

How Jesus Is Redeeming the Scandal of Rock 'N' Roll

Music is a big part of our culture—and not just in secular circles. Music is huge in terms of worship, especially in the evangelical and charismatic communities.

I can remember the days (when I was quite young) when it was scandalous to have a drum set in the church. Some church leadership opposed early contemporary Christian music, but for the most part, those attitudes have changed.

Recently, a friend of mine named Mark Joseph wrote a book called *Rock Gets Religion*, in which he delves into the tension religious youth encounter when they engage in the world of rock 'n' roll. After all, rock music once exalted—and was even defined by—a culture of hedonism and debauchery. Now, though, many upstanding citizens and even godly men and women are taking their place in the rock music industry. Mark's book lays out the case for people of faith to keep making their music in the midst of popular culture.

Mark is the son of missionary parents who went to Japan in the early 1950s after General Douglas MacArthur called for missionaries. Mark's late father, Ken Joseph Sr., was a friend of Robert Walker and well aware of *Christian Life Magazine*, so I have known him for many years.

I don't often write about music, though some of that is generational. Truth be told, I enjoy music, and I try to keep up with trends. My son Cameron's *Relevant* magazine really focuses on music because that's so important to Millennials. My son Chandler, a Millennial, makes his living as a musician and is quite good. (You can check out his music on Saskatchewan. How is that for a shameless promotion by his dad?)

It's hard to be successful in the music industry and maintain a strong faith—and Mark makes that point clear in his book. But in order to reach the maximum number of people with their music, Mark says, Christian musicians have to be willing to reach people where they are. He points out that the more Christians participate in mainstream culture, the more we will see that culture reflecting our values.

I recently interviewed Mark on my podcast, “The Strang Report.” Listen to the interview below to learn how we as Christians can impact society, especially the music industry.