



*the invitation*  
MEREDITH ANDREWS

At its very essence worship is an invitation. Whether it's a church congregation on a Sunday morning or a solitary soul reaching up to God in a moment of personal praise, worship is inviting God's presence into our lives so we can celebrate His glory. That's why "The Invitation" is such a fitting title for singer/songwriter Meredith Andrews debut on Word Records.

Beneath her youthful exterior and fresh-faced exuberance, Andrews is a focused artist who knows exactly what she wants to say. She creates music that serves as a personal conduit for those seeking to worship God, and she also wants to remind others of God's desire to reach them. "God is extending an invitation to you, to you personally, calling you by name," she says. "He knows where you've been and he knows your background. He knows your family situation. He knows the things you struggle with, but he's calling you by name and he's inviting you to come in and to meet with him and to know him."

Andrews shares that theme on her debut album with a well-crafted set of songs that are musically inventive and lyrically challenging. It's a potent combination that is garnering Andrews enthusiastic support. Even before "The Invitation" hit store shelves, Andrews was tapped to open Aaron Shust's spring tour. In *Billboard* magazine's yearly "Faces to Watch" feature, she was singled out as Christian music's most promising new artist.

Andrews felt the call into music ministry very early in life. Growing up in Wilson, NC, she started singing in church when she was only six-years-old. "I remember the first song I ever sang in church was 'I Love You Lord,'" she recalls. "Then me and my mom would go around to other churches in our area and sing Southern Gospel music."

Andrews' childhood love of music matured into a desire to lead worship. She learned to play piano, began writing songs and during her high school years, she began leading worship at her church. On Saturday nights, young people from all over the area would converge. "That youth group thing we had on Saturday nights was called the Potters House and it was one of the most influential things in my life," she says. "I learned what it really means to worship the Lord. I'll never forget that time in my life. It was just so powerful. All the kids that would come were just so hungry for the Lord and we would worship for an hour and then my youth pastor would speak and then we'd worship for another hour or more. I remember there would be nights that the power of the Lord was so strong that I'd be under my keyboard playing because I just couldn't stand. I couldn't stand anymore, just being so humbled and in the presence of the Lord. It was powerful and I will never forget that."

Andrews attended Liberty University where she majored in family and child development, and planned on working in an orphanage after graduation. She was born an only child, but her parents provided homes for many foster children. "We had about 20 kids come through our home in a period of about 10 years," she recalls. "We ended up adopting three of the boys. They are my brothers now. I forget they are adopted."

Seeing the impact her parents and their faith had on other children was an inspiration to Meredith and she had planned on a life of service, working to help children. However, during her junior year at Liberty, God revealed His plan for her life. “It was an amazing time of worship,” Andrews says. “Looking out at the student body with their hands in the air, you could tell that the presence of the Lord was so sweet in that place. It was like the Lord just dropped something into my spirit saying ‘This is it. This is it! This is what I called you to do.’ I remember thinking, ‘This is the thing that makes me feel most alive.’ It is also the thing that I feel like the Lord takes the most delight in and I feel closest to him when I’m doing it. That doesn’t necessarily mean being in an arena leading worship, it also means when I’m behind closed doors. Private worship must precede public worship. If what I’m doing on stage isn’t first birthed behind closed doors, then it’s inauthentic. I can’t take people where I haven’t been with the Lord.”

While leading worship at Liberty, a pastor from Chicago’s 12,000 member Harvest Bible Chapel heard her and recruited Andrews to join his worship team. “I went up there in April 2005, which was a month before I graduated from Liberty,” Andrews recalls. “They let me sing with the worship team and I just remember thinking this is a place where I can really grow and that night, they offered me a job.”

Just as God led Andrews to Liberty University then on to Harvest Bible Chapel, he opened doors in Nashville that led her to sign with Word Records. “I wasn’t really looking for a record deal. It just fell in my lap,” says Andrews. “I’m so humbled by it all. It’s obvious that it’s the Lord’s hand and not my own.”

Andrews wrote or co-wrote every song on “The Invitation.” Produced by Jason Ingram, the project not only showcases Andrews’ skills as a songwriter, but her engaging vocals as well. She has a clear, pure voice that draws the listener into her songs and points them to the heavenly father. The opening track, “You Invite Me In,” reminds us all that God’s arms are always open to us. It’s a message that also resonates powerfully on the stunning ballad “You’re Not Alone.”

“Deeper” is another compelling ballad that finds Andrews longing to delve more completely into a relationship with God. In a voice that is hauntingly vulnerable, she shares her heart in a poignant lyric that other believers will readily relate to on an intimate level. It’s that ability to be so transparent in her writing and her delivery of these songs that invites others in.

“When we were in the studio recording, I remember listening to Jacob, my fiancé, playing piano on ‘The River’ and there was the element about God inviting us in there in that song as well as ‘Invite Me In’ and ‘Lift Up Your Head.’ That theme runs through all of the songs, but as he was playing this song and I was sitting at this table, all of a sudden it just hit me, ‘The Invitation!’ That’s what the album should be called!”

Though Andrews’ music ministry is poised to impact a national audience with the release of “The Invitation,” she continues serve where she feels God has planted her—leading worship at Harvest Bible Chapel. Additionally, her desire to help underprivileged children has never waned and she’s established Meredith Andrews Ministries to aid orphans and children in need.

Meredith Andrews has seen the impact music can have on people’s lives, but it’s not her agenda she wants to share. Her songs are laced with scripture because of her passion for sharing the word of God. “I never want to write songs just to write songs. I always want them to be about conveying

the heart of God to people, whether they are people who walk with the Lord or people who don't walk with the Lord," she says. "I think the best way to do that is to do it through His word. I always want my songs to be infused with the word of God because if it's my words, it's null and void. What do I have to say to people that is going to change their lives? Nothing! But if it comes from the Lord, it's that's what's going to change them."