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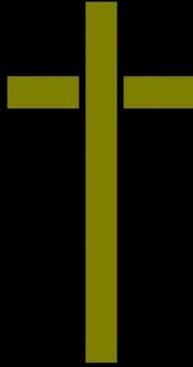
MICHAEL W. SMITH

A RECORD FOR OUR TIME

FACE YOUR FEARS
INSPIRATION INSIDE
FROM BETHEL MUSIC

ALSO FEATURING
MICHAEL GUNGOR
STRYPER'S MICHAEL SWEET
MARY MARY'S ERICA CAMPBELL

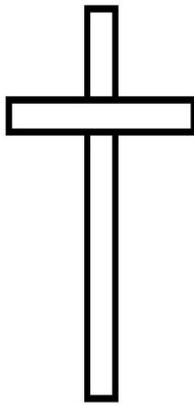
MAY 15, 2014



Doug Sedona
Who Created Love

Nashville, meet Heaven...





Doug Sedona
“Jesus, I Say Thanks”

International Version

Heaven, meet Nashville...

You Tube

FEATURES

ON THE COVER:

Michael W. Smith

Living in a new phase of
humility, creativity and
intimacy with his Creator



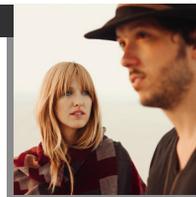
Photo: Cameron Powell

Bethel Music

Facing fear with the One
who makes us brave

**Michael Gungor**

Breaking new ground on
his latest solo project

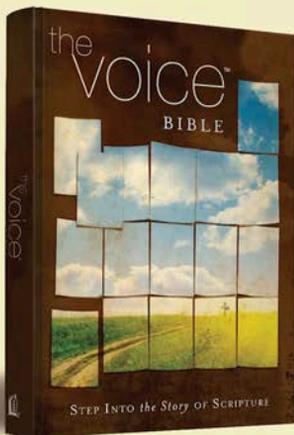


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DEPARTMENTS

FROM THE EDITOR

PHOTOS

TOUR SPOTLIGHT

Scott Stapp



OUT AND ABOUT

Pix of your favorite Christian artists on the road, off the road and everywhere in between

WHAT'S NEW

ALBUM RELEASES

SPOTLIGHTS



MICHAEL SWEET

MARY MARY'S ERICA CAMPBELL

TYLER NEWBERRY

DEVOTIONAL

EXCERPT FROM:

Jesus Now by Frank Viola

REVIEWS

ALBUMS, BOOKS AND FILMS

ONE LAST LOOK

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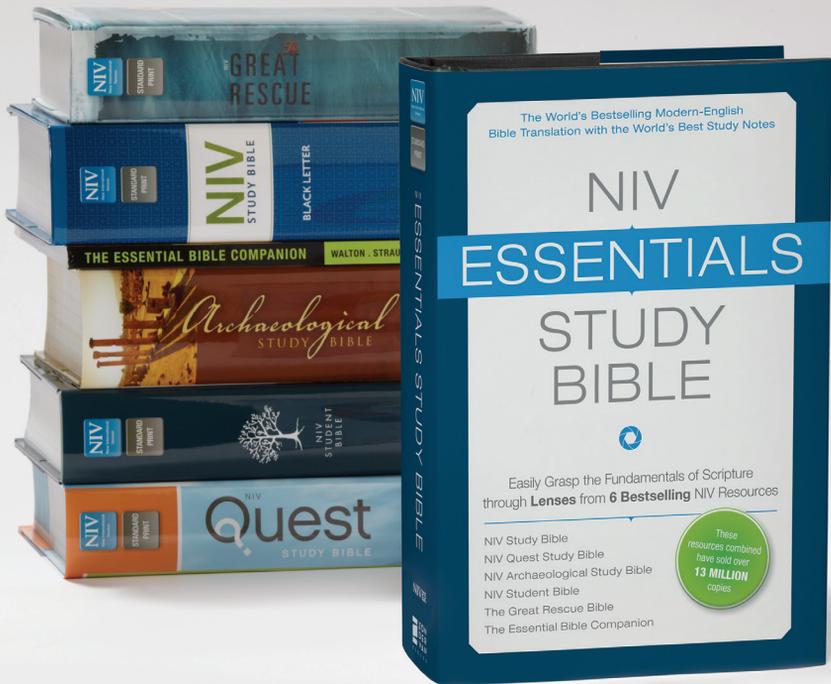
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Have you ever tried to wrap your mind around the ups and downs of life?

It's dizzying and largely futile.

Yet time after time when good things happen, we try to analyze the circumstances to find some way to credit ourselves or those around us. When bad things happen, we do the same but often rope God into the equation, asking Him why. Why me? Why now? Why this?

Be it a good or bad thing we're trying to understand, the truth is, we can't. We never will.

Life is a constant challenge to reside in the faith that God really does know what He's doing. There are no arbitrary blessings or tragedies. Each serves a purpose that we will never understand in full while living on this earth.

Michael W. Smith has spent his life ascribing glory to this great, big God. After all these years, he's still learning how to rest in God and reside in His sovereignty.

What a goal! To live each day seeking ways to say thank you instead of reasons to ask why.

Life is a string of events and circumstances that can break us or bless us.

Fortunately, we're not controlling the strings. We merely have to hand ours over into the hands of the One who is absolutely in control, perfectly on time and ultimately sovereign.



Caroline Lusk

Caroline Lusk
Editor, CCM Digital



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Book Fun Magazine For May 2014

In this issue:

Francine Rivers: Touching interview
Her book **“Bridge to Haven”** is reviewed.

Plus these Articles:

A banker who woke up one morning, said
“Enough!”
Then turned himself into police. (Pg 10)

A Whale Inspiration (Pg 81)

A pie set the tone for a marriage! (Pg 111)

Did the English start the Mafia in Italy?
Over Lemons??? Seriously! (Pg 128)

A women who saved thousands of Hebrew
babies in WWII (True story! Pg 144)

How a Rabbi who came to Christ
(Hear his story on Pg 163)
So much more!

Don't miss the May 2014 issue of
Book Fun Magazine
<http://www.bookfunmagazine.com>



SCOTT STAPP

PROOF OF LIFE TOUR

HOUSE OF BLUES/ CHICAGO, IL

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ANDY ARGYRAKIS

Following an overwhelmingly successful reunion tour with Creed, who has sold more than 40 million albums worldwide, and the release of his unvarnished autobiography, *Sinner's Creed*, front man Scott Stapp returns to solo life with his sophomore CD, *Proof Of Life* (Wind-up Records).

The Grammy Award-winner naturally split his generous two-hour tour between band favorites (“My Own Prison,” “Higher,” “My Sacrifice”) and solo material (“Justify,” “Break Out,” “Jesus Was A Rockstar”), while always keeping his message at the forefront, especially now that he’s recommitted to his Christian faith.



TOUR SPOTLIGHT



The show's entire tone was set with "Slow Suicide," his first-ever No. 1 Christian radio hit (after logging no less than eleven in the mainstream) that boldly speaks of his deliverance from drinking and drugs after putting full reliance on the Lord.

Add in Creed's enduring power ballad "With Arms Wide Open," or the new "Dying To Live," and Stapp didn't just provide plenty of bellowing modern rock aggression but also sent listeners from all walks of life home with the assurance that liberation from any realm of darkness can begin with a simple act of surrender.

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Seat Section Row		
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FOR THE HOTTEST TOURS GOING ON RIGHT NOW!

TOUR CONNECTION

Today's Christian Music CCM [CLICK HERE](#)



COMPILED BY ANDY ARGYRAKIS

1 The brothers from the band Everfound steal some songwriting time in their hotel room during a break on The Winter Jam 2014 Tour Spectacular.

2 for KING & COUNTRY plug away on their sophomore album late night on the tour bus with producer Tedd T. and rapper Andy Mineo.

3 Petra lead singer John Schlitt and his wife, Dorla, connect with President George W. Bush impersonator John C. Morgan at the National Religious Broadcasters Convention in Nashville.

4 & **5** Kevin Chalfant, faith-anchored front man for The Storm (the super-group that featured three members of Journey), performs and poses in Illinois alongside Rex Carroll, perhaps best known for his time in multiple-Dove Award-winning Whitecross and fellow super-group King James (with members of Stryper and Sacred Fire).



Photo: Andy Argyrakis

Photo: Andy Argyrakis

Sometimes it takes a very long nap to wake up to *Happily Ever After*.

In true *Sleeping Beauty* style, Shannon awakes after ten years in a coma to find that nothing in her previous life is the same—including her! Can she navigate to a happy ending in a world where reality television has taken over the planet and everyone's life appears to revolve around a tiny screen on their cell phones?

New from bestselling author
Sandra D. Bricker



watch the *Rise & Shine* trailer!



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a sprinkle of humor and a dab of faith.

**** —RT Book Reviews

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MICHAEL W. SMITH
SOVEREIGN
MWS GROUP/CAPITOL

BETHANY DEVINE
DAILY CONFESSIONS
UNIVERSAL MUSIC/CAPITOL

SEVENTH DAY SLUMBER
WE ARE THE BROKEN
VSR MUSIC GROUP/CAPITOL

D. TROPP
AWAY FROM HOME
INDIE

SHOUT PRAISES KIDS
ULTIMATE KIDS WORSHIP
INTEGRITY/PROVIDENT

FELLOWSHIP CREATIVE
RUNNING TO FOLLOW
FAIR TRADE SERVICES/PROVIDENT

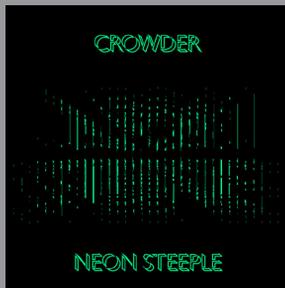
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SHAI LINNE
LYRICAL THEOLOGY PT 2
LAMP MODE RECORDINGS/NEW DAY

5.27.2014



TEDASHII
BELOW PARADISE
REACH RECORDS

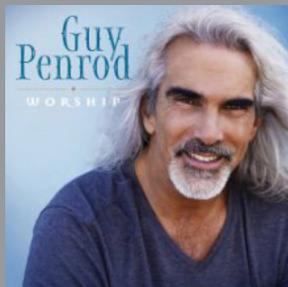


CROWDER
NEON STEEPLE
SIXSTEPRECORDS/CAPITOL

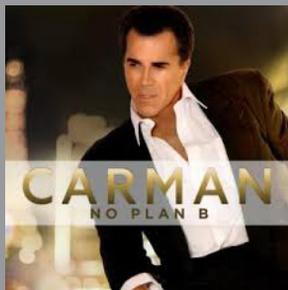
THE MARTINS
A CAPPELLA
SPRING HOUSE/CAPITOL

SMOKIE NORFUL
IN THE MEANTIME
SNO/CAPITOL

CRISTY LANE
THE SON OF GOD IS BORN
CLN/CAPITOL



GUY PENROD
WORSHIP
SPRING HOUSE/CAPITOL



CARMAN
NO PLAN B
NORWAY AVENUE RECORDS/CAPITOL

ARTIFEX PEREO
TIME IN PLACE
TOOTH & NAIL/NEW DAY

BEVERLY CRAWFORD
THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU'VE DONE
UNIVERSAL/CAPITOL

VARIOUS
GOSPEL PRAISE DUETS
RENDEZVOUS MUSIC/PROVIDENT

GMA IS FINE

On April 29, the inaugural GMA Honors Awards Ceremony was held in Nashville, Tennessee. The magical evening included a tribute to Rich Mullins, the first performance from Take 6 in more than 20 years and a dc Talk reunion. GMA Hall of Fame inductees were also honored, including the Gaither Vocal Band, Brown Bannister, Take 6 and Rich Mullins. It was an emotional night and—with everyone from Michael W. Smith, Amy Grant, Vince Gill, Take 6, TobyMac, Kevin Max, Michael Tait, Eddie DeGarmo, David Crowder, Bill and Gloria Gaither, Bart Millard and countless other artists and industry insiders—a once-in-a-lifetime occasion.

[+](#) **CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL RUN-DOWN.**

ROYAL TAILOR DEBUT

Royal Tailor is making the rounds on mainstream media with the debut of their latest video, “Ready, Set, Go,” on RyanSeacrest.com.

[+](#) **CLICK HERE FOR MORE!**

TFK ROCKS RUSSIA

Thousand Foot Krutch put on a killer show in Moscow.

[+](#) **CLICK HERE FOR OUR EXCLUSIVE PHOTO GALLERY OF THE SHOW, PLUS A LINK TO THE ARENA ERUPTING IN TFK'S SONG “SO FAR GONE.”**



Photo: Cameron Powell

Sovereign State

MICHAEL W. SMITH ENTERS A NEW
PHASE OF HUMILITY, CREATIVITY
AND INTIMACY WITH HIS CREATOR

BY CAROLINE LUSK

The Columbine High School massacre.
The September 11 terrorist attacks.
The Haiti earthquake.

These three events represent some of the most shocking and devastating tragedies of our time.

Lives lost senselessly, families broken needlessly and faith shattered upon the harsh cliffs of reality and grief...

In the wake of each of these calamities, Michael W. Smith has offered songs, drawing people together and shifting the perspective from, "Why, God?" to "How do we see You in this, God?"

His music has been leading people to the throne room for decades. And in times of crisis, his compassionate heart has led people to the arms of Christ.

Following Columbine, "This Is Your Time" honored the price of faith and the heart of the faithful who paid it. After the Haiti earthquake, he brought the CCM industry together to record "Come Together Now Haiti," offering resources and hope.

And on Sept. 11, 2001, his timeless album *Worship* was released, immediately providing a voice to those left speechless by the horrific tragedy of that day.

It's no surprise then that, 13 years later, his music continues to offer healing and hope.

As he readied the release of his first studio worship album since 2008, a friend asked him to sing at his son's funeral. The friend's son had committed suicide.

"It's one thing to lose a child," Michael says quietly. "It was such a challenge to deliver the song and hold it together. I just closed my eyes and tried to get inside the song and deliver it in a beautiful way. I always want to be authentic and beautiful, but there's a balance. If I let myself go, I'd be a basket-case and never get through it."

The song, "Sovereign Over Us," which would inspire the title of the album, *Sovereign*, reminds us all that regardless of circumstance, He is greater and higher and above all.

"We are here for a moment, and then we're gone," says Michael. "He's sovereign

“He’s sovereign and in control. He rules the universe. We know Him in part, but do we really know His ways? Sometimes I think I have a clue, but I probably don’t even come close to knowing how large He truly is.”

and in control. He rules the universe. We know Him in part, but do we really know His ways? Sometimes I think I have a clue, but I probably don’t even come close to knowing how large He truly is.”

Michael’s candor is refreshing and largely informed every aspect of the project—from the creative perspective to the spiritual.

“There’s something really special about the motivation on this record,” Michael says. “The posture was pure. I think it’s very special. I feel like it’s a record for our time.”

From the opening strains of the album to the last refrain, it is unequivocally one of the most relevant albums he’s ever made. With a different production approach and an entirely new team, the album captures a moment of rejuvenation in Michael’s life and career.

“I’m with a new label, Capitol Records,” Michael says. “I needed a change, and we did this as a team. Everyone gave 110 percent from day one. They gave it the attention the record needed to have.”

The team was large, and the scope of the project was equally as grand.

“It was a long, beautiful journey,” says Michael. “We went through about 120 songs. If a song didn’t hit the bar, it didn’t make the cut.”

The songs that did land on the record are beautiful, vertical and, as Michael says,

“very different. All the songs are pretty worshipful on some level, but they have a more anthemic, pop element to them. It’s different from any worship album I’ve ever done. Honestly, we didn’t have a solid concept for a theme other than wanting to find great songs. A lot of times, if you don’t set out with a theme, you can get something that’s pretty disparate. But this really holds together like it was all pre-conceived on a drawing board. It’s a God thing. His favor was upon the process.”

It was a process that very quickly expanded beyond Michael, involving many new writers and collaborators, including one very special writer.

“My son Ryan wrote most of the lyrics on ‘Sky Spills Over,’” says Michael proudly. “The whole lyric is fresh. I love it.”

“If I had to pick one song over all as my favorite, it would be ‘Sovereign Over Us.’ This is a song for our time. There’s so much truth in the song. As the bridge says, *Even what the enemy means for evil/ He means for good.*”

Already, the music is resonating with audiences. The *Sovereign* tour kicked off in Pennsylvania with shows that have been, according to Michael, “amazing.”

“When we sing ‘Christ Be All Around Me,’





Photo: Cameron Powell

it's such a huge moment. You almost can't contain the energy in the passion that is happening.

"We just had our tenth grandchild," he says with a laugh. "What in the world? How did that happen? We're extremely thankful for that. When your kids are good, you're good. That's probably our biggest blessing right there."

It's a blessing Michael is intentionally taking the time to appreciate and enjoy, relishing the sovereignty of God in every facet of life.

"On a Gungor record, Michael Gungor speaks for about the first ten minutes. He reminds us that we're a blade of grass, a vapor. We're here for a moment and then we're gone. God is the one who's sovereign and in control," Michael shares. "We live in a society where everything is at your fingertips, vying for your attention. We need to just be still. I don't think we do that very well, but my hope and prayer is that this record will connect with people and help them get to that place."

The world is chaotic. A tragedy is just a breath away.

When the Columbines and the September 11ths and the family tragedies take place, God has divinely appointed men and women much like Michael to help all of us remember that no matter what—despite the deepest pain and the greatest of uncertainty, fear, loss or anger—He is good. He is in control. He is sovereign. **CCM**



FOR MORE, VISIT MICHAELWSMITH.COM.

YOU MAKE ME BRAVE

EMBRACING THE ONE WHO DRIVES OUT FEAR



BY MARK D. GEIL

CCMAGAZINE.COM

Bethel Music follows the success and impact of their first all-studio release, *Tides*, with a unique and no-less-powerful project, *You Make Me Brave*. The CD and companion video chronicle the worship experience during a three-day women's conference held at The Civic in Redding, California, in August. As the event was planned and executed, organizers realized it was transcending a typical church conference. Words were changing lives. Songs were moving hearts. Worship was erupting as voices were lifted and souls were renewed. Though participants were unaware, God had carefully woven a theme through the messages and music. The songs were written independently by a gifted team of worship leaders—Jenn Johnson, Kari Jobe, Steffany Frizzell Gretzinger, Kristene DiMarco, Amanda Cook, and Leah Valenzuela—but they took on a consistent character and a common voice. To 1,200 people at a conference, and to so many more who will watch and listen, the Spirit spoke: God is present. God is forever. God is for you, to give you strength and to make you brave.

Bethel's growth and impact have accelerated in recent years as the ministry continues its transformation from local church music to global outreach, featuring a cadre of songwriters and worship leaders, a half-dozen CDs, chart-topping songs such as "One Thing Remains," and both online and on-campus worship schools. *Tides* became the biggest retail debut ever for the worship ministry, reaching No. 1 on the Top Christian/Gospel Albums and Praise & Worship *Billboard* retail charts amidst unprecedented international acclaim. The momentum continued when *Tides Live* released in late February. The Women's

Conference is an annual event; but this year in particular, organizers recognized the powerful undercurrent of God's work in the preparation, and they knew they needed to share it with the world.

"I think this project will serve two purposes," says Jenn Johnson, who serves as Bethel's Senior Worship Pastor along with her husband, Brian. "I'm excited for people to listen and to hear what the Lord is saying to them personally through it and then also to find that launch pad in each song to worship—to identify where they're at with the Lord and worship Him from that place."

God's message in the music is spoken eloquently in the title track, a song from the heart of Amanda Cook, who recently moved

GOD IS PRESENT. GOD IS FOREVER.
GOD IS FOR YOU, TO GIVE YOU
STRENGTH AND TO MAKE YOU BRAVE.

from Winnipeg to be closer to her Bethel team. Amanda recalls the birth of the song "You Make Me Brave."

"The song took only a matter of minutes to write; but it was the result of a long, dry season God took me through to reach the point where I was able to express what He had been doing through the last number of years," shares Amanda. "God has themes in all of our lives, and I feel like bravery is something that He's always called me into. I've struggled with fear my whole life. You name it, I've been afraid of it. The song is a very personal statement to me because it's not written out of a place of declaration that 'I'm so brave.' I'm writing myself into that character, writing myself into the person that

I really do feel called to be and want to be.”

The song opens the album with driving drums and vivid imagery of a crashing tidal wave.

“The water for me represents the presence of God, the expansiveness, the majesty, the wonder of who He is. The wave is His grace taking me deeper and further into His presence,” says Amanda.

“The song’s explosive bridge captures the fear we might feel when God calls us into a deeper level of intimacy with Him: *You make me brave / You make me brave / You call me out, beyond the shore, into the waves.*”

Renowned songwriter and worship leader Kari Jobe joined the worship team with another song of extraordinary power, “Forever.” Co-written with Brian Johnson, the song traces the emotion of Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection as it was felt by both the eyewitnesses and by the universe itself. Through the sadness of the weeping moon and stars, captured on a somber piano, to the war on death that caused the earth to tremble, the song is a confident declaration of death’s defeat. The tumult and victory move the listener to bravely declare: *We sing hallelujah! The Lamb has overcome!*

Another standout song tells of a personal journey out of the busyness of life and into intimate communion with God. Jenn’s “A Little Longer” opens with tension, as guitar notes unexpectedly descend a minor chord through each verse. That minor key recreates a scene Jenn recalls vividly.

“I was getting ready to go lead worship in a conference at the church, and I had so much

going on,” she says. “I was running around scrambling to get everything together, my little baby was sleeping, and I was just a mess. As I walked past the piano in our living room I felt the Holy Spirit saying, ‘Sit down and worship.’ I thought, ‘Are you kidding me, Lord? I’m going to worship you in like 15 minutes!’ I kept going, and I remember coming back through the living room and walking by the piano again. I was arguing with the Lord, but I knew it was Him. So I sat down at the piano, frustrated and annoyed; and in a minor key I just played, *What can I do for You, what can I bring to You, what kind of song would You like me to sing?* With an

attitude. And the Lord almost audibly spoke to me: ‘I didn’t want anything, I just wanted to be with you.’ And I sobbed. Snot and tears all over the piano. I scratched the lyrics down, put the baby in the car and went to the conference. I told Bill and Brian that I felt like I needed to do this song, even though it was not even really written. I started singing the song that the Lord had given

me; and it starts out in that minor key, and then the chorus says, *You don’t have to do a thing, simply be with Me and let those things go.* The whole room turned into snot and tears!”

These songs are so personal, but part of the beauty of the event was the corporate nature of the worship. The team worked diligently to shift the focus away from the individual and toward the object of our praise. In fact, there are plenty of moments on the CD when it’s difficult to tell who’s singing.

“I think it’s awesome,” Jenn recalls. “I think it’s a value system. I love the ‘nameless, faceless’ thing. It’s beautiful to celebrate



who someone is, but it can be so weird sometimes. I don't have a false humility at all, but what was celebrated was what God was doing, not who was doing what. I really hope that people feel that the highlight is what the Lord is saying through the whole album versus who sang what, who did what, whose name is on what."

Jenn's enthusiasm for the project is palpable. "Personally, I'm more excited about this than anything that we've ever done. I might be a little partial, but these girls killed it! This would be my favorite album by a long shot, even if I wasn't on it. I also don't think

this project is just for women. I think this is a message for the church."

That message is loud and clear. God's presence is a promise for here and now, not a destination for which we long. And that presence should change us. Like an approaching wave, we see His wonder and His overwhelming love calling us to something more, something deeper; and though we might falter as we face the unknown, He makes us brave. **CCM**



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Mountain Climber

MICHAEL GUNGOR EXPLORES NEW GROUND ON HIS LATEST

BY CAROLINE LUSK



Never one to operate within constraints, Gungor has pushed the boundaries of faith-inspired and faith-inspiring music since its inception in 2003. Uniquely gifted and ridiculously creative, Gungor's music has challenged those who have heard it just as it challenged those who were making it.

Recently, the band's founder and central figure, Michael Gungor, has walked through a

season of questions, doubt and uncertainty. While that place can be a desert for most people, this period of time has, instead, spanned his most creative and progressive project to date.

I Am Mountain has already generated buzz among mainstream press and audiences. CCM was able to ask Michael a few questions about the project, which is sonically, lyrically



Photo: Simone Rubi

and emotionally a masterpiece. Enjoy getting inside the head and the heart of one of the most gifted songwriters and musicians of this generation.

CCM: *I Am Mountain is your first self-produced album released independently. Why did you decide to do this now?*

MICHAEL GUNGOR: The music industry is

one of the industries that's in the middle of drastic change right now, and everybody is just trying to figure out how to make things work. The reality is that there is no room for "non-essential personnel" anymore. So we were just seeing if we could do it all ourselves. And honestly, it's not quite as easy to do as we had hoped. But, again, most people in the industry right now are just trying to figure out how to survive; so who knows what we'll do for the next album, but it certainly was an educational experience to do the indie thing.

CCM: *You've always pushed boundaries sonically and thematically. This album takes that even further. What was your goal on this one?*

MG: This may sound funny, but the goal was to make a record that we liked. I know that sounds like an over-simplification, and maybe it is; but it's also true. We want to make music that is honest and is something that we are proud of and excited to play every night on the road. We do hope that other people like the record, and that the music opens their hearts, but we also recognize that we have very little control of how people respond and react to the music. All we can do is make the music that feels right to us and hope that some other people out there will feel the same way about it.

CCM: *You and your wife, Lisa, have had a beautiful working relationship. How did your collaboration on this project differ than on previous albums?*

MG: I do feel really lucky to work with Lisa so closely. I think we have found a pretty good stride in our working relationship to know each other's strengths and weaknesses enough to focus on what we should focus on. We know each other so well that it's easy to write and collaborate with her without the

“WE CERTAINLY HOPE THAT PEOPLE WILL HAVE THESE SORTS OF EXPERIENCES WITH THE MUSIC— THAT HEARTS AND MINDS WOULD BE OPENED AND THAT THEY WOULD EXPERIENCE HOPE.”



Photo: Luca Ventor

awkward dance, for instance, of trying to tell the person you are working with that the idea needs work. I can just say, “that idea needs work,” and she understands that I don’t mean anything else by that. So, our working relationship has actually gotten better over the years, I think. If there’s anything different about this album, I think it’s actually that we included John Arndt more in the writing process. Normally it’s just Lisa and me writing the Gungor stuff; but John, who has played with us since the beginning, came forward with some cool ideas this time, and it was really fun having him part of that process.

CCM: *Your audience has always been diverse, which is more apparent than ever with this release. Why do you think that is? Do you have a target audience in mind?*

MG: While we don’t really have a target audience, we do try to speak to a thoughtful and fairly progressive listener. But I also am a huge fan of diversity; and some of the most fun I have at a show is when there are all sorts of different, weird people in the

audience. I love weird, and we’re not afraid of trying really eclectic mixes of influences and styles; so maybe that’s why we have a fairly eclectic fan base.

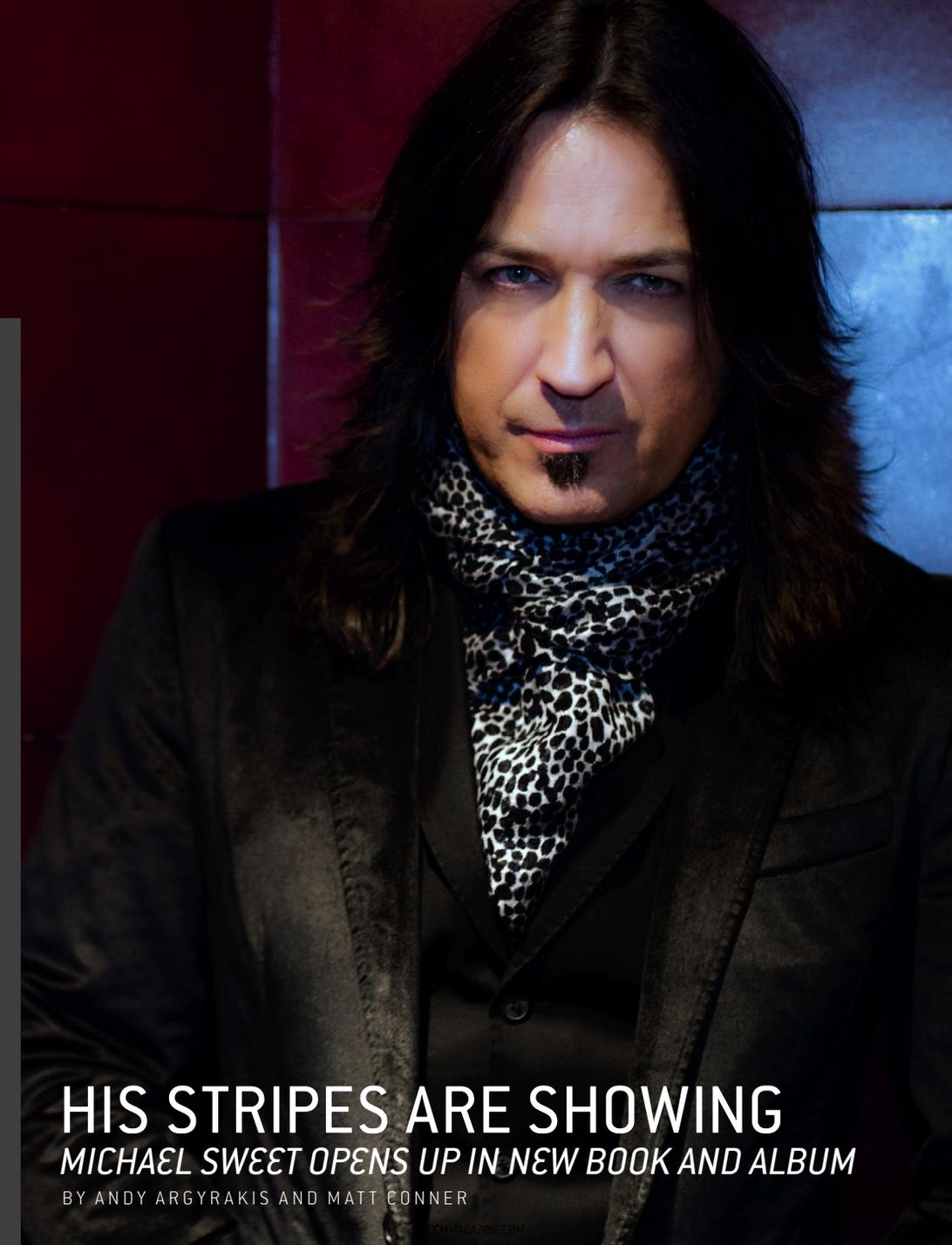
CCM: *People experience God and participate in worship in so many ways—through art, spoken word, instrumental music, time spent in nature... How do you personally experience God and how do you think your music expresses that and invites people to do the same, whether overtly or not?*

MG: My understanding of the Divine at this point is hard to separate from the experiences of transcendence, connectedness and openness that I experience in my life. So while this album is not overtly trying to be religious at all, we certainly do hope that people will have those sorts of experiences with the music—that hearts and minds would be opened and that people would experience hope. That, for me, is a very sacred thing. **CCM**



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT GUNGORMUSIC.COM.





HIS STRIPES ARE SHOWING

MICHAEL SWEET OPENS UP IN NEW BOOK AND ALBUM

BY ANDY ARGYRAKIS AND MATT CONNER

Michael Sweet has a story to tell and is finally ready to share it. Although he's been incredibly active singing for Stryper and even took a stint co-fronting Boston, Sweet's been flying under the solo radar as of late. But that's all about to change.

With a new book release this spring, *Honestly: My Life & Stryper Revealed*, Michael is finally telling the backstory of his years as the front man for one of rock and roll's legendary hard-rock bands. Accompanying the book is Sweet's first full-length original album since 2000.

I'm Not Your Suicide shows off the harder edge that Stryper fans know so well, along with a softer side and a crazy guest list.

Amidst the frenzy of the book and album release (both on BIG3 Records), Sweet was able to squeeze CCM into his schedule. Read on to find out more about the 10 million album-seller's current whereabouts and a look at his all-star musical collaborators and the book's overarching message.

CCM: What's the story behind the new album's title, *I'm Not Your Suicide*?

MICHAEL: It was written and completed more than two years ago. It's a compilation of my heart and soul, good and bad; and it's very diverse, musically speaking.

The title track was co-written by Blair Daly and holds a strong message of hope to those who have been beaten down and who have considered suicide.

CCM: You've obviously been very active with Stryper, but this is technically your first solo album of entirely original material since 2000. Did you intend the break to last that long or were you simply waiting for specific inspiration?

MICHAEL: Sometimes in this crazy business you don't always have the option of doing things according to your own schedule or timeframe. I had to wait, but I'm glad I did. It made me dig deeper.

CCM: Musically, where does this album land compared to your past projects?

MICHAEL: It's similar to my previous all-original solo release, *Truth*. It's got an edge, yet it has a soft side too. I love to experiment, and I certainly did on this project. I used steel guitar, 12-string, mellotron, Moog, Ebow, slide guitar, Rhodes and lots of cool instruments on this album.

CCM: What was your favorite part about each of the key collaborations?

MICHAEL: Just being able to work with some of these guys—Kevin Max, Tony Harnell, Chris Jericho, Doug

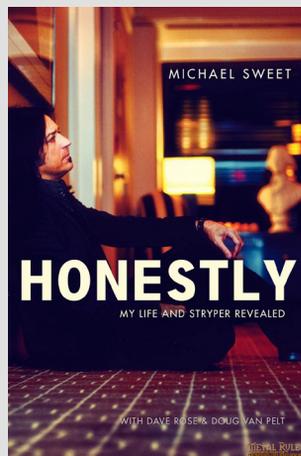
Aldrich, Electra Mustaine and, of course, Robert Sweet and Timothy Gaines. They are highly respected by me and the rest of the world.

CCM: How does the CD tie in with your highly anticipated autobiography?

MICHAEL: It speaks openly and honestly, as does the book. They both have a deep and powerful message.

CCM: What message do you hope fans will take away from all of this?

MICHAEL: To see that I'm just a man who makes mistakes; but through Christ, I'm lifted up and given the strength to carry on. I hope and pray that someone will be touched in a positive way and be helped by something that I've personally experienced. [CCM](#)



+ FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT MICHAELSWEEP.COM.



TWO BECOME ONE

MARY MARY'S ERICA CAMPBELL GOES SOLO AND STRIKES GOLD

BY ANDREW GREER

Known as one-half of the platinum-selling sister sensation Mary Mary, Erica Campbell is setting out solo. And she's doing it big. Her chart-topping LP, *Help* (My Block/eOne), has already amassed a No. 6 spot on *Billboard's* Top 200, a Grammy nod for the lead single, "A Little More Jesus," and a quickly rising Top 10 radio hit with the title track, featuring Lecrae. Giving *CCM* an exclusive chat, Campbell talks going solo, her sister Tina and being a reality TV star.

CCM: *After having recorded so many records and having been recognized for so long as part of Mary Mary, what prompted a solo record?*

ERICA: Initially, the solo record was just a change of pace so Tina could take the much-needed break she asked for and I could continue to sing. When I was a little girl I sang solos in church. As a teenager in the choir I was the lead soloist. Mary Mary just happened, and I have been extremely grateful for it; but I had forgotten these dreams I had as a child of just me

singing to people. Maybe God allowed this just to let me know He didn't forget my dream! I'm so grateful.

CCM: *What freedoms did you experience recording solo? In what ways did you miss Tina?*

ERICA: Because it's just me, *Help* stretched me vocally. I wanted to record more collaborations; but Warrryn [Campbell], my husband and producer, said, "You have been collaborating for years. Just let the people hear your heart and voice." So I had to gain more confidence to do this alone. I asked Tina to come and help me write "A Little More Jesus," which got a Grammy nomination this year! Even though we do a lot less together, she is still my sister and BFF. We talk every day about what's happening and how we are growing as women.

CCM: *How is Help reminiscent of or different from Mary Mary's discography?*

ERICA: The only connection between my solo music and Mary Mary is my voice. The style is more diverse. I love so many different styles, which I think helps reach dif-

ferent people with the message that God is everything we need and more. Some songs are a little rock-and-roll. Some are a little folk.

CCM: *Talk about the first single, "A Little More Jesus."*

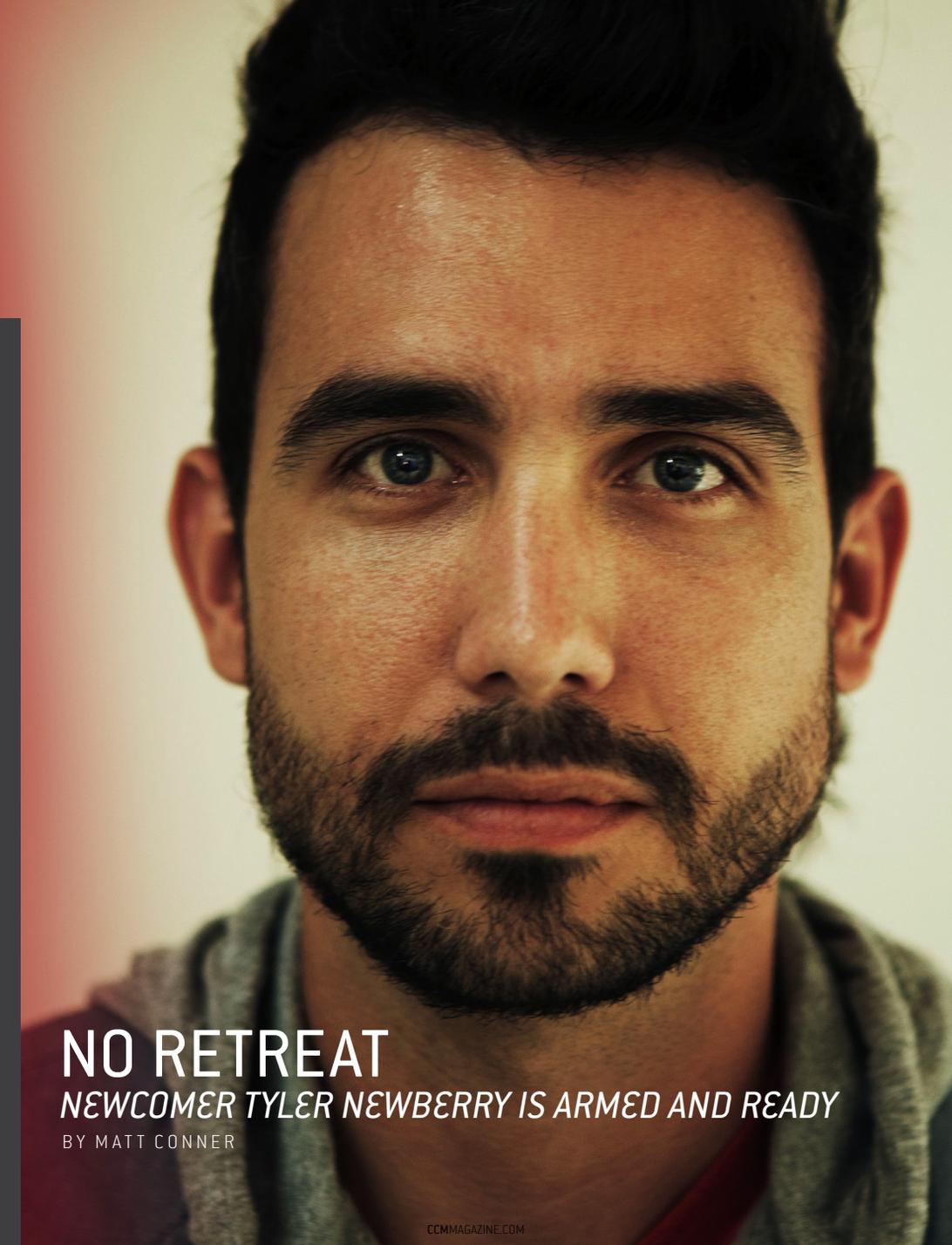
ERICA: I had a rough year last year. I knew I wasn't totally equipped to handle it by the way I was responding to the drama. I needed a little more Jesus or I wasn't going to make it through! Anytime a problem arises, we should turn to Jesus. We try and fix things our own way first. That'll get you in trouble every time.

CCM: *Let's talk about Mary Mary, the reality TV stars. Any adverse effects of being so exposed with your family's WE TV series?*

ERICA: Oh, the show! [Laughs] I believe the show has been successful because of our honesty. It's been a rough year, especially for Tina. I applaud her for being brave enough to try and live out forgiveness in front of the world. My family doesn't claim perfection, but we definitely claim that God is the source for everything. *CCM*



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NO RETREAT

NEWCOMER TYLER NEWBERRY IS ARMED AND READY

BY MATT CONNER

If you're looking for a bright star on the horizon, look no further than Tyler Newberry. An impressive singer-songwriter, Tyler is making his mark with a strong new album, *The Devil Rides A Horse*, his first LP of original tunes that are as inventive as they are meaningful. His message is clear—the devil's got tools and uses them well; but we, as Christians, are infinitely more equipped to defend our hearts, our honor and faith. Read on as Tyler shares his heart in his own words.

CCM: *The Devil Rides A Horse is such a great title. Can you tell us about the origin and what that means for you?*

TYLER: So often, we feel like we are on the defense as humans, as believers. I wanted to convey that there are other options. There is a way to fight evil, not just avoid it. The devil roams the earth, has his tools and uses them well. The "horse" represents his tool. It can manifest as anger, pornography, jealousy and in many other ways; but he's not the only one with tools. We have been given what we need—"everything for life and godliness," says Peter.

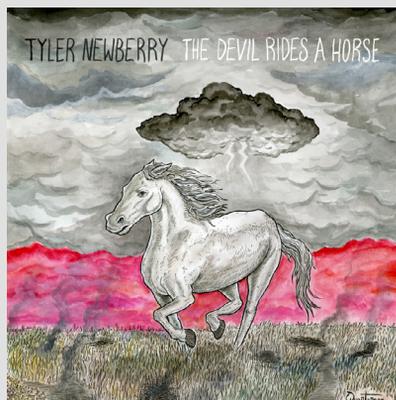
CCM: *I love the singer-songwriter sound, especially the old AM sound on tracks like "The Air Back Then." Can you tell us about some of your own musical influences?*

TYLER: I grew up with CCM Magazine. Cindy Morgan, Rich Mullins, Wes King, Burlap to Cashmere and Phil Keaggy were regulars in my Walkman. Nirvana, U2 and Pearl Jam were mainstays. I have grown to respect more genres and songwriters than I could name.

It is about the song. If I hear an artist who is serving the song—melodies and lyrics—that attitude comes through. Writing a song is a craft. Two of my favorite crafters right now are Matthew Perryman Jones and Andy Gullahorn. The truth is, I owe every good song I ever heard a handshake.

CCM: *You said Christian musicians have influenced you, but what about your own church background?*

TYLER: This year, I celebrate my 20th year leading churches in music. I started in Memphis, Tennessee, leading my fellow seventh and eighth graders in worship. My folks supported my musical path, one that many parents are leery of, and shepherded me all the way. They let me hang out with other musicians, took me to studios, concerts and introduced me to possibility after possibility. If I messed that up, it was my own fault. I owe my love of music to the church. It will always be integral to my music. **CCM**



+ FOR MORE INFORMATION,
VISIT TYLERNEWBERRYMUSIC.COM.

WORSHIP

**MICHAEL W. SMITH****Sovereign***(Sparrow Records)*

FOR FANS OF:

Chris Tomlin, Kari Jobe, Hillsong

★★★★☆

Sovereign, Smith's first worship record since 2008, shows that the years have been kind to the Christian music icon. Time has granted a lovely depth to his vocal, which is surrounded by smart, fresh arrangements. "Miracle" and "Sky Spills Over" in particular are standouts. "The One That Really Matters" pairs Smith with Kari Jobe for a beautifully nuanced duet. Overall, the record shows Smith returning to what he does best—ushering listeners into worship.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "The One That Really Matters"

**JASON BARE****Love Is Alive***(Madicah Music)*

FOR FANS OF:

Aaron Shust, Chris Tomlin, Sonicflood

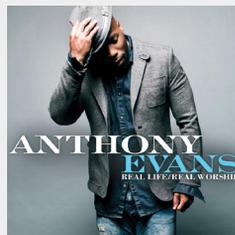
★★★★☆

Love is the concurrent theme throughout *Love Is Alive*, an ambitious and successful project. Bare's strong vocal could be likened to Chris Tomlin's, and his songs are congregation-friendly ("More Than Enough") and reflective ("He Took My Place"). The final song on the record, "Miracle Maker," featuring Jennie Ortega, is a standout.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE:

"Miracle Maker"

**ANTHONY EVANS****Real Life/Real Worship***(Fair Trade Services)*

FOR FANS OF:

Tamela Mann, Israel Houghton, Mandisa

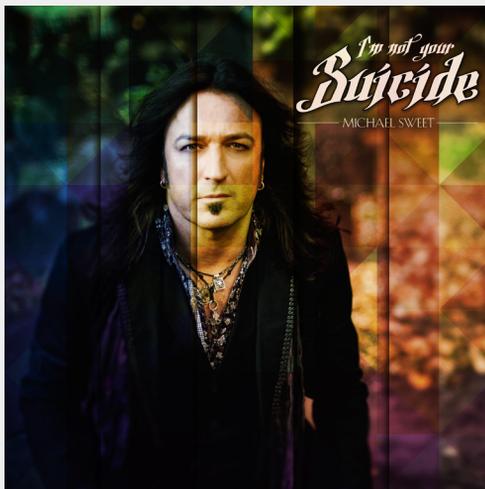
★★★★☆

Expanding his already-thriving fan-base as a favored contestant on Season 2 of NBC's *The Voice*, Evans continues forging a national platform with his R&B-distinctive worship/pop hybrid. Stocking his polished vocal program with the substantial song co-writes of Martha Munizzi, Cindy Morgan and Bert Elliot (OneRepublic), the soul-tinged powerhouse maintains straightforward gospel lyrics, while musically offering significant pop panache.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE:

"Greater Is He"



MICHAEL SWEET
I'm Not Your Suicide

(Big3 Records)
FOR FANS OF:

Stryper, Whitesnake, Boston, Mr. Big

★★★★★

For the first time since 2000, longtime Stryper leader/former Boston co-vocalist Michael Sweet is releasing an entirely original solo album. To make up for the gap, he stacks this modern-day melodic rock masterpiece with major guest stars such as Kevin Max (dc Talk, Audio Adrenaline), Chris Jericho, plus members of Whitesnake, TNT and Stryper. But make no mistake, *I'm Not Your Suicide* is a full-fledged foray into Sweet's songwriting soul, alongside sky-high vocals that only seem to improve with age.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "All That's Left (For Me To Prove)"



THE OVERSEER

Rest and Let Go

(Solid State)
FOR FANS OF:

Thrice

★★★★☆

The Overseer are back with their sophomore set on *Rest and Let Go*, a slightly decelerated set of songs from their debut that still makes a distinct mark on the hard rock market. "Finer Fiend" and "The Ferryman, Charon" are fine entries, while "The Structure/The Foundation" slowly builds into the album's focal point and shows off Darren King's tremendous rock vocal. Strong second effort.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE:
"The Structure/The Foundation"



JONNY DIAZ

Let It Fly

(Centricity Music)
FOR FANS OF:

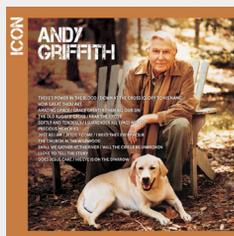
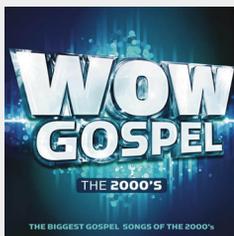
Jason Gray, Jack Johnson, Josh Wilson

★★★★☆

A cheerful, breezy, summer soundtrack, *Let It Fly* is a work of art. The country-tinted "Thank God I Got Her" is a fun departure for Diaz, and "Live Like He's Alive" boasts his signature contemporary-pop style. Every track is well written and creatively arranged, revealing more depth and maturity than on his previous work. While the timing seems a bit odd, "Asleep In The Hay" is a beautiful Christmas addition that rounds out a meticulous record.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE:
"Like Your Love"

**VARIOUS ARTISTS****WOW Gospel:****The 2000's**

(RCA Inspiration)

FOR FANS OF:

Modern gospel music

★★★★☆

The perennially RIAA-certified *WOW Gospel* series' newest compilation spans gospel music's biggest songs of the last decade. Featuring hardcore gold-selling genre mainstays such as Fred Hammond ("Let the Praise Begin"), Marvin Sapp ("Never Would Have Made It"), Smokie Norful ("I Need You Now"), Mary Mary ("Yesterday") and Richard Smallwood ("Total Praise"), *WOW* more wholly covers gospel's recent past than any other single-disc mix on the market.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "I Need You to Survive" (Hezekiah Walker & The Love Fellowship Choir)

ERICA CAMPBELL**Help**

(My Block, Inc./eOne)

FOR FANS OF:

Tamela Mann, Ledisi,

Le'andria Johnson

★★★★★

Goodness, *Help* is good. Erica Campbell, one-half of platinum-selling sister act Mary Mary, flies the coop to create a solo record of epic gospel proportions. Compared to the slick R&B-pop production of her familial discography, live instrumentation is Campbell's calling card. Consummately produced by hubby Warryn Campbell (Alicia Keys), live handclaps, chiming Wurlitzers, weepy strings, front porch harmonica, Motown backbeats and the singer's authentic gospel growl create an absolutely irresistible throwback tracklist. Add straight-up revival verses and *Help* is set to enamor urban music history.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "Help"**CHARLIE PEACOCK****Lemonade**

(Twenty Ten Music)

FOR FANS OF:

Herbie Hancock, Chick

Corea, Bruce Hornsby

★★★★☆

Never one to abide by convention as either an art/pop solo artist or producer for the likes of Amy Grant, Switchfoot and The Civil Wars, Charlie Peacock continues to indulge his jazz side on this piano-centered collection. Though most of the arrangements are sparse and straightforward, *Lemonade* serves as a solid follow-up to 2005's *Love Press Ex Curio* and 2008's Jeff Coffin collaboration *Arc of the Circle*, once again overflowing with uplifting instrumentals.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Our Father Always Near Us"

ANDY GRIFFITH**Icon**

(Sparrow Records)

FOR FANS OF:

George Beverly Shea,

Tennessee Ernie Ford,

The Gaithers

★★★★☆

The one-time name-sake of *The Andy Griffith Show* and star of *Matlock* was also a lifelong believer with an affinity for southern gospel music. The best of his periodic musical recordings find their home on this soft-spoken and low-key collection that consists entirely of warm-hearted hymns (sometimes grouped together as medleys) sung in Griffith's charming drawl.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Softly And Tenderly / I Surrender All / Pass Me Not"



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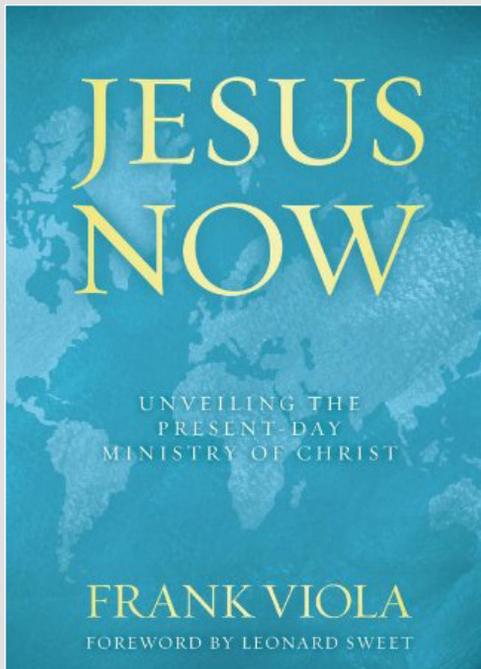


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JESUS NOW

AN EXCERPT

BY FRANK VIOLA

JESUS CHRIST TODAY

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. -Hebrews 13:8 NIV

So who is Jesus today? Is He someone we remember and try to emulate? Or is He someone who is living and active and has a specific ministry?

In the previous pages, we've seen that the ascension of Jesus marked the commencement of His present-day ministry. In reaching His own destiny, Jesus reached it for us, too. Christ led us to the place that

neither Abraham, Moses, Joshua, nor David could ever lead us.

Jesus presents Himself to God the Father as high priest, as both offerer and offering. Since we are in Christ, as the Father receives Jesus, He also receives you and me. When Christ ascended into heaven, He did not drop His human body. He is still the human Jesus with a glorified human body. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul called the glorified body of Jesus a "spiritual body" (v. 44). This doesn't mean that He was a ghost. It means that His renewed physical body was energized by the Holy Spirit after His resurrection. In His glorified body, Jesus could eat and drink physical food. He could also pass through walls (Luke 24:13-35; John 20:26). Consequently, Jesus continues His incarnation after His ascension and receives our humanity into Himself. He didn't dispose of our humanity but took it with Him into heavenly realms. Jesus penetrated the splendor of heaven wearing our flesh, bringing us to His Father. Theologically speaking, the ascension reveals that Jesus' incarnation continues, and the Father, Spirit, and Son have taken up our humanity into God's bosom forever. Jesus retains His humanity and His divinity and reigns over the world as the God-Man until all enemies are put "under His feet" (1 Cor. 15:20-28). We, the collective people of God, are the continuing incarnation and presence of Jesus on the earth today.

DID JESUS FAIL?

To natural minds, Jesus' ministry ended in failure on two counts: (1) a failure in Galilee when most of His followers turned away from Him, and (2) a failure in Jerusalem when His disciples deserted Him, and He was put to death on a cross. But the work of Christ went on. Jesus was raised by His Father and ascended to God's right hand (Eph. 1:20-22; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 7:26; 8:1; 10:12). But He

didn't retire, nor was He detached from the world. Instead, He began His present-day ministry, where He became powerfully present with His followers. His followers weren't to carry on Jesus' work in His absence. No, Jesus shared His ministry with them (Mark 16:19–20; Acts 1:1–2). The work of God today is still the work of Christ. He carries it out in His enthroned state, withdrawn from visible sight but active in Spirit in and through His followers. The book of Acts would be more accurately called "The Acts of the Risen Christ through His Apostles." While Christ is no longer visible to unaided human sight, He is still powerfully active through His disciples. Jesus doesn't operate us by remote control. He's present with us by His Spirit. He's not a clockmaker who sets the work going and then leaves it to go on by its own momentum. No, Jesus keeps it going Himself.

Jesus still is—present tense—the visible image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). When we see Jesus operating through His people, we see God. Jesus is still the human face of God.

TRUE FREEDOM

As our mediator, Jesus carries our names on His shoulders and breast just as the high priest of the Old Testament carried the names of Israel on his shoulders and breast. Christ's position of sitting at the right hand of the Father signifies rest—it denotes a completed and finished work. There's no more to be done. Jesus' blood was completely and eternally accepted by God the Father. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was once and for all, but His ministry of intercession is eternal. He is the Son of God and the Son of Man eternally. As high priest, Jesus makes intercession on the basis of His own spotless perfection. It's as if He says to the Father, "Receive Me for them. Forgive all of their imperfections on the basis of My sinless perfection." In the presence of God, the

mighty perfection of Jesus is the answer for our sins. Hence, we don't come before God the Father in ourselves. We come to God in Christ, by Christ, and through Christ. And God is satisfied with us in Christ (1 Cor. 1:30).

For this reason, Jesus is the author of our eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9 NKJV). So when we speak of Jesus interceding for us, Jesus isn't reminding the Father about what He did. (How could the Father forget?) Nor is He pleading His sacrifice before a reluctant God. Christ's very presence in heaven as the Crucified One constitutes the greatest prayer and intercession. The wounds of Christ are the unceasing prayers of Jesus. By them, He has secured constant and free access to God's throne (Heb. 4:16). A guilty conscience, a conscience stained by sin, cannot be purified by anything else but the blood of Christ. No other sacrifice for the sins of humankind is necessary. Jesus' death was a once-and-for-all sacrifice (Heb. 9:26). Jesus has passed into a realm wherein we have access. We don't have to wait to die to enter it: eternal life begins now. The veil has been torn, and the way into the holiest opened. More remarkably, our great high priest, Jesus, leads our worship "in the midst of the ekklesia." Through the Spirit, Christ comes into our midst and offers our praise and worship to a welcoming Father. Through the church, Jesus sings to His Father, leading our praises (Heb. 2:12; 8:1–2). So Jesus is the perfecter not only of our faith but also of our worship. This relates to our prayer life as well. We enter into the fellowship that the Son has with His Father (1 John 1:1–3; 1 Cor. 1:9).

Jesus is not only the object of our prayers, but He's the means. As our high priest, Christ by the Spirit prays in and through us (Rom. 8:26–27). According to the New Testament, prayer is in Christ, through Christ, and to Christ.



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[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE.](#)

GMA HONORS A HISTORIC EVENING OF TRIBUTE, PASSION AND SONG

BY CAROLINE LUSK

On April 29, Christian music's finest gathered in Nashville to honor those who have shaped and built the CCM industry at the inaugural GMA Honors Awards Ceremony. Four individuals were inducted into the GMA Hall of Fame, including Take 6 (who shared the stage for the first time in 20 years), Brown Bannister, Gaither Vocal Band and, posthumously, Rich Mullins.

Also honored that evening were ShowHope and World Vision. With performances from Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, David Crowder, Take 6 and Ellie Holcomb, it was a spectacular evening—worshipful, emotional and meaningful.

See below as Michael W. Smith and Matt Maher honor the legacy of Rich Mullins and officially induct him into the GMA Hall of Fame. **CCM**



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PASSION: CHANGING THE WORLD

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- RUSH OF FOOLS
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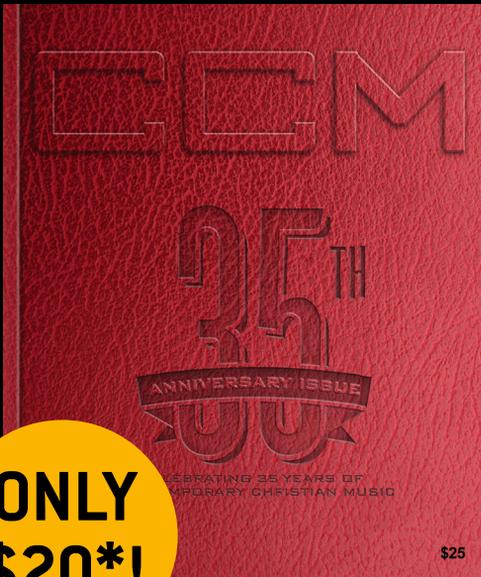
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