

# Texas band emphasizes life-changing message

April 4, 2014

GREENVILLE—For the Dove-Award winning group [MercyMe](#), *Welcome to the New* is more than just the title of their latest CD.

The album presents songs that celebrate new life in Christ, and its theme is based on 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”



“From the beginning to end, the whole premise of this record is identity in Christ,” said lead singer Bart Millard, who grew up in Greenville, where his grandfather, Lloyd Lindsey, served as pastor of [Ardis Heights Baptist Church](#) throughout the 1960s and early 1970s.

“As people are listening to these songs, our desire is that the message of the gospel resonates with people and helps them realize that God loves them unconditionally and is calling them to pursue a personal relationship

with him. During concerts, we emphasize that salvation is not based on works but what Christ has already done on the cross. There is nothing anyone can do to make God love them more than he already does. All you have to do is accept his invitation and respond by resting in the finished work of the cross.

“It’s a shame to meet people who refuse to respond to the message of the cross, but it’s just as tragic to meet people who claim to know Jesus but still feel like they are in bondage. From the moment you receive Christ, you are a brand-new creation. When your identity is found in Christ, there is freedom. For all past, present and future sins, Christ already says redeemed.”

Through their message and music, band members desire to connect audiences to the life-changing love of Christ.

“God has really placed on our hearts the importance of sharing messages about grace and identity,” Millard said. “It’s the simplicity of the gospel and who you are in Christ—realizing why you can show grace to other people because grace has been shown to you.”

This spring, MercyMe is touring to promote the album and tell stories behind the songs.

Upcoming appearances including an April 13 concert to help raise awareness and support for [Buckner International](#), scheduled after the Texas Rangers game against the Houston Astros at Globe Life Park in Arlington.

MercyMe will perform an acoustic concert April 14 at Vista Ridge Mall in Lewisville and host an autograph session at LifeWay Christian Store in Hurst. The next day, the group will make appearances at LifeWay Stores in Webster, Katy and Houston.

Following this tour, MercyMe band members plan to limit their concert schedule and perform only 50 dates throughout the year.

“While addressing the subject of identity, the Lord has been reminding me that my identity is not wrapped up in MercyMe,” Millard said. “Being in the group is one of the ways that the Lord has given me a platform to speak truth into people’s lives and present the gospel, but it is not the only way to get the message out.

“During this season, we have recognized the importance of cutting back our touring schedule so we can focus on being better husbands and fathers. However, God is still giving us opportunities to be a voice and share the gospel through music.”

Millard recently accepted a position at [Grand Canyon University](#) in Phoenix, Ariz., where he will serve as the director of a new program launching this fall at the Center for Worship Arts.

“A lot of musicians either go to college as a backup plan or skip it all together,” Millard noted. “I mentioned the idea of creating a program that would encourage musicians to earn a bachelor’s degree and come out not only more equipped from a business standpoint, but would also allow them to become more equipped by who they are in Christ.

“The goal is to raise up a generation of students and help them learn the Christian music industry inside and out, before they become a full-time worship leader or recording artist. Basically, I’ll be sharing everything that I learned the hard way over the past 20 years.”