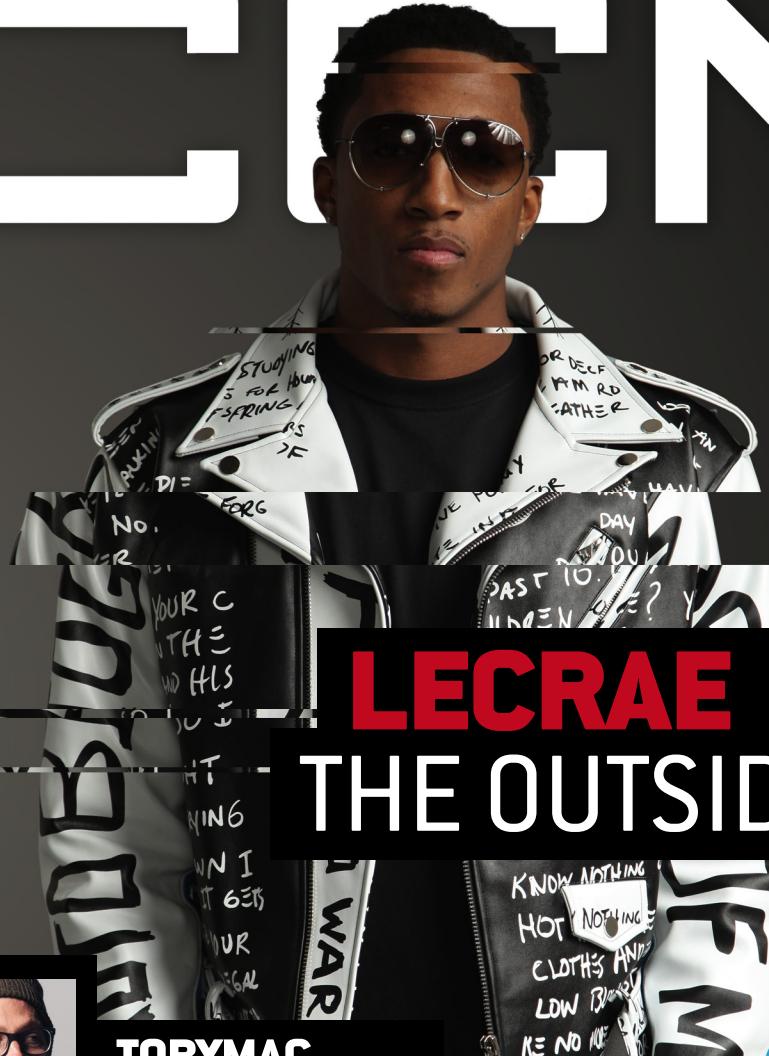


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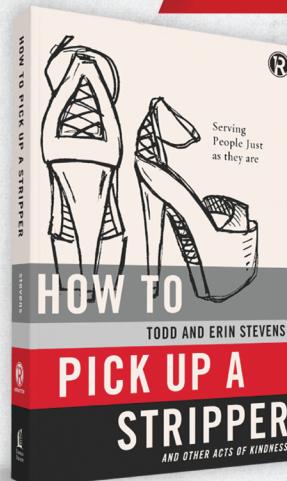
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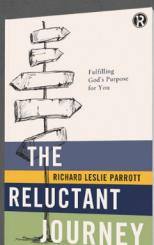


- How Christians often contribute to a problem rather than helping
- Spiritual tolerance and humble service to others
- True spiritual authenticity and doing what is right
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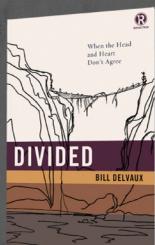
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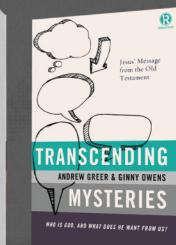
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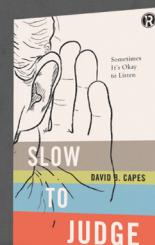


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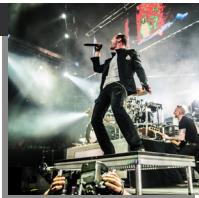
Lecrae

The Outsider



Thousand Foot Krutch

Lifeline in a Broken World



2014 Dove Awards

Check out this year's nominees

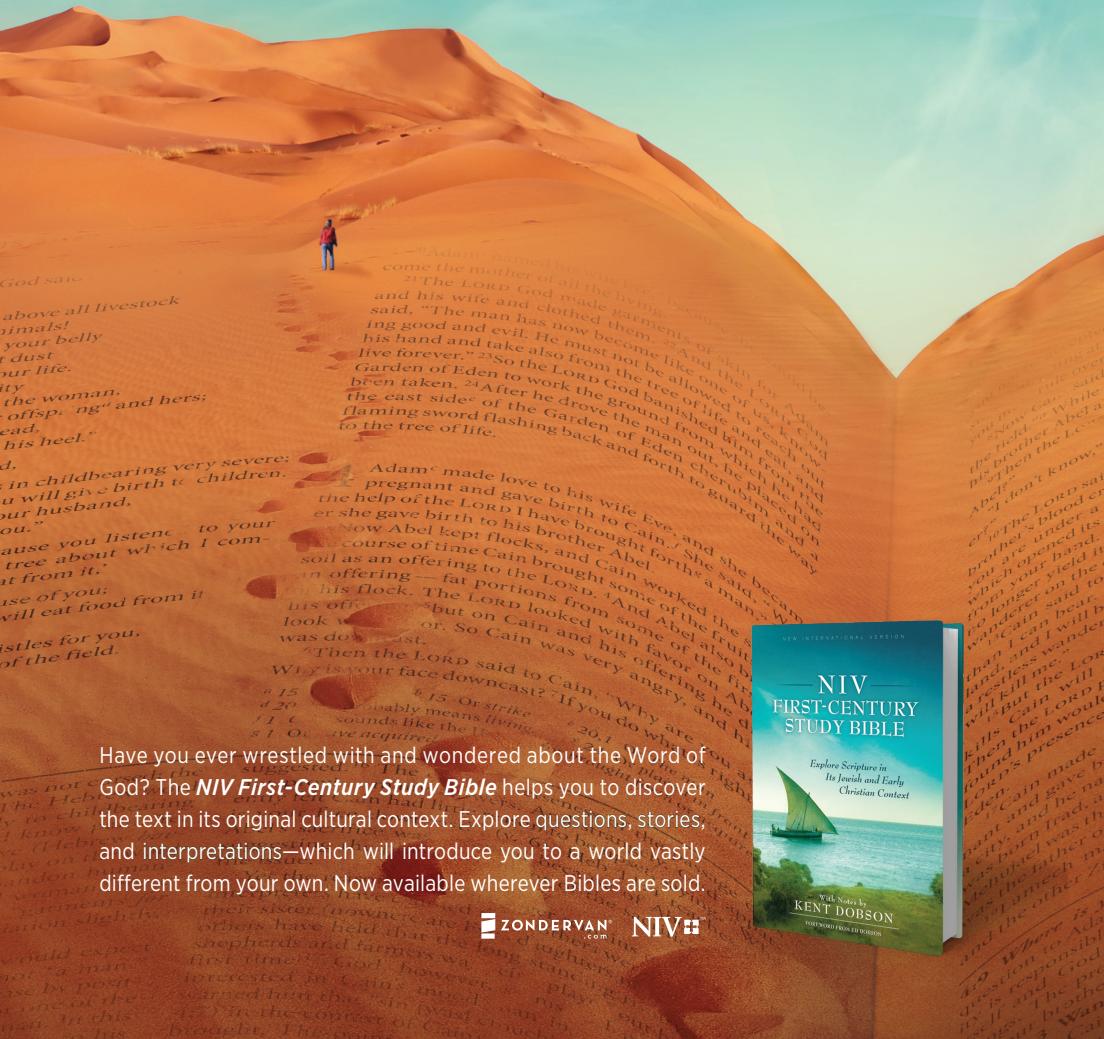


Toby Mac

It's Story Time



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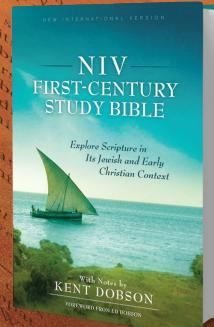


God said,
above all livestock
animals!
your belly
dust
life.
the woman,
offspring" and hers;
head,
his heel."
d.
in childbearing very severe;
you will give birth to children;
our husband,
our."
cause you listened to your
tree about which I com-
from it,"
use of you;
will eat food from it
sistles for you,
of the field.

"Adam named his wife Eve, because she would come to be the mother of all the living.^a 21The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.^b 22And the man knew that he must not be allowed to eat fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He must not be allowed to eat fruit from the tree of life.^c 23So the LORD God banished him from the garden, driving him out, and he had to work the ground now to earn his bread.^d 24After he drove the man out, the LORD placed a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

4 Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain, for whom she worked the soil as an offering — fat portions from some of the first fruits of her flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering, he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his anger was downcast.^e 5 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, you will be accepted.^f 6 If you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. It desires to have you, but you must rule over it." 7 Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is too great for me to bear.^g 8 You know that if anyone kills me, you will present me to your judgment.^h 9 And we are not equal, for you have given me no helper or guardian in the land.ⁱ 10 If you send me away from the land, I will be forced to leave the land and be a wanderer on the earth, for I am destined to be a wanderer." 11 The LORD said to Cain, "If you do what is right, you will be accepted; but if you do not do what is right, sin is at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it." 12 Cain left the presence of the LORD and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. 13 Cain built a city and named it after his son Enoch.^j 14 Cain's wife was born to him in that city, and Cain built a city and named it after her name. 15 Cain's wife bore him sons and daughters, and Cain built a city and named it after his son Enoch.^k 16 Cain's descendants became numerous in the land, and they built cities and settled in the land.

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their sister (nowhere are others have held that the long-stemmed sheepherds and farmers were first timers). God, however, was interested in Cain's method of sown him due to his ways. In the context of Cain's brought. The point is that

you may have spent
your time in the field, but Cain said his brother Abel said, "I don't know,"

brother Cain's blood said which opened under a from your hand; it longer yield the it wanted, Cain said, the land, and Cain bear to will kill me." But Cain said, "I can't bear to Cain the Lord will Cain him. Cain will Cain's presence would Cain and Cain made Cain's city, and gave Cain's wife, Ira, a Cain's father, and the other Z

9 Where is question is responsibl itself. The God's brother Cain

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DEPARTMENTS

FROM THE EDITOR

PHOTOS

TOUR SPOTLIGHT

Burlap to Cashmere



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 MELANIE PENN



LIGHTFALL

MUSICIANS CORNER IN THE STUDIO

for King & Country

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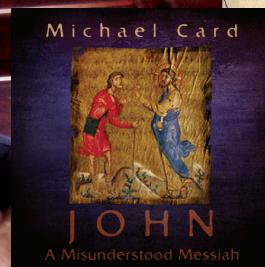
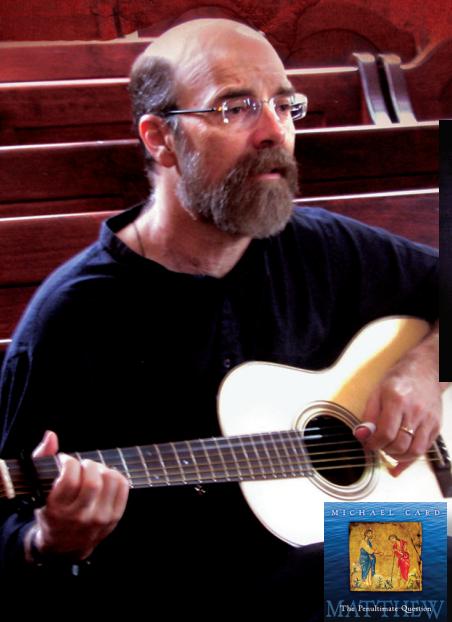
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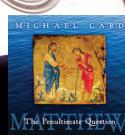
A Misunderstood Messiah

MICHAEL CARD

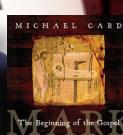


JOHN
The Gospel of Wisdom

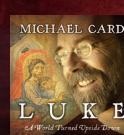
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The Finalist of Queues



The Beginning of the Gospel



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The Gospel of Identity



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The Gospel of Amazement

We live in a culture of contradictions.

On one hand, we're taught to work hard, make money and provide for our families. On the other, we're told to not work too much because money isn't everything and quality time with family has priority.

Children learn the art of blending in early on. As they get older, they often maintain the art of not standing out because standing out is embarrassing or frightening. By contrast, children of all ages are encouraged to be unique. To stand out. Be memorable.

It's confusing. Fortunately, we have a God who fully embraces and uses contradictions for His purpose.

Jesus was a king. Many expected Him to look and act the part. He did anything but. He didn't stand out for the sake of standing out or proving a point; He acted out of love.

Love trumps mixed messages.

Lecrae has spent a great deal of his life as a walking contradiction. In some circles, he's viewed as the "evangelical" one; in others, he's viewed as the "urban" one, meaning he'll have praise and criticism wherever he goes. But instead of letting it diminish him, he's harnessing the power of contradiction to change hearts and reach into people's lives, wherever they may be.

Carefully examine your life. Look for contradictions in your day-to-day and embrace them for the lessons you will learn and the perspective you will gain.



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.



Grace Cartwright Aspinwall is a freelance writer from Oregon and the founder of Wonderment Entertainment. She has been in the music industry since 2006.



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



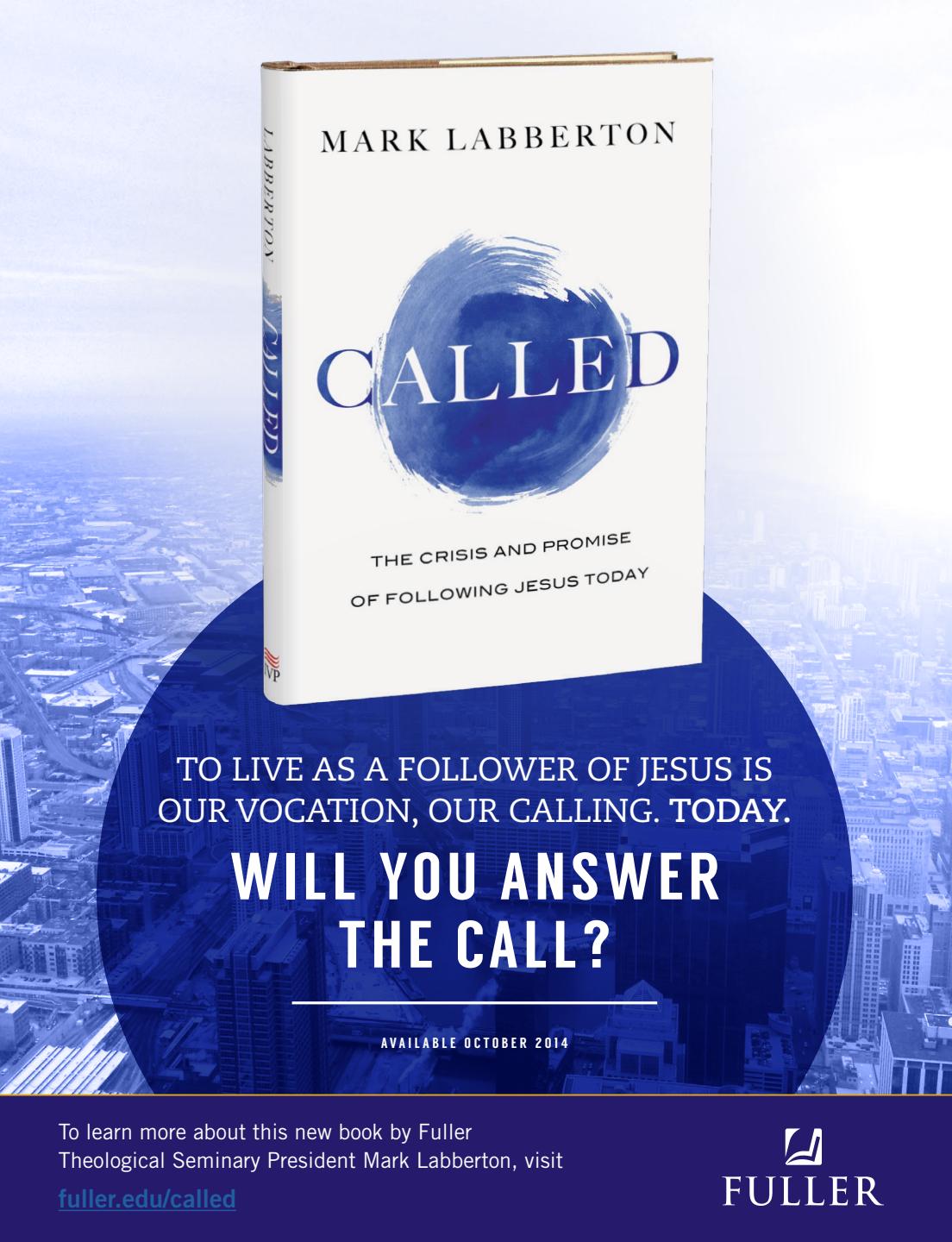
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BURLAP TO CASHMERE

REUNION TOUR

CALVARY CHURCH / ORLAND PARK, IL

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ANDY ARGYRAKIS

Burlap To Cashmere burst onto the national scene with 1998's gold-selling, Dove Award-winning blockbuster *Anybody Out There?*, notched several major singles on Christian and mainstream radio alike, staged multiple tours with Jars of Clay alongside sold-out headlining runs, only to disappear as quickly as they came.

But after periodic solo projects and partial regroupings, the original band is back together for the first time in almost 15 years, sounding even better than before thanks to front man Steven Delopoulos' increasingly genius storytelling, the prodigious playing of guitarist Johnny Philipiddis, plus the razor-sharp rhythms of drummer Teddy Pagano, bassist Roby Guarnera and fellow guitarist Mike Ernest.



Steven Delopoulos



Teddy Pagano



Johnny Philipiddis

TOUR SPOTLIGHT

Though the show addressed all the major touchstones from way back when (culminating with "Basic Instructions" and "Digee Dime"), the group also excelled with more recent musings, including the ethnically tinged beats of "Orchestrated Love Song" and the gospel/folk-framed charmer "The Other Country."

Before bowing out with the unrecorded, absolutely jaw-dropping jam "Dialing God," the guys promised an unfathomably overdue new album and even more extensive tour right around the corner.

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Mike Ernest



Roby Guarnera

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COMPILED BY ANDY ARGYRAKIS

1 Singer-songwriter Holly Starr takes a break on the video set for her latest single, "God Is," which spotlights autism awareness. Pictured from left to right: Diana Stancil, Artist Garden Entertainment; Jonathan Ward, video director and producer; Holly Starr; and Keith Stancil, Artist Garden Entertainment.



2 Lincoln Brewster (center) renews his 15-year recording and publishing relationship with Integrity Music, flanked by the label's Scott Sanchez (left) and Chico Gonzalez (right).



3 & **4** NewSong's Russ Lee went across the pond to lead ministry events at several U.S. military bases in Europe and managed to find time for sightseeing with family. He's pictured in France with daughters Ana (left) and Addy (right) at Arc de Triomphe, in addition to Addy, Ana and wife Mary during another pause in Paris.





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CHRISTMAS EP
WORD RECORDS/WORD

EAMONN MCCRYSTAL
A LIVING PRAYER
DIFFERENCE MEDIA/CAPITOL

ELINA GARANCA
MEDITATION
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THE CATHEDRALS
FAMILY REUNION
GAITHER MUSIC GROUP/CAPITOL

CLIMBING BLIND
BURN
INDIE

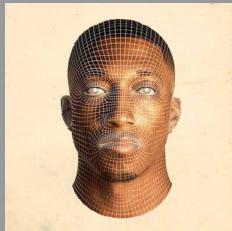
ALL SONS & DAUGHTERS
ALL SONS & DAUGHTERS LIMITED EDT
WHITE
INTEGRITY/PROVIDENT

MOM'S NIGHT OUT (BLU-RAY/DVD)

THE WALLS GROUP
FAST FORWARD
RCA INSPIRATION/PROVIDENT

DETRICK HADDON
BEST OF DETRICK HADDON
RCA INSPIRATION/PROVIDENT

9.9.2014



LECRAE
ANOMALY
REACH RECORDS/NEW DAY

MICHELLE WILLIAMS
JOURNEY TO FREEDOM
ENTERTAINMENT ONE

JAYE THOMAS
HERE IS MY WORSHIP
FORERUNNER MUSIC/NEW DAY

VERITAS
VERITAS
FAIR TRADE SERVICES/PROVIDENT

GATEWAY WORSHIP
GOD BE PRAISED (SPANISH)
INTEGRITY/PROVIDENT

DEE-1
MISSION VISION
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THE OUTSIDER

LECRAE EMBRACES LIFE ON THE FRINGE

BY CAROLINE LUSK

Outliers.

Misfits.

Rebels.

Freaks.

Anomalies...

Call it what you will, those who stand on the fringe of society are often handed any number of labels throughout their lives. Some complimentary...others, considerably less so.





And whether those individuals embrace and adopt said label or not, they can't undo the reality that they're just a bit different. Their perspective, level of intrigue in the world around them and, most of all, their inability or complete lack of desire to conform for conformity's sake set them apart.

These are the people who change the world—for better or worse. Einstein, Newton, DaVinci, Hitler, Stalin lived within their own paradigms and earned either the hatred or love of millions.

But it is Jesus Christ who threw the bell curve to the wind. It's His story that inspires Lecrae.



"MY FAMILY IS A PRIORITY AND EVERYTHING ELSE TAKES SECOND PLACE."

"I always find it fascinating that He was coming to be a king, just not the kind of king they thought He would be," Lecrae says. "They were screaming 'Hosannah' for their political savior, and then they executed Him. I get a sense of what it might have been like to be loved and hated."

No stranger to criticism himself, Lecrae has been on a unique journey to identify, reconcile and then build upon those things that have placed him on the fringe of society at various points in time.

"I've always stood out," he says. "It's not a bad thing. I'm an African-American Christian male in urban culture but existing in evangelical Christianity. That's who I am, and I'm embracing it and encouraging others to embrace it as well."

"If you're an outcast or outsider, which is just about every middle school student, you're probably insecure. It starts with acknowledging that," he continues. "Then, you step up and embrace your unique story. Find your confidence in that and then move toward the person you want to be."

Lecrae decided many years ago the man he wanted to be. Abandoning a reckless lifestyle of alcohol, drugs and, ultimately, emptiness, he met a man who saved his life. Jesus Christ gave him a new path to walk and a different way to use his life—and the outcome speaks for itself.

Lecrae's Dove Awards and nominations, Grammy Award, numerous tours, speaking engagements and record sales offer tangible evidence of the fruit that has bloomed in his life since he surrendered it. But for him, the greatest things he has accomplished are in need of new school supplies.

- A committed father of three children aged 2, 5 and 6, he is intentional about his role at home.

"I put a lot of emphasis on being present at home, trying to be a good father and husband," he says. "My reality is getting my kids' stuff ready for school or going to family camp. My family dominates a lot of my thoughts and time. Between that, getting an album ready and recording it seem like little interruptions in the midst of what feels like reality."

It's a reality that has required thought, planning and intense follow-through, as well as the wisdom of others.

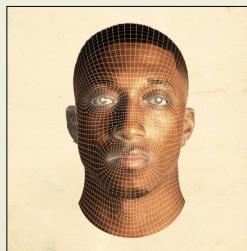
"Years ago, Mark Hall [Casting Crowns] sat me down and said, 'Don't ride the train to success and see your family lying on the tracks behind you.' That sent a chill up my spine. How many artists sacrifice their families on the altar of success?

"The first season of marriage was really dark and really hard," he shares. "They were probably the toughest two years of my life. But we had a lot of people and time and books invested in those years. Now, with care and action, my family is a priority and everything else takes second place.

"I'll work in the studio from nine to five, then I go home and I'm Dad. I do what normal guys do. Then, it's back on a stage. The kids get it. They know that Daddy's communicating the heart of Jesus through music and life. The music is just another aspect of that. We'll go from talking about our faith at the park to the stage. It's just a different aspect of who we are and what we do."

Over the years, his commitment to family and home has seeped into his music—a departure from earlier work.

"I have historically waved a banner for and about explicit theology," he shares. "But the world is often disinterested in theology and mission trips and sanctification. What they do understand are things close to home. Believers, though, sometimes think you no longer care about the things you used to



focus on. The hardest critiques come from the people you consider family. But it's tough when you're grossly misunderstood."

Rather than allowing feelings of defeat affect his trajectory, Lecrae has used that criticism to create music that reaches people who experience the same. *Anomaly* is laced with messages to offer encouragement to those on the fringe.

"There are so many songs that stand out on the new record," he says. "'Dirty Water' touches on the water crisis in the world and some of the racial tensions that surround that. Another song, 'Good, Bad, Ugly,' is about the time I pressured my girlfriend at the time to get an abortion. I talk through some of that pain.

"Sonically, I'm very secure now," he continues. "Before, I was trying to figure out what I was doing. In a sense, I was hiding behind Jesus. This album, I have a little more wisdom. I

know enough to not know it all."

Armed with spiritual wisdom, street-smarts and a genuine desire to be a good man, Lecrae has intentionally embraced the person God made him to be. And be it in mainstream culture or evangelical culture, he has found his voice.

"I think art is a very telling piece of culture," he says. "A lot of artists are today's philosophers. We do well, specifically as Christians, to remember the arts reflect culture."

Lecrae's art reflects truth. It reflects redemption. Most of all, it reflects a life patterned after the greatest anomaly of them all. **CCM**



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THOUSAND FOOT KRUTCH

LIFELINE FOR A BRO- KEN WORLD

BY TYLER JONES



Oxygen is essential to sustaining life, and that element is at the core of Thousand Foot Krutch's new record, *OXYGEN:INHALE*.

"Oxygen is our lifeline," lead singer Trevor McNevan says. "While writing, I dug deep into what 'oxygen' really represented. I thought about our faith, our human nature, the many different walks of life we all lead, and the fact that universally all of us breathe in and out and rely on oxygen every minute of every day to stay alive."

Since hitting the scene in 1997, Thousand Foot Krutch has been an engine of forward motion through the music industry. In that time the prolific band has released six studio albums, one live album, and two remix albums. Bending genres and styles, their songs have been featured prominently in numerous commercials, sports promos, and film trailers.

Lead single "Let The Sparks Fly," from their last record, *The End Is Where We Begin*, could even be heard playing on ESPN, WWE, and during NASCAR races. Their music has consistently been a soundtrack for some of the most adrenaline-fueled sports events, video games, and movies over the last ten years.

After nearly a decade as one of Tooth & Nail Records' top selling artists, TFK once again blazed its own path through uncharted territory to become 100 percent independent. The recording of *The End Is Where We Begin* was completely funded through a Kickstarter campaign that shattered all expectations and propelled the album to No. 1 on the *Billboard* Hard Rock chart.

Thousand Foot Krutch's music has always been enveloped with heat and energy. The interplay between the pulsing bass, courtesy of Joel Bruyere, and pounding drums of Steve Augustine are the backbone over which Trevor spits out some of the most rapid-fire and melodic lyrics in rock and roll. While musically "heavy," they've always veered more toward the funk of Rage Against the Machine while simultaneously incorporating the fast-paced, rhythmic singing of Michael Jackson circa the *Bad* days.

The End Is Where We Begin was not only the start of a new chapter for the band but one of those rare albums that delivered exactly what the fans wanted—and something that would be difficult to top.

Fast-forward two years and more than 250 shows, TFK reunited with Aaron Sprinkle (who co-produced 2003's *Phenomenon*, 2009's *Welcome To The Masquerade*, and *The End Is Where We Begin*) to once again co-produce alongside McNevan.



Trevor describes the sound of *OXYGEN:INHALE* as being a “natural evolution” for the band. In an era where even the nightly news can be auto-tuned, the band rejected all the studio trickery that has come to define much of modern music, rock and roll included, and relied instead on solid performances.

“We wanted to make a raw rock record,” he says. “We decided to strip away all the background sounds and popular over-production so that what you hear are just the instruments and the voice.”

The music itself is also given room to breathe. It has the raw and organic feel of something being performed in the same room. You hear fingers sliding along the guitar fret board, the metallic ring of cymbals, and vocals that sound like they’re two feet away. The band is stripped down to

the bare bones, the core elements of guitar, bass, drums, and vocals. Although there are the adrenaline-fueled rock songs TFK has become known for, *OXYGEN:INHALE* is the first TFK album that dares to lower the volume on a few songs and allow the melodies and words to soar. Even fans who have followed the group since day one will be hearing a new side of them.

“We make music for everyone,” Trevor says, “and hopefully there’s something on this record that everyone can relate to.”

The album kicks off with the one-two punch of “Born This Way” and “Untraveled Road.” First single “Born This Way” is a barn burner of classic American rock and roll by way of Toronto. It starts with a few notes of slide guitar before coming in with a riff that sounds like Lynyrd Skynyrd and Gun N’ Roses got pushed through a time machine to the future. It’s something familiar yet completely new.

“This song is about being comfortable in your own skin,” McNevan says. “We were made to be who we are, and every one of us is unique. It’s an anthem for everyone who’s tired of being someone they’re not.”

“Untraveled Road” is like marching orders set to music, complete with hand claps and vocals delivered with hip-hop urgency before exploding into a chorus that reminds of Linkin Park at their catchiest.

“Give It To Me” and “Like A Machine” are signature TFK rockers that keep the adrenaline high with some of McNevan’s finest vocals to date. He displays incredible range and agility, infusing each track with just the right tone and emotion. Songs such as “Set Me On Fire,” “Glow,” and “Oxygen” find the band moving in a new direction with sparse instrumentation, while “Set Me On Fire” is a stadium-sized song reminiscent of U2 at their most powerful.

Even the most beautiful songs such as “In My Room” and “Light Up” have an energy

Photo: Jimmy Davis





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that's humming just beneath the surface. Whether it be the passionate vocals, the fluid bass, or the precise drumming, each song complements the others. While the world seems to consume music in a "singles" format, *OXYGEN:INHALE* is truly an album experience, a collection of songs that, once started, is difficult not to finish.

The lyrics of *OXYGEN:INHALE* tell a story, a narrative that reads like an open letter to the brokenhearted, the lost, the abandoned and the hopeless. It's a call for everyone to lay down our weapons of painful words and love one another, to help each other carry the heavy burdens of life. A call to find our sameness—the things that make us all human—and not what divides us.

"To me, the words are as important as the melody," McNevan says. "The song has to say something important, to connect with the

audience on a deeper level. I had this image of prostitutes, addicts, businessmen/women, people from all walks of life, holding up a sign that reads 'Breathe Through Me.' Love includes everyone. We were called to love one another, help and support one another, and to walk through life together."

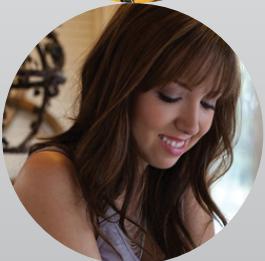
OXYGEN:INHALE is a stunning album by a band in top form, certainly the most dynamic of their career. We live in a world that breeds fear and anxiety, a massive media machine that beams news of tragedy and horror to us wherever we are. *OXYGEN:INHALE* is like the light at the end of a black tunnel, like taking that first long inhale after realizing we've been holding our breath for far too long. □CM



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STORY TIME!

*GO INSIDE THE ORIGINS OF HIT SONGS FROM TOBYMAC,
FOR KING & COUNTRY, MATTHEW WEST AND MORE!*

BY CAROLINE LUSK

When it comes to longevity, no one has achieved it as successfully and creatively as tobyMac. From dc Talk to founding Gotee Records to a meteoric rise to the top as a solo artist, Toby is the king of reinvention.

Along the way, he's made a name for himself in the live-show arena. Non-stop and high-energy, he's taken the art of performing to a different level. This time around, though, Toby's doing something a bit different. And, as with most new things he tries, this one is a winner. In November 2014, Toby, along with Matt Maher and Ryan Stevenson, will embark on the *Worship, Stories and Songs Tour*.

Intimate, personal and evocative, the show won't revolve around lights, smoke or a stage. It is a storyteller's night will give audience members a deeper look inside the music of all three artists. Tickets and information can be found at tobymac.com/tour.

In the spirit of storytelling, we dug up the stories behind other major songs you know and love. Each Dove-nominated song has a story as powerful as the song itself.

Enjoy! 



TOBYMAC
“SPEAK LIFE”





MATT MAHER
“LORD, I NEED YOU”



MANDISA
“OVERCOMER”



FOR KING AND COUNTRY
“FIX MY EYES”



HILLSONG UNITED
“OCEANS”



MATTHEW WEST
“HELLO MY NAME IS”



NATALIE GRANT
“HURRICANE”



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DOVE AWARDS 2014 NOMINEES

COMPILED BY CAROLINE LUSK



It's that time again! The Dove Awards are just around the corner, and Music City is gearing up to host Christian music's biggest night. On August 13, industry professionals and artists gathered at Lipscomb University, where the awards show will be held, to learn this year's incredible nominees.

The Doves will take place on October 7, but you don't have to wait to join in the fun! Pick your favs and let CCM know who you think should win on our Facebook page! [CCM](#)

SONG OF THE YEAR

"Fix My Eyes" – for KING & COUNTRY

(writers) Seth Mosley, Joel Smallbone, Luke Smallbone

"Hello My Name Is" – Matthew West

(writer) Matthew West

"Hurricane" – Natalie Grant

(writers) Natalie Grant, Matt Bronleewe, Cindy Morgan

"I Can Trust Him" – The Perrys

(writers) Wayne Haun, Joel Lindsey

"Lord I Need You" – Matt Maher

(writers) Christy Nockels, Daniel Carson, Jesse Reeves, Kristian Stanfill, Matt Maher

"Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)" – Hillsong UNITED

(writers) Matt Crocker, Joel Houston, Salomon Ligthelm

"Overcomer" – Mandisa

(writers) David Garcia, Christopher Stevens, Ben Glover

"Revival" – Karen Peck and New River

(writers) Kenna Turner West, Karen Peck Gooch, Don Poythress

"Say Amen" – Brian Free & Assurance

(writers) Jason Cox, Michael Farren, Kenna Turner West

"That's Why" – Ernie Haase and Signature Sound

(writers) Ernie Haase, Wayne Haun, Joel Lindsey

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR

"Fix My Eyes" - for KING & COUNTRY

Fervent/Curb, (producer) Seth Mosley

"Hurricane" – Natalie Grant

Curb Records, (producer) Bernie Herms

"Lord I Need You" – Matt Maher

Essential Records, (producer) Paul Mook

"Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)" – Hillsong UNITED

Hillsong Music/Sparrow Records, (producer) Michael Guy Chislett

"Overcomer" – Mandisa

Sparrow Records, (producers) Christopher Stevens & David Garcia

ARTIST OF THE YEAR

Casting Crowns, Beach Street Records/Reunion Records

Hillsong UNITED, Hillsong Music

Lecrae, Reach Records

Mandisa, Sparrow Records

NEEDTOBREATHE, Atlantic Records

Switchfoot, Atlantic Records

NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR

1 Girl Nation, Reunion Records

Andy Mineo, Reach Records

Ellie Holcomb, Full Heart

Hillsong Young & Free, Hillsong Music/Sparrow Records

Love & The Outcome, Word Entertainment

SHORT-FORM VIDEO OF THE YEAR

"Love Does" - Brandon Heath

(director) Ry Cox, (producer) Michelle Abnet

"Love Is Stronger" - Jason Crabb

(director) Roman White, (producer) Michelle Abnet, Revolution Pictures

"Never Gone" - Colton Dixon

(director) Eric Welch, (producer) Karen Martin, Broken Poet Productions

"Overcomer" – Mandisa

(director) Eric Welch, (producer) Karen Martin, Broken Poet Productions

"Shake" – MercyMe

(director) Joel Banta, (producer) Joel Banta, Bilby Films

"Speak Life" – TobyMac

(director) Eric Welch, (producer) Ben Stansbury, Broken Poet Productions

LONG-FORM VIDEO OF THE YEAR

Endless Praise – Planetshakers

(director) Peter John, (producers) Peter John, Chris Peterson, Epik Films

Fading West – Switchfoot

(director) Matt Katsolis, (producers) Chad Butler, Paul Kerby, Interpret Studios, Lowercase People

Glorious Ruins – Hillsong LIVE

(director) Ben Field, (producer) Ben Field, Hillsong Film

Hope Is What We Crave – for KING & COUNTRY LIVE

(director) Ben Smallbone, (producers) Josh Lauritch, for King & Country, Radiate Film

Strong God – New Life Worship

(producers) Jon Egan, Drew MacAlmon, Parallel Media

INSPIRATIONAL FILM OF THE YEAR

God's Not Dead

(director) Harold Cronk, (producer) Pure Flix Entertainment

Grace Unplugged

(director) Brad J. Silverman, (producers) Roadside Attractions, Coram Deo Studios

Heaven Is For Real

(director) Randall Wallace, (producer) Screen Gems

Son of God

(director) Christopher Spencer, (producers) Mark Burnett, Roma Downey

When Calls The Heart

(directors) Michael Landon Jr., Brian Bird, (producer) Believe Pictures



SEE FULL LIST OF NOMINEES AND
PRODUCTION NOTES HERE.



MELANIE PENN

MAKING THINGS CLEAR

BY MATT CONNER

M

elanie Penn's as straightforward as you get, both lyrically and in her musical approach. Strong yet simple, beautiful pop constructs hold her thoughts on life and love, hope and pain.

If you somehow missed Melanie's debut, *Wake Up Love*, the good news is you have two full albums now waiting for you. *Hope Tonight* is the lovely follow-up produced by Ben Shive (Ellie Holcomb), and it's another meaningful collection of pop gems.

CCM: Can you tell us a bit about your life outside of the recording career?

MELANIE: Not sure how much you want to know! Life outside of a recording career looks very much like most city dwellers' lives. I work a lot to keep my NYC life economically powered. I am single, so I have a lot of time to invest fully in vocational stuff. For me that is my role as Creative Director for Redeemer City to City, another role as a worship leader for Redeemer Presbyterian Church, and also my work as a songwriter. They all do fit together in this beautiful way!

CCM: When you say your roles work together, is there a tangible example that you can point to on Hope Tonight?

MELANIE: The best thing I can say here is that my role as a Creative Director has a lot to do with user experience. At City to City we are often pushing one another to make language clearer, images clearer, design clearer—all for the sake of the person who will be listening, watching or interacting with us on the other end.

My passion has always been about clarity. At a very young age I remember being confused by pop songs and wondering why I couldn't figure out what the lyrics meant. That's probably mostly because I'm super

dim, but it's also something else. Being clear is not always easy. It's easier, sometimes, to exchange clarity for a rhyme that sounds pretty good, or vague imagery, or abstraction. I approach songwriting the way I approach any other writing or messaging in which I am privileged to contribute—how can I make it clear?

CCM: Is there a hope that you have for your fans to take away from Hope Tonight?

MELANIE: Yes there are lots of hopes that I hope everyone hears and knows. The biggest hope—the best one, for me—is that all is unfolding as it should. A good friend and I were having dinner the other night, and she said, "If we knew everything God knows, we would cheer Him on." The point is, if we knew everything God knows about how matters will play out, we wouldn't ask, "Why? Why me? Why not now? Why this now?" We would just say, "Yes," and relax and know that all will ultimately be well.

This is a hard hope to have, and it doesn't feel kind because having hope like that requires absolute trust. There are few hints left for us, only a few breadcrumbs on the path. The way is dark. So having hope like this is a heroic thing, a noble thing. And I hope we have hope like this. □CM



VISIT MELANIEPENN.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION.

LIGHTFALL

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

BY MATT CONNER

You're likely already a fan of Canadian worship imports such as Starfield and The City Harmonic, but you'll

want to make room for one more when you hear the new self-titled EP from Lightfall. The five-piece band is a collective of worship and

ministry leaders from various churches in the Toronto area, and their heartfelt message of God and the gospel is evident in every song. The debut EP is a short set at four songs, but it's enough to make you keep your ears tuned to the north for much more in the future.



CCM: How much are you guys involved in local churches in and around Toronto?

RYAN HAMMOND: Renz [Laserna] and Marquis [Murray] are part of a small church plant east of the city where set-up and tear-down is a weekly occurrence, and both are involved musically. Nathan [Hamilton] and I both play guitar at our respective

churches, and Mark [Chown] is Youth and Young Families Pastor at his church in Toronto.

We're always asked the question, "What church do you guys go to?" People don't understand how members of a Christian worship band can attend different places and stay on the same page. That's one of the great things about us. We don't have any one church or denomination backing us. We are as indie as it gets. Though we come from different backgrounds, it all comes together in a very real way.

CCM: Was there a reason you kept the debut to only four songs?

RYAN: At 18 minutes and 14 seconds most people can listen to the full EP on their morning commute, working out, doing housework, or walking their dog and can listen to it back to back a couple times without it feeling like it's too much. We wanted this EP to give people a taste of what the full-length album would be like, and we wanted to leave people wanting more.

CCM: What do you hope people walk away with after listening to the EP?

RYAN: Our greatest hope is that these songs will help people connect with and worship God. We were very

purposeful with our lyrics. We didn't want anything that needed to rhyme. We more so wanted people to connect with God through the words.

"Promise of the Father" comes from Isaiah 43; and it speaks of God's promise to hear us, help us and heal us, so long as we keep our eyes on Him. "For All" speaks of a God who sent His son to the earth to die for the sins of all people so we could live eternally. "Walk on Water" speaks of faith, that even when things are going rough and you are facing a storm, Jesus is by your side holding you up. "Saviour of My Soul" speaks to those who may have been hurt in the past and are looking for an answer. It speaks of this divine meeting with God after searching for something more.

That was a long-winded explanation to say that each person will identify differently and formulate his or her own thoughts. At the end of the day, whether they connect with the cool guitar riff or vocal run, we really just want people to connect their story to God's. [CCM](#)



FOR MORE INFO VISIT
LIGHTFALLWORSHIP.COM



FOR KING & COUNTRY

BY ANDREW GREER

Album Title: *RUN WILD. LIVE FREE. LOVE STRONG.*

Label: Word

Release Date: September 16, 2014

Recording Studio: Dark Horse Studio in Franklin, TN

Producers: Seth Mosley, Tedd T, Matt Hales and for KING & COUNTRY

Number of Songs: 14

IN TOUCH WITH THE BUS: Going into this second record, the bus became a place of refuge. We wrote and recorded a lot of the more important songs in the bus. There was

this sense of being street level, close to what people were thinking and feeling as we sang the songs off the first record live. So in this lovely exchange, we would perform, then walk straight off the stage into the back lounge of the bus to continue recording. —*Joel Smallbone*

FREE TO FOLLOW UP: We have a deep understanding of what we are called to say as musicians, what we are designed to write about, on this record. So though we have felt pressure along the way, we have such partnership and support from the producers, the band, our wives and the label that we were liberated to write very freely. —J.S.

Joel Smallbone



IN SYNC: We recorded the first record conventionally, writing on acoustic guitar or piano—a lot of pre-production—and then we would go into the production stage. On this record, the process was: write, produce and dream all at the same time. This allowed us to see the “forest through the trees” and spell out how the song was going to feel and sound and translate. —J.S.

1 VERSUS 2: The first record was much more organic. We haven't done away with the organic side, but we have given a little more of this program element a go. There is a throwback to some of the 1980s timeframe. We use a lot of drums and our show is pretty theatrical live, so we have interjected that into the music. It is not a complete departure [from the first record], but I wouldn't say we

are resting on our laurels either. We have been sensitive to not take our audience somewhere they can't go, to find the balance to continue the story, knowing the foundation is our springboard. —J.S.

BAND OF BROTHERS: Because the recording of this album has been so fluid, we wrote two or three songs out in Los Angeles with Matt Hales (Aqualung), we have recorded in several different studios and, obviously, recorded in Nashville—the only immovable fixtures have been Luke and me. Everything else, from computer programs like Logic or ProTools to the producers, have all at one point or another shifted. —J.S. CCM



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
FORKINGANDCOUNTRY.COM.



AC

WORSHIP

**ALLAN HALL**

Work of Love (Curb)
FOR FANS OF: The Isaacs, Selah, Joey + Rory

★★★★★

One-third of the gold-selling inspirational trio Selah, Allan probes his personal musical influences to record a best-of Americana-folk catalog. A handful of Emmylou Harris favorites (including "The Light"), the Ricky Skaggs title track tear-jerker, a Billy Graham biographical tune ("Nearing Home") and a stunning duet with Sonya Isaacs ("Hickory Wind") float on the tender acoustics and Allan's gentle vocalizations. A stellar acoustic release from one of Christian music's perennials.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "Hickory Wind" (ft. Sonya Isaacs)

**ONE MORE STEP**

Lindsay McCaul
(Centricity Music)
FOR FANS OF: Meredith Andrews, Amy Grant, Bethany Dillon

★★★★★

McCaul shows tremendous growth in both her songwriting and her vocal control on this, her latest effort. Songs such as "More Certain Than The Stars" are reminiscent of the rustic charm of Bethany Dillon's debut, and the more earthy feel of the entire project shows McCaul's true colors. Though some clichés remain (lyrics like "You are the anchor of my heart"), she is certainly one to reckon with as she continues her upward trajectory.

—Grace S. Aspinwall

WE LIKE: "With The Brokenhearted"

**BLUETREE**

Worship & Justice
(Integrity)

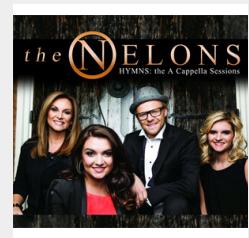
FOR FANS OF: Matt Redman, Fee

★★★★★

Belfast worship collective Bluetree, best known for penning "God of This City," once again shows their heart for the down-and-out on their latest, aptly named *Worship & Justice*. Each song speaks out of the band's experience fighting against child trafficking and other important causes. "It Is Finished" speaks of the power of the cross against injustice, while "Each Day" brings hope to the cause each new morning. A powerful worship set.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Each Day"

**THE NELONS**

Hymns: the A Cappella Sessions
(Daywind Records)

FOR FANS OF: Glad, Take 6, The Martins

★★★★★

Less sophisticated than Take 6 and more Southern Gospel than Glad, The Nelons do the hymns and, for the most part, do them well. This quartet can sing. Still, the more blues-based gospel standards come off a bit vanilla, and the album seems to work best when the original melodies are respected and left intact. "Sweet Hour Of Prayer" is certainly a better fit than "The Hallelujah Chorus," but Handel will likely recover.

—Bert Saraco

WE LIKE: "Gentle Savior/Just As I Am"

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ROCK

THOUSAND FOOT KRUTCH
Oxygen:Inhale
(TFK Music)
FOR FANS OF: Red, Pillar
★★★★★

Given the tremendous fan response on the funding of TFK's album *The End Is Where We Begin*, it made sense to return to the source for their latest, *Oxygen:Inhale*. Another arena-ready set of positive rock-and-roll songs on identity ("Born This Way"), forgiveness ("Give It To Me"), and courage ("Like A Machine"), Trevor McNevan and company once again give fans exactly what they want.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Like A Machine"



ANBERLIN
Icon (Universal)
FOR FANS OF: The Juliana Theory, Copeland, Mae
★★★★★

It's shaping up to be a banner year for Anberlin. Besides launching a farewell tour behind its swansong album *Lowborn*, they deliver another impressive retrospective. Though it's not as comprehensive as their previous collection, *Dancing Between The Fibers Of Time*, this latest flashback does offer a concise highlight reel of the group's spiritually informed alternative rock and will best serve new fans looking for a crash course on Anberlin's anthemic origins.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Godspeed"

INDIE

FOR THE FATHERLESS
For the Fatherless
(Independent)
FOR FANS OF: Brad and Rebekah, Lady Antebellum
★★★★★

For the Fatherless is an interesting, independent new husband-and-wife duo, Brian and Christa Yakaboski, that packages meaningful lyrics inside a pop-country/worship cocktail. Songs like "Not of the Night" and "Child of the King" reveal the couple's heart for, as their name suggests, those who are struggling. Their powerful vocal delivery adds a potent extra dimension.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Not of the Night"



PASTOR RIVA TIMS & MAJESTIC PRAISE
Access Granted
(Zion Records)
FOR FANS OF: Bobby Jones, CeCe Winans
★★★★★

A big believer in gospel music as a medium for ministry, the inspiring author and pastor of Orlando's Majestic Life Ministries designs her own gospel music service for the music marketplace with the introduction of Majestic Praise. Tims and crew compile empowering ballads, hope-driven smooth grooves and declarative choir-backed gospel to develop a "Sunday-morning experience" listeners can carry all week long. Special guests include genre staples Shirley Murdock and Preashea Hilliard.

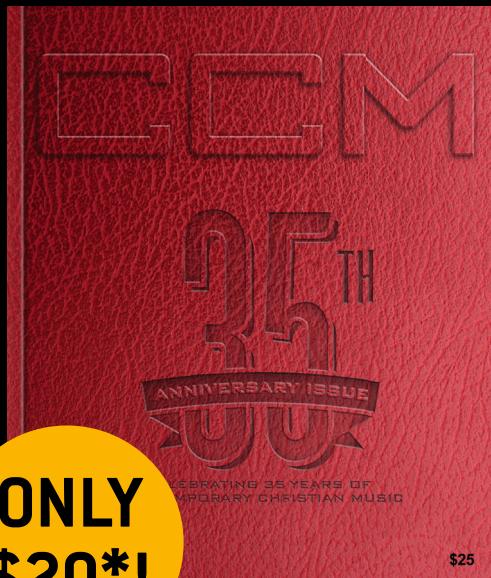
—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "Incredible God"

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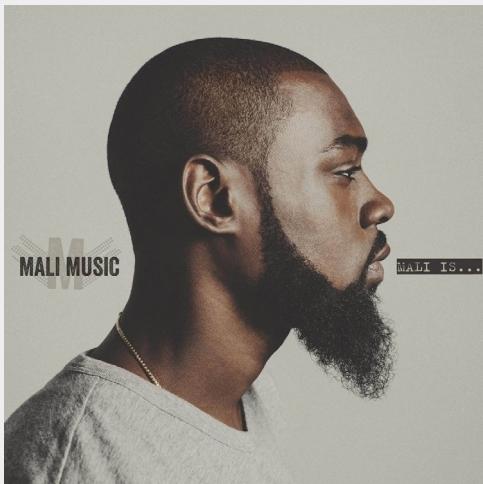
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**MALI MUSIC*****Mali Is...*** (ByStorm/RCA)

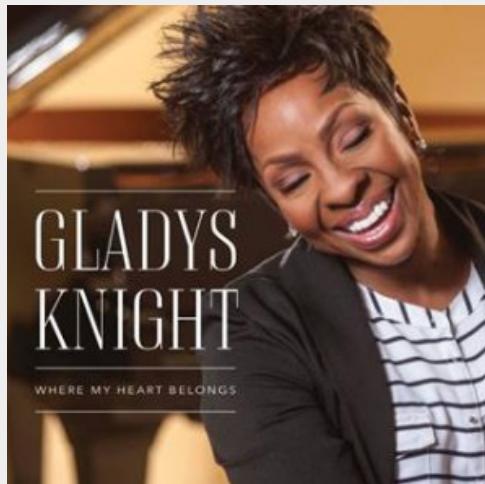
FOR FANS OF: Marvin Gaye, John Legend, Aloe Blacc

★★★★★

Grounded in the Gospel, yet boasting a mainstream R&B sound, Mali Music's major-label debut overflows with velvety vocals and smooth grooves. As a vocalist and socially minded songwriter, comparisons to Marvin Gaye immediately spring to mind, though the 26-year-old BET favorite carves out a hopeful niche of his own, split between soulful pop, piano ballads and the occasional nod to contemporary reggae.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Make It To Heaven"

**GLADYS KNIGHT*****Where My Heart Belongs*** (Shadow Mountain Records)

FOR FANS OF: Smokey Robinson, Dionne Warwick, Oleta Adams

★★★★★

A multi-genre and multi-medium legend, the seven-time Grammy winner acknowledges her spiritual convictions with a poignant recording of inspirational and gospel songs carried on her legendary, silky alto. R&B and black gospel subtleties nuance a charge of mostly faith-focused balladry, headlining spiritual hope amid circumstances of brokenness and pain. Though *Heart* is somewhat sporadic, Knight's authentic and convicting vocal alone can transform any tune into a must-hear event.

—Andrew Greer

WE LIKE: "Always"



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PERSECUTED

Director: Daniel Lusko



Gretchen Carlson spends her mornings on camera as a host for Fox News on shows like *Fox & Friends* and *The Real Story with Gretchen Carlson*. Recently, however, she made a bit of a switch, trading her title of host for actress as she played a key role in the new political thriller *Persecuted*. We recently interviewed Gretchen to hear a bit more about her first foray into acting in a feature film.

CCM: We'd love to hear how you got involved in the film in the first place.

Gretchen: I got a call from the writer/producer of the movie *Persecuted* about 15 months ago, asking me if I'd be interested in acting in a movie. I said, "Who? Me?" It was something new to try; and I'm a big believer in trying new things and challenges, so I went for it.

CCM: How was this for you as a journalist to enter into the film from that side of things?

Gretchen: I didn't have to step that far out of the box to be in the movie, since I am a

journalist as host of *The Real Story with Gretchen Carlson* on the Fox News channel and in the movie I also play a journalist named Diana Lucas. What was different was going from live TV every day to shooting a film, which, of course, involves a lot of takes to make sure everything is perfect from every angle! That took some getting used to and made me appreciate what I do every day and what actors do!

CCM: How much acting have you done in the past?

Gretchen: I was a thespian in high school, but that was acting in plays on stage. This was my first movie experience, and I loved it! I'd love to do it again!

CCM: How did the message of the film resonate with you personally?

Gretchen: I liked the message of the film. It focuses on freedom of speech and freedom of religion, and I think it's important to not lose sight of the amazing freedoms we've been given here in the United States. The movie is, of course, fictional; but I think it will make some viewers maybe not take certain freedoms for granted every day as much.

CCM: Could you tell a difference in your own beliefs before and after being a part of the process?

Gretchen: I recently visited Washington D.C., to do an event for our troops and brought my husband and two young children along. We were able to visit the National Archives and saw the Constitution and then the Bill of Rights. It was fortuitous timing right before the movie came out. And it was interesting to hear our guide say he felt the Bill of Rights is the most important document for our nation. I would agree.

—Matt Conner



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MARIA'S BIG HOUSE OF HOPE TURNS FIVE!

BY CAROLINE LUSK

Steven Curtis Chapman just celebrated a milestone. More accurately, Steven, his wife, family and team at Show Hope celebrated a remarkable five years of operation at Maria's Big House of Hope in Luoyang, China.

With more than six million people living in the area, it is one of the poorest provinces in China. Since opening its doors in 2009, MBHOH has provided care to more than 800 children, as well as providing job opportunities to adults.

Named after the Chapman's late daughter, Maria Sue Chapman, MBHOH symbolizes the healing power of hope and the faithful hand of the One who generously extends it. Moreover, it is yet another indication of the divine guidance the Chapmans have been following since the founding of Show Hope in 2003.

With a heart of compassion and empathy for pain, loss and desperation, Steven shares the heart of Show Hope in the video below. **CCM**



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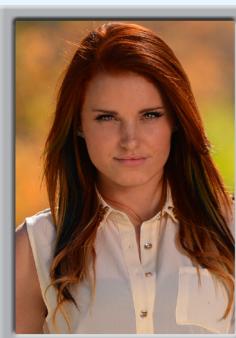
**Sadie & Korie Robertson
Speakers**



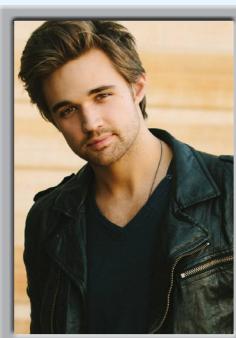
**Matthew West
Singer**



**Colton Dixon
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