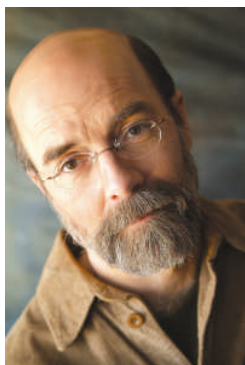


Q&A

AUTHOR INTERVIEW



Michael Card is an award-winning musician, performing artist, and writer of "El Shaddai," "Immanuel" and many other songs. He has produced over twenty albums and has also written numerous books, including A Fragile Stone, Scribbling in the Sand, A Sacred Sorrow, A Violent Grace, The Parable of Joy and Sleep Sound in Jesus (a children's book). A graduate of Western Kentucky University with bachelor's and master's degrees in biblical studies, Card is currently at work on a Ph.D. in classical literature. He also serves as a mentor to many younger artists and musicians, teaching courses on the creative process and calling the Christian recording industry into deeper discipleship. Card lives in Tennessee with his wife and four children.


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Q: Why a book that uses slavery as a theme? Is this really something that people can relate to in the twenty-first century? Shouldn't we move past that horrible concept?

Card: As an issue, slavery is still very much alive. In fact, there are more people living literally in slavery today than at any time in history. More people became slaves last year than in the entire 250 years of African American slavery. So it should still be a topic that is alive in all our hearts. The problem from the beginning has been that people want to move past slavery, to get over it. That is why so much that should have been done about slavery after abolition remains undone. What needs to happen is a redemptive discussion. As unimaginably horrible as slavery in America was (and remains in the rest of the world) there is much that can be learned from the suffering of slaves. They were never listened to redemptively. That is one thing I tried to do.

Q: You call this book a paradox. Can you explain what you mean by that?

Card: A paradox is a statement that seems contradictory but is sometimes a vehicle for truth. Most of the fundamental truths of Christianity are paradoxes; for example, Jesus is fully God and yet fully man. This book is based on the paradox that the only way to be truly free is to become a slave to Christ.

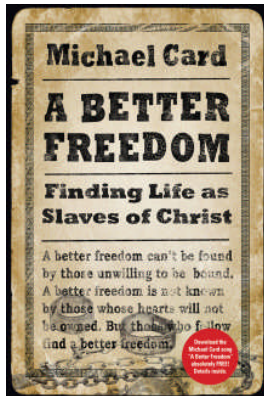
Q: The idea of being a slave and of having a master would seem to deter anyone from wanting to become a Christian, wouldn't it?

Card: There are a lot of truths about Christianity that should deter people from becoming followers of Jesus. You must recognize and repent of your sin. You must die to yourself. You must live your life in service to others and not to yourself. Dying in order to live, becoming a slave to become free, these kinds of ideas might put people off at first, but still it is our obligation to announce and share them with those around us. Behind this however, the real truth is, these difficult truths about following Jesus contain the sources for the greatest freedom and joy. The book is called *A Better Freedom*, because that describes the heart of being a slave to Jesus. It really is about freedom.

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Q&A

AUTHOR INTERVIEW



A Better Freedom: Finding Life as Slaves of Christ

October 2009

\$15, 168 pages, paperback,
0-8308-3714-0

Q: What in your experience moved you to explore the topic of slavery?

Card: I have been a part of two African American churches; one where I was discipled in college and more recently one here in Franklin, Tennessee, where I live. In both of those churches I experienced an unusual depth in the embrace of Christ. Frequently Jesus was referred to as “Master.” That is what started me down this road. When one of the pastors explained to me that early slaves called Jesus “Master” in order to let their earthly masters know they *weren’t*, I had to know more. When I went to the Bible, I discovered that slavery is one of the keys to understanding Christ and our following of him.

Q: I was surprised to learn that the apostle Luke was most likely a freed slave. Was there anything that surprised you as you studied this topic?

Card: I was surprised that sixteen of the thirty-five parables of Jesus were about slaves. I was surprised that the original meaning of the Greek word *kurios*, which we usually translate “Lord,” was “owner”; that when I confess, “Jesus is Lord,” I am saying he owns me! There were a lot of surprises along the way, which made the writing of the book a fascinating experience.