

CEM

JASON CRABB

360 DEGREES OF CHOICES



BIG DADDY WEAWE

11 NEW OFFERINGS OF
SURRENDER & HOPE



CRYSTAL LEWIS

3 THINGS THAT KEEP
HER GROUNDED



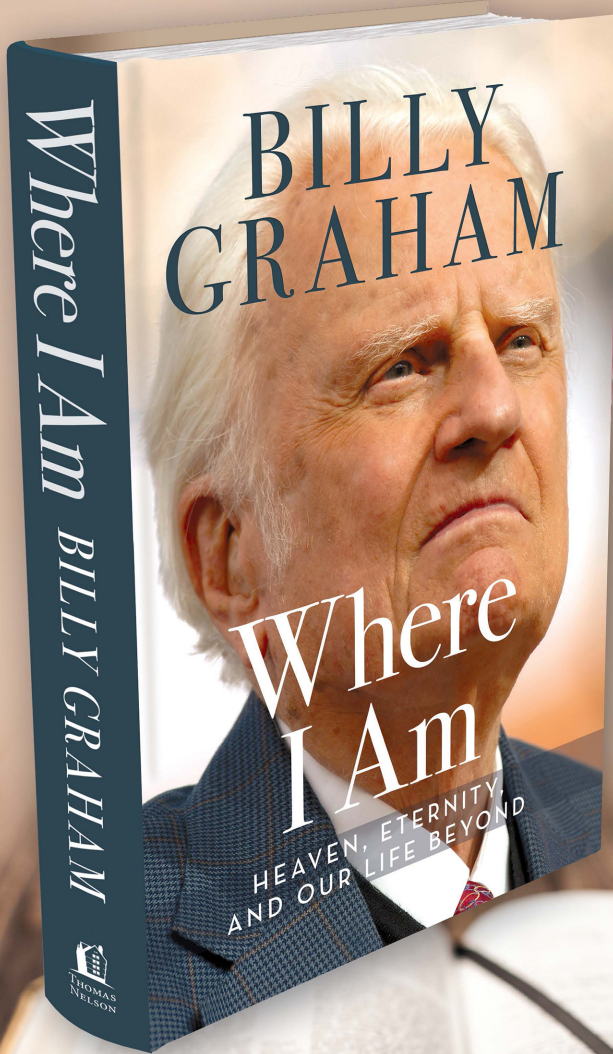
TASHA COBBS

NEW PLATFORM
—SAME GOD

The Final Chapter

In *Where I Am*, MR. GRAHAM reminds us what the Bible has to say about eternity from all of its 66 books; messages of truth, warning, love, and the certainty of the future, all gleaned by a man who would like to be remembered solely as a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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FEATURES

JASON CRABB

How do you determine which way to go when you need direction? Jason Crabb relies on a single map.

**CRYSTAL LEWIS**

Priorities, risks, doubts and payoffs. Crystal has learned some things about them all, and she's ready to share.

**TASHA COBBS**

Mid-stride on her way to the top, Tasha was suddenly hit with great loss. What was it that got her through?



DEPTS

FROM THE EDITOR**PHOTOS****OUT AND ABOUT**

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

REVIEWS

CRYSTAL LEWIS, BIG DADDY WEAVER, THE CITY HARMONIC + MORE!



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Is Jesus really first? | Like many of you, I have asked myself this question many times—for many reasons. For the longest, I would throw about this phrase almost as often as the easily misused “I love this” or “love that...”

However, I realized that I was getting this completely wrong. Bantering the phrase, “Is Jesus first in my...,” or “... first in your [fill in the blank],” is just as misleading as contextually overusing the word “love.” Not of my own cognizance, a speaker at church recently helped me to grasp the concept that Christ shouldn’t be first in the many aspects of life—He should be at the very center of our being. The speaker illustrated a bicycle wheel, placing Jesus at the center and emanating through to each spoke.

In “My Story” from their new album *Beautiful Offerings*, **Big Daddy Weave**, whom you will read about in the Reviews section of this edition of *CCM Magazine*, uses song to also illustrate this point:

*If I told you my story / You would hear life but it wasn't mine
If I should speak then let it be
Of the grace that is greater than all my sin
Of when justice was served and where mercy wins
Of the kindness of Jesus that draws me in
To tell you my story is to tell of Him*

We have way too much going on—to parse Jesus out among the countless facets of our lives seems exhausting and potentially limiting. This way of thinking about Him in our lives has already been a game changer for me. What’s YOUR story—how will you tell others of Christ emanating through you?

Colossians 1:16-17 (MSG) *For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels—everything got started in Him and finds its purpose in Him.*



Blessings,

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Andy Argyrakis

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



Andrew Greer is a

Dove-nominated singer-songwriter and writer. The Texas native and Nashville, TN resident recently released his first book, co-authored with Ginny Owens, titled *Transcending Mysteries* (Thomas Nelson). More info at Andrew-Greer.com.



Matt Conner is a

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

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1



COMPILED BY ANDY ARGYRAKIS

1 Aryn Michelle, winner of **GMA Immerse 2014's "Female Artist/Songwriter of the Year,"** joins legendary jazz saxophone player/Whitney Houston collaborator **Kirk Whalum** on a panel during the 2015 edition of Immerse.

2 Word Records' husband/wife duo Love & The Outcome have a baby on the way! Here's more from singer **Jodi King**: "Chris and I are happy to announce that Love & The Outcome will take on a whole new meaning this coming February 2016 with the arrival of our first child! We couldn't be happier to share this news with our fans and can't wait to introduce you to the newest member of our band!"

2



3



Photo: Andy Barron

3 & **4** Rapper **Trip Lee** kicks off the **OUTCRY Tour** during a visit to Washington D.C.'s Jiffy Lube Live, followed by singer/songwriter **Lauren Daigle** leading over 19,000 worshippers later in the night.

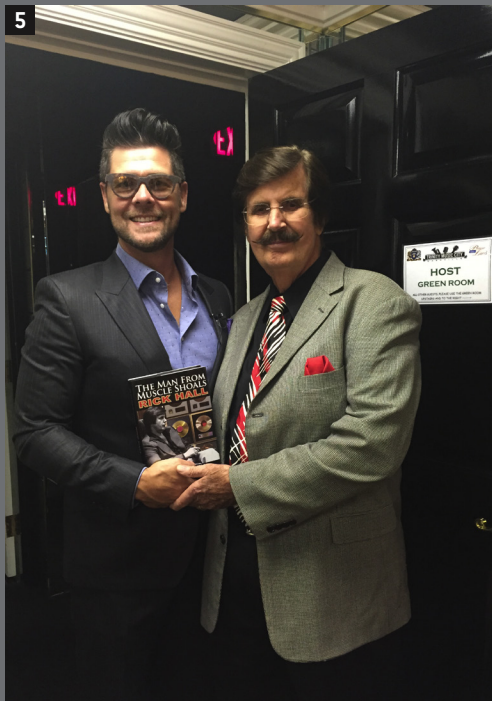
4



Photo: Andy Barron

5 **Rick Hall** appears on TBN's "Praise the Lord" with host **Jason Crabb** to share stories from his new autobiography, ***The Man From Muscle Shoals***. Hall made music history when he founded FAME Recording Studios in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, which led to 300+ hit singles, more than 40 Gold and Platinum records and a Grammy for lifetime achievement, plus production and engineering credits as wide-ranging as Aretha Franklin, Tom Jones, Alabama and Alicia Keys.

6 After the enormous success of the big screen blockbuster *God's Not Dead*, it's only fitting to find the sequel ***God's Not Dead 2*** in the works. Here's a sneak peak from the set (pictured from left to right): **Brooke DeLeary** (also of Christian pop group Love Collide); **Jor'Dan Armstrong**; **Abigail Duhon**; **Melissa Joan Hart**; **A.J. Wray**; **Tyrone Kuykendoll**; **Spencer Kane**; **Lauren DeLeary** (Love Collide) and **Hayley Orrantia** ("The Goldbergs").



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360° OF CHOICES



WHATEVER THE ROAD

BY BARTON GREEN



There are only two places in the world where a compass does not matter; at the North Pole every way you turn is—south. And at the bottom of the world, there is only one direction to go—north. If we all lived at the ends of the earth there would be no need for “directions.” But since we each reside at the crossroads of left, right and wrong, the best option to find your way is to use a GPS device... Or, simply follow **Jason Crabb**; he seems to know where he’s going.

“Jason is just different,” smiles long-time manager **Phillip Morris**, “He sings about things above. In the music business that’s dangerous. There are not many **Carrie Underwood**’s out there—and for sure only one Jason Crabb. He’s not afraid of belting out a lyric.”

*If I had my way, I'd take this from you
But God, He knows what he's doing **

“Now, there’s nothing wrong with singing about everyday life—we live it everyday,” Morris explains, “But there is something about focusing on The One who can make our every-day amazing ...that’s what Jason does.”

*Every life's a different story
How He led us out of darkness into light
But there's no way to keep us silent
Every breath's another chance to testify, testify ***

From his Beaver Dam, Kentucky roots, through every city and state he travels, GRAMMY Award winner, Jason Crabb has relied on a rare kind of map. This leather-bound chart of lyrical lines not only helps to navigate the paths he travels, it likewise guides him to chose just the right tracks to record. And despite the twists and turns of every day life, this internal moral compass always seem to point him in a positive direction...whatever the road.

The eldest son of country gospel's dynastic **Crabb Family**, Crabb first got his bearings on a small church platform in rural Kentucky. Standing alongside his parents and four siblings, the group's tight family harmony reverberated past the sanctuary's back pew, into the hallowed halls of the **Grand Ole Opry** and eventually onto the stage of Manhattan's **Carnegie Hall**. Along the way their rare brand gospel accumulated fifteen number one hits, multiple GRAMMY nominations, and eleven GMA Awards.

Finally, after twenty amazing years of road maps and rehearsals, family patriarch **Gerald Crabb** handed the keys of the family bus to Jason. And though the clan was a vocal bunch, that silent gesture between father and son said more than words. It was not just an exchange of keys, but an intangible change of key. The father's mantle and moral compass were now in the hands of the next generation. And the family rolled on... whatever the road.

After passing a few more mile markers and garnering even more awards, each of the Crabb siblings gradually began to consider their individual paths. In time, setting off in every direction, Crabb's two brothers and two sisters each launched their own exploration into music's north, south, east and west.

Younger brother **Aaron Crabb** not only became the founding member of the quartet **Canton Junction**, both he and wife **Amanda** also stepped out to create a duo of their own. Eventually those multiple platforms



led the couple to a single pulpit. Today, the duo pastors Restoring Hope, a thriving congregation in the Nashville suburb of Hendersonville.

Like his twin brother Aaron, **Adam** and sister **Terah** initially formed a band called, **Crabb Revival**. Then Terah created a little spin-off of her own, eventually leaving the group to pursue the adventures of family and full-time motherhood.

Sister, **Kelly**, likewise performed her own variation of the theme when she joined her husband **Mike Bowling**, becoming the newest member of the equally talented gospel clan, **The Bowling Family**. Finally, not be left out,

lead singer Aaron had a “Crabb revival” of his own when he was asked to join the iconic gospel super group, **The Gaither Vocal Band**.

With his folks retired and his siblings off exploring the four-corners of the world, Jason was left at the crossroads of his career. But though he was surrounded by 360 degrees of choices, he might as well have been standing where the compass doesn’t count; for every musical direction he turned the lyrical theme was the same.

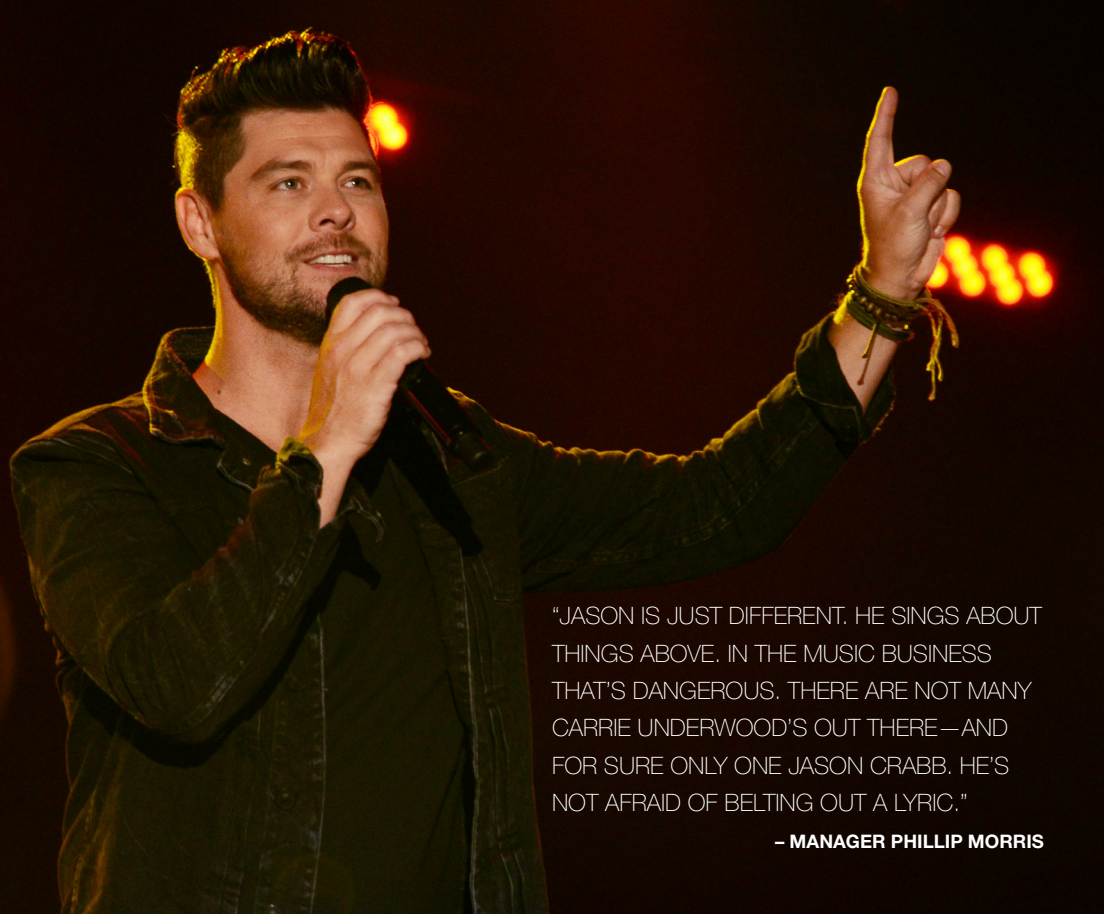
*When all is said and all is done
My time on Earth is through
May all my days say one thing
I live this life for You. ****

“Since he set off on his solo career,” Morris leaned in as if to reveal a secret, “Jason has travelled every musical direction an artist can go, yet without compromise.”

With four solo albums to his credit and a new offering to debut September 2015, Crabb has taken the keys of the family bus and accumulated more than just miles. And the numbers are impressive.

Each of his four previous collections have debuted in the Top 10 of his *Billboard* category; starting with his first self-titled album which stayed on the charts for 77 weeks. Since 2010, the singer’s accolades have been as diverse as the music he performs: Country Recorded Song of the Year, “Somebody Like Me” (2010), Traditional Gospel Recorded Song of the Year, “Go Tell It On The Mountain” (2011), Inspirational Recorded Song of the Year, “Joseph” (2011), Song of the Year, “Sometimes I Cry” (2011), plus both Male Vocalist & Artist of the Year (2012). And in 2013 Crabb earned kudos for Inspirational Album of the Year, *Love Is Stronger*, Inspirational Recorded Song of the





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— MANAGER PHILLIP MORRIS

Year, "Satisfied," as well as Southern Gospel Recorded & Best Performance of the Year, "What The Blood Is For."

Though the diversity of his artistry is obvious, Crabb has never veered from his map, his leather-bound chart of lyrical lines. And using that scriptural direction as his bearing, he has found himself in some interesting places.

He's performed at the Choctaw Labor Day Festival with CCM artist **Matthew West** and co-hosted the Dove Awards with **Nicole C. Mullen**. He's been a **Celebrity Apprentice** on **Donald Trump's** NBC hit show, and appeared alongside **Duck Dynasty's Willie Robertson**.

Crabb has been a regular at the Grand Ole Opry, hosted his own program on **TBN**, and had the honor of being a part of **Billy Graham's Farwell Crusade** in New York City.

Called, "one of the greatest male voices of any generation," Crabb nevertheless continues to diversify. Not only is he making his mark on stage and movie soundtracks, he has started to appear in front of the camera, too. Just in the last two years Crabb has lent his voice and face to such cinematic efforts as **Uncommon** (2014), playing opposite **Erik Estrada**, and **Welcome To Inspiration** (2015), featuring Crabb in both the starring role and soundtrack.



All of this visibility and notoriety has made Jason Crabb a household name. But when it comes right down to it, this artist knows that the real stars are the names of those inside his own household. With every mile he travels Crabb is not just building a career, he's raising a family. And when those miles put added distance between him and the house he holds so dear, the sacrifices along the way are the stuff songs are made of.

*We'll cry tears when we are happy
We'll laugh out loud when we face our fears
We'll weather any weather
'Cause we're better when we're together ***^*

"For the longest time my amazing wife **Shellye** could not get pregnant," Crabb remembers. "Then we had two miscarriages. It was a difficult season. We prayed, we cried. Then we prayed some more. And in His time,

God gave us **Ashleigh** and **Emma**, the joys of our lives."

"Eventually when our tour dates started growing as fast as the girls, they started calling me on the road. 'Daddy, please come home. You can get a job here in town. We want you here more.' It tugged at my heart a little.

"But now that they are older and understand what I do, and why, they want to tag along; go out on the road with me and experience the adventure. They're just starting to see what I do firsthand. And it's fun for us all when they get to take the stage with me."

With his children's generation on his mind, Crabb has added yet another facet to his diversified journey; author. Attempting to point today's young, impressionable minds in the right direction, he has mapped out a ten book series looking at the Ten Commandments from a kid's point of view. "... And the narrator guiding the kids though the journey is, of course," [chuckles], "a little crab."

After all of the diversified projects of this TV host, actor and author, the mainstay of Jason Crabb's repertoire remains his music. And if, as they say, "everything you do prepares you for everything you do," then Crabb's latest studio effort, titled, **Whatever The Road**, promises to be a mature, multi-directional effort; a lyrical sampling of all the miles, memories, detours and destinations this artist has experienced so far.

Due to release September 18, 2015, this collection's ten tracks of inspiration will take you to the crossroads of life's 360 degrees of choice and compel you towards that moral compass that always points the right way... *Whatever The Road*.

*I've seen some crazy things, looked like
coincidence*

*Stuff that shouldn't have happened in the
natural, didn't make sense*

*Granddaddy used to say, the good things he
couldn't explain*

*So don't try to understand
everything*

*God works in mysterious ways
^

Produced by **Jason Ingram, Paul Mabury** and **Terry Hemmings**, *Whatever The Road* is Crabb's fifth solo album and the first with his new label **Reunion Records**, a division of Provident/Sony Music. By the palpable energy of everyone involved in the project this collection promises to be another chart topper.

"When we were trying to find a title for the album," Crabb explained, "we all poured through the lyrics. When we got to the song,



'He Knows What He Is Doing,' our A&R gal, **Jordyn Thomas**, came across a double-line in the bridge. It was simple, yet it said it all; *'whatever the road.'*

"It was perfect. Whatever the road, God knows what He's doing. I can't wait for people to hear it."

Not long after the new album's christening. Jason got a call from his ol' stompin' grounds in Kentucky. To his surprise the artist was invited to take part in yet another christening—of sorts.

The request came from his hometown, Beaver Dam; (a place not much bigger than a real beaver's efforts). In fact its so small the community only has two claims to fame: it is the birthplace of favorite son Jason Crabb and it is the location of the new, state-of-the-art entertainment venue, the **Beaver Dam Amphitheater**.

Having already played host to artists like **Merle Haggard** and **Aaron Tippin**, it seemed only natural that the theater would invite their most notable neighbor back for a special concert. Of course, he was honored by the July 23, 2015 invitation. But when he arrived for the event, rolling down its old familiar road, Crabb had no idea how much he, and the town map, were about to change.

It happened somewhere during the course of his performance; first, the amphitheater stage filled up with members of the local city commission. Then, out of nowhere the music stopped, and Mayor Paul Sandefur stepped into the theater spotlight. "We are thrilled to have Jason come home for this concert," he announced, "But we are even

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TO HEAR IT."

—JASON CRABB





we each reside at the crossroads of left, right and wrong, the best way to find your way is check the street signs... Or, simply listen to Jason Crabb; his music is a kind of compass. It will point you in a positive direction... *whatever the road.* [CCM](#)

+ READ CCM'S REVIEW OF JASON CRABB'S ALBUM "WHATEVER THE ROAD" IN THE SEP. 1, 2015 EDITION OF CCM MAGAZINE

more thrilled to show him how proud we are of him and his work."

Holding up an object for the hometown crowd to see, a wave of applause and whistles filled the venue. As the echo traveled throughout the hall, the mayor, beaming with pride, turned toward Crabb and handed him the item. The gift was altogether unexpected.

Placed in the musician's hands was a green aluminum street marker, boasting white reflective lettering; the kind usually displayed on a pole, at the corner of a street. The sign itself was so common that Jason no doubt glimpsed a version of it as a boy peering out the windows of the old family bus. But the marker in his hands was far from ordinary, for this one would signify the name of the street connecting the town with its new theater. And it would bear the name of a man who seemed to already know where he's going.... **JASON CRABB DRIVE.**

*Everybody has a message they are sending
Everybody's living Life Oh, so loud
I only have one chance to make a difference
And I don't want to be just an empty sound ****

If we all lived at the ends of the earth there would be no need for directions. But since



ALL LYRIC EXCERPTS FROM "WHATEVER THE ROAD" (2015) REUNION RECORDS

- * *He Knows What he Is Doing*
(Jason Crabb/Jason Ingram)
- ** *If I Shout*
(Jason Crabb, Tony Wood, Michael Farren)
- *** *This Life For You*
(Jason Crabb, Tony Wood, Jonathan Smith)
- ***^ *It's a Good Life*
(Jason Crabb, Jason Ingram)
- ***^* *Mysterious Ways*
(Gerald Crabb, Jimmy Yeary)

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PRIORITY AND PAYOFF

FOR **CRYSTAL LEWIS**, IT'S ALL ABOUT GOD, FAMILY AND MUSIC—IN THAT ORDER.

BY CHRISTINA FOX

As one of Christian music's most notable artists, **Crystal Lewis** has made a career of rising to the top while remaining exceptionally grounded. With multiple Dove awards to her name, the Grammy-nominated songstress has performed alongside some of music's greatest artists and vocalists, including **Kirk Franklin**, **Bono**, **R. Kelly** and **Mary J. Blige**, cementing herself as one of Gospel music's most beloved and successful powerhouse balladeers over the course of her near 30-year career. She has recorded nearly a dozen albums, owns and operates her own record label, **Metro1Music**, along with husband **Brian Ray**, and has inspired the industry careers of her son, **Solomon**, a Christian music producer, and her daughter **Isabella**, blossoming Christian artist "**Izzy Ray**."





But behind the extraordinary talent, strength of faith, and unwavering respect in the industry, Lewis says it was her own family-oriented upbringing that truly gave her the tools to not only build a music career, but to maintain a humble focus on regular life, in the face of enormous success.

Born and raised in Southern California, Lewis spent every Sunday in church. Her father was a pastor and her mother led worship. Early on, Lewis' mother spotted rare talent in the burgeoning singer and continued to nurture that gift throughout her childhood, spending countless hours on the piano accompanying her vocal rehearsals. That commitment, sacrifice, and dedication is a gift that left an indelible mark on Lewis.

From the time their son Solomon and daughter Isabella were small children, Crystal and her husband, Brian, spent extensive time on the road, traveling coast to coast while Crystal toured, sharing the inner workings of show business with their children along the way. But as Crystal's celebrity continued to rise, the demands on her career meant more time away from home, rapidly deteriorating the young family's connection and prompting a much needed change to their way of life. Crystal and Brian had come to terms with the fact that their fast-paced Southern California home was not conducive to the family-focused lifestyle they had been longing to create. Drawing on the positive memories and impressions from a past vacation, the family headed northeast into the dramatic change of scenery of Montana. After giving homeschool a trial run, they adopted it as a permanent shift in their children's upbringing, as the move to prairie life proved to be the missing link for the kids, their education, and the entire family to experience the kind of connection they had been looking for.

"I look back on those years with fondness," Lewis says, recalling the complicated but fulfilling transition from city to country life. "I enjoyed the process of teaching them, and in turn, was able to remember many of the things that I once learned in school."

With its overwhelmingly positive impact on her own family, Lewis has since become an advocate of homeschooling as a way of life, openly promoting the unique benefits of the more traditional educational setting.

"When we began, I remember many people having concerns about a child's socialization in learning at home versus a traditional school. But I believe that socializing with only people of your own age is not representative of the realities of life."

She continues, "After those first few years on the road, we wanted to spend the remaining time we had with Solomon and Izzy being able to pour into their lives. Moving to Montana afforded us that opportunity."

The family of four embraced their new country life as lovers of horseback riding and the beautiful "Narnia-like" winters, blanketed in snow. After completing high school, homeschooled in one of the country's least populated states, both Solomon and Isabella revisited the lifestyle of their early childhoods, pursuing careers in the Christian music industry where their mother has so long been a staple artist for fans and producers alike.

Meanwhile, back on the ranch, Crystal and Brian continue to thrive in Montana, confident that the intentional slowdown was a wise move. While many in the industry might consider it a risk to relocate so far from the entertainment hub of Southern California, Lewis maintains that relocating her family was one of the best decisions she's ever made.

"Most thought that I was shooting myself in the foot. Many also said, 'I hope you know

“MOST THOUGHT THAT I WAS SHOOTING MYSELF IN THE FOOT. MANY ALSO SAID, ‘I HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU’RE DOING,’ AND WONDERED IF I MIGHT BE INTENTIONALLY THROWING AWAY MY CAREER. BUT MOVING TO MONTANA WASN’T ABOUT CAREER; IT WAS ABOUT US CHOOSING TO PUT OUR FAMILY AND CHILDREN BEFORE OUR WORK.”

—CRYSTAL LEWIS





“THERE IS A DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN NEEDING TO BUILD A BRAND AND A BUSINESS, AND NEEDING TO BE ‘FOLLOWED’ AND ‘LIKED.’ I’VE LEARNED TO APPROACH SOCIAL MEDIA WITH A ‘CARE LESS ABOUT WHAT DOESN’T MATTER AND MORE ABOUT WHAT DOES MATTER’ ATTITUDE.”

—CRYSTAL LEWIS

what you’re doing,’ and wondered if I might be intentionally throwing away my career,” she says. “But moving to Montana wasn’t about career; it was about us choosing to put our family and children before our work.”

At the same time, there is no question that Lewis sometimes struggled with the direction of career and her identity as an artist, often doubting God’s plans for her. In her search for certainty, she turned to **2 Timothy 1:7**, “*For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*” Through claiming this as her life’s verse and surrendering her fears to God, Lewis was able to battle and ultimately defeat her emotional turmoil, doubts, and worries about the future.

Reinventing her image through social media, Lewis has managed to reemerge as an artist and popular figure in Christian music, utilizing the changes in technology to produce, market, and rebrand herself, all from the comfort of her home ranch. But even with over 30,000 Twitter followers, close to 40,000 “Likes” on Facebook, and more than 13,000 followers on Instagram, Lewis recognizes the distinction between using social media as a career move, and letting it become a distraction.

“There is a delicate balance between needing to build a brand and a business, and needing to be ‘followed’ and ‘liked,’” she says. “I’ve learned to approach social media with a ‘care less about what doesn’t matter and more about what does matter’ attitude.”

With her return to a full-time music career, Lewis is primed to begin the next chapter in life. Her latest project, simply titled **Crystal Lewis** (just released on Metro1Music), is both a masterfully crafted reintroduction to some of Lewis’ best works, and a reflection of her trust in an ever-faithful God. For fans, this homespun new release, from an always humble industry veteran, is just what they’ve been waiting for. **CCM**




FOR MORE ON CRYSTAL LEWIS, VISIT HER
WEBSITE AT CRYSTALLEWIS.COM

A portrait of Tasha Cobbs, a Black woman with dark hair, wearing a black leather jacket over a black top. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is a textured, teal-colored wall. Her right hand is raised near her face, and she is wearing a thin chain bracelet on her right wrist.

TASHA COBBS

The Heart of a Worshipper

BY ANDREW GREER



Just two years ago, **Tasha Cobbs** was a relative unknown in the world of gospel music. Today, millions worldwide avidly follow the charismatic, Atlanta-based worship leader. The instantly recognizable corporate worship tune, “Break Every Chain,” helped propel her debut record, **Grace**, onto *Billboard’s* Top Gospel Albums chart, where it has remained for two years (and counting).

Eliciting swarms of critic and consumer praise—including a prestigious trifecta of Dove, Stellar and GRAMMY Awards—*Grace* transformed Cobbs’ platform from a regionally-recognized worship leader and church arts mentor into one of gospel music’s core singer-songwriters seemingly overnight. But right in the middle of her meteoric rise, **Bishop Frtiz Cobbs**—her father and mentor—passed away.

As the powerhouse singer proclaimed the goodness of God on stage each night, behind the curtain her heart hurt with the void left by her father’s unexpected passing. In the midst of her grief, Cobbs began to claim for herself promises she sang over audiences night after night—the spiritual truths her father had taught her growing up—for her own heart and life.

On the heels of the release of her sophomore set, **One Place Live** (Motown Gospel)—recorded live at Redemption Church in Greenville, South Carolina with fellow leading singer-songwriter ladies **Kierra Sheard** and **Jamie Grace**—the ministerial songstress discusses the pressures behind recording the follow-up to such a magnificent debut and the heartbeat behind the music she creates for the church.

CCM: With the success of your first record, you could have utilized the protective corridors of the recording studio to create the follow-up *One Place Live*. What compelled you to go with the live experience?

Tasha Cobbs: I'm a worship leader! Standing before a group of people who are ready to worship is always my preference. I'm sure there will be certain situations that call for a studio recording, but for now I always see myself doing solo projects in a live setting. I love the energy that the worshippers bring. Nothing can compare.

CCM: *Grace* was a huge success, garnering a mantle of awards. In fact, two years later the record is still charting in the Top 10. What kind of pressures does that create in recording your sophomore set, and how do you deal with those pressures—personally, creatively and spiritually?

TC: I've always been the type of person who doesn't have a problem moving forward with what's next. I believe *Grace* will forever be saying what it was intended to say. The songs are classic and will help people remain in a place of worship for years to come.

With the new project, *One Place Live*, my focus was the same. I'm not a parent, but I can imagine what it's like having children. Each of them have their own gifts, talents, and anointing. You love them with the same heart, but you nurture and navigate them in different ways according to their assignment.

CCM: Spiritually, how do you handle the celebrity birthed from such a successful project? Does it create tension and conflict with a worship leader's responsibility to direct attention towards God?

TC: Honestly, this has been the most difficult thing for me. [In the past] I would always





think, *I live my life to bring fame to Jesus' name. So why is it bringing focus to me?* One of my mentors helped by telling me that it's okay to appreciate the messenger who has been used to deliver the message that changed a life. So, I'm much better now! [Laughs]

CCM: You enlisted VaShawn Mitchell to also produce this project. How did that collaboration come about for a second time, and how did his unique musicianship influence this set list?

TC: There is no reason to reinvent the wheel. We work together so well and he understands my assignment. I trust his wisdom and experience, so I always share with him my thoughts on the songs I'm looking to record. Sometimes they make the cut, sometimes they don't. [Laughs] But it's because I can trust his "ear to hear."

CCM: Between the release of *Grace* and the recording of *One Place*, your father passed away. How did his death affect your life, personally and creatively?

TC: The answer to this question is quite simple: it hurt. Anyone who has ever lost a loved one can attest to this. But we as believers have the advantage of the Holy Spirit. It's our comfort through every situation. So, though my heart hurts—that's normal—my spirit rejoices knowing that my father is literally spending face-to-face time with Jesus.

[My father] always taught me to stay at the feet of Jesus. I still rehearse this in my life daily. That posture helped to birth the greatness out of me that God has entrusted me with—and we all have greatness within



us. That simple reminder was a part of the foundation that aided in writing the song "Jesus Saves" [featured on the new album].

CCM: How did your father influence the development of your faith and ministry?

TC: My parents raised both my brother and I to exalt Jesus and to praise Him—even if I have to do it alone.

CCM: As musicians in the gospel music industry, we often throw around the title "ministry." So tell us, Tasha Cobbs, the artist and worship leader, what do you feel is your ministry?

TC: My ministry is to bring awareness to the presence of God, and to help usher the audience or listener into that "one place" with Jesus where everything else is silenced." **CCM**



+ READ CCM'S REVIEW OF TASHA COBBS' NEW ALBUM 'ONE PLACE' LIVE ON **CCMAGAZINE.COM**



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BIG DADDY WEAWE

***Beautiful Offerings* (Word)**

FOR FANS OF: *Sidewalk Prophets*,
Casting Crowns, *Building 429*

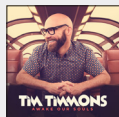


Christian radio mainstay Big Daddy Weave finally releases the highly anticipated follow-up to 2012's *Love Come To Life*. *Beautiful Offerings* features eleven originals that continue the band's tradition of offering rich melodic hooks perfectly paired with thought-provoking and worshipful lyrics.

The veteran band incorporates elements of country, classic rock, and even electronic, demonstrating their strong commitment to musical growth and their willingness to extend their boundaries. And those who particularly appreciate high production value will find themselves especially pleased. Front man Mike Weaver, arguably one of the more recognizable voices in contemporary Christian music, displays yet again his special ability to convey deep emotion. This is especially evident on "Come Sit Down," in which Weaver ranges from tender reverence to majestic exaltation. With *Beautiful Offerings*, Big Daddy Weave once again powerfully presents in their own unique way the live-giving messages of hope and surrender.

—Jamie Walker

IN THIS ISSUE



WE LIKE: "Redeemed"



CRYSTAL LEWIS

Crystal Lewis (Metro1Music)

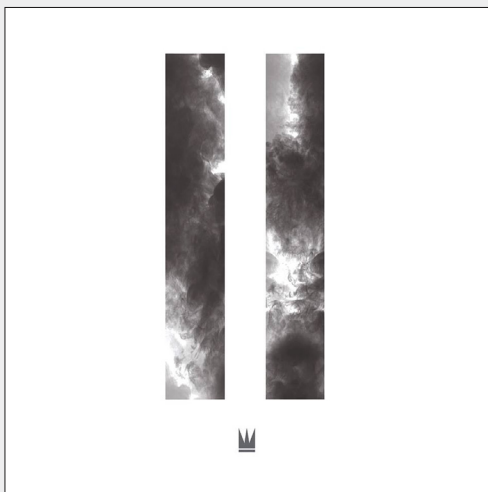
FOR FANS OF: Amy Winehouse, Adele, Sam Smith

★★★★☆

Nearly three decades into her remarkable career, Crystal Lewis has survived and thrived through numerous musical trends, emerging as one of the most immediately recognizable voices in Christian music. Though this self-titled release has fingerprints of her glistening pop/R&B past, Lewis is firmly planted in the here and now. Alongside meaty beats and pristine vocals, Lewis sings of redemption ("Beginning Again"), finding peace in prayer ("Let Go") and giving glory to God with serious groove in her step ("Faithful"). There's even the old-fashioned gospel romp "Seat At The Table," which sounds like it could've been cut in Stax Records' heyday, suggesting that Lewis is just as aware of those who paved the way before her as she is committed to staying in today's game.

—Andy Argyrakos

WE LIKE: "Faithful"



CAPITAL KINGS

II (Gotee)

FOR FANS OF: Owl City, Tiësto

★★★★☆

Capital Kings' wide-ranging take on synth-pop garnered acclaim and a top five spot on the *Billboard* Christian albums chart with their debut. On their sophomore album, *II*, the duo reins in the diversity to further their EDM impulses (and pulses) with a propulsive, dance hall-ready set that sits well alongside global faves like Tiësto.

The Gotee band is already seeing strong results with the hit single "Fireblazin,'" which features Chris Tomlin, but there's plenty more to love on *II*. "Satellites" brings a funky jam that Bruno Mars would appreciate, and a killer guest appearance from KB (Reach Records) on "Northern Sky" turns the track into a must-listen. The scope is a bit narrower than before, but Capital Kings truly make their mark on their second album.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "Satellites"



COLTON DIXON

The Calm Before The Storm (Capitol CMG)

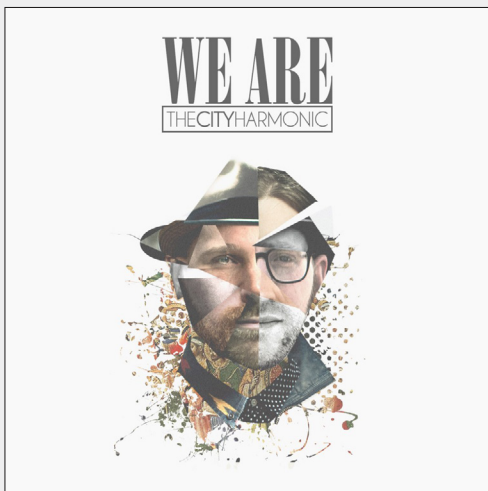
FOR FANS OF: Matthew West, Adam Levine, Phillip Phillips

★★★★☆

In a unique twist of marketing, Colton Dixon packages and releases a set of acoustic alternatives and transformed remixes on the combined *The Calm Before The Storm*. Fans can enjoy all ten modifications of Dixon's biggest songs on the aforementioned title, or purchase them separately on EPs simply named *Calm* and *STORM*, containing five tracks each. Both EPs feature hits from his two previously released albums, *A Messenger* and *Anchor*. If picking favorites, we like the peaceful and surprisingly engaging *Calm*. Drawing listeners in with his heartfelt vocals and signature piano skills, the *American Idol* alum also duets with sister and rising star Schyler Dixon on "You Are." Together, the collection is a smart collision that provides a soundtrack to fit any mood of the day.

—Kevin Sparkman

WE LIKE: "Through All Of It"



THE CITY HARMONIC

We Are (Integrity)

FOR FANS OF: Phil Wickham, Hillsong United

★★★★☆

Five years ago, worship music fans first heard the promising Brit-pop influenced sound of The City Harmonic. The Canadian band formed when musicians from small churches around Hamilton, Ontario came together to play and write, and it wasn't long until their anthemic songs touched hearts of believers all over North America.

After winning several Covenant Awards and a Juno Award, The City Harmonic is now Canada's preeminent worship band. Fortunately they've maintained their initial heart for unity in the church, as illustrated by their own background, on their new album, *We Are*. "We Are One," "Manifesto," and "One" are all musical gifts for the greater church to proclaim, with the latter ending with the familiar prayer of Jesus from John's gospel, "make us one as you are one."

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "One"



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What should I do?



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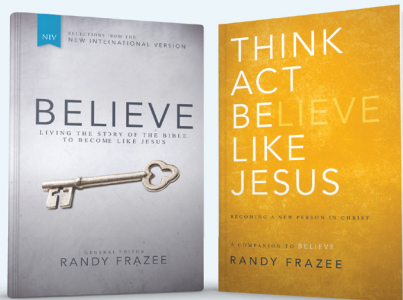
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TIM TIMMONS

***Awake Our Souls* (Reunion)**

For Fans of: Matthew West, Sidewalk Prophets, Mercy Me

★★★★☆

Tim Timmons' latest album, *Awake Our Souls*, is an impressive sophomore offering. The first five tracks will have the listener tapping their foot to upbeat and playful melodies. Timmons invites us to join him on the journey of surrendering to God and trusting Him, whatever the outcome. The entire collection from the whimsical to the contemplative, will leave fans encouraged wherever the road is leading.

—Jamie Walker

We Like: "Awake Our Souls"



ALL THINGS NEW

***The Good News* (BEC)**

FOR FANS OF: The Lumineers, The Neverclaim

★★★★☆

All Things New returned to their roots before writing and recording their sophomore album, *The Good News*. It's easy to hear a band back in touch with their reasons for singing in the first place, when presented with the straightforward truths couched in sing-along melodies. The title track, "All Because You Loved Me" and "Believe" are both impressive parts of an on-target whole intended to communicate the gospel and nothing more.

—Matt Conner

WE LIKE: "The Good News"



ANNIE MOSES BAND

American Rhapsody

(Warner Classics)

FOR FANS OF: Celtic Woman, The Piano Guys, Alison Krauss & Union Station

★★★★☆

Nashville's classically trained ensemble of six siblings already has Carnegie Hall, the Grand Ole Opry and PBS on its resume, but after 11 albums and five DVDs, the Annie Moses Band is poised for additional ascent on the continuously eclectic *American Rhapsody*. Not only do the prodigious players astound with everything from the Gershwin twist "Rhapsody In Bluegrass" to the glorious string battle "Psalm Of Life," but there's always a spiritually hopeful angle to lyrics that bridge cultural and musical boundaries.

—Andy Argyrakis

WE LIKE: "Hard Times Come Again No More"



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