

Presence of Mind of the Spirit

Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. **—Ezekiel 18:31**

Trying to Prove Ourselves

You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight. **—Luke 16:15**

Be Prepared to Affirm God

And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ. **—Ephesians 1:9**

Raising Her Voice to Change Poverty and Child Abuse

Recording artist and singer Beckah Shae says one of the most underutilized weapons Christians have is their voice. The

Dove-award nominee isn't referring to her soulful crooning;  she's talking about speaking out against injustice. Every day, she notes, children go hungry and young girls and boys are trafficked for sex—not because there aren't enough people to change that, but because those who are aware of the problems aren't vocal enough about them.

"This is the most powerful thing for me—to be a voice. I have a powerful platform right now," Shae says. She uses her voice in numerous ways, including to create contemporary Christian albums such as *Destiny*, her most recent. She is also a spokesperson for Kids Alive, which fights poverty, and for A21, which rescues girls from sex trafficking.

The songstress says she was both heartbroken and elated when she visited Kenya to see the work Kids Alive was doing during the drought that has created a hunger crisis in east Africa. She witnessed the ministry helping to rescue orphans who had been physically abused, then meeting the spiritual, physical, educational and emotional needs of the children who had nowhere else to turn.

"It's more of a family-type setting. They make it like a family so it's not like an orphanage," she says.

Shae and her husband, a music producer, sponsor a child with Kids Alive. She is committed to helping—and using her voice to tell about the injustice and the work being done in Kenya to change it.

"It's not about everything we do," Shae says, "it's about [our lack of] doing anything."

Beckah Shae's favorite quote:

"We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people."

—Martin Luther King Jr.

Bikers Deliver Christmas Gifts, Santa-Style

On a crisp and sunny Saturday recently, hundreds of bikers from around the Carolinas descended upon the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte, N.C., with gifts strapped to their  motorcycles for the Fourth Annual Bikers with Boxes event. The group is an annual supporter of Operation Christmas Child, an outreach by Samaritan's Purse that last year alone gave 8.2 million underprivileged children Christmas shoe boxes.

"We've just really been thrilled that this has been an annual event and that the bikers have embraced it," said Diane Wise of the Billy Graham Library. "Bikers are the most generous group of people."

Church Suit May Go to High Court

It's not unusual for churches to rent school auditoriums for worship services. The Bronx Household of Faith just wants the same rights other community groups have to assemble in  public schools during off hours. But school officials who preside over the New York borough are allegedly discriminating against the group because it would use the facility for religious services, the church claims.

The New York City Department of Education consistently

rejected Bronx Household's request to meet at a school building for weekend services until a federal district court in 2002 issued an injunction prohibiting the department from keeping churches out. Now the U.S. Supreme Court may decide the matter. It's a case that could have far-reaching ramifications for churches across the nation that wish to hold meetings in public schools.

The Politics of Sunday Sermons

Should government regulate Sunday morning sermons about political candidates? Most Protestant pastors don't think so. A survey shows they want the freedom to preach what the  Bible says about candidates' positions.

According to LifeWay Research, nearly nine out of 10 Protestant senior pastors believe government should not regulate sermons.

"The survey confirmed what pastors of nearly every persuasion have told us for years: They don't want the IRS or any other governmental agency to censor what they say from their pulpits," said Alliance Defense Fund Senior Legal Counsel Erik Stanley.

Feedback

"I am so impressed with Charisma and how it has progressed with the times without losing sight of our mission as believers."

-Sarah Matthews

A Virtual winner

Wow! The October issue was very powerful and informative. Awesome research on all the new digital and virtual technology for spreading the Good News of Jesus around the world. I also loved the 30-year-old picture of beloved founder and publisher Steve Strang.

Bob Weiner, Gainesville, Fla.

I've been carrying my October issue in my tote because it is chock-full of articles I intend to share with friends and family. Charisma is always a blessing.

Lisa Letterii DeFelice, Marlboro, N.Y.

October was one of the best issues yet. The cover looks like Moses giving the Ten Commandments. Brilliant!

DaisyMay Rader, Minneapolis

The October issue was OK for me. We are in a small town with a small-town church, so none of this stuff really applies to us.

Colleen Cobb Audette, Sebastian, Fla.

Staying true to the mission

I'm a long-time reader and I am so impressed with *Charisma* and how it has progressed with the times without losing sight of our mission as believers.

I also get Charisma News updates on my iPhone. I love getting kingdom news—and you certainly can't get that in the mainstream media. Keep up the great work!

Sarah Matthews, Jacksonville, Fla.

Let's 'watch' our Timing

Regarding your article "Timing the Spirit" (September, Inform), I say, "Amen." I suggest that pastors and teachers remove their watches in the pulpit. It is a pet peeve of mine, seeing them checking their time.

I have said to them on occasion that they should not be concerned about how long the message goes; it is the Holy Spirit's work, not theirs. I too wonder how many wonderful things have been missed because there was more concern for people-pleasing.

Thanks for all the great articles and information in your magazine. I look forward to *Charisma* every month. J. Lee Grady is right-on and almost every column of his gets a hearty "Amen!" from me, too.

Pam Dolson, Lihue, Hawaii

Angels We Have Heard (and Seen)

Explaining the reality of angelic beings in everyday life



Angelic activity always increases at times of great spiritual breakthrough in the kingdom of God. Christmas was just such a moment in history. At the first advent of Christ, the earth exploded with angelic activity.

God sent angels to make announcements to all who took part in the birth of the Savior. Gabriel appeared to the priest Zacharias and told him: "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John" (Luke 1:13). Soon after, Elizabeth was pregnant with the Messiah's forerunner, John the Baptist.

Gabriel was also sent to Mary, Jesus' mother, to herald her as the woman chosen by God to birth His Son. Joseph was reassured of Mary's virginal purity by an angel who appeared to him in a dream. An angel directed the shepherds to Bethlehem so they could find the stable where Jesus was. The same angel along with countless others serenaded above the shepherds' field.

Your Guide to a Rockin'

Christmas

Check out the hottest Christian Christmas albums this season.

Wow Christmas Various



Looking for a delightful yuletide smorgasbord? Then check out *Wow Christmas*, featuring 32 of contemporary Christian music's top artists putting their own spin on beloved holiday tunes. Ring in the festive season with Casting Crowns crooning "Joy to the World," Point of Grace caroling "Little Drummer Boy" or Chris Tomlin singing worshipful ballad "Emmanuel."

One Silent Night FFH

The husband and wife duo known as FFH recently released *One Silent Night*, their first Christmas album. With a mix of classic and original Christmas tunes, you'll be sure to do a little jingle-bell rockin' while listening to these tracks.

Christmas in Diverse City



Toby Mac

Five-time Grammy winner TobyMac has already hit a good note with his first Christmas album, *Christmas in Diverse City*. Its single "Christmas Is Here," featuring Leigh Nash, became a No. 1 radio hit. And with the addition of Jamie Grant and the Diverse City band, listeners are in for a sugarcoated treat with these diverse vocals and musical stylings.

Oh for Joy

David Crowder Band

Known for its creative worship style, the David Crowder Band doesn't disappoint with *Oh for Joy*, a collaborative reinvention of Christmas hits such as "Go Tell It on the Mountain," "The First Noel" and "O Holy Night."

The Heart of Christmas



Matthew West

For his seventh album, pop artist Matthew West didn't pull any punches. His Christmas release, *The Heart of Christmas*, features some stellar work from heavy hitters Amy Grant, Vince Gill and Mandisa. With such an all-star cast joining West to celebrate the true reason for Christmas, it's hard not to feel more than a little holiday cheer.

Born is the king

Hillsong

The popular Aussie Pentecostal worship band released *Born Is the King* this winter while on a 13-city tour of the U.S. The eight-track holiday EP can be purchased as a digital-only release on Hillsong Music's website.