

# Christian music scene is varied and growing in Pasco

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Jay Heilman, right, founder of the Web site Christian Music Review, interviews Michael Tait, lead singer of the Newsboys and former member of the Christian rock/hip-hop group, dc Talk.



[Courtesy of Jay Heilman]

ZEPHYRHILLS — The world of Christian music is in constant transformation. Bands like Rock the Universe and Night of Joy bring in crowds from all over the world. And, in Zephyrhills, a music scene is quietly forming.

Three notable musicians in the Zephyrhills area are giving their time and talents to bringing Christian music, both local and national, to a whole new level of popularity.

## **Jacob Hill, New Walk Church**

At New Walk Church, music is combined with a modern message to minister to a wide cross-section of locals. Jacob Hill, director of worship arts, said the music is exciting, loud, powerful and relevant.

"A lot of people come and say they feel like they've just been at a rock concert," Hill said. "They love it."

Hill said the church fosters a "come as you are" attitude, where young men and women in jeans sit next to couples in their 80s and families attending with their children.

"We accept people just the way they are, but we're determined to help them grow," Hill said.

Even though the church is currently housed at the East Pasco Family YMCA, the informal atmosphere and focus on energetic worship seems to be working. Hill said 1,500 people attended four service times during one week in December.

Hill said the church breaks up into smaller groups that meet at congregants' houses during the week.

The groups complete service projects, and individuals can join the choir and band or volunteer their time setting up the worship space, parking cars, or get involved in a number of other ways.

For information about New Walk Church, call (813) 469-9299. The New Walk Web site is [www.mynewwalk.com](http://www.mynewwalk.com).

### **Jay Heilman, Christian Music Review**

For Jay Heilman, life is a balance between a new house, three children, his wife, a full time job at a local rental center, and his ministry. Heilman founded the Web site Christian Music Review.

For the past five years, Heilman has seen the site as a way to spread the word about Christian music that glorifies worship and God. In addition to maintaining the site and writing content, Heilman also manages a small staff of writers and acts as a gatekeeper to the bands highlighted on the site.

"The goal is to bring people to music that's going to be ministering to them," Heilman said. "Music that honors and glorifies God. Not every artist that calls him or herself a Christian artist is going to do this."

Heilman said the focus of the site is national artists and record labels. He does not cover local, independent bands because there are too many to choose from, and he doesn't want to seem to be playing favorites.

While Heilman's site is growing, he doesn't see it as a way to make ends meet, even in the future.

Heilman said the culture surrounding Christian music centers around love, not money.

"If you're wanting to break into Christian music to make money, then you're in the wrong business," Heilman said. "Most Christian artists don't make money."

Christian Music Review can be found at [www.christianmusicreview.org](http://www.christianmusicreview.org).

### **Greg Clifton, Entertwine**

Greg Clifton has a unique sound in today's market. Influenced by psychedelic folk and rock music from the 60s, his songs focus not on worship but on life.

"It's Christian in the sense that it's based on the life of a Christian," Clifton said. "It's more about the experience of life and how I relate to the world as a Christian."

His new album, *Entertwine*, revolves around emotion. Clifton hopes it will have a positive impact on listeners.

"My music may not change lives, but it will make a difference on their perspective, that's for sure," Clifton said.

In addition to writing, producing, and performing the album himself, Clifton is also his own marketing manager, as well as the graphics designer and webmaster for his Web site.

*Entertwine* is now available on iTunes, Amazon, Rhapsody and Napster. You can find Clifton on the Web at [www.thegregclifton.com](http://www.thegregclifton.com).