

Christian Author, Former 'CCM' Editor Matthew Paul Turner Comes Out as Gay, Announces Divorce

On Friday (July 17), Christian author Matthew Paul Turner came out as gay via Facebook and Instagram and announced that he and his wife, fellow writer Jessica Turner, are divorcing.

Matthew Paul Turner is the former editor of CCM, a magazine covering contemporary Christian music, but he is best known for his rhyming children's books published through Convergent, an imprint of Penguin Random House. His 2019 book *When I Pray for You* is a Today, Publisher's Weekly and Wall Street Journal bestseller with more than 100,000 copies in print.

"[A]s someone who spent 30+ years in fundamentalist/evangelical churches, exploring God through conservative theologies, I've lived many days overwhelmed by fear, shame and self-hatred," Turner wrote in a Facebook post. "But for the first time in my life, despite the sadness and grief I'm feeling right now, I can say with confidence that I'm ready to embrace freedom, hope and God as a gay man."

Jessica Turner also shared a Facebook post. "We are moving forward with ending our marriage, while remaining deeply committed to our family and each other," she wrote. "We are all adjusting to a new normal, with our home now extended under two rooftops."

The two were married in 2004 after meeting online and quickly bonding over their interest and involvement in CCM.

"I fell in love with her 17 years ago and still love her deeply," Turner wrote. "Despite her own grief and pain, she

has loved and encouraged me to be fully me.” The couple live in Nashville, Tennessee, with their three children.

They did not say when their divorce will be finalized.

In his book, *Fear No Evil*, Turner describes growing up in a conservative Independent Fundamental Baptist Church where he said his belief in God was rooted in fear of damnation—he was taught musical syncopation was sinful and said he didn’t set foot in a movie theater until age 19. He writes that his faith evolved over the years, and eventually Turner launched a blog called “Jesus Needs New PR” and became a part of more progressive Christian circles.

“Though my own faith evolved long ago to become LGBTQ+ affirming, my journey toward recognizing, accepting and embracing myself took much longer,” Turner wrote in his post.

His now-progressive faith is reflected in his children’s books—which emphasize God’s radical, inclusive love—as well as his other writings. Turner said he would continue to write children’s books with the support of his publisher.

Jessica Turner is founder of popular blog and of the 2018 book, *Stretched Too Thin: How Working Moms Can Lose the Guilt, Work Smarter and Thrive*. She writes about family, motherhood, DIY hacks and savings tips. {eo}

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