

Circleslide: Inspiring Hope

The modern-rock band Circleslide always has purposed to inspire hope through their music. Recent experiences have made the group more determined to carry out its mission. Lead singer Gabe Martinez shares the meaning behind the band name, the reason Circleslide creates music, and the message of their new album, Echoes of the Light, which releases today.

How did Circleslide get started?

Gabe Martinez: I got started doing this a while back when I was doing missionary work in Russia. We were delivering Bibles and medical aid to areas really close to the Chernobyl accident in Belarus. At night we'd have all this time and we'd invite people to come and hang out with us there in the hotel lobby there in Minsk. I started just playing the guitar. We started singing songs, worship songs in English, and people seemed to really respond to that. And basically I realized that music was something that I felt called to do.

When we came back to the States, I started playing in coffee houses and started playing in any venues that would have me because I saw the potential to sing about my experiences, sing about faith, sing about loss, and connect with people and then maybe strike up a conversation that would lead to them asking questions about God and asking about why it is I believe the way I believe. That's always been the goal with music—to inspire a conversation, to get things started that way.

How did the band come together?

Martinez: We all had mutual friends. We all knew people who said we'd be great for each other. When we met, we hung out and this band and we became instant friends. We all like the same music; it was easy to be on the road with each other.

Tell us about the inspiration for the name of the band.

Martinez: I heard the word from a band called The Choir. They had an album called Circleslide, and that's all I would listen to for hours and hours [growing up]. So when it came time to name the band, it felt like a little bit of a tribute to another band that I liked that maybe didn't get a lot of recognition.

I got to meet the guys, and I asked them what the word meant. And Steve Hindalong, who wrote the song, said that when he was a kid he liked this slide that would come to town with the carnival that you needed a potato sack to ride, but he hated climbing the stairs. So he told his mom, "When I get to heaven, God's going to make me a circleslide that I can ride all the time and never climb the stairs." To me it seems like a perfect example of God's grace in heaven; it's like a metaphor for the joy that we can wait for when we finally reach heaven and see Him face to face.

What is Circleslide's mission?

Martinez: Our mission is to inspire hope in people, whoever is the listening audience, whether it be Christians or non-Christians. ... There's just a huge opportunity right now in the times that we're living in to say something about a God who loves us and a God who thinks thoughts about us, thoughts of goodness. The way the Bible says, "How countless are Your thoughts towards us, O God. They outnumber the sands of the sea." That to me is what inspires me to write songs, this concept of a God who created the heavens and the earth, who has the power to wipe us all out but yet He's not angry. He's reaching out to us every day. The Bible says His mercies are new every morning. That, to me, is what inspires me to sing and to rethink what's going on in my life.

What was the inspiration for *Echoes of the Light*?

Martinez: We had to deal with the flood here in Nashville; I had health issues around that same time. We found out that

loved ones of ours are struggling with cancer; it's been a really rough year. And yet I can see how God is pushing us toward this idea that there is redemption and there is hope. That's what's inspiring me right now and I'm hoping that these songs on this album inspire people to have hope again.

The first song, "Echoes of the Light"—the idea is that God spoke, "Let there be light." And we are living in the aftermath of those words. He is the author of light. He is the author of truth. And we're supposed to be like that. Whether we like it or not, whatever we believe, we are echoes of that action, echoes of that light. That's what the album is talking about. Every song talks about a different aspect of what it means to be an echo of the light.

"Love Amazing" is about God's love; the ability to rejoice when all around it looks like we should despair. I've seen that countless times in my life, where you would think that someone would despair at their worst moment, yet they call out: "No God, I choose to trust you. I choose to believe that you're good." And I've seen that; that's when you see God's grace shine through; that's when you see miracles happen; that's when you see lives changed. We're trying to talk about that on this album—real moments, real life.

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