

C.S. Lewis-Inspired Metal Band? Silent Planet Breaks Down Barriers

The Vans Warped Tour is one of the biggest music festivals of the summer. And the only thing rising higher than the temperatures is the success of up-and-coming Christian heavy metal band Silent Planet.

The band, which marked their Warped Tour debut this summer, sees this rock tour as an opportunity to reach music fans with the gospel of Christ.

Silent Planet is a five-piece heavy metal band from Los Angeles. Garrett Russell sings lead vocals, with Spencer Keene and Mitchell Stark on guitar, Thomas Freckleton on bass, and Alex Camarena on drums.

The band's name comes from a C.S. Lewis classic work of fiction called *Out of the Silent Planet*. Garrett explained how the group of musicians chose the name.

"We were all a bunch of college nerds when I started this band in 2009 and I was a literature major, so we thought we would incorporate literature into what we are doing," Garrett told CBN News. "We all love C.S. Lewis and our drummer, that was his favorite book. And we are really interested in this idea that we live on this silent planet, that Earth is this silent planet. That's what C.S. Lewis is talking about."

"We're experiencing an existential separation from one another and an inability to understand one another because of sin, because of selfishness," he added.

In hopes of mending that separation, part of Silent Planet's mission is to break down the barricades in order to bridge the

gap between the church and the rock music culture.

"I'm here because I love Jesus and because Jesus has transformed my life," Garrett explained. "And I want people to encounter the love of God that I've found in a non-religious setting and to experience God freely. That's why I've been doing this for seven years."

"Warped Tour is the new stage for us," he continued. "But it's really been the same thing for seven years. We've just graduated to a place where we are allowed to be on this tour and it's exciting."

And this new platform has ignited the Garrett's passion to reach people.

"To be honest I think being here has empowered my desire for people to know the love of Jesus because I see that need," he said.

The music they write covers topics that Garrett believes people need to hear. Silent Planet released their first full length album "The Night God Slept" in the fall of 2014. The songs deal with topics like sex trafficking in America and the bombing of Hiroshima.

Their second full-length album, "Everything Was Sound," was released barely a month ago while on Warped Tour. It addresses issues like post-traumatic stress disorder in the song titled "Panic Room" and the challenges of prejudice in "Orphan."

Garrett says the lyrics have already started to reach people.

"Yesterday a guy came up to me and said our song, 'Panic Room,' about PTSD, helped him to forgive his father who abused him growing up because of what his father had gone through in Vietnam. The song, it helped him to reconcile with his father who's not in his life, but to understand why his father was like that," Garrett said.

Garrett also met a girl who is a survivor of sexual assault.

"She said the fact that we could be a Christian band and talk about these social issues was big for her," he said. "To be able to be a Christian and also stand up and say 'no, sexual assault is not right,' that was like, you're why we do this!"

Less than a month after their new album's release, "Everything Was Sound" topped the Billboard charts, reaching the number one spot for both Christian and hard rock albums, and finding a place on the Billboard 200 chart.

"It's definitely kind of nerve-racking when you put out an album," Garrett told CBN News. "I feel both nervous and good about the fact that when we write we don't think about who's going to listen to it, what genre will this be perceived as. We are just kinda doing it, you know what I mean?"

Regardless of it's success, Garrett says the band is proud of their album

"It's what we wanted to write and I was proud of my guys for the cool music we wrote and we try to do it justice with what we were writing about," he said.

When writing the songs, Garrett has one primary goal: to integrate his faith with the music culture.

"I believe that to be a Christian is to be integrative and it's sad because I believe a lot of people's experience with Christians has been largely segregative," he said. "Jesus is integration I believe."

And he's not only reaching fans at Warped Tour. Members of the church community are also supporting the Silent Planet mission.

"You know, maybe there's certain churches that wouldn't want us to play or certain festivals that would ask us not to come back. But, you know, overall I've experienced way more love

from the church than negativity,” Garrett shared.

“Love and Jesus are interchangeable to me,” he said.” I have found no love outside of the love of God. Only in God have I seen love, and have I been able to experience love with other people because of the love I’ve experienced with God.” {eoa}

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