



CONTACT: Tricia Whitehead, Spinhouse Public Relations
615-599-SPIN (7746) or Spinhouse@bellsouth.net

CHRISTIAN/GOSPEL MUSIC ALBUM SALES RISE IN 2006
Country Icon Alan Jackson's Gospel CD Leads a Diverse Top-Selling Albums List

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – January 4, 2007 – The Gospel Music Association (GMA) and Nielsen Christian SoundScan have announced 2006 year-end sales data for the 52-week period ending December 31, 2006.

“2006 was a good year for Christian/Gospel music. Album sales were up, albeit slightly; digital sales continue to rise and most importantly, the impact of the Gospel through music reached beyond even what our sales reveal. Everywhere you look, in books, games, TV and movies, music that is inspired by faith seems more prevalent than ever before,” said John W. Styll, president and CEO of the GMA. “There may be many reasons why this is true, but I think chief among them is that people seem to be drawn to the inspiring and compassionate message of Gospel music amid uncertain times.”

Christian/Gospel music sales in 2006 represent music that is sold at both Christian and mainstream retail and is compiled by the GMA from Nielsen Christian SoundScan, the data information system that tracks point-of-purchase sales of recorded music product.

OVERALL MUSIC SALES

(In Millions - CDs, cassettes, digital albums and digital tracks)

Units sold	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>%Chg.</u>
	44.9	43.5	+3.4

OVERALL ALBUM SALES

(In Millions – all albums and digital track equivalent albums)

Units sold	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>%Chg.</u>
	40.2	39.6	+1.5

2006 TOP-SELLING CHRISTIAN AND GOSPEL MUSIC ALBUMS

(Reflects sales for all titles in the Nielsen Christian SoundScan system sold at Christian and mainstream retail and through digital channels. It excludes Christmas catalog titles.)

<u>Title/Record Company</u>	<u>Artist</u>	<u>Units Sold/2006</u>
1. <i>Precious Memories</i> (Arista/Sony/Provident)	Alan Jackson	1288595
2. <i>Flyleaf</i> (Octone)	Flyleaf	488828
3. <i>Hero</i> (GospoCentric)	Kirk Franklin	424269
4. <i>Lifesong</i> (Reunion)	Casting Crowns	398160
5. <i>WoW Hits 2007</i> (Sparrow)	Various	363395
6. <i>Define the Great Line</i> (T&N)	Underoath	316128
7. <i>Coming Up to Breathe</i> (INO)	MercyMe	309423
8. <i>WoW Gospel 2006</i> (Verity)	Various	301534
9. <i>Wherever You Are</i> (Essential)	Third Day	295721
10. <i>Piece of My Passion</i> (Flow)	Juanita Bynum	287028
11. <i>WoW Hits 2006</i> (Sparrow)	Various	277663
12. <i>Arriving</i> (Sixsteprecords)	Chris Tomlin	253757
13. <i>Mary Mary</i> (Columbia/Integrity)	Mary Mary	252323
14. <i>WoW Worship Aqua</i> (Provident)	Various	234557
15. <i>Testify</i> (Atlantic)	P.O.D.	225850
16. <i>All I Really Want for Christmas</i> (Sparrow)	Steven Curtis Chapman	220836
17. <i>Restored</i> (BEC Recordings)	Jeremy Camp	216175
18. <i>See The Morning</i> (Sixsteprecords)	Chris Tomlin	203095
19. <i>Three Wooden Crosses</i> (Word)	Various	193867
20. <i>Open the Eyes of My Heart</i> (INO)	Various	188483
21. <i>Casting Crowns</i> (Reunion)	Casting Crowns	175240
22. <i>Chronicles of Narnia</i> (Disney/EMICMG)	Various	162352

23. <i>Day by Day</i> (Atlantic)	Yolanda Adams	156224
24. <i>Hearts of the Innocent</i> (BEC Recordings)	Kutless	156052
25. <i>MMHMM</i> (Gotee)	Relient K	155585

“Alan Jackson represents the significant impact that various country artists are having in our culture with faith-inspired recordings,” said Styll, who noted that the Christian/Gospel music industry shares Nashville/Music City as its “home” with country music. In addition to Jackson’s record, *Three Wooden Crosses*, a compilation CD featuring Rascal Flatts, Tim McGraw, Faith Hill, Amy Grant and others was among the top-selling Christian/Gospel music albums sold in 2006. Also notable, Alabama released *Songs of Inspiration*, claiming the top spot on *Billboard's* "Top Country Albums" and "Top Christian Albums" chart, marking the first time the legendary country group entered any album chart in the top position.

Country was not the only story in 2006, Styll added, noting that the breakout success of artists like Flyleaf, Underoath, Juanita Bynum, Kutless and Mat Kearney and the continued popularity of Kirk Franklin, Chris Tomlin, Casting Crowns and others contribute to a positive outlook for the long-term health of Christian/Gospel music.

Additional Year-End Notes and Facts:

*According to Nielsen SoundScan’s 2006 Year-end report the Christian/Gospel category of overall album sales joined classical, soundtracks and Latin as the only genres that grew in sales in 2006. Christian/Gospel music sales are the largest of those four genres and represents 6.75 percent of all album sales.

*Overall Christian/Gospel album sales were up 1.5 percent for the year when factoring in digital track equivalency compared to the overall music industry’s overall music sales downturn of 1.2 percent. (Nielsen SoundScan calculates digital track equivalency by converting every 10 individual tracks to one album unit). Excluding digital track equivalents, Christian/Gospel album sales are still up, 1.3 percent.

*Legal digital music sales continue on an impressive growth trajectory, with a total of 5.2 million tracks sold a 22.9 increase over 2005. Digital albums sales nearly doubled from 597,000 in 2005 to 1.1 million in 2006, a 91 percent increase. The top-selling digital album was Mat Kearney’s *Nothing Left to Lose* which had 28,456 in digital sales, and the top-selling digital track was “Beautiful Love” from The Afters, the 2006 recipient of the Dove Award for New Artist of the Year, with 189,461 units downloaded.

*Mainstream retail outlets sold 64 percent of all Christian/Gospel music sales while Christian retail accounted for 36 percent of gospel music sales.

*The top 10 markets in 2006 were Los Angeles, Atlanta, New York, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Chicago, Washington D.C., Houston, Philadelphia, Seattle-Tacoma and Tampa/St. Petersburg.

*The most popular styles of Christian/Gospel music were AC/pop (23%), black gospel (20%) and rock (16%). Praise & worship followed with approximately 10 percent of sales.

*The top-selling albums in the AC/pop category were:

<i>Lifesong</i> (Reunion)	Casting Crowns
<i>WoW Hits 2007</i> (Sparrow)	Various
<i>Coming Up to Breathe</i> (INO)	MercyMe
<i>WoW Hits 2006</i> (Sparrow)	Various
<i>All I Really Want</i> (Sparrow)	Steven Curtis Chapman

*The top-selling albums in the black gospel category were:

<i>Hero</i> (GospoCentric)	Kirk Franklin
<i>WoW Gospel 2005</i> (Verity)	Various
<i>Piece of My Passion</i> (Flow)	Juanita Bynum
<i>Mary Mary</i> (Columbia/Integrity)	Mary Mary
<i>Day By Day</i> (Atlantic)	Yolanda Adams

*The top-selling albums in the rock category were:

<i>Flyleaf</i> (Octone)	Flyleaf
<i>Define the Great Line</i> (T&N)	Underoath
<i>Wherever You Are</i> (Essential)	Third Day
<i>Testify</i> (Atlantic)	P.O.D.
<i>Hearts of the Innocent</i> (BEC Recordings)	Kutless

*The top-selling albums in the praise & worship category were:

<i>Arriving</i> (Sixsteprecords)	Chris Tomlin
<i>WoW Worship Aqua</i> (Provident)	Various
<i>See The Morning</i> (Sixsteprecords)	Chris Tomlin
<i>Open the Eyes of My Heart</i> (INO)	Various
<i>Anything Worth Saying</i> (Brash Music/Word)	Aaron Shust

*The top-selling digital album downloads were:

<i>Nothing Left to Lose</i> (inpop)	Mat Kearney
<i>Flyleaf</i> (Octone)	Flyleaf
<i>See The Morning</i> (Sixsteprecords)	Chris Tomlin
<i>Precious Memories</i> (Arista/Sony/Provident)	Alan Jackson
<i>Chronicles of Narnia</i> (Disney/EMICMG)	Various

ABOUT THE GMA AND NEILSEN CHRISTIAN SOUNDSCAN TRACKING:

Founded in 1964, the Gospel Music Association serves as the face and voice for the Christian/Gospel music community and is dedicated to exposing, promoting and celebrating the gospel through music of all styles including pop, rock, praise & worship, black gospel, R&B, hip hop, southern gospel, country, and more. The GMA community consists of 4,000 members including agents, artists, church leaders, managers, promoters, radio personnel, record company executives, retailers, songwriters and other industry visionaries. The GMA produces the GMA Dove Awards, GMA Music Week, GMA Music in the Rockies, and the GMA Academy. For more information, please visit www.gospelmusic.org.

For an album to be tracked by Nielsen Christian SoundScan, it must have national distribution and meet at least one of the additional criteria: 50 percent or more of the tracks on the album contain Christian-oriented content, as determined by the Dove Award content criteria; one or more songs on the album receive national Christian radio airplay, and 25 percent or more of album scans are reasonably anticipated at Christian retail the first week added to Christian SoundScan.

###