



September 28, 2007

New chapter, 10 years after near-fatal crash **(<http://tribune-democrat.com/editorials/x519146870/New-chapter-10-years-after-near-fatal-crash>)**

BY CHIP MINEMYER
(<http://tribune-democrat.com>)

Songwriter Mitch McVicker has been my friend and an inspiration since I first met him following a concert some seven years ago.

His is not a household name, although millions have been moved by the songs he's written or helped write.

He is a young man who has overcome a tragic accident to build a new life and a promising career. And I never get tired of telling his story, even as it moves in new and exciting directions.

On Sept. 18, Mitch welcomed the release of his latest CD, "Love Will Rise." A day later, he experienced the 10th anniversary of a car crash that left him in a coma and killed popular Christian recording artist Rich Mullins.

Mullins was known for songs such as "Awesome God" and "Step By Step." Mullins and Mitch together wrote "My Deliverer," which won a Dove Award – contemporary Christian music's equivalent of a Grammy.

Since recovering from the wreck, Mitch has carved out his own legacy of music, including four albums.

Strengthened by a recent marriage and a baby daughter, the Kansas native is embarking on a concert tour that will bring him through western Pennsylvania in October.

"Honestly, I haven't looked back and wondered if things could have been different," Mitch said in a telephone interview. "I'm grateful for how things worked out for me – and for Rich, although I miss him greatly."

Mitch, 34, and his new band will perform at Waynesburg College, south of Pittsburgh, on Oct. 23. He also has Keystone State concerts scheduled for Duncannon, near Harrisburg, and Williamsport.

Specifics about the shows and Mitch's music can be found on his Web site – www.mitchmcvicker.com.

“These songs are a faith expression of where I was at, at the moment,” he said on his new CD, “what I was noticing around me, what I was noticing within me.”

His family now includes wife Paula, daughter Brooklyn and stepsons Jordan and

Mitch said becoming a father has “softened me up a bit” – and that even includes handling problems that come up on tour.

“I don’t get as worked up about the little things as I used to,” he said. “When I face something that would have gotten me frustrated in the past, it is always helpful to think of (my daughter’s) face and what her reaction would be to the whole thing – which would be nothing. It would be, ‘Tickle me.’ Or, ‘Read to me.’ ”

Mitch always seems to have a simple way of conveying a deeper message.

When recalling his time with Mullins, Mitch said: “Things rub off on you when you’re brushing your teeth in the same sink. Rich’s approach to songwriting certainly rubbed off on me, his attention to details. His quality stayed with me. You say, ‘I want to do that.’ ”

Mitch, a guitarist, knows he could benefit from the recent explosion in popularity of Christian music.

But, he says, there’s more to be experienced.

“Everybody and their dog can make a CD these days, and has,” he said. “The last thing the world needs is another Christian musician. But the world definitely needs the truth.”

Truth is something Mitch says he experienced in churches and concert halls with Mullins. He sees truth in the eyes of his young daughter and feels it in the spirituality he encounters on stage each time he performs.

“Gosh, 10 years ago I was in a coma. I was lucky to be alive,” he said. “Nobody knew if I would come out of it and what I would be like if I came out of it. But I’m here. And it’s been just taking steps every day all along the way – the steps God puts in front of me.”

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