

# Dove Award nominees keep spotlight on Christ

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NASHVILLE, Tenn.—[The Dove Awards](#) may be the biggest night of the year for the Gospel Music Association, but through testimonies and songs of praise, the spotlight remains shining brightly on Christ.



Musicians and recording industry representatives who gathered for a press conference—and a time of prayer and devotion—before the nominees were announced for the 41st Annual Gospel Music Association’s Dove Awards included (left to right) Ed Leonard, chairman of the board of the Gospel Music Association and president of Daywind Music Group; Wes Bulla, dean of the Mike Curb College of Entertainment and Music Business at Belmont University; Ben Tankard, gospel/jazz artist and multiple Dove Award nominee; Francesca Battistelli, Dove Award nominee; Michael W. Smith, 44-time Dove Award winner; Brandon Heath, 2009 Dove Award-winning male vocalist of the year; Kari Jobe, Dove Award nominee; Jeremy Camp, two-time male vocalist of the year; Lisa Kimmey-Winans, member of the group Out of Eden and Gospel Music Channel host; and Jason Crabb, 10-time Dove Award winner.

Before the nominations were announced for the 41st annual Dove Awards, many Christian musicians and industry leaders gathered together for a time of prayer and devotion led by Pete Wilson, senior pastor of Cross Point Church in Nashville and author of [\*Plan B—What Do You Do When God Doesn't Show Up The Way You Thought He Would?\*](#)

“The more God expands your ministry and influence, the more you have to give up control and completely surrender to him,” Wilson said.

“Your primary responsibility in life is to be living for his glory. It may seem like the tasks will always require more than you have to offer, but remember, what Christ begins in you, he will complete. As you’re writing these songs of hope and sharing messages of grace and redemption, you’re being used as a vessel for Christ to accomplish incredible things for his glory.”

Multiple Dove Award winner Michael W. Smith agreed.

“It’s wonderful to hear great songs, but when people’s hearts are really in the right place and focusing on Christ, that’s what will change the world,” he said. “When an artist takes the focus off of himself and shines the spotlight on Christ, that’s what makes me proud to be a part of this industry.

“We’re here to celebrate music and to celebrate Jesus, the one who really is the famous one. It’s not about us. As we recognize these artists who have made a significant impact, it’s really recognizing a heart that loves Jesus and is focused on leading people to him.”



Bart Millard



Natalie Grant

In addition to Smith, other recording artists including Brandon Heath, Kari Jobe, Francesca Battistelli, Jason Crabb and Jeremy Camp attended the devotional time and press conference at Belmont University's Curb Café in Nashville, Tenn., where this year's Dove Award nominees were announced.

Jaci Velasquez made a special appearance to assist Camp in announcing the nominees for the Spanish language album of the year.

"I'm always honored and so excited to be a part of anything that the Gospel Music Association does," Velasquez said.

"It's an incredible industry. We get to be a part of music that changes people's lives. For me, watching all the artists is such a great experience and my hat goes off to each and every one of them. They're all doing amazing things and creating music that is intended to lead people to a

deeper love for God and promoting the kingdom.”

Camp agreed.

“It’s such a joy to be here with all my peers—amazing musicians who love Jesus,” he said. “And that’s the whole purpose why we’re here—to get the gospel out. To be nominated is such an honor, but above all, just to see everyone joined together and saying, ‘I just want to be here to glorify God,’ that’s what brings me the most joy.”

The Dove Awards will be held April 21 at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville and aired on the Gospel Music Channel. The evening will feature artists from every style of gospel/Christian music coming together for a night of music and celebration.

For a complete list of nominees, visit [www.gos-pelmusic.org](http://www.gos-pelmusic.org).

Natalie Grant, four-time Dove Award winning female vocalist of the year, and Bart Millard, lead singer of the Texas-based band MercyMe, will serve as hosts for the awards show.