered "Believe," *Royal Flush* is truly a rare album that mixes deeper theological subject matter with dynamic compositions.

"Honestly, I feel like this is probably some of my best work," he says. "Actually, I wouldn't even say 'probably.' With every album, you want to reinvent yourself but



"I KNOW THE HAND THAT YOU'VE BEEN DEALT. YOU CAN BE RE-DEALT THE HIGHEST HAND. YOU CAN RECEIVE THE ROYAL FLUSH FROM GOD."

not lose yourself. You never want to go so far in another direction where it's like, 'What happened to Flame? He's weird now.' But you also don't want to remain the same where they feel like they're not getting anything unique from this particular project."

Flame believes the poker metaphor found in the album's title gives him a



proper point of entry into meaningful conversations with both Christians and non-Christians. Given Flame's commitment to presenting a message of hope, *Royal Flush* is a winning image with which anyone can relate.

"The metaphor for *Royal Flush* is saying that God has given us the highest hand," says Flame. "In poker, if you're dealt a royal flush, it's the highest hand you can be dealt.

"The Christian has been set up to win over sin, over death, over trials, over temptations from the work that Christ has done on the cross. I get to say, 'I know the hand that you've been dealt. You can be re-dealt the highest hand. You can receive the royal flush from God.' It's a metaphor I think will resonate and, on the front end, won't turn the non-Christian off and will pique the interest."

After landing near the top of the charts during release week, it's clear everyone was ready for Flame to deal another hand. Fortunately, *Royal Flush* is a winning hand for everyone. [CCM](#)

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BILLY GRAHAM

HOW THE HOPE OF ONE BECOMES THE HOPE OF ALL

BY CAROLINE LUSK

*"Were it not for hope,
the heart would break."*

— Scottish proverb

In a broken-hearted world, the absence of hope is palpable.

Everyday, marriages dissolve, addictions abound, governments corrupt and natural disasters wreak havoc.

Overworked, over-caffeinated and disconnected, people increasingly seek solace in temporary remedies that can numb or pacify for a moment, but offer no real solution. They offer no hope. And in

a time when hope has been pushed aside for so long, many have even forgotten what it means.

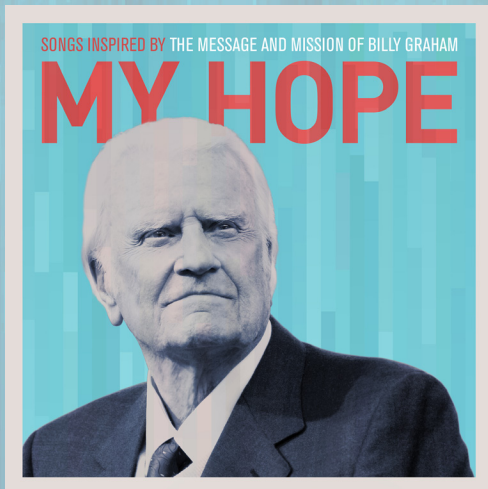
Billy Graham hasn't.

For over 70 years, Rev. Graham has watched this world ebb and flow along cultural, spiritual, moral and racial divides. He has learned the language of lost generations and lived a life above reproach, but not out of reach of the rest of us. He has opened his heart, his home, his life for a single purpose.

Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His great love for us, Rev. Graham has given all of us hope simply by sharing his.

This year, Rev. Graham celebrated a monumental birthday by giving a gift to us. As his 95th year commenced, he, along with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and various partners, unveiled *My Hope*. A book, an album, a movement with the singular intent of honoring the life of Billy Graham by honoring the God of whom he has proclaimed the truth for over 70 years. On November 7, the world watched as Rev. Graham's final sermon, *The Cross*, aired. The poignant message was the capstone of a movement that includes partnerships with churches, publishers, artists and more.

Fittingly, one of those artists was introduced to Jesus, while watching a



bold, passionate man deliver a sermon on television.

Only 13 at the time, this boy was drawn in by the simplicity of a message of love and surrender and forgiveness. That night, that boy accepted Christ into his heart. Fast-forward a few years and that kid—Matthew West—is joining hands with fellow artists whose lives have been touched by the life and work of Billy Graham.

“I asked Jesus into my heart watching him,” shares Matthew. “And here I am having the chance to write a song dedicated to Rev. Graham and all his years of preaching and ministry. It was an honor.”

Matthew joins the likes of Kari Jobe, Amy Grant, Israel Houghton, TobyMac, Nichole

Nordeman, Darlene Zschech, Lacey Sturm, the Newsboys and Michael W. Smith, among others, on the album that bears the name, *My Hope*. Each artist was charged with writing a song that represented Graham’s ministry. Michael W. Smith served as one of the four executive producers on the album, pulling together a lineup as esteemed as Graham’s career. To Michael, the experience was not only gratifying, but fondly nostalgic.

“I met him [Rev. Graham] in the 80s while I was on tour with Amy Grant,” shares Michael W. Smith. “During one youth night in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1994, we opened along with DC Talk. We made history and got a lot of opposition from lots of folks



back then who couldn't believe there would be a rock concert before the preaching. He [Rev. Graham] brings that up from time to time. It was a pivotal moment for him and the world."

That was but one of the many pivotal moments of which Rev. Graham has been a part throughout his ministry—a legacy that has continued with son Franklin Graham and grandson, Will Graham, and has set their ministry apart throughout the world.

Lacey Strum, former front-woman of FlyLeaf, who recorded two songs for the *My Hope* project, has traveled with Franklin Graham, playing Rock the River events along the Mississippi River. She shares that when Franklin asked them to be a part of the event, she was somewhat skeptical.

"We had just decided we weren't going to do any more Christian shows, because when we would play, the speaker would often be completely out of touch with what was going on and say something we would never want to say to our audience," shares Lacey. "When Franklin asked us, we really wanted to meet him to learn why he wanted us."

His response brought Lacey to tears then and even now, as she shares.

"He said to us, 'These kids are hopeless. Everyday they face the possibility of death. They need to know how they can be saved from going to hell. If we save someone from suicide and give them a positive message so they don't kill themselves, but don't introduce Jesus, what good have we done?'" Lacey recalls, her voice thick with emotion.

Now a solo artist, Lacey continues to travel with the Grahams, sharing her own story of hopelessness redeemed, as well as a song she wrote to bring her testimony to life, "The Reason."

"I wrote the song about my testimony, but it wasn't recorded for the longest time," she shares. "When they did this record [*My Hope*], they wanted to use it."

Lacey acquiesced, recording a compelling rendition of "The Reason" as well as another song written for this tribute record, "Mercy Tree."

"Who am I?" she says softly. "To be a part of this is amazing. I can't believe I ever even got to meet Billy Graham. And when I did, it was one of the most loving encounters I've ever had. It was as if he was honored to meet me. He understands who he is. That's the key. He's presenting something in such a humble way out of love. You can see his thankfulness for his own salvation. He understands that he is someone who said yes to the Lord."

Humility and authenticity are running themes as others reflect on the life and personhood of Rev. Graham.

"I didn't grow up in a Christian home," says Tommy Coomes. "After I became a Christian, I saw him preach at Anaheim Stadium. I thought, 'There is a really big God standing behind this preacher.' It was a touch of God's spirit. The fruit was there. The first time I met him, he shook my hand and said, 'Thank you for being here to help me.'"

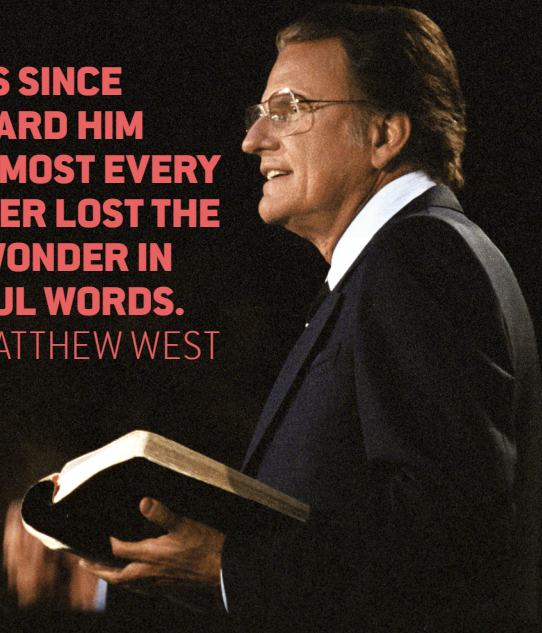
"He's been a great friend," adds Michael W. Smith. "Every time we're together he wants to know how the kids are doing, how my wife is... He believes in me and continues to thank me."

For a man who has earned a reputation of humility, the grace and gratitude that shine in his eyes, his smile, his words are larger than life, and are part of his legacy.

It's a legacy of hope and of promise, redemption and mercy.

IN ALL HIS MESSAGES SINCE THE BEGINNING, I HEARD HIM QUOTE JOHN 3:16 ALMOST EVERY SINGLE TIME. HE NEVER LOST THE SENSE OF AWE AND WONDER IN THOSE 25 WONDERFUL WORDS.

—MATTHEW WEST



It's a legacy that will continue on long after this 95th birthday because Billy, his team and his family have a singular goal.

"The family value system and the drive for the Gospel has been passed down generation to generation," says Tommy. "They're just all about the gospel."

They're also all about people and communities and churches. These priorities have informed the practice of connecting with churches around the world, training them to disciple new believers and equipping them to fan the flame of hope beyond one sermon or one song or one chapter. After a lifetime of selflessness for the sake of the Gospel, it is probably impossible to know the full extent of his impact on the world.

"In all his messages since the beginning, I heard him quote John 3:16 almost every single time," says Matthew West. "He never lost the sense of awe and wonder in those

25 wonderful words. And he never walked off the stage without inviting people to decide what they will do with Jesus."

Just like Matthew years ago, generations have found hope because one man was bold enough, humble enough and faithful enough to share the truth. And while we still live in a world of broken hearts, where hope can be hard to find, it's people like Rev. Graham that point the world back to light, love and the promise of a better tomorrow, with love, compassion and conviction.

"One of my top five prayers is to finish well," says Michael W. Smith. "I want to finish well just like him."

It's a prayer anyone could share...and it's a goal anyone can achieve; because in a world blinded by brokenness, God remains. Redemption remains. Love remains.

That is the hope of Billy Graham.

That is the hope of the world. **CCM**



**SOUNDS
OF THE SEASON**



THE MUSIC OF CHRISTMAS 2013

By Caroline Lusk



hat can you say about Christmas that hasn't been said?

It's the most wonderful time of the year!

It celebrates the greatest gift in the history of mankind.

It's a time for family and friends and lots of food...

Everyone has an idea of what Christmas looks like, smells like, feels like. Most also know how difficult it can be to safeguard against commercialism.

Most want to experience and share the holiday with reverence and joy over the birth of a king.

Along the way, though, we get busy. Between work and church and plays and parties and family, Christmas can come and go in such a flurry that the divine is diminished, if not omitted entirely.

Perhaps this is why God gave us music. Christmas songs have become symbolic of the birth of our Lord and the joy of that gift.

As we stand side-by-side singing together the familiar words of "Silent Night" or "The First Noel," we see, perhaps, a glimpse of what heaven will be—a family, honoring our Father and celebrating His love.

This Christmas, as the flurry of the holidays begins, perhaps you can find a respite, a smile, a celebration within one of the many new Christmas albums that have been released this year. CCM sat down with for King & Country, Sidewalk Prophets, Paul Baloche and others to hear the heart behind their holiday offerings.

Press pause on your Holiday to-do and enjoy the read, enjoy the songs and let every moment of this season fill your heart with joy, knowing that you are the recipient of the greatest gift ever given.



PAUL BALOCHE

Christmas Worship

Worship, Carols...Both

"The past few years, every time Christmas would come around, I would go through the process of planning the Christmas services at my church, and in the back of my mind I was wishing there was something I could pull from that would incorporate the carols and worship," says Paul Baloché. "That's always been a puzzle as the worship pastor. And I thought, 'Why can't we do both?'"

"The carols don't need any help," says Paul. "They stand on their own. Originally, they were intended to be sung and heard in the context of worship. Re-introducing them in that context forces us to re-engage, re-awaken the intent of the writer and re-appreciate that intent."

FOR KING & COUNTRY

Into the Silent Night

Tried and True

"We're dealing with the greatest tried-and-true that we'll ever listen to. They [traditional carols] will be much better than what we write. We wanted to keep it all relatively true. There's something incredibly powerful about singing the truths of who Christ is," says Luke Smallbone. "You're just talking about the things that we know to be inherently true. There's something powerful to be able to reflect back on some of these truths that have been around for a very long time."

SIDEWALK PROPHETS

Merry Christmas to You

A Charlie Brown Christmas

"We made it in May," says lead vocalist, Dave Frey. "I brought in a tree and we

played *Home Alone*. We hung a giant *Charlie Brown Christmas* banner and actually got the rights to use the voice of Linus from a *Charlie Brown Christmas*."

Star Bright...

"My favorite song from the record is one in which the moon is having a discussion with the Christmas star, remembering the night Jesus was born," Dave continues. "We wanted it to be almost like a lullaby...it's reflective of that night."

BRANDON HEATH

Christmas Is Here

Holiday Protocol

"I'm finding out a lot of people agree on my hardline rule—no Christmas music until the day after Thanksgiving," says Brandon. "Too much of a good thing is a bad thing!"

Something Old, Something New, Something Blue

"I wanted it to be fun. It always reminds me of children. I wanted something for kids to sing along to and to reflect the vinyl records I grew up on—Nat King Cole, Bing Crosby...I borrowed from their style a bit. I really wanted to sing some carols," says Brandon. "So I recorded a lot of carols, including 'In the Bleak Mid-Winter.' It's super old and one of the most beautifully written. There's also some bluegrass style on the record. A couple guys from Union Station played on the record. It was fun!"

DAVE BARNES

A Christmas to Remember

Target Practice

"It's probably some of my favorite stuff

to write just because it's the one time as a writer when it's a specific target," Dave explains. "For me, that's what's so fun about it and what's so mind-bogglingly frustrating about it. With a pop record, you can write songs that run the gamut. Christmas songs kind of say the same thing over and over, but that thing is incredibly potent and powerful."

High Hopes

"Because it's such a strong sentiment, people attach so much value to that season and the memories associated with that season. Things either trigger that or they just don't," Dave continues. "My hope for this record is that it becomes what so many classic Christmas albums are to me—the music that accompanies the memories and moments that surround my favorite holiday."

POINT OF GRACE

A Point of Grace Christmas

Pull up a chair...

"We are so excited to be partnering with Cracker Barrel on our holiday CD this year. What an honor to walk through the doors of our favorite restaurant and see Point of Grace music on the shelves," says Point of Grace's Shelley Breen. "It's our sincere wish that the faithful customers of Cracker Barrel will find joy and encouragement this Christmas while listening to *A Point of Grace Christmas*."

DAVID IAN

A Vintage Christmas Wonderland

What's old is back again...

"After overwhelming enthusiasm that came from my debut album, *Vintage Christmas*, I felt energized to explore more

Christmas music," David Ian explains. "Songs I've chosen for the new EP include two instrumentals: a mellow and swinging rendition of 'O Little Town Of Bethlehem' and 'The First Noel,' featuring a melodic bass solo by Jon Estes. The familiar sound of the vocalists stay true to the *Vintage Christmas* brand in 'Angels We Have Heard on High' and 'Winter Wonderland,' with a slight departure in 'Jingle Bells.'"

ANDREW GREER

*Andrew Greer Angel Band:
The Christmas Sessions*

"I have loved Christmas and, more specifically, Christmas music since I was a young kid. From historic hymns to modern classics, the season's song repertoire is so rich. This season evokes a hopeful melancholy of sorts. A reflection on my humanity, God's divinity and the need for Jesus, the Messiah, to reconcile the two," says Andrew. "So I wanted to record sacred carols, as well as write a few tunes, that perpetuate this bigger redemption picture. The sparse Americana-Folk arrangements, instrumentation and production—vibey pedal steel, vintage upright piano, fiddle, mandolin, plenty of acoustic guitars—are designed to give a hallowed acoustic framework to the life-changing message of these songs. All of these elements add to this sacred midnight that I feel gives Christmas music such magical meaning—especially in the life of a follower of Christ." CCM

 **CLICK HERE FOR MORE FROM THESE ARTISTS ON THEIR CHRISTMAS ALBUMS AND PERSONAL CHRISTMAS MEMORIES**



HONORING **SUPERCHICK'S** INNOVATION AND LASTING LEGACY

BY CAROLINE LUSK

Few bands embody the meaning of the word “innovative” more completely than Superchick. Their unique brand of power-pop put them in a tier all their own within Christian music. After over a decade of ministry, though, the band members are moving on. *Recollection* stands to be their final album, containing 11 of their greatest hits, plus five new songs. While the album celebrates their ministry, it also serves as

a tribute to their drummer, Chase Lovelace who sadly succumbed to a battle with cancer earlier this year.

“When he first started chemo, Chase called me to say, ‘Don’t finish the record without me; I’m coming back in the fall,’” Superchick founder and band member, Max Hsu, recalls. “We managed to get some studio sessions with him and some of Chase’s rhythmic creativity lives on in these songs. They are the last words in a sentence that was brought to a full stop by his passing. These new songs are dedicated to his fighting optimism and I hope they honor his memory.”

CCM recently spoke with Max about closing this epic chapter in their lives.

CCM: What has this journey that Superchick has been on meant to you?

Superchick is about what happens when you say “yes.” There are always a thousand reasons to say “no,” but what we started in a basement became an amazing ride that changed all of our lives. We did the best we could with what we had and the fans took it the rest of the way. I wish there was a better word than “fans” because it was more a parade of people running along with us and carrying us on their shoulders. When children have a velveteen rabbit, it’s not loved because it has value; it has value because it is loved. We were a band made real by love. We got to live the idea that we were spreading: God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. We didn’t do something amazing; we became part of something amazing. That only happens when you say “yes.”

CCM: With *Recollection*, how did the songs reflect not only your history, but your new normal, following the loss of Chase?

It was a hard couple years for us while we were making this record; we spent a lot of time in hospitals hoping that the people we cared about would make it through the night, and sadly Chase didn’t. He was an example right until the end of how you never let go of hope and faith. I hope the lyrics reflect what we learned in this time, which is that we don’t know how long we have and so we do not have time to waste on fear, anxiety and pettiness. Each day is a gift we cannot take for granted, and I hope

when it’s my turn that it will be said of me that I lived well and fully and was always able to find the beauty in every day. I try to see the world like it’s my first year and live like it might be my last (that doesn’t apply to credit card debt).

CCM: Is this farewell bittersweet?

When something has been part of your life for so long, it’s going to have a big emotional impact when you leave it. All major change is scary, but it’s necessary to keep moving forward. When a door closes, it frees you up to walk through other doors and be challenged in other ways. My goal in life is to always be learning and growing. If I don’t actively work on it, I find myself becoming smaller and harder. It’s safe but it ends with me like an old dog always barking at things I don’t understand.

CCM: What has God revealed to you and the band about Himself and your role in His kingdom throughout the years?

When the waters of life rise above your head and you’ve swum until you can’t swim anymore, when you are well past exhausted and there is no land in sight, the trick is to learn to float. Floating requires that you stop struggling and swimming. You lie back and rest and somehow you stay above the water. To float you have to believe that something you can’t see will hold you up. [CCM](#)



CLICK HERE TO SEE THE REST OF THE INTERVIEW, INCLUDING FUTURE PLANS AND STORIES BEHIND THE NEW SONGS ON THE RECORD

Generations Un-Divided

NICOLE C MULLEN
BRIDGES A GAP

BY ANDREW GREER



Whether releasing best-selling records, writing hit songs or touring the world with her Team NCM kids, for nearly twenty years Nicole C. Mullen has been an immovable force in Christian music. But more recently, the bulk of Nicole's energies have been invested in spiritually shaping the next generation through her non-profit mentorship programs, Baby Girl's Club and Team NCM. And it was her work behind the scenes with these outreach initiatives that led her back into the forefront with her latest recording, *Crown Him: Hymns Old and New* (Lucid Artist)—available exclusively at Family Christian. Here the multi-award-winning singer-songwriter talks about how her mission continues to drive her music.

CCM: *What instigated this recording of new and old hymns?*

NICOLE C. MULLEN: For the past several years I have been mentoring young teens at least four times each week. And we have been singing all over the globe. In Africa or France or wherever we have performed, people sing the hymns. There is something about the hymn-like worship, and hopefully some of my songs will become hymns that transcend cultural and language barriers. I thought *Crown Him* would be a great unifier. Not to remind us here in the states of our heritage in Christendom, but to celebrate across the globe. And since one-hundred percent of Family Christian Stores' proceeds support orphans and widows across the world, the opportunity to partner with them on *Crown Him* was a perfect combination.

CCM: *How has traveling internationally opened your mind and heart, spiritually speaking?*

NICOLE: Every time I go out of the country, I realize again that the kingdom of God is not just American; it is wide, it is vast and it is broad. It includes people of different languages, different cultures and different looks that are all a part of the same kingdom because we unite under the banner of Jesus Christ. I love celebrating that with song.

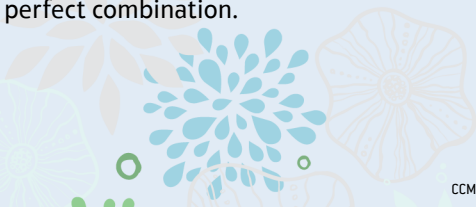
If you want to see real worship, where people are not concerned about what they are wearing, or how their hair looks, or if their makeup is going to run if they cry out to Him, or if they are going to get their clothes dirty because they are on the dirt floor facedown, if you want to see real worship, go to a third-world country where if God doesn't provide food today they won't eat. If He doesn't provide healing they can't just buy Advil Cold & Sinus.


Traveling abroad has been humbling. Wherever we go, I find we are not bringing Jesus. Jesus is already there and at work. We are just coming to join in with what He is already doing.

CCM: *Have these experiences also impacted your family?*

NICOLE: Absolutely. We have taken our 10-, 16- and 19- year-old kids overseas, and every time it brings back to mind what is really important. Sometimes we get disgruntled with ourselves because we have "stuff-itis". Our stuff can become our god. So we have to remove those things so we can see and worship the true God all over again. I learn that every time I go away.

And everywhere we go, they love the hymns because they are foundational. They





I BELIEVE WE AS MUSICIANS ARE CALLED TO USE MUSIC WISELY, TO HEAL THE BROKENHEARTED AND TO TURN OUR WORSHIP TOWARDS CHRIST.

—NICOLE C. MULLEN

say what we believe. Hymns are Christ-centered, not self-centered. So that's part of my love for bringing hymns back to people's attentions.

CCM: *Why do you think music is such a universal medium?*

NICOLE: Music can make you happy or make you sad, make you glad or make you mad. It's one of those God things. In scripture, when Saul was depressed and wanted to kill everybody around him, David would play and sing to him and the evil spirits would depart. I think God still places that anointing on music, especially music that is God- and Christ-centered. I believe we as musicians are called to use music wisely, to heal the brokenhearted and to turn our worship towards Christ.

CCM: *Tell us more about Baby's Girl Club and Team NCM.*

NICOLE: Team NCM is an auditioned group of girls and guys here in Franklin [Tennessee]. We dance, sing, talk and memorize scripture. These are the kids you have seen perform with me all over the globe and at Women of Faith for several years. Team NCM is our way of making disciples, who in turn go and make disciples. These kids are actually discipling

some of the "Baby Girls" we have been mentoring. It is a beautiful cycle, watching them grow in Christ.

We have had the Baby's Girls Club for many years. Girls 6- to 18-years old get together several times a week to dance, sing and work on homework. The majority of these girls come from non-churched environments, so we have seen many come to Christ. We also have a Baby's Girl Club in Belize. People in Kenya and South Africa have also asked me to help start their own clubs. So the Lord is starting to multiply our work.

I'm just someone who is answering questions, and giving the little bit of knowledge that I have to help others disciple well. That's a huge passion of mine. God has done a powerful work in our young people and I am honored He is allowing me to be a part.

CCM: *Music. Mentoring. Traveling. Through every endeavor, what do you hope to accomplish?*

NICOLE: When all is said and done, that Nicole C. Mullen would become invisible, and Christ would be seen brilliantly. If that's accomplished, then the mission has been accomplished. **CCM**



A FEW OF OUR

Favorite Things



CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

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CHRISTMAS
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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.

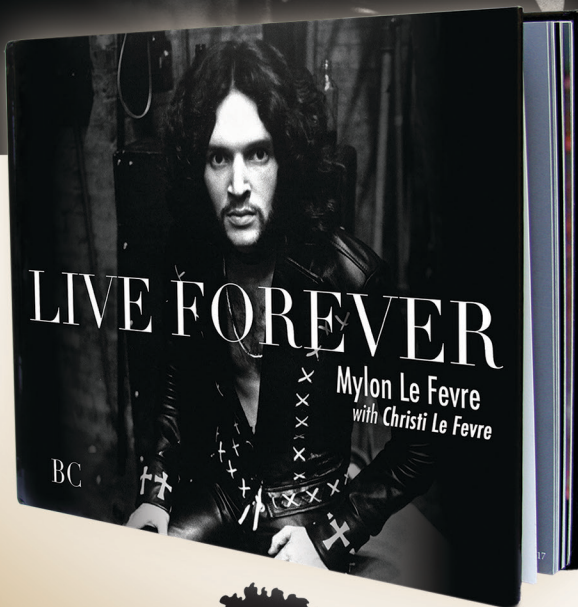
This journey Mylon lays out is not only intriguing, but it could change your life. There are few stories that are so fascinating yet so graphic. You will be enraptured by the simple, easy-to-read writing style that really defines the man. At the least, this book will be a breath of fresh air.

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LIVE FOREVER

The True Inspiring Story of Mylon Le Fevre



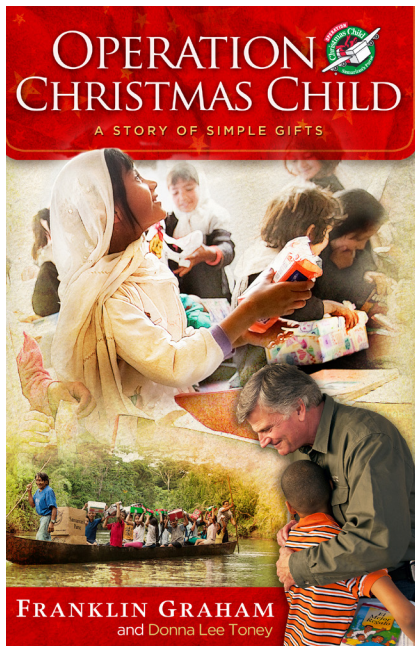
This is Mylon's story. It's all here with over 100 photos and lyrics to 15 songs. The true story of Mylon Le Fevre's career in Gospel Music to a whirlwind ride of rock and roll fantasy, strung out on drugs, depression, and loneliness until he found what he was truly looking for... he found God, a loving 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

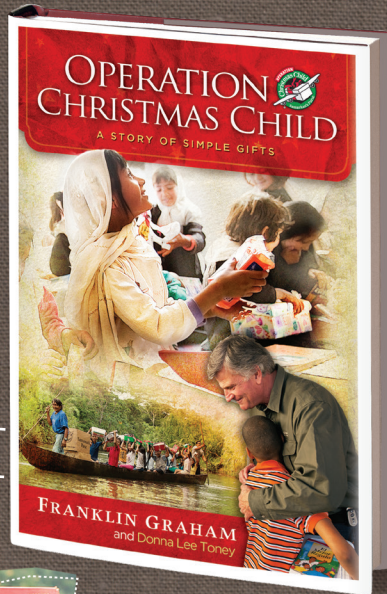
to celebrate and honor.

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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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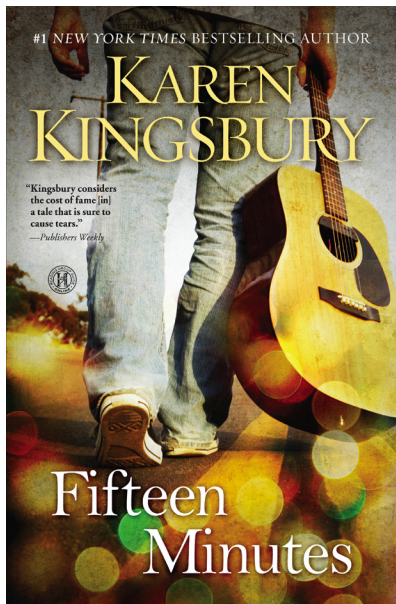
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FIFTEEN MINUTES
(HOWARD BOOKS)



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

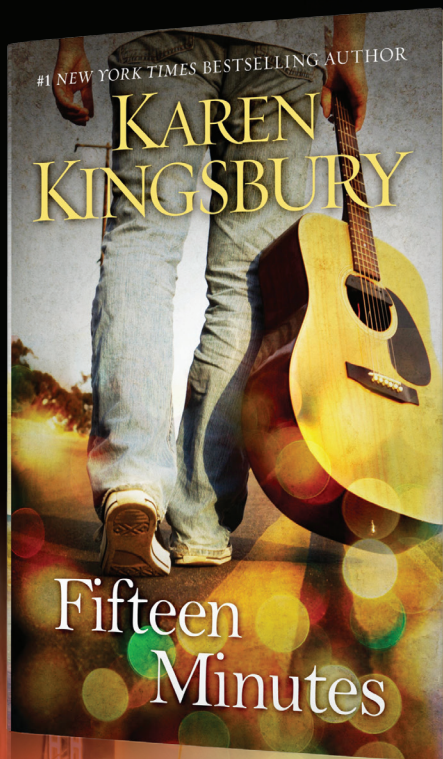
Zack advances from one round of the competition to the next, an offer comes to Reese—one that will take her to a home halfway around the world.

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?

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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**.

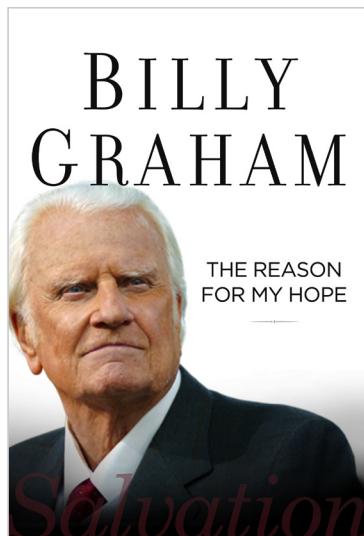


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THE REASON FOR MY HOPE
(THOMAS NELSON)



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.

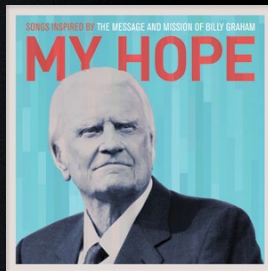
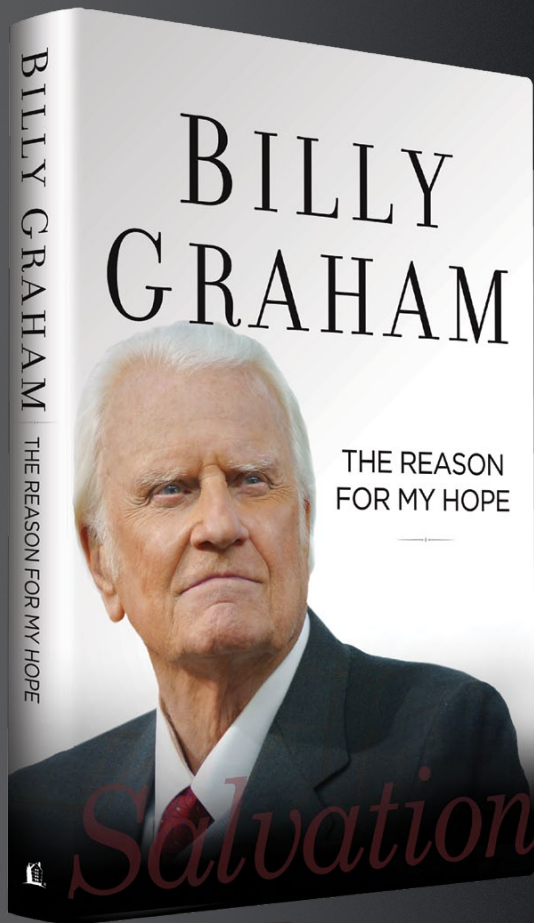
**Excerpted from the introduction of The Reason for My Hope by Billy Graham*

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THOMASNELSON.COM**

— NEW THIS FALL FROM —

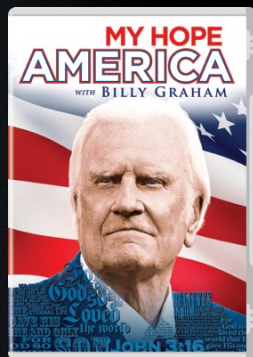
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BILLY GRAHAM



MY HOPE: SONGS INSPIRED BY THE MESSAGE AND MISSION OF BILLY GRAHAM

includes 12 brand new recordings from the biggest names in Christian music—each with a special connection to Billy Graham and his ministry—including **TobyMac, Michael W. Smith, Amy Grant, Matthew West, Kari Jobe, Newsboys**, and more.



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NIV RAGAMUFFIN BIBLE (ZONDERVAN)



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

It's just one of the soul-searching questions posed by bestselling author Brennan Manning who confesses he has been "John the beloved, Peter the coward, and Thomas the doubter all before the waitress brought the check."

The NIV Ragamuffin Bible offers a collection of Manning's raw, painfully honest, yet grace-filled devotions, meditations and reflections of his journey limping back to—as the prodigal son—his overjoyed father. When you journey through this Bible, you likewise will find yourself returning to your heavenly Father, basking in the knowledge that God not only loves you, but He delights in you.

Shedding new light on God's Word from an unexpected perspective, it is a precious reminder to the ragamuffin-prodigal in everyone that they are still God's beloved. In addition to the full NIV text, devotions, reflections and quotes from Brennan Manning are scattered throughout this Bible.

Features:

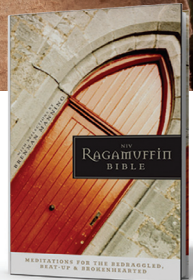
- Complete text of the world's most popular modern-English Bible, the NIV.
- 104 Devotions guide you into a deeper connection to God and his Word.
- 250 Reflections help you understand what it means to be a child of God.
- 150 Quotes offer short but thoughtful insights into God's kingdom.

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God
Receives
All
Christians
Equally

An ounce of grace can overcome a world of hurt. *The NIV Ragamuffin Bible* with notes from Brennan Manning, inspired by his book *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, will help beaten down, bedraggled, and broken Christians rebuild their relationship with God through simple honesty and understanding his furious love for us all. Visit zondervan.com to learn more.





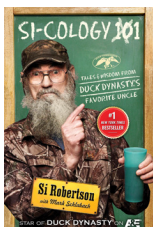
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BOOKS FROM THE DUCK COMMANDER FAMILY (HOWARD BOOKS)



THE DUCK COMMANDER FAMILY is the bestseller that offers an up-close and personal, behind-the-scenes look at the whole *Duck Dynasty*® family.

Get to know the founder of the multi-million-dollar family business in **HAPPY, HAPPY, HAPPY**, a no-holds-barred biography chronicling the remarkable life of **PHIL ROBERTSON**, the original Duck Commander and patriarch on the *Duck Dynasty*® series on A&E®.

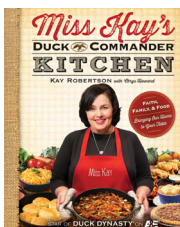


Hey Jack—do you know any **UNCLE SI** fans? In **SI-COLOGY 1**, *Duck Dynasty*® Uncle Si presents his signature tall tales, crazy exploits, and quirky one-liners all in one raucous collection!



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

Camo and Pink Camo covers.



Who on your list has a flock to feed? Sassy, country-cookin' **MISS KAY**, matriarch of the Robertson clan, dishes up her fabulous recipes, stories, and photos in **MISS KAY'S DUCK COMMANDER KITCHEN**.



And if you can't decide, don't worry! Just in time for the holidays comes the perfect gift for the die-hard *Duck Dynasty*® fan: a boxed set of all three bestsellers by **PHIL, WILLIE** and **KORIE** and **SI ROBERTSON**. Get yours today!

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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 led 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 unflinching

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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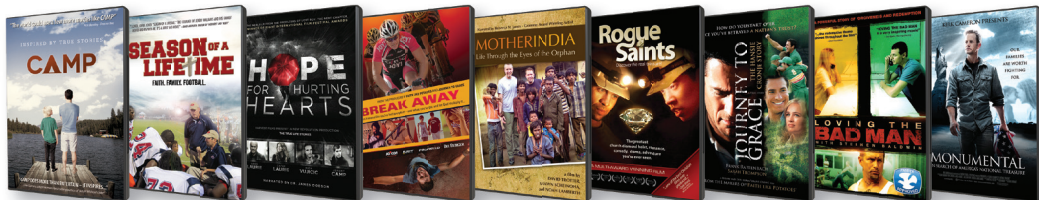


When Calls the Heart is the story of Elizabeth Thatcher, a cultured young school teacher in 1910 who, through the discovery of her aunt's secret diary, finds the courage to leave her big city home to accept a teaching position in a frontier coal mining town. And in the process, she also finds the potential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

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November 19th
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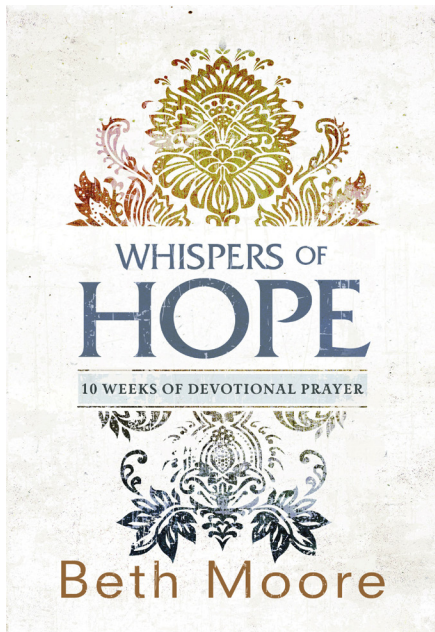


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CHRISTMAS
GIFT GUIDE
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WHISPERS OF HOPE
(B&H PUBLISHING)



SCRIPTURE TELLS US TO PRAY WITHOUT CEASING, but how in the world do we do that? In fact, do we even know how to pray? Where do we start?

Best-selling author Beth Moore addresses these practical and pervasive matters in *Whispers of Hope* by walking readers through an easy-to-remember-and-apply method of prayer, coupled with 70 daily devotionals and followed by prompts to put this prayer method into practice.

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.

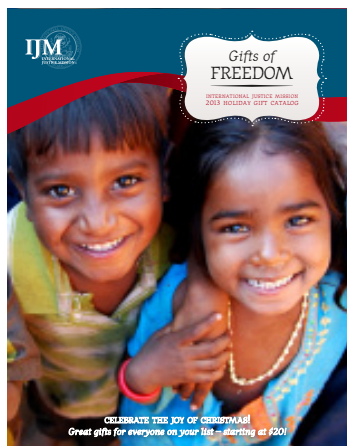
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CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE 2013

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION



UNWRAP THE GIFT OF FREEDOM THIS HOLIDAY SEASON WITH INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION

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.
- **Share of Freedom Training for a Family Rescued from Forced Labor Slavery—\$25**
Provides skills to those rescued to find a new job and rebuild family life from basics such as how to open a savings account to planning for the future as a family.
- **Defend Vulnerable Widows and Orphans—\$25**
Send IJM lawyers to defend and support widows and orphans whose land and shelter has been stolen from them.
- **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.

Donations go directly toward the category selected. Visit IJM.org/GiftsofFreedom to order gifts before Dec. 10, 2013, and receive a free card to personalize and share with gift recipients. E-cards are available until Jan. 10, 2014.

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Gifts of
FREEDOM

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Give meaningful gifts to honor the ones you love this Christmas—and bring rescue and restoration to someone in need—with International Justice Mission's Holiday Gift Catalog.

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Each gift you purchase comes with a beautiful, free mailed card or personalized e-card.

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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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DUCKTHEHALLS.COM**

A promotional image for the album 'Duck in the Halls: A Robertson Family Christmas'. It features four men dressed in camouflage clothing and Santa hats, standing in a swampy forest. A small duck is in the water in the foreground. The title 'Duck in the Halls' is written in a large, stylized font, with 'A Robertson Family Christmas' written below it in a white font on a red banner.

Duck *in the* Halls

A Robertson Family Christmas

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

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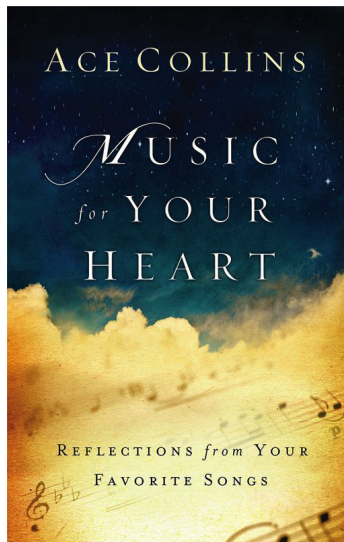
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CHRISTMAS
GIFT GUIDE
2013

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

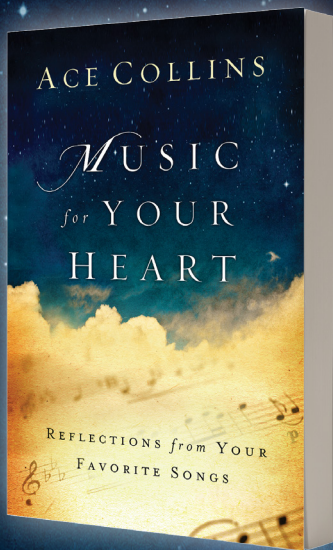
By Ace Collins

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

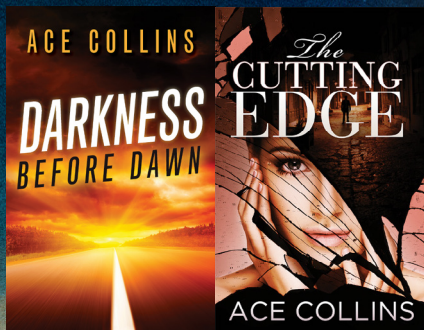
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Also Available from
Master Storyteller Ace Collins



“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

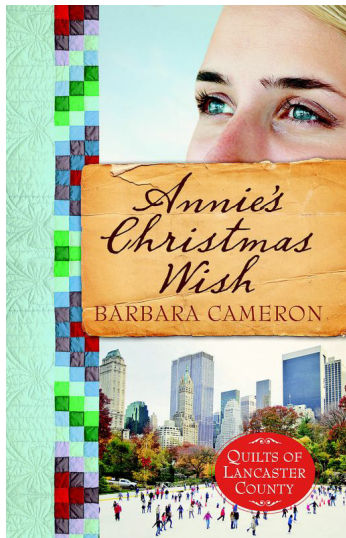
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CHRISTMAS
GIFT GUIDE
2013

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 rumschpringe—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

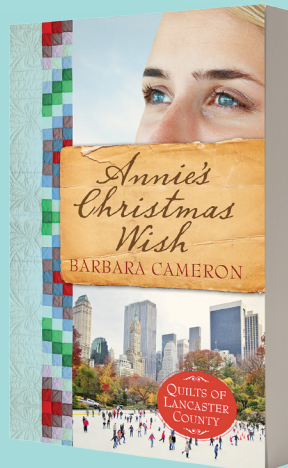
he watches her engage in the big city, he grows concerned that she won't want to return to their quieter life. Will Annie follow Aaron back home, or stay and pursue her dreams? Competing for her attention, Aaron sets out to show Annie that Christmas isn't about the glitz and glamour, but about family, love and the birth of Jesus.

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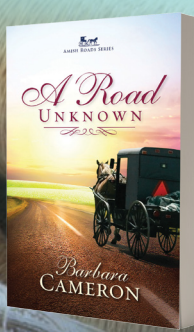
The Exciting Conclusion to the Quilts of Lancaster County Series by Popular Amish Author **BARBARA CAMERON**

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?



Also Available in the
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**SEEK
& YOU
SHALL
FIND**

**MATT REDMAN FINDS
GRACE IN LIFE, LOVE
AND WORSHIP**

Matt Redman has consistently and generously given melodies to God's promises throughout his career; thus it was no surprise that his song, "10,000 Reasons" took home Song of the Year at the 44th GMA Dove Awards. He's back with a new album, *Where Grace Finds Me*, that once again gives simple, yet fresh songs to which the world can worship. Read on for CCM's exclusive interview with the worshipper, leader, songwriter, father and husband.

CCM: *Where do you find grace? Where does grace find you?*

Matt: I think grace shows up in our lives in a multitude of ways and it's there for those with the eyes to see it. Grace could be defined as the undeserved, unearned, freely given gifts of God in our lives. Ultimately, we find grace at the cross, the biggest example we'll ever see. And yet, grace finds us in so many other moments too. You breathe in and out and your life continues—that's grace. You socialize or enjoy family—that's grace.

You didn't earn those beautiful moments; they are the generous, kind expressions of grace in our lives. Everyone experiences this stuff, but not everyone attributes it to God or recognizes it as grace.

CCM: *You've been writing worship songs for the church for years, yet seem to consistently come up with new ways to phrase things and creatively express your adoration of Christ. From where does your inspiration come?*

Matt: The ultimate filter I put everything through when I'm writing a worship song is something I heard Brian Doerksen say years ago: "The best songs express a 'universal theme' in a 'unique way.'" So that's always the aim—to take these big grand themes of God, life and the Bible and try to wrap fresh words and melodies

around them. I always have my antennae up, looking for a Bible verse, a phrase or even a mere word that might add some freshness to things. I don't think we always have to be progressive or clever. Sometimes profound things can be said in simple ways.

CCM: *What do you notice as the key differences between bodies of believers in the UK and the US?*

Matt: Living in the States for a while made me realize that there's a lovely optimistic positivity in the outlook of so much of the church and a tendency to dream big. That was helpful for me and something from which so many of us in the UK can learn. The biggest differences have to do with the fact that a sense of the secular has taken hold of European culture so much more than in the USA. When it comes

to evangelism in the UK, you can't assume people know the Christ story or Bible moments that previous generations would have. There are also fewer obstacles to an un-churched person attending a service in the States, I think. I noticed it particularly at Easter, living in Atlanta. I noted how service numbers would swell massively on Easter weekend, as lots of people in the community visited who normally wouldn't do so. Where as in the UK, you honestly



wouldn't notice any difference in numbers that week from any other week.

CCM: *Were you surprised by the success of "10,000 Reasons"? Did you feel pressure with this record to come up with another huge hit like that?*

Matt: I was very surprised by the level of momentum that accompanied that song, yes. It's a simple song, there's nothing complicated or groundbreaking about it at all—it doesn't even have a bridge section! But somehow, it seems to help people talk to God in a special way, and I love that. It was written very quickly and without strain. Because it arrived like that, it's made me not stress about matching it this time around. I figure if I didn't know what I was doing last time with "10,000 Reasons," I don't need to know what I'm doing this time around either! I'll do my best and then let go and let God breathe on what He wants to breathe on. That's the interesting thing about the creative sphere—you're automatically kept in a stance of dependence, not knowing when the next helpful song will arrive. That's not so in lots of other walks of life. For example, an accountant can pass an exam and from then on, always be able to repeat that level of competence. That's not so with songwriting. I wrote "10,000 Reasons" with my friend Jonas, and we've had so much response to that song—yet we're no more qualified as worship songwriters than we were the day before we wrote it. Ok, we're more experienced and hopefully are always honing our skills, but we couldn't go back and guarantee a repeat of the process. In my mind, that's a good thing. It can keep you humble and dependent.

CCM: *You and your wife have done some amazing work together... how do you balance that work/marriage relationship?*

Matt: Wow...there's no quick or easy answer. We love ministering together. Sometimes that means Beth singing with me, us songwriting together or her speaking when I lead worship. Other times it's me supporting Beth in her role as a UK ambassador for the A21 Campaign [an anti-human trafficking organization]. But of course we have 5 kids, so life can get a little crazy. We haven't discovered the magic formula yet. At times it's a tricky balancing act, and one of the key things is trying to make sure we have some good support in place.

CCM: *What's the latest thing God has revealed about Himself to you?*

Matt: That He is slow to anger, and quick to show compassion. And that sometimes I'm the opposite. I'm going to need to give that some attention!

CCM: *When you see the world worship, what does that stir up within you?*

Matt: It makes me think about God on His throne, and a glimpse of that heavenly scene we see in places like Revelation, chapters 4 and 5. We're not just singing for the fun of it. I believe that our expressions of worship are part of that heavenly anthem. CCM



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THE HEART OF HIS CHILDREN THE ROAD TO REVELATION

*So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when He adopted you as His own children. Now we call Him, "Abba, Father." For His Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. And since we are His children, we are His heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share His glory, we must also share His suffering. **Romans 8:15-17***

This is one of my favorite scriptures in the Bible because it deals with intimacy from a son and daughter to their Father. It says we now call Him Abba Father, or Daddy Daddy. I have two children and I never get tired of them calling me Daddy, because it shows a heart of innocence, love and tenderness.

In much the same way, worship is not merely a time of singing songs; it's the opening of your heart to an intimate God who wants to embrace His children. If we have the wrong heart condition, it limits our ability to connect to our loving Father. An orphan heart comes from a lack of understanding of what our Heavenly Father is really like. He is like no other father on earth. Even the greatest father doesn't even come close to how loving and powerful our Heavenly Father is. We are all born with an orphan heart, independent and rebellious, when it comes

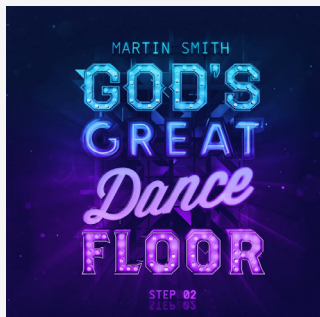
to God the father. An orphan's heart is cynical and closed. On the other hand, a son or daughter's heart is open and trusting. When we come to the Father through Jesus, we are given a spiritual heart transplant.

When we lead people into the Father's presence, we must encourage them to let the things in their hearts that are wrong trade places with an embrace of a loving Father. The next time you worship and embrace the love of our awesome Dad, do not approach Him as an orphan; rather, come before Him as a son or daughter. Daddy is waiting. **CCM**



WORSHIP

MUSIC



MARTIN SMITH
God's Great Dance Floor,
Step 02 (Gloworks)
 FOR FANS OF: *Delirious?*,
Matt Redman

★★★★

Worship music pioneer Martin Smith is now settling nicely into his solo career after years as the front man for *Delirious?* *God's Great Dance Floor, Step 02* is a diverse collection of emotional Brit-pop anthems ("You Are My Salvation") and hall-oriented tracks ("Only Got Eyes"). Smith's friends helped write several tracks (Michael W. Smith, Chris Tomlin), and such friendships pay off on this interesting and inspiring release.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "You Are My Salvation"



JIMMY NEEDHAM
The Hymns Sessions, Vol. 1
 (NeedHim Music)
 FOR FANS OF: *Shane and Shane*,
Jonny Diaz, *Jason Mraz*

★★★

Jimmy's vocal lends itself nicely to some well-arranged hymns, particularly in his soulful "Rock Of Ages" and the pure, beautiful, "It Is Well," which is stripped down and perfect. However, the misstep occurs on, "Holy Holy Holy," where the collaboration with Shane and Shane is overwhelming and full of competing vocal runs. Still, a good variety and solid effort will please fans of Needham's unique compilation.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "It Is Well"



MATT PAPA
Look & Live
 (The Summit Church)
 FOR FANS OF: *Steve Fee*,
Chris Tomlin

★★★

Matt Papa's latest release, *Look & Live*, is the culmination of months of study on the glory of God. Such a broad, grand theme is served well on this 14-song release, especially by mid-tempo songs like "Show Me Your Glory" and "The Ocean." In addition, songs like "The Crucible of God (Gethsemane)" offer a more somber side to diversify the entire package.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Show Me Your Glory"

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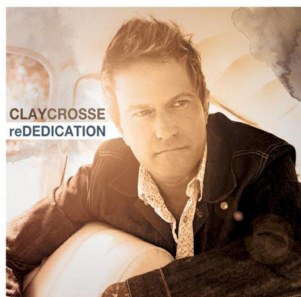
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KarenOrlando.com



ADULT CONTEMPORARY

MUSIC

**CLAY CROSSE**

reDedication (CCM Forever/
Elevate Entertainment)

FOR FANS OF: Michael English,
Bob Carlisle, Wayne Watson

★★★★

Ten albums into his chart-topping and multiple Dove-adorned career, Clay Crosse remains steadfast in his position as one of contemporary Christian music's leading voices. The ten tunes that make up *reDedication* don't just show off his pristine blue-eyed-soul pipes, but also give listeners a dose of eternal hope at every praise-tipped turn.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: “Waving a White Flag”

**NICOLE C. MULLEN**

Crown Him: Hymns Old and New (Lucid Artist)

FOR FANS OF: Natalie Grant,
CeCe Winans, Mandisa

★★★★

One of the most endearing singers, songwriters and philanthropists in recent Christian music history, Nicole couples famous hymns (“Blessed Assurance”) with her personal hit songs archive (“Redeemer”) on a potent list of brand new recordings. Elegant strings, melodic electrics and Mullen-distinctive vocals color *Crown Him* gracefully. But the true crown jewel remains Nicole's tender musical heart. The album is available exclusively at **Family Christian**.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: “Call on Jesus”

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

Grace Unplugged

(Sparrow Records)

FOR FANS OF: Aly and AJ,
Chris Tomlin, Colton Dixon

★★★

The film soundtrack includes multiple tracks from the star of the film, AJ Michalka, but also includes audience favorites like Chris Tomlin, Nine Lashes and Jamie Grace, who also appeared in the film. AJ Michalka provides a versatile vocal, and notably covers songs like “Desert Song.” A few tracks are somewhat juvenile, like “Misunderstood,” which will probably only strike a chord with fans of the movie. Tobymac and Chris Tomlin's contributions are a welcome addition, particularly for listeners who don't have the previously released songs found here.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

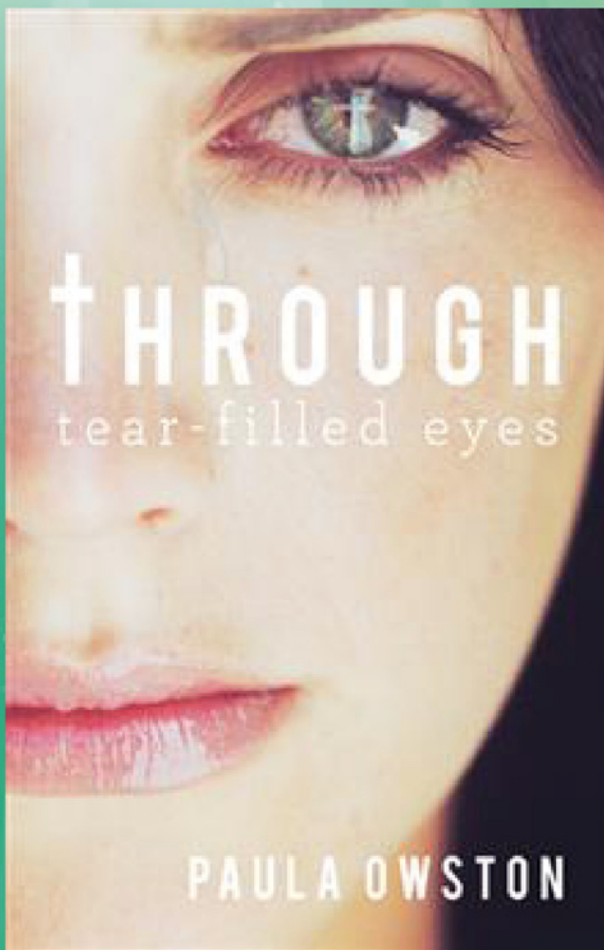
WE LIKE: “In And Out of Time”

A Story of Finding Faith in the Midst of Grief.

Through Tear-Filled Eyes

When my parents were both fighting the same lung cancer in 2009, my world suddenly turned upside down. I had reached a point where I did not care about anything.

I believed the Lord had abandoned me in my darkness. I was ready to toss in the towel on everything and simply walk away. I had no idea how to regain my faith or if I even wanted to find it.



Through Tear-Filled Eyes is my story.

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PaulaOwston.com

CHRISTMAS

MUSIC


BRANDON HEATH
Christmas Is Here

(Provident Label Group)
 FOR FANS OF: Matt Wertz,
 Dave Barnes, Jimmy
 Needham

★★★★

His smooth, pop vocal was made to sing Christmas songs, and Brandon Heath doesn't disappoint. His lovely renditions of classics like "The Christmas Song" sit alongside originals, like the moving, "Just A Girl," and his tongue-in-cheek, "The Day After Thanksgiving," for an album sure to become a holiday classic (though we would have loved to see the previously released "The Night Before Christmas" make the cut).

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "The Christmas Song"


JOHN SCHLITT
The Christmas Project

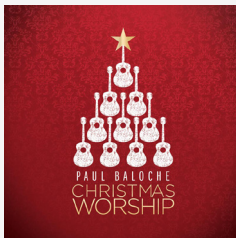
(4K Records)
 FOR FANS OF: Petra,
 Styx, Stryper

★★★★

Believe it or not, John Schlitt never recorded a Christmas album during his 20-year tenure with Petra or his illustrious solo journey thus far. Nonetheless, he brings that melodic rock style from both career chapters to the forefront of this festive and powerful collection that consists mostly of carols, but also includes the new reason-for-the-season reminder, "What Christmas Needs To Be."

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen"


PAUL BALOCHE
Christmas Worship

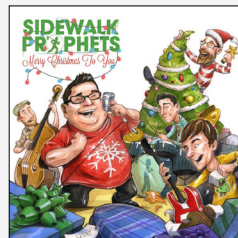
(Fervent Records)
 FOR FANS OF: Kathryn
 Scott, Lincoln Brewster,
 Aaron Shust

★★★★

Even though it's a fairly star-studded affair (with guests Kathryn Scott, Aaron Shust, All Sons and Daughters, along with songwriting by Jason Ingram and Lincoln Brewster), the heart of this album lies in its gorgeous arrangements. Strings and piano are heavy throughout, which makes it appropriate for congregational and personal use. Of particular note is the medley of "This Is Love/Come Thou Long Expected Jesus," which is lilting, perfect and bears the message of the season.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "This Is Love/
 Come Thou Long
 Expected Jesus"


SIDEWALK PROPHETS
Merry Christmas To You

(Fervent Records)
 FOR FANS OF: MercyMe,
 Casting Crowns,
 Big Daddy Weave

★★★

With a little more big-band flair, Sidewalk Prophets has put together a fun, entertaining ensemble of Christmas music. Best track is definitely "White Christmas," where guest Francesca Battistelli lends a flawless jazz vocal. The band also does a great arrangement of "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas," but their version of "What Child Is This" is a bit odd, and doesn't translate as well.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "White Christmas"

CHRISTMAS

MUSIC


FOR KING & COUNTRY
Into the Silent Night

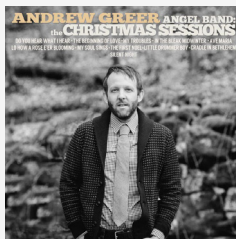
(Word)
 FOR FANS OF: *Tenth Avenue North, Building 429*

★★★

Brothers Joel and Luke Smallbone, the duo known as For King & Country, made quite a splash in the last couple years with their hit album *Crave* and subsequent singles. Thus a quick holiday offering makes sense to tide fans over. *Into the Silent Night* is a five-song EP with inventive takes on traditional tunes and memorable new songs like the inspiring "Baby Boy."

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Baby Boy"


ANDREW GREER
Angel Band: The Christmas Sessions (MA'M Recordings)

FOR FANS OF: *The Civil Wars, Derek Webb, Gungor*

★★★★

Armed with three new and eight traditional tunes, troubadour Andrew Greer puts a folksy/acoustic spin on the season with a stable of skillfully-paired guest-stars. His richly passionate vocals are just as capable of volleying with the tender Sandi Patty ("Ave Maria") or the earthy Cindy Morgan ("A Cradle In Bethlehem") as they are hitting a soulful stride next to The McCrary Sisters ("The Little Drummer Boy"), all while individually earning titles of master interpreter and emotive originator.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "My Troubles"


DAVE BARNES
A December To Remember

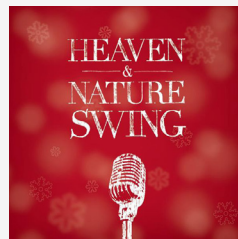
(50 Year Plan Records)
 FOR FANS OF: Matt Wertz, Brandon Heath

★★★★

Warm and cozy like your favorite Christmas sweater...that sums up Dave Barnes' second Christmas record. He croons his way through classics like "White Christmas" with panache, and will melt listeners with his jazz-infused vocal on "Please Come Home For Christmas." The standout track is piano-backed "When Love Was Born," which marries his signature songwriting with a beautiful message.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "When Love Was Born"


VARIOUS ARTISTS
Heaven & Nature Swing (Lucid Artist)

FOR FANS OF: Easy-listening holiday music to entertain by

★★★★

Whether summoning old-school Orleans jazz ("Deck the Halls"), horn-crazed big band ("Joy to the World"), a funky bossa backbeat ("O Come, O Come Emmanuel") or ethereal acoustic dreaminess ("The First Noel"), producers Craig Swift and Chris Bevins of Salvador fame channel the best of instrumental and vocal musicianship, plus the cheeriest of song dispositions, to create a swingin' go-to Christmas playlist. Available exclusively at **Parable stores.**

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "The First Noel"

ROCK

MUSIC

**AARON SPRINKLE*****Water and Guns***

(BEC Recordings/
Tooth & Nail Records)

FOR FANS OF: Fair, Pedro The
Lion, Damien Jurado

★★★★

Long before he was producing the bestsellers like Anberlin, Kutless and Thousand Foot Krutch, Aaron Sprinkle was a part of iconic underground bands like Poor Old Lu, Rose Blossom Punch and eventually, Fair. It's no wonder that his creative genius continues to burn brightly on this new solo endeavor, which doesn't just feature him playing practically every instrument, but also turning in another round of contemplative soul-searching framed around flawless melodies.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Whisper Something"

**LIVING SACRIFICE*****Ghost Thief* (Solid State)**

FOR FANS OF: *Becoming the
Archetype*, *Mortification*

★★★★

For a season, it seemed Christian metal pioneers Living Sacrifice had hung it up, but 2010's *The Infinite Order* showed a strong return to form from the veteran act. Now over 20 years into their career, *Ghost Thief* is the eighth studio album. With blistering songs like "Sudden" and the title track, it's clear these guys aren't hanging it up any time soon.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Sudden"

**THE NEVERCLAIM*****The Neverclaim* (Provident)**

FOR FANS OF: *The Lumineers*,
Third Day

★★★★

If you filtered modern worship choruses through the "Ho! Hey!" pop-folk movement, you might end up close to The Neverclaim's self-titled debut. Traditional instrumentation is set alongside familiar pop-rock elements to varied effect on the Portland band's first album. Some work ("Revival"), some don't ("Sweet Sweet Mercies"), but there's a solid enough foundation here to expect much more from this sextet.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Revival"



ROCK SPOTLIGHT

THE LETTER BLACK

After a few false starts and release-date delays, The Letter Black is finally back with its immensely anticipated sophomore collection *Rebuild* (Tooth & Nail Records). Serving as the official follow-up to 2010's *Hanging On By A Thread*, the project shows just how far the Pennsylvania players have come with their full-throttled brand of hard rock and alternative metal, alongside lyrics of renewal as further explained by front woman Sarah Anthony.

CCM: What accounted for the release-date hold-up for *Rebuild* and did you do any tinkering with the record during the wait?

Sarah Anthony: We've been ready to put *Rebuild* out since we recorded the first part of it in the spring/summer of 2012. We've been dying to get it out to the public. We went through some transitions on the business side of the band, which caused several delays. Because there were some delays, we decided to record and add three new songs, and we took a few songs off of the record that we originally had on it. They may be released at a future date on a deluxe version or something. You never know!

CCM: How would you summarize the lyrical theme this time around?

Anthony: We have grown a lot in the past few years. We put *Hanging On By A Thread* out in 2010 and have done countless shows and tours since then. We've also had big things happen personally and spiritually in our lives and we've simply gotten older. So the theme you will see matches all of those things. We wrote *Rebuild* after a period of testing, stretching and growing that God brought us through. He broke us down and rebuilt our hearts and minds and that's what we discuss. We also challenge Christians in ways that God challenged us through the process.

CCM: What does the group hope to achieve with this release in both the Christian and mainstream music communities?

Anthony: We really hope to encourage and challenge the Christian community, as well as just give good entertainment. As far as mainstream, we really want to give hope to those who may feel hopeless and show them that just because we are Christians doesn't mean we are that different than them. We're simply sinners forgiven.

—Andy Argyrakis

FOR MORE, VISIT THELETTERBLACK.COM

INDIE

MUSIC



ANDY GULLAHORN
Beyond the Frame

(Independent)

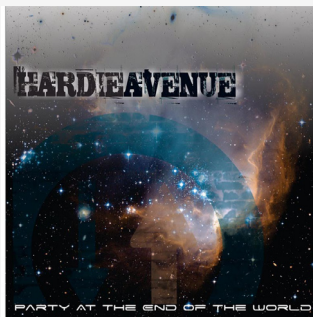
FOR FANS OF: Jill Phillips,
Andrew Peterson

★★★★

Andy Gullahorn is primarily known as a member of Andrew Peterson's band and the songwriting partner and husband of Jill Phillips. However, the veteran songwriter's solo work has long been celebrated under the radar for his ability to portray simple truths in beautiful, vulnerable ways. *Beyond the Frame* is his best yet—a collection that provides a perfect companion through life's trials and joys.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Any Less True"



HARDIE AVENUE
Party at the End of the World

(H. Ave Records/Elevate
Entertainment)

FOR FANS OF: Family Force 5,
Manic Drive, Hearts of Saints

★★★★

Combining bits of rock, rap, electronica and straight-up contemporary pop, Hardie Avenue dishes up a constant dose of variety across its latest long-player. The Tulsa-based band certainly knows how to rev up the purified party, as the title so cleverly proclaims, while a handful of vertically directed ballads shed additional light on members' spiritual maturity.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Now I Say"



KEITH & KRISTYN GETTY
Live at the Gospel Coalition

(Getty Music)

FOR FANS OF: Stuart Townend,
Fernando Ortega, Laura Story

★★★

At the forefront of the church's modern hymn movement stand The Gettys. World-renowned for keeping worship music scripture-centric and melodically accessible, *Live* couples the greatest of The Gettys' deep corporate catalog with classic hymns, appropriately housed in this live setting of singing worshippers. The occasional electric "praise band"-ish instrumentation only briefly distracts from the simple goodness that remains Keith and Kristyn Getty.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "Holy Spirit,
Living Breath of God"



INDIE SPOTLIGHT

DYLAN ARMS

Every year a limited number of people get the chance to say they became a finalist for *American Idol*. For Dylan Arms, it was more than an opportunity. It was a journey from shy kid who plays music at church to performing artist and charismatic leader.

With a new EP, *Take Me Higher*, Dylan will remain rooted in his church in South Carolina, but he's a good bet to break out with his strong vocal and memorable pop songs. It's a journey that might have started with *the show*, but Dylan's taking the reigns himself and moving forward with the gift he's been given.

CCM: Can you tell me about your music career before trying out for *American Idol*?

Dylan Arms: I began playing music when I was 10 years old, and writing music at 15. Prior to *American Idol*, I was singing in local churches and leading worship at my home church in Taylors, South Carolina. I spent most of my time working on the craft of songwriting and performing.

CCM: What did you learn from your experience on the show?

Dylan: *American Idol* was an incredible experience. It forced me to get out of my box of the life I had known. Prior to that, I was a quiet, shy kid with a dream. The show shot me into the spotlight and has given me countless opportunities to perform to mass audiences and to be heard around the world.

CCM: You have a new EP out. What are the hopes for you, musically, heading into 2014?

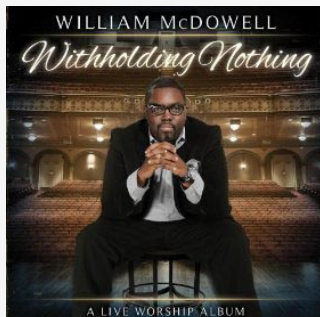
Dylan: My hope is to continually develop my craft in music as a guitar player, vocalist and songwriter so that I'm able to better relate my music to those who will listen to it. I want to make people feel something when they listen to a song that I've written and hear the heart behind my voice.

Growing up as a shy and quiet kid, music has been my outlet where I'm able to be heard and find comfort in a crowd where there is usually fear. By pushing and bettering myself in music, I'm also able to push and better myself as a person.

–Matt Conner

URBAN

MUSIC

**WILLIAM MCDOWELL*****Withholding Nothing* (eOne)**

FOR FANS OF: Donald Lawrence, Tasha Cobbs, Fred Hammond

★★★★

On the heels of two chart-topping, critically-lauded live recordings, the genre-defying worship leader furnishes listeners with tight urban anthems, sweeping interludes and the sound of over 2,000 worshippers enraptured by musical praise on his first CD/DVD combination. Spontaneous, yet technically tight, McDowell transcends man-made church divisions with the poignant faculty to facilitate musical environments ripe for worship. *Withholding* continues to use McDowell as a catalyst for multi-generational-ethnic-denomination praise.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: “My Heart Sings”

**VARIOUS ARTISTS*****BMI Trailblazers of Gospel Music Live 2013* (eOne/BMI)**

FOR FANS OF: Contemporary gospel music

★★★★

The first live recording of the annual Nashville musical extravaganza that honors time-tested gospel greats, *Trailblazers* tributes the legendary music of Edwin and Lady Tramaine Hawkins and Kurt Carr in a dynamic live-tribute tracklisting seamlessly seguing through one-of-a-kind performances and collaborations between the brightest of contemporary gospel talent like Le’Andria Johnson, Yolanda Adams and Pastor Shirley Caesar.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: “In the Sanctuary” ft. Donald Lawrence & Company

**CHRISTIAN LIFE CHURCH*****CLC: Live, Servants of Praise* (eOne)**

FOR FANS OF: William McDowell, Hillsong, Israel Houghton & New Breed

★★★★

Representative of its multi-cultural congregation, Christian Life Church’s first worship album recorded live at the mega-congregation’s home-base in Chicago incorporates a diverse roster of sounds. From the Calypso-tinged, “Higha,” to the corporate sing-along, “I’m Forgiven” and the sweet amalgamation of the Gaithers’ “There’s Something About That Name,” the recording’s live presence is palpable on stereo speakers—a testimony to CLC’s musical-service impact week to week.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: “The Anthem”



URBAN SPOTLIGHT

WILLIAM MCDOWELL

Having obtained the #1 slot in all of Christian music with his latest live CD/DVD worship offering, *Withholding Nothing* (eOne), Orlando-based worship leader and pastor William McDowell continues to cause ripples throughout the global church community with his accessible, yet astute, worship music catalog. In this *CCM* exclusive, the ASCAP-Award-winning, and Dove- and Stellar-nominated musician talks about incorporating worship with soul *and* skill—and why worship music is truly without definition.

What was the impetus for recording *Withholding Nothing*?

William: As a songwriter, I recognize the gift of songwriting in me. And even though the gift is in me, I choose to wait to write until the Lord is speaking something specific to me over a certain season for the body of Christ. I look at my assignment as a messenger. During certain seasons, songs flood and I'll write in bunches. This was a season where God was saying something.

How did the title track become the title track?

William: We wanted to capture new declarations along with some of the popular declarations we had recorded on other projects on this recording. Spending time at my piano one night, I sang the chorus of “Withholding Nothing” and I began to sing it over and over. I felt like it would be a great new part to “I Give Myself Away,” a song I wrote that has literally traveled the world.

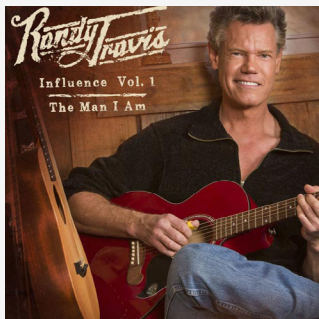
Leading up to the recording, we spent quite a bit of time preparing because I believe in practicing His presence. As I began to play the chorus, something unique began to happen. Then on the night of recording, people took over the song. It had this organic movement where the audience was driving the declaration. And so it was captured that way, as only a chorus. We wrote the rest of the song six months after the recording. So *Withholding Nothing* wasn't the driving force behind the recording. It is what the recording became.

—Andrew Greer

[READ FULL INTERVIEW HERE](#)

CROSSOVER

MUSIC

**RANDY TRAVIS**

Influence Vol. 1: The Man I Am
(Warner Bros.)

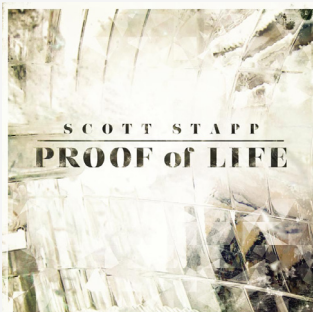
FOR FANS OF: Kenny Rogers,
Alan Jackson, Collin Raye

★★★★

On his 21st studio album, country/gospel great Randy Travis turns to the artists and tunes who served as the primary muses in his multiple Grammy-, Dove- and Country-Music-Association-Award-winning career. The crooner covers everyone from George Jones to Merle Haggard and Ernest Tubbs in his charming neo-traditional style that hasn't lost any of its luster, even amidst recent health scares.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Someday We'll
Look Back"

**SCOTT STAPP**

Proof of Life (Wind-Up)

FOR FANS OF: Creed

★★★★

Scott Stapp has turned his life around. He has not, however, altered his musical approach. The Creed front man was perhaps, at one time, the most recognizable rock vocalist in the world, and *Proof of Life* finds Stapp in his wheelhouse, albeit with lyrics that speak of a life radically changed. There's more diversity here than fans might expect, but Stapp is a rock star through and through, and *Proof of Life* proves that some things never change. That's a good thing.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Slow Suicide"

**GORDON MOTE**

All Things New

(New Haven Records)

FOR FANS OF: Steven Curtis
Chapman, Mark Schultz,
Rascal Flatts

★★★★

Songwriter and session-player extraordinaire Gordon Mote is also an accomplished solo singer/songwriter/piano man who continues serving up spiritually-centered tunes at the crossroads of country, pop and southern gospel. Besides the troubadour's top-notch style-weaving talents, *All Things New* also includes many more album-enhancing guests as diverse as Sheryl Crow, Darius Rucker, Matthew West and Trace Adkins.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Faith Like That"

CROSSOVER SPOTLIGHT

A THOUSAND CHAMPIONS

From her early days as a member of Chasing Furies to her solo work on albums like *Currents*, Sarah MacIntosh has remained a compelling voice and songwriter for over a decade in the industry. Now her latest turn features equally impressive talents for a meaningful cause that should resonate with fans on multiple levels.

A Thousand Champions is Sarah's latest musical outlet, a collaboration that includes JT Daly of Paper Route fame and Hillsong's Mia Fieldes, and a new Kickstarter campaign allows fans to help the MacIntosh family add another precious member through adoption. Sarah recently caught us up on the new addition(s).

CCM: Can you tell us about the genesis of *A Thousand Champions*?

Sarah: Recently I have been doing a lot of songwriting for other people by building tracks—drums, keys, bass, etc.—and realized that I haven't ever written for myself in that way. Usually I sit down with my acoustic guitar and then let a thought unravel into words and melody, but for *A Thousand Champions* I decided I wanted to do things in a completely different way.

It has been my intent, for some time, to work with some of my favorite people on a side project, so I decided that I would begin by building tracks that I would then send to my good friend and musical magician JT Daly. He then works on the tracks a bit more before giving them back to me to start writing words. After I write the bulk of the words for the songs, I brought in another good friend and word wizard, Mia Fieldes, who then sharpens and brightens the thoughts I have put to paper. Finally I track the vocals and send it all in to Jonny, the finalizer. He trims the fat and brings out the lean song that is the voice of A Thousand Champions.

CCM: Part of this project is also about adoption for you and your husband, correct?

Sarah: Jonny and I have a 5-year-old little girl named Scarlett, and the three of us have been wanting to add to our family for some time. When we saw this project taking shape, we realized that this was a way that we could help provide financially for this adoption. We have seen many people having yard sales for their adoptions or churches having bake sales to help a family in their congregation wishing to adopt, and I suppose that this Kickstarter is our musical form of a yard sale, but instead of knickknacks and shoes, we are selling words and creative, melodic hooks. Pretty much the same, right?

—Matt Conner

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [HERE](#)

IN THE STUDIO WITH JONNY DIAZ & LAUREN DIAGLE

Album Title: *Christmas: Joy to the World*

Label: Centricity Music

Release Date: October 22, 2013

Recording Studio: The Brown Owl,
Nashville, TN

Producers: Matt Bronleewe

Number of Songs: 8

COLLABORATION ADORATION:

One of the beautiful parts of a compilation is how different the songs can sound. It keeps you interested when each song sounds unique from the song before. There are some great artists included on this CD (Jason Gray, Andrew Peterson, Downhere). And it is neat to hear the different voices and styles shine through! *—Jonny Diaz*

MOM MESSAGE: “Asleep in the Hay” is a poem written by my mom, Gwen. She is an amazing woman and writer, but not musical at all! [Laughs] So I tweaked it to fit a musical cadence and melody. I love the result! We wanted the words to shine through, so we kept the recording as simple as possible. A simple guitar, accented by violins and cellos, was all it needed to get the beautiful message across. *—J.D.*



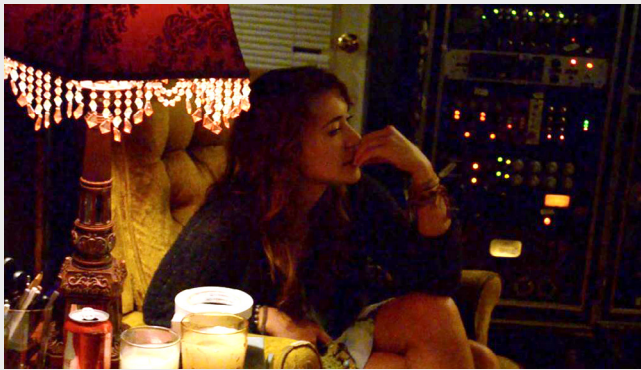
IN THE STUDIO WITH JONNY DIAZ & LAUREN DIAGLE

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP: I want people to encounter God through my music, whether it is Christmas or a Monday morning drive to work. So I knew if Christmas was launching my first song, it would have to be a reflection of what my album will represent—worship. With “Light of the World” I wanted to take a commercially driven holiday and place the spotlight on Jesus Christ alone—to give Him optimum glory.

—Lauren Daigle

HOLLY JOLLY JULY: Recording Christmas music in the summer was quite humorous. Christmas in July became my reality! It’s hot outside, but jingling bells are ringing in my ears. —L.D.

+ FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT CENTRICITYMUSIC.COM



STORY BEHIND THE SONG

“BREAK EVERY CHAIN”

ARTIST: FUZED WORSHIP

ALBUM: *BY YOUR BLOOD*

This song is more than a pretty melody. It gives a clear description of what Christ came to do, as He said in Luke 4:18. “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free.” It reinforces the promise from God that each of us would experience and live out this freedom that Christ came to give us and to see us give that to others.

This power we sing about is what looses us from the chains that have kept us bound and broken. You can’t find this power to set you free in religion, tradition, forms or steps. It’s only in the name and the person of JESUS. Read Paul’s prayer from Ephesians 1:19 as he talks about this power, “I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe in Him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms. “In Romans 8:11, he explains that the same power lives in us. “And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of



his Spirit who lives in you.” If that same power resides in us and can raise the dead, don’t you know that it can raise you out of addiction, depression, pain, doubt, lies and ANY Chain that has bound you?

John 8:32 says, “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” What is this truth? Jesus tells us “who” it is in John 14:6: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” It is Jesus! We have to stop looking in all the wrong places and go straight to the source. Let’s search out the one who bore the weight of all of our sins and went to hell to pay the price for it. It is all in that name that we are free from any chain that is preventing us from being able to walk in the fullness of his power and grace. It is in that name that He positions and equips us to be the Army that He has called us to be. He wants to break EVERY chain and have us rise up as His ambassadors in the ministry of reconciliation to which He has called us.

Our prayer with this song and every song we sing is that God’s power and presence will be demonstrated in your lives in the same way He has demonstrated it in ours. Rise up with us in this freedom in Christ and let’s be a mighty army in His name, doing greater works for His Glory. CCM



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CCCM

**BEST OF
2013**

**The stories and songs
that landed on *CCM*
covers and in hearts
around the world**

With 2014 on the horizon, it's time to look back at the year that was. Marked by homecomings, perseverance, reunions and, of course, great music, 2013 saw artists stepping up and stepping out more boldly than ever with the truth and a song. CCM reviewed the stories that made covers and pulled the best of what your favorite artists had to say throughout the year. Inspiring, transparent, passionate...they share their passion with you. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



JANUARY

In 2013, Winter Jam maintained its position as the top tour worldwide for quarter one. Founded by Newsong, the tour has grown continuously over its nearly 20-year

run and maintains a unique and intentional focus on ministry, support and follow-up with those who make decisions for Christ.

[+ READ THE FULL STORY HERE.](#)

"It's God's tour. This isn't Newsong's tour. This makes no sense."

— Eddie Carswell (Newsong)

"We wanted to pull together the best of what all of us have, to go from a live experience to getting connected with God's word and God's people. In fact, kids who responded last January are still being encouraged through texts and other ways now."

— Nick Hall, Winter Jam Pastor



FEBRUARY

It's difficult to put into words the impact Chris Tomlin has had on the church and the culture of worship throughout the world. His latest album, *Burning Lights*, showcased Tomlin's

signature knack for crafting congregational songs, while pushing artistic boundaries more than ever.

[+ READ THE FULL STORY HERE.](#)

"I think people might think I have a special connection to God, but I'm no hero. Obviously King David was out watching over his sheep, singing and pouring out to God long before he was given a platform. And even when you have it, you're still just a shepherd boy, singing a song to God. To the people reading this, you are the burning lights. I'm hoping to sing over the people a song that will lift them up. There's something special about music. There's power in our words. What

we're speaking into our lives reflects what we believe about God. That's all through scripture. Praise the Lord, oh my soul. David is telling us to rise up and praise."

— Chris Tomlin



MARCH

Generally, when a band makes a comeback, it has something to do with personal or financial interest and, more often than not, is a shadow of its former

self. Not so with Audio Adrenaline. With new lead vocalist Kevin Max at the helm, Audio A has been crystal clear about their motivation to return. Drawn to the plight of orphans, the profit earned from Audio Adrenaline will go directly into their Hands and Feet Organization, which has been on the ground in Haiti for years and is the heartbeat of the band.

[+](#) **READ THE FULL STORY HERE.**

*Boys become kings, girls will be queens /
Wrapped in Your majesty / When we love, when
we love the least of these*

— Audio Adrenaline, "Kings and Queens"

"Mark and I poured ourselves into the Hands and Feet Project. It's really our legacy. We have 100 kids we're taking care of now, but there are still over 800,000 to a million kids not being helped. It's really all about anything we can do to bring awareness to the need and the plight."

— Will McGinniss

"It wasn't just starting the band again. It was linked to something that had a much bigger idea behind it...helping orphans."

— Kevin Max

"The Hands and Feet project is a huge passion of ours. The mission of the project is to care for the orphans of Haiti and to inspire people to serve along with us. Our vision is to raise these forgotten children in Christ-centered families and give each child the opportunity to reach their God-given potential. Currently we are at capacity, but are in the process of doubling the sizes of our Children's Villages. The rebirth of Audio A plays an invaluable role in helping us tell the story of the orphans of Haiti."



APRIL

Consider Amy Grant the face of Contemporary Christian music for over 30 years. Her writing, her voice, her bold decisions raised the bar in Christian music and put it on the map in

mainstream culture. As she pulled together her latest studio album, she did so with the depth and wisdom and artistry that can only develop over time. Inspired by the life of her mother, as well as a renewed intentionality about her music and mission, Amy's ministry is as poignant and relative as ever.

[+](#) **READ THE FULL STORY HERE.**

"When you get on stage, sing something that matters."

— Gloria Grant (Amy Grant's mother)

"There are so many life truths I've learned from my mother that I've tried to put gracefully into songs. I think it's important to take stock of your life every so often. Primary relationships, physical well-being, relationship with money, with our mate, with God...it's important to look at those things every couple of years and say, 'If there were no limitations, this is how I would like to be.' Say them. Write them down in a way that's anticipatory. What we say is so powerful. Years ago, I wrote down that I wanted to be a good cook, be more healthy, have a garden... I had to take the steps to say those things. No one else is going to take time to do that. You have to take time to speak yourself in a direction; it's almost like reminding yourself of who you are."

— Amy Grant



MAY

Steven Curtis Chapman represents the best of what Christian music is all about—authenticity, humility, worship and musicianship. Possessing both

longevity and innovation, he has managed to grow with the changing musical landscape and connect with the world in their own language. His *Deep Roots* album shared his personal heritage, honoring the music and the family that has undergirded his entire ministry and career. He shares his reflections on the album and the gift of making music.

[+ READ THE FULL STORY HERE.](#)

"If I could only sing one song for the rest of my life, it would be 'My Redeemer is Faithful and True.' This is the one thing I know to be true. God has been faithful, God has been true.

I had always wanted to do an acoustic version of 'Cinderella.' I haven't recorded it since Maria went to heaven, but I sing the last line differently now. I knew if there were ever an appropriate time to record it this way, this would be the time to do it.

This year is a time to go deeper. This feels like a new season." — Steven Curtis Chapman



JUNE

They call themselves a 14-year overnight success story. Building 429 has traversed the country and the world throughout its run in the land of CCM. When they released the

epic song, "Where I Belong," they allowed the country to get to know them all over again. Their follow-up record, *We Won't Be Shaken*, sits in that same sweet pocket of transparency, while providing a rallying cry of hope and inspiration to listeners and fans worldwide.

[+ READ THE FULL STORY HERE.](#)

"We're not talking about David the shepherd; we're talking about David the King. This is not Saul. This is, we are more than conquerors and as such we should be leading the way. We all make mistakes and fall short. If I stand, it's only because I've been in His hands. If men would step back up, including myself, we'd see families change.

You have a choice. You can't say, 'I am who I am because my dad wasn't good enough.' You can either be who your father was or learn from it. You have a choice to love or hate and continue to remember that our past isn't meant to be a burden; it's our testimony."

— Jason Roy, lead vocalist



JULY

You might say Skillet stands alone in their unprecedented capacity to serve both mainstream and Christian audiences.

Few bands have enjoyed their level of success with regard to a loyal following and an unapologetic, yet subtle dissemination of the love and truth of Jesus Christ with audiences of every creed, culture and conviction. *Rise* was a pinnacle release for them. It reminded audiences around the world that they are not only amazing musicians, they see the world beyond the church and have allowed the truth of culture to inform the messages of hope they craft through their songs which not only have the *potential* to reach every corner of the globe, they *are* reaching every corner of the globe...and the fruit is thriving.

[+](#) **READ THE FULL STORY HERE.**

"We were about to go out on tour with a secular band. Two weeks before the tour started, the lead singer's brother, who was a part of the crew, probably took some drugs before jumping out a hotel window. Later, my daughter came up to the lead singer and told him we were praying for him. I didn't really have to talk to him about Jesus for him to hear the message of Jesus."

You've got to write from your own experiences. What you're going through, what you feel. For instance, the Boston bombings, September 11...you feel shock and horror and just get sick of it and want to do something about it." — John Cooper, lead vocalist

*"Rise is the story of your typical American teenager coming into adulthood and being bombarded with terrible things like war, bombings, violence, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis and just a fear of the world in general. Also inward struggles...struggles with parents, bullying, feeling overwhelmed by all these struggles. Eventually, the teen realizes he can't control or really change anything, not even his present life. But when he reaches out to God, his life can be part of something significant. That's what *Rise* is about. You alone can't overcome the world and its horror. God gives you reason and meaning and helps you forgive yourself. It's a rallying record. We are encouraging everyone to join us and rise above these chains."*

— John Cooper



AUGUST

Aaron Shust first captured the attention of the church with “My Savior, My God.” Since then, this father and husband has walked a journey no parent should have to—two

of his children have faced life-threatening illnesses. Throughout the hardship, Aaron has maintained a resolve in the sovereignty and purpose of Christ and His plan. And when darkness descended time after time, Aaron fought the adversity with the sword of spirit and truth.

[+ READ THE FULL STORY HERE.](#)

“Whenever things would happen and I would get a phone call, I thought there was no way we could handle one more thing. But whenever something happened, I would tweet scripture. God has given me a platform and every time Satan wants to meddle, lots of people are going to be reading the Word of God. I responded with anger towards the enemy. He is the one trying to be the accuser of our souls.

Those difficult days do come and they are sobering moments. The progression of life teaches you to not be selfish. God has a plan to chip away our selfishness. Even when things don’t go the way we would desire, God has something amazing in mind for His creation. At some point we’ll look back and thank Him for the platform we have.”

— Aaron Shust



SEPTEMBER

The Dove Awards have been dubbed Christian music’s biggest night. And for 44 years, they have represented the pinnacle of success in this industry. The past several years,

however, have cast a shadow on the music industry overall, and events like the Doves have suffered. This year, however, the Doves returned to their home city of Nashville, Tenn., with a refreshing spirit of intentionality, humility and gratitude.

[+ READ THE FULL STORY HERE.](#)

“The future of the GMA lies in the hands of our community. As long as there is a thriving body of believers who have the same mission, there will be a need for the GMA. This past year has been about the task of assessing how the foundation needs to be re-laid. I believe that together we are going to move forward as a united front in a way that will allow the GMA to be relevant and serve the Christian- and Gospel-music communities. The Dove Awards have long been a time for Christian music to come together under one umbrella and celebrate. God gave me a scripture regarding this event: ‘Let your light shine before others so they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.’”

— Jackie Patillo,
Executive Director,
Gospel Music Association

"If you know me at all, you know that what God did through the song 'Blessings' is so much bigger than some yahoo like me could ever make happen, and I love that about God! He calls us to be part of something bigger than ourselves. 'Blessings' was more an adventure God called me to be part of, and I will be forever grateful for that."

— Laura Story

"Laura [Story] and I are so different from each other! Glam and granola, bling and Birkenstocks. And when we met two years ago, it was an instant friendship. That's the body of Christ! We're called to unity—not uniformity."

— Mandisa



OCTOBER

A few years ago, they were *Born Again*. This year, the newsboys have hit *Restart*—literally. Their latest studio recording is a work of seasoned veterans. Relevant

both sonically and lyrically, this is the kind of album that explains the group's longevity and reach, while demonstrating that the band is as sharp, creative and passionate as ever.

[+](#) **READ THE FULL STORY HERE.**

"It sounds crazy coming from guys who have been doing this as long as we have, but it feels like as a band, as an entity, we're really just getting started. It seems like all the previous records have been building up to this moment right here. This is unequivocally the finest record I've ever been a part of."

— Duncan Phillips, drummer

"Sometimes in life, you fall down and you lose your way. Just like on a computer, sometimes it messes up and you have to reboot. That's how it is in life. You have to go back to the basics. I have not felt this way about anything I've been involved in musically since 'Jesus Freak.'" — Michael Tait, lead vocalist



NOVEMBER

Natalie Grant is a woman's woman. The mother of three exudes vitality, joy and purpose, while allowing herself the transparency that puts others at ease and

offers hope to those who are struggling. For 20 months, she wrestled with post-partum depression that nearly robbed her of that joy. After a time of contemplation and surrender, Natalie has come through the storm and shares the journey and the promise of tomorrow in her most personal album to date, *Hurricane*.

[+](#) **READ THE FULL STORY HERE.**

"All of us struggle with insecurities. 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.

Life is still chaos and one day at a time. I'm trying not to 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 nonprofit. Who must have a lot of faith in me. I'm going to embrace who God is calling me to be."

— Natalie Grant

"My hope is that the message you have read in this book will drive you to God's Book, which holds the key to hope for tomorrow— eternal life—and that you will have the certainty of knowing that your future will be secure in the promises of eternal hope found only in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

"I will hear Him call my name not because I have preached for more than 70 years. Not because I have done anything good. I will hear my name because His sheep hear His voice (John 10:27)."

Excerpt from *My Hope*, Billy Graham, Thomas Nelson, pp.176-177, 2013. CCM



DECEMBER

On November 7, Reverend Billy Graham celebrated his 95th birthday, while communities around the world honored his legacy and his ministry. *My Hope*,

his most recent book, is somewhat of an epilogue to his 70 years of preaching. An album of the same name, featuring Michael W. Smith, Matthew West, Tommy Coomes and others, is a sonic celebration of his life, and more so, of the God whom he has served with selflessness and faithfulness.

[+ READ THE FULL STORY HERE.](#)

2014

JANUARY AND BEYOND

2014 promises to be an exciting year with even more of the CCM artists, music and moments you love. January will mark the beginning of our bi-weekly schedule! That means that you'll get CCM's in-depth stories and artist exclusives not once, but twice a month! We're thrilled to kick off the year with our friends at WinterJam, now the largest tour in the world for three years straight. Mid-January, look for the latest from Casting Crowns and a new creative direction for Switchfoot. And that's just the beginning. Don't miss out on a single CCM issue and experience! And let us be the first to wish you a Happy New Year!



FOR THE UNDERDOG

JASON DUNN CONTINUES TO SPEAK HOPE TO A GENERATION

IT'S widely understood that immersion is the best way to learn a language. Since he was 17 years old, Jason Dunn has been immersed in the culture of teens and young adults across the country. As lead singer of Hawk Nelson for ten years, Jason got to see firsthand the young people around the country and world who were hurting, lost and in need of hope. Now, as a solo artist, Jason is continuing to write music and speak to a generation in need.

"Teens are so insecure," says Jason. "My job is to love these people. My heart aches for them. Just loving people goes a really long way."

And for Jason, love is a verb.

The songs on his solo project address various cultural issues, but perhaps the most poignant is the hot-button topic of bullying.

"More and more people are getting wrecked by other people," says Jason. "It

seemed appropriate to write a song about it and stand up for the underdog. I try to level the playing field with music, and hope kids will get something out of it.”

Now that he’s on his own, Jason is able to get his music out to more venues—meaning more people—than ever.

“I play anywhere and everywhere now,” says Jason. “The latter years of Hawk, we just played churches. But I’m willing to try anything and everything. Before, when there was an opportunity to play House of Blues but the church down the street paid a lot more, you often had to move

always scary and never easy. After a couple days in, I thought, ‘Oh shoot! What did I do?’ It can be overwhelming, but overall it’s been really great.”

As Jason has been writing and playing his new songs, not only has his creative freedom flourished; but so too has his confidence in the merit of his ideas and musicianship.

“I’m not the kind of person who will speak up,” he says. “I’m generally very passive. In Hawk Nelson, if an idea got overwritten, I would just be cool with it. But now I’m getting to record the way I hear



from a business stance. It’s easier to follow your wallet than your heart. It’s easy to get comfortable. But I’m going back to the original goal—bridging gaps and letting people know they’re loved.”

If he comes across as bold and uninhibited, he is.

Only someone with an intense desire and ability to make music that says precisely what you want it to say in a precise way of saying it would walk away from one of the most successful bands in CCM history.

“It sounds stupid for me to do,” Jason says, “but it was the right thing for me to do. The album title, *Abandon Progress*, seemed very appropriate. Transition is

it. I’m getting older and the music is a bit more mature. The songs could have been the next Hawk Nelson record. They’re 100% honest and real.”

The depth is there.

The truth is there.

The language is there.

Shoring up the wealth of experience and immersion he had with young people while with Hawk Nelson, Jason Dunn is speaking the native tongue of a generation more clearly than ever...and he couldn’t be happier about it.

“I’m starting from the ground up,” he says. “It’s simple. I’m a simple person. It’s really good to be playing again.” CCM



BLOOD:WATER MISSION

A PASSION SUSTAINED

We flip channels in the middle of programs, we scroll through 140-character statements with little thought and we adjust the content of our profiles more quickly than the weather changes. We have entered an environment where we can immediately shift from one focus to another with little consequence.

But, certainly there are consequences, whether we want to acknowledge them or not. I fear that our flip-flop culture is diminishing the staying power of our commitments in the world. Think about how quickly trends come and go, how quickly entertainment fads come and go. But what happens when we apply

that same short attention span to weightier commitments like relationships, service and vocation? Failure to practice endurance, patience and commitment leaves us empty. We miss out on the grander and more real things in life like joy, satisfaction and community.

I have learned about the value of the practice of enduring commitments from the members of Jars of Clay. For ten years, I have traveled and worked alongside Dan,



Matt, Charlie and Steve as they have lived out their vocational call to artistry, justice and community. In a world that tempts us all to jump the fence to greener pastures when the going gets tough, the band has taught me the true and real gift of sticking with each other through those days and years that hurt and frustrate and break. Those of us who have been touched by the authenticity of Jars of Clay's work are blessed by their staying power. In their 19th year together, they have just released another brilliant album called *Inland*. It is a work of art that could not have been produced in their first years as a band. Like an enduring marriage, their experiences percolated, year after year, to allow them to create this.

The need for sustained attention is true for Africa, as well. The HIV/AIDS and water crises in Africa are not capable of being ended through a fad of social justice. We will see the small changes of health and hope in communities only through the enduring commitment, not just to the cause, but to the people we seek to serve... for as long as it takes to end these crises.

I cofounded Blood:Water Mission with Jars of Clay ten years ago. If someone had told me then that I would spend more than a decade of my life building Blood:Water Mission, I don't think I would have signed up for fear of being stuck in one place for too long. But it's only after these ten years of committing day in and day out amidst the temptations to move on to something else, that we can celebrate more

than 800,000 Africans with clean water and more than 30,000 people with HIV/AIDS support.

As fads come and go, and as our attention spans threaten to dramatically diminish, don't forget to pursue those lifelong commitments to people and communities. It is these commitments where the treasures of true joy live. **CCM**

Jena Lee Nardella is cofounder and chief strategy officer for Blood:Water Mission. In their sustained commitment to partner with Africa to end the HIV/AIDS and water crises, they are on a mission to launch a new AIDS clinic in central Kenya.

+ PLEASE VISIT THEIR SITE TO JOIN THEM!

ON THIS HOLY NIGHT

AN EXCERPT

Just like Joseph, you can't see the whole picture. Just like Joseph, your task is to see that Jesus is brought into your part of your world. And just like Joseph, you have a choice: to obey or disobey. Because Joseph obeyed, God used him to change the world. Can He do the same with you?

God still looks for Josephs today. Men and women who believe that God is not through with this world. Common people who serve an uncommon God. Will you be that kind of person? Will you serve... even when you don't understand? No, the Bethlehem sky is not the first to hear the pleadings of an honest heart, nor the last. And perhaps God didn't answer every question for Joseph. But He answered the most important one. "Are you still with me, God?" And through the first cries of the Godchild the answer came.

"Yes. Yes, Joseph. I'm with you."

There are many questions about the Bible that we won't be able to answer until we get home. Many knotholes and snapshots. Many times we will muse, "I wonder..."

But in our wonderings, there is one question we never need to ask. Does God care? Do we matter to God? Does He still love His children?

Through the small face of the stable-born baby, He says yes.

Yes, your sins are forgiven.
Yes, your name is written in heaven.
Yes, death has been defeated.
And yes, God has entered your world.
Immanuel. God is with us.



Rekindle the true meaning of Christmas with the help of six gifted Christian communicators.

Every year, the story of Christmas is told and retold, but sometimes the very familiarity of holiday traditions causes us to overlook the vital expressions of this meaningful season. *On This Holy Night* breathes new life into several aspects of the Christmas story through the voices of six beloved Christian communicators. Each author explores the meaning of Christmas in different facets of the holiday:

MAX LUCADO—a look into Joseph's story, a man caught between what God says and what makes sense

RICK WARREN—the real gift of Christmas is that God sent His own Son to connect with the human race

DAVID JEREMIAH—why the name of Jesus is so important and perfect

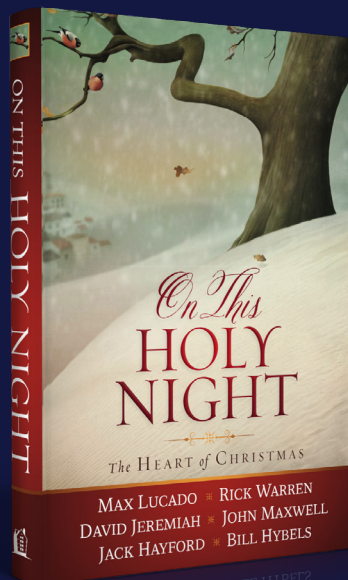
JOHN MAXWELL—how to journey like the wise men to unexpected places

JACK HAYFORD—a look into Mary's story, a woman who embraced the seemingly impossible with God at her side

BILL HYBELS—rediscovering meaning in the nativity scene

Sure to connect readers back to the heart of the holiday, this beautiful four-color gift book will be treasured for years to come. CCM

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