

BETWEEN THE LINES & SPACES ...TWENTY YEARS LATER



# NEWSBOYS

## IN THE NAME OF LOVE

WHY THEY BELIEVE IT'S TIME  
FOR A PASSIONATE UPRISING

MICHAEL  
W. SMITH

HOW ROOTSY  
RECOLLECTION  
CALLED HIM TO  
RESOUNDING  
REVERENCE



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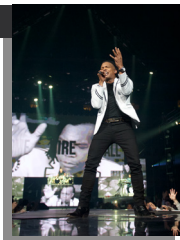
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## From the Editor

## NEWSBOYS

In the name of love—why they believe that now is the time for a passionate uprising



## MICHAEL W. SMITH

How another rootsy recollection—with the release of his second hymns project—called him to an ever-increasing reverence for Christ



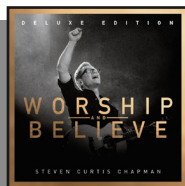
## BETWEEN THE LINES AND SPACES

In celebration of the 20th anniversary of the first short story ever published in CCM's pages...Alone In Times Square by Barton Green



## Reviews

Stephen Curtis Chapman, Josh Tibbs, Charles Billingsley, Fellowship Creative + much more!



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**We should be silent** | Let's face it. We run to noise. Often times, we do it without even thinking about it—it's as if we are subconsciously conditioned to check our social news feeds (*all the time...at a red light...while traveling at 75 MPH on I-65!*), turn the television on as soon as we get home, and open our laptops as we lie in bed.

When do we hear from God?

He wants to be in conversation with us, but do we hear His voice amidst the noise? **Psalm 46:10** (ESV) *Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!* The King James Version says, "I will be exalted among the *heathen*," as opposed to "nations" in more popular versions. Ouch—does this speak to you, like it speaks to me?

He is coming back to reign, and when He does every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord (**Isaiah 43:25, Romans 14:11**)—but I don't want to be in that number. What am I missing from God, right now, by not shutting up or turning off the gadgets, for even just a few hours a day?

What is it that He is trying to tell me now, prepare me for, or teach me before He comes back and has to say, "This... You missed out on this earlier, Kevin."

Before turning the pages of this edition of **CCM Magazine**—turn it off, unplug it, and be silent for a moments. What does God have to say to us?

Hitting the power button...now,



A stylized, handwritten signature of Kevin Sparkman in dark ink, featuring a large, looping 'K' and a cursive 'Sparkman'.

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# NEWSBOYS



*in the name of love*

# NEWSBOYS - IN THE NAME OF LOVE

Why They Believe Now Is The Time For A Passionate Uprisings

BY LINDSAY WILLIAMS

When **Peter Furler** announced his departure from **Newsboys** eight years ago, by all standards, the band should have never survived such a massive shake-up. Now, three **Winter Jam Tours**, five additional headliners, four records and two movies later, Newsboys are basking in one of the busiest and best seasons of their tenure thus far. As the face of the **God's Not Dead** movement and one of the most-played artists at Christian radio, the veteran band is entering a fresh chapter with the release of a brand-new studio album, intent on starting a love riot.

**Jeff Frankenstein** has a picture from the early '90s of himself and his longtime band mates **Jody Davis** and **Duncan Phillips**. In the photograph, the men are standing in front of brand new Jeep Cherokee's after an attempt at off-roading before a concert later that night in Knoxville, Tennessee. And there, in the middle of the 4 x 6, posing with the trio is one-third of **DC Talk**, **Michael Tait**. If not for their outdated fashion and youthful grins, a current fan might mistake it for an outtake from 2016. Back then, if they could have only predicted the future, they would have known the photo was foretelling what was to come.

"Michael was always our friend back in the early Newsboys days," Frankenstein recalls. "He was the one guy that was always hanging out with us."

Today, Tait does more than hang out on the Newsboys' bus. For the past eight years, he's fronted the band, arguably one of the most iconic

groups in Christian music history. And for the DC Talk alum, it's the second act of a storied career. Yet, when longtime front man Peter Furler passed the baton to Tait back in 2008, he wasn't sure how the story was going to unfold.

After the members of DC Talk went their separate ways, Tait embarked on a lackluster solo venture that came up dry. So when the Newsboys approached him about the lead singer gig, the timing couldn't have been better. "I needed Newsboys desperately, and they desperately needed me," Tait says. "They needed a singer; I needed a job, and it was that simple to me."

Not all Newsboys fans saw it that way.

"Michael had to [cover his ears and] not listen to the naysayers, and then we had those moments where we'd get up onstage and people would boo us," Phillips candidly shares.

For the first nine months with Tait as the lead singer, the band's future looked grim. "Even though I came from DC Talk, I still didn't get much grace from that," Tait recalls. "I had to prove myself as a Newsboys guy."

"I understand it," Phillips says of the fans' point of view. "It's like a marriage. When you see two people together for twenty years, then all of a sudden it changes... It takes people a moment to get used to seeing that different pair together."

While Tait began his tenure with the band performing songs from the Newsboys' vast discography of hits, the group quickly entered the studio to work on new material. "We went straight to work. We did



150 shows that first year,” Phillips remembers. “We got straight in the studio with Michael, because we didn’t want to turn into a Newsboys karaoke band.”

“After that first year, I was pretty beat up. I was tired,” Tait says. “We’d worked hard, and we weren’t getting a lot of traction. My lead singer insecurities kicked in, and I thought, ‘Oh gosh, you don’t like me.’”

“It was horrible there for a moment,” Phillips admits, “but I think God placed something deep in the heart of every guy here and said, ‘This is going to work, guys.’”

### REBRANDING AND REBIRTH

The title track of 2010’s ***Born Again*** officially introduced the new front man to radio, and the tide began to turn in Newsboys’ favor. The song became the first No. 1 single for Newsboys 2.0 and the grand marshal in a hit parade that followed with mega hits like “Your Love Never Fails,” “God’s Not Dead (Like a Lion),” “Live With Abandon” and “We Believe.”

“When [“Born Again”] hit and really caught on, everything changed,” Frankenstein acknowledges.

If “Born Again” was the match that reignited Newsboys’ career, “God’s Not Dead” was the gasoline on the fire. When 2014’s *God’s Not Dead* movie struck gold at the box office, it resurrected the Newsboys’ single of the same name (a track from an album that, incidentally, had released three years prior to the film’s debut). “God’s Not Dead” quickly became an anthem for an entirely new generation of Newsboys fans. Adding to the frenzy, the band also made an appearance in the

movie, which further solidified them as ambassadors of the God's Not Dead movement.

"The movie comes out, and in, like, two weeks, it's played for two million people," Frankenstein says. "It already dwarfs every show you've ever done in twenty years. So all of a sudden, you've got a new audience."

For all the support and acclaim the movie and the band received, the film and Newsboys' subsequent single also elicited its fair share of resistance from those whose feathers were ruffled by the movie's bold message.

"It was like dropping a lighter into a bunch of explosives," Phillips observes. "[People] are feeling the pressure from the culture, so for someone to stand up and have the audacity in this culture to say that, 'God is not dead,' you're going to get some hate. It's going to cause a reaction, and I think that was maybe not what we initially intended for this thing, but that's what it's getting."

"I remember the 'Jesus Freak' movement, and it was pretty psycho, [but] God's Not Dead—it's another level," Tait reflects.

After banking nearly \$64 million worldwide during its theatrical run, God's Not Dead sold two million copies when it released on DVD, driving the success of Newsboys' music. While the band's single went Platinum, the album went Gold, and the group saw fans turn up in droves to hear the song at concerts nationwide.

## SEQUELS AND STUDIO ALBUMS

Now, with *God's Not Dead 2* slated to hit theaters April 1, Newsboys is poised for even greater success. The band's current radio single, "Guilty," serves as the theme song for the sequel and is already climbing the charts in advance of the movie's premiere. The group also makes another cameo in the highly anticipated follow-up, but don't expect them to abandon Music City for Hollywood any time soon.

"They got Oscar-winning actors [this time], but we are still at the same level... So don't look for anything real special," Tait jokes. "We have not made any leaps and bounds on acting at all."

They may never earn an accolade in performing arts, but *God's Not Dead 2*, which stars **Melissa Joan Hart** and **Jesse Metcalfe**, will inevitably fan the red hot flame that has become Newsboys' current career status.

Ahead of the movie, the band is whetting fans' appetites by serving up ten new tracks on their fresh studio album, *Love Riot*, the group's first effort on **FairTrade Services**. "Guilty" is included on the project and is a fitting introduction to the band's next chapter.

"My soul was in the balance, but now I'm guilty of selling it out to Christ," Tait explains as he talks about the new single. "There's no apologies. Guilty—you got me... I'm guilty of following Christ."

On *Love Riot*, Newsboys unapologetically share the Gospel message with the confidence and ease of a band riding the wave of a powerful movement. Although they didn't originally audition to be the ringleaders of this movement, they're eagerly stepping into their roles and leading the charge, heads held high, all in the name of love.



“It seems to me like the message is timely for today because I think even the concept of love has been misconstrued by our culture. It’s so disposable—love. It’s temporary,” Frankenstein says of Love Riot’s theme. “Christ being the example of perfect love to this culture now is probably more appealing than ever. [It’s] an unconditional love that you can’t find anywhere else, and I think people are searching more than ever before for that.”

“Essentially, the only thing that’s going to affect our culture and our society in a positive way is Christ’s love,” Davis asserts. “It’s the only true love, and that’s the only love that’s going to actually make a difference.”

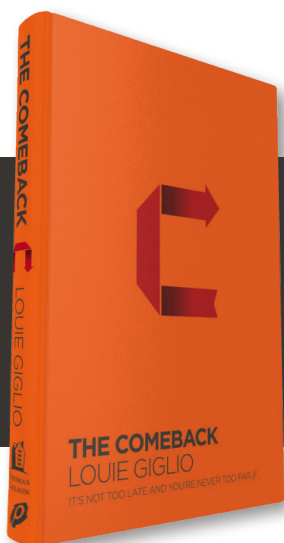
The band hopes the new songs inspire people already supporting the message of God’s Not Dead to ignite real change through acts of love. In essence, their new album is a call to arms of sorts.

“You look at Paris; you look at San Bernardino, Calif.; you look at the Syrians rushing the borders of other countries—it’s become a mess. At the end of the day, that little God-shaped hole inside your heart—everybody has it—it’s made for the love of Christ. We have free will, true enough, but Christ wants a love riot out of all of His followers,” Tait maintains. “I’m on a mission to start a love riot because I believe love wins. At the end of the day, love wins.”

### **FRIENDS AND FAMILY**

“Love wins” is a slogan the band not only promotes at its concerts, but it’s also a mantra the four men live by personally. Traveling the country in a bus means living in close quarters 24/7, and that kind of unique lifestyle requires patience, understanding and a bond that’s more important than any daily pettiness.

God isn't  
finished  
with you yet.



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“If we’re going to be one of those bands that God’s going to take to this next plateau, which we believe that He is, we’ve got to have all of that little stuff sorted,” Phillips offers. “He’s not going to elevate us to this point if we haven’t taken care of business. The little stuff—that can eat away at you; that’ll nip at your heels.”

“We love and respect each other. We like each other,” Tait adds. “The like makes you work through it.”

That’s why it was so important to find a new front man eight years ago that the other members gelled with on a personal level. Fortunately, the friendship they had already forged with Tait proved to be one of the biggest assets in helping the switch succeed. Yet, the band’s massive rebranding was risky, especially considering the members were at a different point in their lives than they had been when they first embarked on the Newsboys journey decades ago.

“It was different this time because I had a mortgage; I had a family; I had all the weight of that responsibility,” Phillips shares. “The first time around I was a kid. I didn’t have any of the weight or responsibility, so it was just fun.”

“You look at it differently, too, when you’re in a band for this long,” Frankenstein adds. “When you’re younger—I joined the band when I was 19-years-old—you’re looking at the future, and you’re looking at wanting to climb the ladder and do all this stuff, all the stuff you think is important; and then when you’re older, you’re like, ‘Oh man, I’m going to enjoy every day. I’m going to just enjoy today and not get too wrapped up in what the industry thinks or what people think,’ and I think that gives you the freedom to be friends with each other and just enjoy.”



Friendship and fun. Those are exactly the two targets Newsboys will be aiming for as they take the stage each night when they hit the road for the final leg of the ***We Believe...God's Not Dead Tour*** this spring with special guests **Audio Adrenaline**, **Ryan Stevenson** and **OBB**. In fact, all four men agree they're enjoying themselves more now than ever before.

"It's made me feel sixteen again," Phillips confesses. "Before all of that, the crowds kind of roared, [and] it was like, 'Okay, here we go...another hit.' But when Michael came onboard, it was like we had to prove ourselves all over again... That energized us. It gave us that energy back to when I was a teenager to, 'Man, I'm going to win tonight; I'm going to make you love us tonight'... There's something vibrant and passionate about that."

On the heels of Love Riot's release and the impending premiere of God's Not Dead 2, Newsboys know they're in a season of explosive growth—an amazing feat for a band who's been recording and touring for two decades. Not to mention, they've survived multiple rebrandings and lead singers—circumstances that often signal the demise of most acts. So, what do they attribute to their success?

"It's greater than the sum of its parts. It's bigger than Duncan Phillips. It's bigger than Michael Tait or Jeff Frankenstein or Jody Davis. This is something exciting, and I'm just hanging on like, 'Alright, I'm ready. Let's go!'" Phillips explains, adding, "There's this excitement and sense of anticipation in this band that God is going to do wonderful and mighty great things, not even in this band, but in Christendom in general."

## NEWSBOYS

Their enthusiasm is contagious, and it's catching on like wildfire. Yet, the four men are quick to acknowledge that it has little to do with their own gifts or accolades and more to do with the ways God has always intended to use this band and their music.

"We're not called because we're talented; we're talented because we're called," Tait offers. "God knew this from the beginning. He was going to use this chocolate boy [and] these vanilla boys... We've been entrusted with something special." [CCM](#)

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A photograph of Michael W. Smith sitting in a wooden rocking chair. He is wearing a dark blue button-down shirt and blue jeans. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background shows several other rocking chairs in a room with wood paneling.

# *MICHAEL W. SMITH*

*how rootsy recollection called  
him to resounding reverence*



# MICHAEL W. SMITH

## How Rootsy Recollection Led The Multi-Talented, Award-Winning Artist To Resounding Reverence

BY MATT CONNER

The natural assumption would be that **Michael W. Smith** had, at some point, recorded a hymns-related project.

Even the artist himself says he was surprised when he looked back over his incredible catalog—one that includes fifteen million albums sold, over forty **Dove Awards** and twenty-eight No. 1 singles—and found that he'd not yet recorded a hymns project. It was on the wish list, but the time had not arrived. It wasn't until a successful partnership with **Cracker Barrel** restaurants that Smith recorded ***Hymns*** in 2014 that he realized how well the album fit with his roots.

"That was a monumental year for me. I did three records in one year, which is insane," says Smith. "I'll never do that again. We did ***Sovereign***, then *Hymns*, and then a Christmas thing was added at the last minute. But the *Hymns* project did so well at Cracker Barrel, and it struck a nerve. I enjoyed singing those hymns in concert, and I thought, 'How have I not done this so far after all these years?' It seemed like the right thing to do."



## Michael W. Smith

Growing up in the small town of Kenova, West Virginia (pop. 3,200), hymns formed the musical and theological spine for Smith's childhood story. The further into the project, the more making a hymns album made sense for the accomplished artist.

"I've wanted to do a hymns project for so many years," says Smith. "Hymns were such a huge part of my life growing up. We were fortunate that the **Jesus Movement** came through our little town in West Virginia, and I was singing **Larry Norman** songs. We had drums and guitar and we were playing "Tell It Like It Is." But while growing up, I was also singing hymns. Those hymns are part of the fabric of my life. They built my faith in so many ways."

*Hymns* earned great acclaim for Smith's intimate approach and sold like hotcakes (appropriate Cracker Barrel analogy), which led to the inevitable release of Smith's brand new album, ***Hymns II: Shine on Us***.

"Cracker Barrel came back and asked, 'Would you be up for doing another one?' I got excited about it," he says. "I started flipping through a hymnal wondering, 'Okay what did I miss out on the first time?'" I started thinking about expanding it a bit. It needed to be a little different than the first one. The production is bigger. We also wanted to bring in the old, like last time, but we brought in the new.

"You've got 'Down to the River to Pray,' which makes me think of ***O Brother, Where Art Thou?*** I've loved that song my whole life. Then we have 'I Need Thee.' I love that song. I sang that in church all my life. But then we wanted to do one of my favorite newer worship songs called 'Jesus, Only Jesus.' I said, 'Let's mix it up and see if it holds together.' So that's what we did."

## Michael W. Smith

Not only is *Hymns II* more robust than the original, but Smith said he also took some chances with the song selection. One song, in particular, presented a musical challenge for the three-time GRAMMY winner.

“I wanted to do ‘His Eye Is On The Sparrow,’ but I was wondering if I could ever pull that one off,” recalls Smith. “My favorite rendition is by **Lauryn Hill** in the movie, ***Sister Act***. I’ll never forget that movie. It was a moment in time for me. I kept thinking, ‘Oh gosh, can I even do this?’ I started messing around with it and it seemed to work. Some of it was a bit of a challenge, but I just tried to do my best and treat these songs the best that I could.”

Smith’s decision to close the album with “America The Beautiful” is another surprise for a hymns album, but like the familiar congregational songs, this patriotic track is also close to his heart.

“I love ending with ‘America The Beautiful.’ I’ve always loved that song,” he says. “It’s my favorite patriotic song of all-time. I’ve sung it in concerts in the past on the fly, just randomly. I don’t mean to be political at all, but I care about this country. I think we’re in trouble on some fronts, but I never want to forget all of the good things about it as well. It’s such a great idea. So it felt like the right thing to end with it. I honestly get chills every time I listen to it. It’s a great song.”

Of all of the songs on *Hymns II*, however, it’s likely “I Need Thee” that reaches Smith at the deepest level—not only for its personal history with Smith but with its message as well.

“With where I am in life, you think it might get easier as you get older,” says Smith. “I’m grateful that I feel like I’m a little wiser. I’ve grown up a bit. But at the same time, I realize, ‘Oh my gosh, I’m a mess!’ It’s an interesting scenario where I feel like the more I mature in the Lord, the more Satan wants to take me down and control my thought life and everything that comes my way.

“I think if we’re all honest, we’d all say the same thing. Thankfully, my marriage is great. My kids are great. God has given us all this incredible stuff, but more than any time in my entire life, I am singing, ‘I Need Thee,’ like I’ve never sung it before. I sing it straight from my spirit. I think He hears me and the intent of my heart.

“When I listen to it in the car, I start crying,” he continues. “It’s weird that you’re crying to your own song, but that’s because I feel I poured my heart and soul into it. I remember doing that even with the arrangement. I put all this down on the piano before I did anything else. I went into this studio in Franklin that has my favorite recording piano in town, and I spent two days just trying to pour my heart into my fingers and trying to express myself musically. It’s just a song, but it sure is heartfelt. I hope people can hear that when they listen to it.” **CCM**



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MATTHEW WEST







# Alone In Times Square

In celebration of the 20th anniversary of the first short story ever published in **CCM**'s pages—the original piece that gave birth to the book, *Between The Lines And Spaces*—and inspired by the lyrics of Cindy Morgan, Susan Ashton, and Wayne Kirkpatrick

BY BARTON GREEN

It was eerie, like I had stepped into a lost episode of the **Twilight Zone**; but **Rod Serling** was nowhere in sight—and neither was anyone else. It was 2:30 am and I was standing in the middle of New York's famous Times Square, absolutely alone. There was not another living soul along the snow-covered streets that intersected Broadway. The only signs of life in that usually lively square, were the flashing neon billboards, and me. Never before had I pictured a sight so vacant, surreal. It was so quiet I could almost hear the snowflakes hit the ground. And in that silence, my mind began to replay the opening lines of a haunting song:

*How fragile how frail  
What a picture perfect place in time  
I recall it so well in my mind  
Went for a walk in the snow*

## *Between The Lines And Spaces*

In that instant I was drawn across the threshold of an unforgettable experience. It was the beginning of an episode that would inevitably alter a lifetime of logic. Before the morning sun rose again, I would see everything—differently.

This still life framed in white was not the product of imagination, but rather the results of the worst blizzard to hit Manhattan in decades. No doubt New York residents will long remember the crippling storm of February 8, 1996; I know I will. That was the day we both blew into town unexpectedly.

Out of nowhere I had been invited to meet with three of the Big Apple's most prestigious publishing firms. For a writer such opportunities come around about as often as Halley's comet, so naturally I dropped everything, jumped into my drafty jeep and made tracks for The City.

The freak snowstorm arrived first; escorted by the odd winter occurrences of lightning and thunder. And about that same time, as I entered the outer boundary of the blizzard, my jeep's heater decided to quit! For the next two freezing hours all I had to keep me warm was my trusty Walkman, pre-loaded with one of the few cassettes I brought along; ***Cindy Morgan's A Reason To Live...***

*Life's always changing  
But never asking  
If change is all right with you...(\*\*)*

Pulling the collar of my jacket around my neck, I had to agree;  
"Sing it, Cindy!"

## *Between The Lines And Spaces*

Sixty frostbitten miles later, I shivered my way into a Times Square hotel, toting my sparse overnight bag and my equally light windbreaker. (note: Next time opportunity knocks, be prepared—pack a parka.)

From my hotel window I could look directly down onto Times Square. From that lofty perch “The Great White Way” seemed the only description that fit. The heavy clouds filtered the rays of the setting sun and casted a cold gray haze over the scene. Everything was covered with snow; from the hoods of impatient taxis to the umbrella tops of scurrying pedestrians. They all seemed desperate to get home before frigid nightfall set in.

I, too felt a sense of apprehension. Like the people below me, I also wanted to get out of town—fast! Coming back to New York was hard for me. The place held too many memories. “Was this the eve of my big break? Or the winter of my discontent?” In my heart I hoped my elevated view was a sign that tomorrow’s meetings would get things off the ground... (That’s when the sneezing started).

Six hours, a pot of hot tea, and a battery-drained Walkman later, I was none the better; if anything—worse. We men never know what to do when we get a cold: When we’re kids we depend on Super Mom. In adolescence, we’re revived by the sympathy of our girlfriends. And as men, we savor every second of attention from our wives. But at the moment I was neither a child, an adolescent, or a husband—I was just alone with my stuffy nose, trying to quiet my Manhattan memories with the tunes of Cindy Morgan, and **Susan Ashton**. That night their God-centered music were the lullabies that calmed this man’s anxiety;

## *Between The Lines And Spaces*

*So when you break  
So when you fall  
Can't find the strength to care at all*

*If you'll reach out to Him  
He'll be reaching in (\*\*)*

*The love that use to hold our hearts  
Wants to take us beyond justice to mercy (#)*

Around 2:15am I was awakened from my fitful sleep by a throbbing head that had transformed into a cotton-stuffed carnival balloon. It was obvious that I had to do something. So in between sneezes, I dialed the front desk and asked, "Does the city that never sleeps have an all-night pharmacy close by?" And to my surprise, "...Yeah over on 8th, between 46th and 47th street." Relief was just a short half-a-block walk from the hotel.

Bundling up, I stepped out the front lobby doors—and was immediately attacked by a wall of wind straight from the North Pole! As its fury subsided and my clinched eyes reopened, I saw it! There in front of me, under a fresh layer of virgin snow was Times Square—abandoned. It looked like a movie set dressed for one of those cliché "end-of-the-world" scenes. Mesmerized, I lifted my tennies out of the calf-deep snow, and took a step forward. Then another. The only sound was the snow crunching underneath my shoes. Over the years, literally millions of feet have trampled across that famous square. But on this strange night the only footsteps visible in the snow was the meandering line that led from the hotel to my heels. I was alone.

## *Between The Lines And Spaces*

*I see him there  
Under a starlit sky  
And if moonlight were magic  
He'd wander back in time (\*)*

Cindy's words still echoed in my head. Maybe it was because she reminded me that my life had indeed changed without permission. Or was it because I was standing on the very spot where my best memories had taken place? Though I tried to shake the feeling, Morgan's words were as persistent as the cold; part of me really did want to go back in time - back before everything fell a part.

Glancing up at the morning headlines on the Daily News Building's wrap-around display, it was clear that the world was constantly making mistakes. Still, I couldn't help but feel alone in my misery.

*Sometimes the wrong way  
Seems much like the right way  
Are we wise when it's our time to choose?*

We humans always think we know what to do when we make mistakes. As children, we cry and point a little finger at our siblings. As adolescents, we run away. And if caught, we place the blame on our friends. As adults, we yell at each other, divide up our belongings and leave the responsibility at each other's feet. It's only after the fact, sometimes long after, that we finally realize what we should have done.

Recalling that I had once been a child, an adolescent and a husband—  
Yes! I wanted to go back in time! Closing my eyes, I let Susan sing my thoughts...

## *Between The Lines And Spaces*

*I know we don't see eye to eye  
We've let angry hearts flare  
And the bitter words fly  
The common ground we used to share  
Is harder to find  
But I believe that it's still there (#)*

Our “common ground” surrounded me. Off to my right was the video arcade where we took our wedding announcement photo. And just above there, were the windows of the office where she now spends her days. Behind me was the restaurant where we celebrated many of my brother’s Broadway performances. And just down the street was the park where we first met. “If moonlight were magic,” I whispered, “what I wouldn’t give to see her face.” But then another chorus of reality surfaced...

*You can turn back to all the memories  
But you can't turn back the clock  
You can make life all it can be  
But you can't make it something it's not  
Yesterday is yesterday  
And tomorrow is still a day away  
So what do you say  
There's a reason to live today (\*)*

“What reason?!” I wondered aloud, certain that no one was listening. “Why should I care about tomorrow? Sure, the meetings I have in the morning could boost my career. But what does it matter anymore? Look at me! I’m ALONE—in of all places, Times Square!”



## *Between The Lines And Spaces*

As my frustrated voice bounced off the surrounding buildings, an incredible notion struck me. “Wait a second ... Times Square!” My mind began to race, snapping the pieces of a puzzle together. “This is the place where one year ends and another begins!”

*Will we change or just regret  
Remember more than we forget*

“This is the very spot where people come to say goodbye to the past and greet the future.”

*How grand it would be to go back  
But life doesn't work that way.*

“It's the one place in all the world where people gather each year to—  
START OVER!”

In that illuminating instant my thawing senses reminded me that I was standing in the world's busiest Square—the intersection of Time, itself. And that just above me, someone was indeed listening; The One Who created Time. When did I forget He was there? Mary and I had once looked to Him for everything.

Suddenly I understood that I couldn't go back and cut out the knot of mistakes we made, but something told me that I could start over again, and let God unravel it for me.

*The love that I've chosen  
Cries out to be spoken  
Leaving the heartache behind*

## *Between The Lines And Spaces*

*We must reach out beyond justice to mercy  
Going more than halfway to forgive*

That February night, I made a brand new start of it in ol' New York. Standing in the middle of Times Square, I decided to celebrate my own, personal, New Year. There weren't a quarter of a million people pressed together, tooting party horns. It was just me, the snow, and the Inventor of Time. The resolutions I made there were earnest. And they were as profound and pure as Susan Ashton's voice...

*Throw Your arms around me and walk me home  
I've wandered off way too far / for way too long  
Standing broken in this wilderness of shame  
I have found my only strength is in Your name  
Oh Father please can you undo what I've done  
Bring me back to square one ++*

That evening I learned that life's blizzards may arrive unexpectedly, but it's up to us how long the winter lasts. Time is a gift from God; we can either wear it like a heart on our sleeve, or like a tool, on our wrist. Our choices create our chances. I also realized that my earlier, elevated view had not been a fluke; it was just the preview of an unforgettable episode that changed everything - including me.

Maybe it was the cold night air, but my stuffy head wasn't throbbing anymore. So turning back to the hotel, I retraced my steps "feeling better" about tomorrow. As the snow crunched underneath my tennies, I offered a whispered 'thank-you' to Cindy and Susan for their insights.... Whether the tunes are new releases, or familiar classics; the God-centered music of such artists definitely have a place in this mistake-filled world -- especially on those occasions when we feel alone... in Times Square.

## *Between The Lines And Spaces*

\* “A Reason To Live” words & music by Cindy Morgan

\*\* “Reaching In” words & music by Cindy Morgan

# “Beyond Justice To Mercy” by Susan Ashton, Billy Smiley & Paula Carpenter

++ “Summer Solstice” by Wayne Kirkpatrick

###

Stay tuned to CCMmagazine.com this year, as author Barton Green will present upcoming features on the stories behind the songs of **Steven Curtis Chapman, Matthew West, Jason Roy of Building 429, Mark Schultz** and many more! [CCM](#)

E L U X E E D I T I O N



# WORSHIP AND BELIEVE

STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN

## REVIEWS

mar. 1 2016

right here

CHAR  
BILLING



## JOHN TIBBS

DEAD MAN WALKING



the voice of the martyrs

i am n

[www.ccmagazine.com/magazine/issues/mar16](http://www.ccmagazine.com/magazine/issues/mar16)

MUSIC BY:  
The Brilliance  
of the  
Bright

## STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN

### ***Worship And Believe***

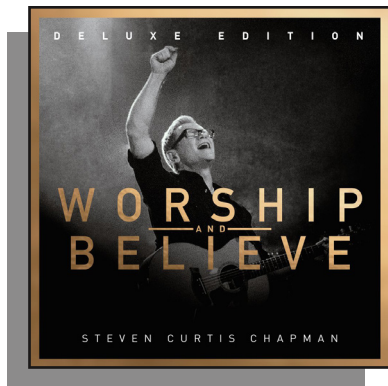
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FOR FANS OF:

Michael W. Smith, MercyMe

WE LIKE: “More Than Conquerors”

★★★★



After twenty-two studio albums and thirty years, you might think **Steven Curtis Chapman** has done it all. Not quite yet. With the release of his forthcoming album ***Worship And Believe***, Chapman will have finally released his first-ever worship recording. With appearances by **Matt Maher**, **Chris Tomlin**, **Rend Collective** and **Matt Redman**, this album proves it was worth the wait.

*Worship And Believe* definitely feels different than your typical Chapman release, but it's his voice that keeps this album in familiar territory, even as the pop production and congregational feel bring in fresh elements—"Amen" as the best example here. "More Than Conquerors" and "One True God," which features Tomlin, are slower, scriptural refrains tailor-made for congregations to proclaim. Taken together, it's a welcome shift in career direction for Chapman and hopefully there's more to come.

—Matt Conner

### JOHN TIBBS

#### ***Dead Man Walking***

(FairTrade Services)

FOR FANS OF:

*John Mellencamp, Michael McDermott,  
Mumford & Sons*

WE LIKE: "Dead Man Walking"

★★★★



After getting a sampling from a promising EP last fall, singer/songwriter **John Tibbs** digs deeper into his roots rock sound and spiritually pondering soul throughout the full-length edition of ***Dead Man Walking***. Featuring production from indie favorite **Ben Shive (Rend Collective, Colony House)**, the collection sounds just as authentic musically as it does lyrically, covering themes of finding identity in faith and finally embracing self-acceptance (after struggling with a lifelong speech impediment).

Even so, the troubadour sounds crystal clear as his voice sturdily switches from pleading to smooth to soulful, the latter of which is most evident on the redemptive title track's duet with the enchanting Ellie Holcomb

—Andy Argyrakis

## CHARLES BILLINGSLEY

### ***Right Here***

(StowTown Records)

FOR FANS OF: Matthew West,  
Sidewalk Prophets, Todd Smith

WE LIKE: “See You Again|”

(f/Meredith Andrews)

★★★★☆



Getting back into pop/rock mode—a timbre we haven’t experienced from **Charles Billingsley** since his **NewSong** days of the early 90s, at least in all of its synth-and-electric-guitar-glory—the worship leader-artist’s new album, ***Right Here***, has plenty of both. With the majority of the album’s eleven tracks produced by **Seth Mosley** and **Mike “X” O’Connor**, it seems like this well thought out plan worked to perfection.

Bringing all available fire power—from songwriting, to studio performance, to production—this collection of songs seamlessly fits into the CCM mold, but provides the kind of foundation that can only come from a tag team effort such as Mosley, Billingsley, and their host of contemporary Christian stalwarts (including **Matt Hammitt**, **Mia Fieldes**, **Travis Ryan**, and **Keith Everette Smith** among others). We love *Right Here*, and think it will stay with listeners across the board.

—Kevin Sparkman



## VARIOUS ARTISTS

### ***The Voice of the Martyrs: i am n***

(Integrity Music)

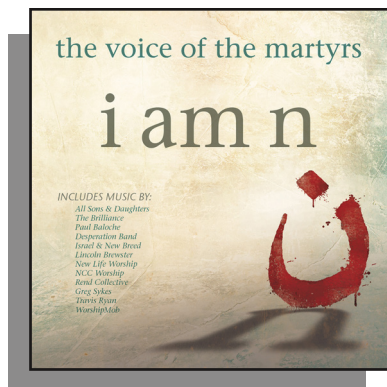
FOR FANS OF: Israel and New Breed,

Lincoln Brewster, Rend Collective

WE LIKE: “We Stand As One”

by Greg Sykes

★★★★



Considering all the proceeds go towards supporting persecuted Iraqi and Syrian Christians via **The Voice of the Martyrs** organization, there's just as much merit as music throughout this companion to the burgeoning “i am n” movement and multi-media resource series (which adapts its moniker from the letter used by ISIS militants to mark the homes and churches of Nazarenes). It's certainly a heavy subject, but those willing to take the plunge for the plight of refugees will be rewarded with contributions from Israel and **New Breed, Lincoln Brewster, Paul Baloché, All Sons & Daughters, The Brilliance, Travis Ryan** and many others.

Though their statements may be wrapped around various forms of modern worship, continuity comes from the empowering focus that regularly reminds listeners to stay glued to their faith no matter how intense the circumstance.

—Andy Argyrakis

## FELLOWSHIP CREATIVE

### *Eclipsed*

(FairTrade Services)

FOR FANS OF:

*Desperation Band, Highlands Worships*

WE LIKE: “Stars”

★★★★



**Fellowship Creative** is building a strong reputation with each new worship release from the artist collective found at **Fellowship Church** in Grapevine, Texas. While it's not uncommon for a large church to write and even record their own songs, few faith communities boast the resources and richness found on a release like ***Eclipsed***. There's a reason, after all, that a label like **FairTrade Services** got involved.

*Eclipsed* finds the talented worship collective singing confidently on uplifting tracks like “Grace On Top Of Grace” and “Jesus Our Hope.” However the album gets better when it creates a reflective atmosphere on songs like “Stars,” which provides a beautiful soundtrack for the liminal spaces in which we often find ourselves. Several tracks follow suit in this darker wheelhouse, and it's ironically here they shine brightest musically

—Matt Conner

## TYSON MOTSENBOCKER

### ***Letters To Lost Loves***

(Tooth & Nail)

FOR FANS OF:

*Benjamin Francis Leftwich*

WE LIKE: “Can’t Come Home Again”

★★★★★



Originally funded via a successful Kickstarter campaign, **Tyson Motsenbocker's *Letters To Lost Loves*** found its way to the right ears to land a label deal with **Tooth & Nail**. It's easy to hear why. The album's pastoral pop/rock echoes solo artists like **Benjamin Francis Leftwich** mixed with some road-weary folk and the pop smarts of **Death Cab For Cutie**. If that sounds interesting, it's because it is.

So is the story behind it. Motsenbocker penned *Letters* after walking 600 miles of the Western coastline of the U.S.—from Washington to San Francisco—after the tragic loss of his mother in 2013. *Letters* is filled with the sum of the experiences, the questions, the lessons from such a life-altering experience. It plays like a score to a movie you've never seen but would love to watch. A true gem for Tooth & Nail.

– Matt Conner

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## SHELLY E. JOHNSON

### ***Measureless EP***

(FairTrade Services)

FOR FANS OF:

*Jamie Jamgochian, Nichole Nordeman*

WE LIKE: "From Heaven's Glory"

★★★



You've been singing along with **Shelly E. Johnson's** songs, even if you weren't aware of it. As the writer of popular and powerful congregational anthems like "Power Of The Cross" (also recorded by Natalie Grant) and "Draw Near," Johnson has built a strong reputation after touring North America with **The Gettys**.

Her newest EP, ***Measureless***, furthers her impact with five vertical songs rooted in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Some tracks like opener "Loved Me First" are radio-ready, but the highlight here is the hymn, "From Heaven's Glory." If a congregation is interested in a rich new track to include in worship settings, you won't find a better entry.

—Matt Conner



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