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## Decade full of growth

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Ten years. One decade. It all seems to have flown by so fast.

And yet, for Topeka native Mitch McVicker, the past 10 years may seem nothing less than an eternity.

It was on the night of Sept. 19, 1997, while en route to Wichita from Chicago for a concert performance, that McVicker nearly lost his life in an accident on an Illinois interstate highway. His best friend, legendary Christian singer-songwriter Rich Mullins, died in the crash.

McVicker suffered a severe closed head injury that resulted in a coma. He also suffered a number of internal injuries. In all, he was hospitalized for six weeks.

With the prayers of thousands of people across the nation and around the world, McVicker slowly but surely regained his health and strength. Many called it a miracle. McVicker wasn't arguing.

He returned to singing, song writing and touring, and soon was criss-crossing the country for 200 dates a year in concerts he said were ways for him to "point people to Jesus."

He got married a few years ago, becoming a stepfather in the process. He and his wife later had a little girl, whom McVicker affectionately refers to as "a blessed little ball of sweetness and stubbornness."

Earlier this month, McVicker, 34, released his fifth studio album, "Love Will Rise," which has been called his strongest effort to date.

"Love Will Rise" seemed to take forever to see the light of day. McVicker admitted as much in a phone interview earlier this week.

"I figured the Lord must have been doing something beyond what I could detect," he said. "I began to wonder if the Lord gave a rip about this record. I know the last thing the world needs is another Christian musician, but the world needs the truth."

His next Topeka appearance is Nov. 17 at Shawnee Heights United Methodist Church, 6020 S.E. 44th, McVicker's home congregation.

Talk in the past week has focused on the 10-year anniversary of Mullins' death and the accident that almost claimed McVicker's life.

McVicker said the past few days have been a time to celebrate Mullins' memory and to give thanks for God's faithfulness in his own life.

"If any one of us were to look back at the past 10 years, we'd see the hand of the Lord in our lives," he said. "We're crazy if we think the Lord isn't active in our lives."

"It has been a time of growth for me - often in spite of me. The Lord continues to work, even when my faith lacks."

Time has given McVicker perspective and insight in his faith.

"I'm a little closer to embracing who the Lord is making me, and embracing the way I'm put together," he said. "I often find myself erring on the side of trying to impress God and working my way into his favor."

"But hopefully, each day, I'm one day closer to resting in my 'childship' and simply being his."

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