SUMMER 05
THIS ISSUE IS ON TOUR
artisan summer 05
get your motor runnin’, head out on the highway, lookin’ for adventure and whatever comes our way

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it’s great to have you on board, especially if it’s your first experience of the Artisan publication. If you enjoy what you read here then you might also like to visit the website www.artisaninitiatives.org where there are further articles from past publications that grapple with issues such as Ambition, Rejection, Image, Money and Sexuality. You can also register your details with us and join the database. This edition focuses on the issue of touring and being away from home.

Over the past few years I have clocked up over 70,000 miles and stayed in enough hotel rooms to be able to write a travel guide. I am usually away for four or five days at a time and I am fortunate in that I rarely travel alone. I have spent time with musicians who have been on twelve-month world tours where they are the only Christian and so much time is spent within the pressures of a tour bus. I’ve also spent time with an actor who went straight from his honeymoon into playing the lead role in a four-month production, 200 miles away from home. The challenges spiritually, morally, mentally and physically are so extreme and also often misunderstood by people who are not involved in the industry so this issue of Artisan seeks to provide perspectives concerning “Home” and honest articles about being away. You are not alone!

On a different note - By the time you read this Live8 will have taken place and been broadcast to over two billion people, which makes it one of the largest and most significant music and arts gigs in history. Newspaper articles will also be reflecting on the G8 summit in Scotland and hopefully reporting on the agreed measures to eradicate national debt and poverty in the world’s poorest countries. It is interesting to observe the rise of the Arts Media influencers in recent times who are, in the desire to see the history of poverty, driving the political agenda. Bono has set the benchmark along with Bob Geldof (another lead vocalist of a band), Richard Curtis (Working Title Films) and Chris Martin (lead singer of Coldplay). I am excited about the fusion and potential of bringing together economists and politicians with the artist/creative. It is interesting that Jeffery Sachs, leading economist and advisor to Kofi Annan, asked his student Bono to write the forward to his latest book “The End of Poverty” (which I recommend). It is also fascinating to see Tony Blair inviting Prophet Bob Geldof to Africa on government business with him, giving him the freedom and opportunities to speak with the kind of passion and passion that a politician can only dream of.

Chris Martin (Coldplay) went to Ghana in March with filmmaker Jeremy Higham (Artisaner) to film a documentary on the issue of fair trade. This five-minute film is now shown before every Coldplay gig on their world tour. The biggest two bands on the planet, U2 and Coldplay, are touring with the same passionate Make Poverty History message as we speak. How great is this?

We are involved in the most influential industries on the planet and together we pray that God will continue to use these industries and us to promote global awareness and justice with a heart passion to “do the right thing”. I pray that Live8 be the launch of more artist communicator revolutionaries who pick up the baton and build on this momentum.

To Chris and Bono. I want to encourage you and thank you for being the pioneers that you are. I pray that whilst both of you are on tour you would remember that Grace is not just found in your home town!! This also goes for all of you who are away from home or on tour.

Wherever you are around the world, you are not alone. You are part of a growing network of thousands who are passionate about Jesus and involved at every level of these industries. There are so many things going on and God, in His way, is doing more than we will ever know or imagine. Stick in there and remain in Him (John 15). Also, know from the Bible that the God who made the heavens and the earth, the source of all creativity, is for us and not against us. He is with us always – the protector of God Almighty and that you would remember that Grace is not just found in your home town!!

To all you revolutionaries around the world

Steve Cole
I play solo guitar which means that I predominantly travel alone. God has blessed me with an adventurous spirit and I’ve been travelling/touring alone in countries such as Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, places where tourism is almost non-existent and Westerners stand out like a sore thumb. If I have time I will tell a couple of stories from these trips, but I wanted to talk more about the challenges that I have faced as a Christian traveling alone.

If I’m honest I have had enough of that way of life, travelling by myself – for good reasons. For instance, I have faced as a Christian traveling alone.

Where was God in all this? Here I realised that this habit was becoming all too frequent. Where was God in all this? Here I realised that this habit was becoming all too frequent.

I have been in many beautiful places with nobody to share the experience with, and you are often (surprise, surprise) lonely. I can think of nothing worse than spending night after night in hotel rooms, especially if it is a different hotel every night. Sometimes different accommodation, the time differences, the travelling, the waiting, the tiring thing about touring. It’s the performing that is tiring; in fact I think that performing is the least tiring thing about touring. It’s the travelling, the waiting, the socialising, the time differences, the sometimes different accommodation every night syndrome which is confusing.

In April 2004 I arrived in Tashkent, Uzbekistan for a seven-city concert tour, to be done in nine days and all by road through some of the most beautiful but hazardous terrain in Central Asia, (including a magical but hazardous road alongside the Afghanistani border). The previous week two bombs had exploded in Tashkent and Bukhara, but we (the British Council and I) decided to go ahead with the tour, as there was no specific threat to us. Bukhara was my favourite place with no comparison. It was magical, with Islamic history second only to Mecca and ancient Mosques and market places. In Bukhara I played a solo concert in the local music school, which was broadcast live on national television. After I had played alone, and also with some local musicians, I decided to have a ‘question time’ with the audience. There were all kinds of questions from the students and public, but then a soldier stood up again. "Hey Englishman, what do English people think about the situation in Iraq right now?"

Remembering that I was live on television, I replied, “Well, I think that the attitude of most English people is similar to most people in this room, but we can discuss it further after the concert if you like?” “OK” he replied. I received a few more questions and then the soldier stood up again. "Hey Englishman, what is your dream?" "World Peace" I replied in a lighthearted, but serious manner. Remembering that I was live on television, I replied, "Hey Englishman, what is your dream?"

"World Peace" I replied in a lighthearted, but serious manner. After the concert, we were packing the car to head on our long drive across the desert to Nukus, and the soldier approached me with two of his friends. "Hey Englishman, I want to tell you something." “OK” I replied, in anticipation. He went on, “Englishman comes to Iraq with gun and brings war. Englishman comes to Uzbekistan with guitar and brings peace.” Probably the best compliment I have ever had as a musician. What have I learned from these experiences? God is always there and always faithful. It is me (and my own weaknesses) that fails to see Him in the hour of need and loneliness.

I have faced many challenges as a Christian traveling alone.

When I feel awake and disciplined I often read my Bible and pray out loud. Other times, I might watch junk TV and raid the minibar. I think one of the weaknesses that I’ve had in the past is that drinking has seemed to pass the time when I was alone. And I am not talking about getting drunk, but purely using alcohol as an aid to getting to sleep in a strange place. This is not healthy and two years ago, after a year of touring eleven countries in one year (only being at home for eight weeks out of the fifty-two), I realised that this habit was becoming all too frequent. Where was God in all this? Here I was, fulfilling my calling as I believed to be true, and yet I was lonely and beginning to drink more often than not. I became a bit depressed and confused as I realized that I was struggling with the lifestyle that I believed God had chosen for me. But then, was that really what God had intended for me? To be alone? Since then I have been in a process where I have really learned how to look after myself in a much healthier way. My first choice of accommodation nowadays is always with a local family. This makes life less lonely and much more interesting. Besides, God is not only speaking to people through music, but also actions, deeds and ways of being. Only two weeks ago I had to spend two nights in a hotel in Saudi Arabia and I hated it. I did watch junk TV but I also spent almost an hour in prayer before I went to sleep and gave my soul the rest and peace it needed. You have to remember that it’s not only the performing that is tiring; in fact I think that performing is the least tiring thing about touring. It’s the travelling, the waiting, the socialising, the time differences, the sometimes different accommodation every night syndrome which is confusing.

At one point I would watch TV but I also spent almost an hour in prayer before I went to sleep and gave my soul the rest and peace it needed. "Ok" I replied, in anticipation. He went on. "Hey, Englishman, what do English people think about the situation in Iraq right now?"

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“Hey, Englishman, what do English people think about the situation in Iraq right now?"
Jesus said: “If you make my word your home you will indeed be my disciples...”
(John 8:31)

Traveling as much as I do, I am keenly aware of the sacrifices of not being home. The singer songwriter Michael Card speaks of how, when he goes on a tour, he spends time with his family grieving over the time they will miss together. “We are not going to get this time apart back,” he says plainly to his children.

In art we create and imagine our belongingness. We are, in this sense, creating a home for our imaginations to inhabit. What kind of a home is it? Is it inviting? Is it haunted? Is it a loft in a city or a farmhouse? Or is it a home far away, a home that we can only long for?

Jesus said: “If you make my word your home you will indeed be my disciples...”
I recently visited the work of Inner City Christian Federation in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Jonathan Bradford (the director) and I have gotten to know each other via a mutual friend. ICCF works to rebuild lives of the homeless by building them homes. But they are not shelters; they are beautiful homes. These homes have large windows, front porches and backyards. ICCF not only builds houses for them, but they counsel them as a family, train them for work and equip them for taking care of their homes. We saw a house that was built in the seventies that not only looked brand new, but looked inviting to dwell in. A person, with his family, is restored in dignity and given the opportunity.

Jesus said: “If you make my word your home you will indeed be my disciples...”
We live in ground zero, New York City. After 9/11 we could not get back to our loft, three blocks away from the rubble, until Thanksgiving Day in November. We probably should have stayed away until the smoldering stopped, but we were all anxious to be home. All of our three children’s schools were displaced as well.

When we celebrated Thanksgiving in ground zero, our friends came and joined us. They work for a mission organization in Florida and had been volunteering as a family to minister to New Yorkers. Their house was torn apart by a tornado only a year prior. My friends and their two daughters were almost taken by the tornado as it tore off their roof. When you have been displaced from home, the greatest comfort one can receive is from those who have already experienced displacement and loss. We received their gift, a gift of their presence in our lives, gratefully.
Albert Pedulla also created a “nijiriguchi” entry for our “Two-T” project but made it into a gate, taking a cue from Christ’s words “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it” (Matthew 7:13). In the crevice of the entry he installed a little brook, with water running over pebbles and rocks.

Shogun Hideyoshi realized, quite correctly, that the egalitarian nature of tea would be dangerous to his power and he became, by no coincidence either, one of the greatest enemies of Christianity in history. He ordered Rikyu to commit Seppuku at the end, the cruelest art form of suicide, at the very teahouse of Shalom. Rikyu’s own blood soaked the tatami mats that were created for peace. He was never to feel at home, even in his own creation of a small teahouse.

Jesus said: “If you make my word your home you will indeed be my disciples…”

I wrote this in my notebook in the spring of 2002:

“This morning I found a male Ruby-crowned Kinglet, fluttering around in the fern bushes of the gardens at P.S. 234, its little red crest flashing occasionally like a tiny flare hidden deep in his golden olive feathers. I have never seen a Ruby-crowned Kinglet although I know it migrates from Canada to mid-southern states this time of the year.

When I was recording this sighting in my bird book, as my “first time sighting” here in New York City my son C.J. said, “Maybe it got confused because the towers are not there anymore…” I suddenly identified with this little bird, perhaps indeed confused a bit, without those two huge “trees” redirecting the flow of air currents in his southern path. The wind flows differently now, seeming to find strength by swirling through the empty spaces of Ground Zero. Our petunias seem to grow better because we have more light without the towers. Our building leaks now in rain, because, I have supposed, this building was never used to rain falling from her southern face.”

We are all in a process of migration, journeying from here to eternity; our path is full of small visitations, manifestations of God’s grace. Can we create art out of these reminders, mapping out where we have come from and where we are going? When we make Jesus’ word our home, we see His sacrifices everywhere, even in a small bird lost in our ground zero, flashing his red crest like a stigmata.

I curated TriBeCa Temporary, using part of our studio space generously donated by Hiroshi, and we began to call it “an oasis of collaboration for ground zero artists.” It became a home for us, to reflect, to share, to collaborate and grieve together.

Sen-no-Rikyu, a 16th Century master of tea, built a unique teahouse at Daitoku-ji. In the war torn nation of Japan, at the heart of their culture, stood a tiny teahouse. He invented an entry hole called “nijiriguchi”, a small entry made so that a samurai visiting the teahouse would have to bow and take his sword off. Rikyu’s tiny teahouse became the center of 16th century cultural activities. He created, even though he was not a follower of Christ, a place of shalom. Many artists, poets, warlords and Shogun Hideyoshi visited him there. After 9/11, another friend and I created an art installation for Ground Zero as part of our TriBeCa Temporary Project by the International Arts Movement. Albert Pedulla and I took this idea of a teahouse and called our collaboration “Two-T”. We too wanted to create a shalom space in our current Ground Zero, to consider how we might provide a temporary home for our creativity. One of Rikyu’s closest wives and seven of his disciples were Christians who had been converted, due in part, by the efforts of missionaries in Kyoto sent by Francis Xavier. We know this because they were exiled for their faith later on. Sen-no-Rikyu visited Mass with his wife and saw a cup being passed. This affirmed his vision for the art of Tea. One who enters the teahouse would be treated as an equal, whether a Shogun or a farmer. A few years later he closed Japan to any foreign influences, sending missionaries home, and the systematic torture and execution of Christians began, lasting for some two hundred years.
Far Away, So Close.

I am currently away from home so I guess it’s a perfect time to last begin writing this. Just to add some unintentional but highly appropriate flavour, I am using a pencil on the back of some Mapquest directions. (The power cord for the laptop has died and I am carrying around with me three thousand miles worth of Mapquesting. To avoid waste, the back of each lifesaving route serves as tour notepaper.)

I live away from my family (my parents and siblings are in another country) and I’m currently also away from my community in the country where I now live. I am single. I am travelling alone, playing music and mostly staying with kind-hearted friends. Being single on the road, I presume, must be very different (not easier or harder) from being married or having other family commitments, but I guess someone else will be writing this article. So, for all you travelling singletons... does any of this sound familiar? For you all you travelling singletons... does any of this sound familiar? For you other set of questions. Bummer.

I am currently away from home so I have no idea how to describe what I feel. Responsibility... blah, blah, blah... “If I had those responsibilities I really don’t believe it would be easier, just a whole other set of questions.” Bummer.

For me, being consistently far away from a like-minded community at the bottom of most of this. For a short time whilst touring I found a church every week. This is getting much more difficult now, but for a season it was great. I didn’t speak to anyone but just slipped quietly in and out. Just being there was enough. It is useful to have one or two friends that can be called on in times of trouble and a good community back home who can pray whilst you are away. It is a shock to your system to return. Likeminded people you can be honest with and important whatever your lifestyle, but sometimes when you are away from that community so much you have to really be careful to be honest with yourself, or more importantly with God, because sometimes that’s all you’ve got.

And what is community in the 21st Century anyway? For those of us away from home a lot of the time, community becomes a global one that can change from day to day. It’s taken a while for me to get used to this, to let the good in relating so many different folks for a day, a tour or a residency. That we can weave in and out of each other’s lives and affect each other so much that way, as well as in long-term relationships is an amazing thing to me. The words of a stranger can be very valuable indeed. Although this lifestyle can be a challenge, I love my job. I have no desire to grumble about the difficulties it presents. I could give it up any day but it’s my choice to continue. In times of trouble it’s my choice whether I decide to grasp God’s strength through the Word and prayer. God is with us. If there any one out there who has experienced God not fulfilling His part of that bargain? Let me finish with this thought... A friend recently told me that the early Christians never called themselves “Christian”. They were given that title by others who had observed them following this man whom some called “The Christ”. (And remember, it was a dangerous title to have in those days...) So...what of my observers? If there’s a chance I’m not going to like what I hear, then I have to rethink what I really do believe, why I believe it and why my actions aren’t matching up to those beliefs. I’ve learnt more this year about my spirituality through being away from home and from so-called “non-believers” than I can even begin to express.
What is a home and why leave it?

Today's post-modern world, adrift and cut loose from its moorings, is tossed about by confusion and chaos. There is so little memory of the umbilicus – that cord of belief that gave birth to our humanity. And yet, there is so little memory of the umbilicus – that cord of belief that gave birth to our humanity. There are few people who do not know that there is a God, and many who profess their belief in Him. However, the scriptures remain as the revelatory route map and compass that reveals the adventure offered to every person as physical and spiritual beings.

The Great Artist placed mankind, his special creation, in a safe and secure homeland – a garden of immense special choice and delight. When banished from this environmentally perfect homeland everything and everywhere became alien to mankind. However, this banishment has never lost its yearning and longing for a better place and a true homecoming. It’s as if the memory has not been entirely erased over the long years of separation. Humankind’s restlessness finds itself being expressed in many diverse, artistic ways which display this ache and longing throughout every generation.

Why is a home, tribe or community important or even necessary?

In the prodigal story told by Luke we hear Jesus speak of spiritual lostness in the story of a family, their restoration and subsequent healing of relationships. This story goes to the very heart of the Great Artist’s passion and love for His creation. We see the unique love of the Father displayed to both redeem and reclaim, and thus to bring home all that is away from its original intention and subjected to wrong choice. All that has been outside of the home is and will be reconciled by Christ and brought through the ‘Theatre of the Cross’ back into the Father’s presence.

The limitations of the far country

Being away from home is sometimes necessary for a while. Certainly this is true for most, if not all, of the arts professions. Being away can give you a better perspective on what you have left and show you it’s a vital and important role in your own wellbeing. However, there is nothing quite as important as your own space: your own four walls, bedroom and toothbrush. Yet, it may be that you are in rebellion and that your own self-will drives you away rather than your calling and gifting. You may have a strong, stubborn, egoistical self-righteousness that both says and demands its own way. Your sincere and yet selfish desires and motives can drive you away from home and from the community, and your journey to the bright lights of the far country can deprive you of the very freedoms you sought in going there. Very quickly you lose the self-respect of the community you sought to serve.

The scriptures teach that there is a promised land, a homeland for all who will surrender their ego and their desires to the will of the Father. Even the best home here on earth can only be a house o’er where the creative, unformed thoughts and dreams of the occupants may be expressed and given legs of encouragement to run, then it will be a hub and centre for healing, laughter, love and tears – a crucible for the wings of imagination. It will be a labour ward for the birthing and celebration of ideas, a place where people are unafraid of risk and have no fear of imperfection.

I would like to leave you with one of my favourite poems by C S Lewis. In it he describes how the Great Artist decided to rework his artwork. He took Noah and his family, one small group, to form his rescue plan. Even here, in His mercy and love, He allowed sin to enter the space that would become a temporary home for His creation until He would finally make a way through the gift of His son for all of us to choose to begin “The Long Walk Home”.

The Late Passenger

The sky was low, the sounding rain was falling dense and dark, and Noah’s sons were waiting at the window of the Ark. The beasts were in, but Japheth said, “I see one creature more Belated and unmade there come knocking at the door.”

“Well, let him knock,” said Ham, “Or let him drown or learn to swim. We’re overcrowded as it is; we’ve got no room for him.”

“And yet it knocks, how terribly it knocks,” said Shem, “Its feet are hard as horn – but oh the air that comes from it is sweet.”

“Now hush,” said Ham, “You’ll waken Dad, and once he comes to see What’s at the door, it’s sure to mean more work for you and me.”

Noah’s voice came roaring from the darkness down below, “Some animal is knocking. Take it in before we go.”

Ham shouted back, and savagely he nudged the other two, “That’s only Japheth knocking down a brad-nail in his shoe.”

Said Noah, “Boys, I hear a noise that’s like a horses hoof!”

Said Ham, “Why, that’s the dreadful rain that drums upon the roof”.

Noah tumbled up on deck and out he put his head; His face went grey, his knees were loosed, he tore his beard and said, “Look, look! It would not wait. It turns away. It takes its flight.”

Fine work you’ve made of it, my sons, between you all to-night! Even if I could outrun it now, it would not turn again. Not now. Our great discourtesy has earned its high disdain. Even if I could outrun it now, it would not turn again. Not now. Our great discourtesy has earned its high disdain.

“Oh noble and unmated beast, my sons were all unkind; Not now. Our great discourtesy has earned its high disdain. Even if I could outrun it now, it would not turn again. Not now. Our great discourtesy has earned its high disdain. Even if I could outrun it now, it would not turn again. Not now. Our great discourtesy has earned its high disdain.”
Being on tour in any capacity is a ridiculous place: “Then Sean Penn bought us all a drink at the bar.” “Your 12-seater jet is ready when you are boys.” Tom Waits taps on the shoulder to say “Great gig man.” “Was that really Anne Heche? - she’s so short!” (and utterly gorgeous it must be noted). “Get Bono onstage now! He wants to do a song with him!” 18,000 Hollywood Bowl fans go bonkers as your little finger pushes up the fader of the ‘crowd blinder’ lights. “Was that really a rainbow in your heart, it’s a rainbow, use your rainbow, let it shine…”

All of you together are the one body of Christ and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it.” I’m sure there are hundreds of you that can identify with the highs and lows of it all as mentioned here. So here’s one brief story. It’s what you CAN do while away, and how God loves us to simply try...

“God who gives you hope will keep you happy and full of peace as you believe in him through the Holy Spirit’s power within you.”

I was challenged by a friend to pray for the artist I was working with – a very, very well known person who has a reputation for being cantankerous and awkward, but at the same time often has an indelible spiritual thumbprint in their work. So one weekend, in Berlin I think, I did. I also prayed words for a lightness of spirit for them. It seemed so ridiculous to do so; it wouldn’t make any difference, my doubting Thomas argued. During the show, when the music went quiet and I sensed they were going to do something freestyle, I prayed out loud in my lighting booth, “Go on, preach, go on do it, use them God!” The very next moment they started, for the first time that I’d ever heard, to whisper to try and see what He’d do. I believe the minute we get to try and see what He’d do, He was whispering over my shoulder that this wouldn’t make much sense, but just to try and see what He’d do. I believe the minute we get stressed and whine at God that we can’t do this thing, that we have no power, skill or know-how, He loves it. It’s then that He smiles and says, “Great, that means you’ll let me do it for once.”

Pray for the outrageous, I dare you.
Leaving today...
What is the greatest piece of advice you have been given in your career? 

The best advice I've been given (quite a few times) is that no matter how much you may love your work, your job is what you do for a living and not the sum total of who you are. At times of huge pressure when you're feeling the heat and managing a massive workload, it's really important to keep your perspective in check. It's also important to keep a balanced outlook, a sense of humour and to not let your career define you instead of relying on your relationship with God to be the source of your identity.

Have you ever been financially broke and if so how did you deal with that time? 

I've never really been flat broke but at the start of my career, whilst trying to break into the media, I spent a good few years working for nothing or next to nothing. I dealt with it by living at home and hanging out with my parents for a lot longer than some friends who were lawyers or bankers that were training for “proper jobs”!

What is your vision for your industry? 

Film is such a fantastic, powerful and accessible medium with a huge influence all over the world. My vision is to see more films made that truly challenge and inspire people. It's also to see the individuals within the industry reach their full potential, personally and professionally, within a healthy work culture.

How do you react to criticism? 

If it's constructive I really try and take it on board, think about it objectively and not take it too personally; if not, park it, walk away and not spend hours worrying about it. Of course, the tricky bit is in knowing the difference – praying about it is usually the best place to start!

Last thing you read that inspired you? 

The last issue of Artisan! Oh, and the daily readings in Word For Today. It's my portable lifeline. It comes everywhere with me and no matter how busy I am I try and read it every day. I'm often amazed at how relevant and profound it can be. A couple of years ago when my Mum was diagnosed with cancer it gently and powerfully kept my head above water through a very tough time.

Most challenging film and most entertaining? 

“Fight Club”, directed by David Fincher, was a challenging film to work on. It's an intelligent, dark and violent film that I found to be both compelling and uncomfortable viewing. As Christians in the media we often work with challenging material – I think it's important not to shy away from controversial products and to stay involved at the centre of the debate.

Most entertaining? 

I love films that you lose yourself in, from the moment they start right up until the end credits. There's so many to choose from but I remember feeling that way when I saw “Matrix” for the first time. I was totally transfixed from start to finish. A song / album that is a must for your ipod and why? 

John Legend’s debut album ‘Get Lifted’ – there's no great spiritual dimension to my choice, just fantastic music from a brilliant new talent.

Worst thing about your industry? 

The film industry can be exciting, adrenalin-fuelled and addictive. At times it can also be very, very tough and not for the fainthearted! There can be unrelenting pressure to deliver in an extremely competitive commercial environment and working for an LA-based studio can mean you have a second working day that starts at 5pm when your US colleagues get to work! But there is never a dull moment. I always come back to the fact that it's a fantastic privilege to have a job that you love and, most importantly, that I've been put here in this industry for a reason.

What has been your biggest encouragement? 

Without doubt it's seeing extraordinary answers to prayer in the midst of a crisis! I've been in the middle of huge work events and I've watched circumstances turn right around as a result of the prayer support of parents and friends! I know that as a Christian it shouldn't surprise me when God turns up and makes the impossible possible, but it always does! Even the odd colleague has been known to comment on “the power of prayer” with a wry smile...

Spiritual input source when away from home? 

Most of my work is London-based but when I do travel I try and head for a local church. There are also times, around the launch of a major film, when for very intense periods of time I'll be working right round the clock. It's very much like being away and can be quite isolating. At those times I'm totally reliant on the prayer support of parents and a committed group of close friends; the support is vital and makes such a huge difference to the job and I would encourage everyone to seek out that kind of back up.
My time spent ‘on the road’ for work has included what has been the most exciting spiritual period in my adult life. It has also been the source of some of my grubbiest moments as a Christian. And that is despite having amassed an unparalleled collection of hotel shampoo bottles.

But let’s start with the positives. The longest I’ve been away with my job as an entertainment reporter was in covering Arnold Schwarzenegger’s hilarious campaign when becoming Governor of California. I spent two months in LA with a free flat on Sunset Boulevard, within walking distance of Motley Crue’s old stomping ground, and I had the chance to blag myself into every gig in town. This was an unlikely scenario for what turned out to be the most excited I’ve ever been about going to church.

On my first Sunday in the City of Angels I took potluck and went to the nearest place of worship - next to the Russian tattoo parlour and across the street from a Russian restaurant. The only time that colleagues observe your lifestyle is well worth finding out somewhere to go to church in advance. I can still remember most of the sermons I heard there and in between interviewing Arnie’s fellow freaky candidates I would be dashing off to their mid-week meetings. (“Hurry up Arnold from Different Strokes. I’ve got a study on Habakkuk to go too!”)

Maybe it is blindingly obvious, but if you are spending any time away from home it is well worth finding out somewhere to go to church in advance. That evening I decided to take the advice of my home town. This was an unlikely scenario for what turned out to be the most excited I’ve ever been about going to church.

On my first Sunday in the City of Angels I took potluck and went to the nearest place of worship - next to the Russian tattoo parlour and across the street from Quentin Tarantino’s favourite Japanese restaurant. Only when I noticed that the “staff choice” on the bookstall was a tome called “Queer Eye For the Christian Guy” did I realise that things were rather different from my usual Sunday service. And there was me thinking that the huge rainbow banner was a Noah reference.

That evening I decided to take the advice of my home church. Before departing for LA they’d recommended Grace Memorial. Over the next six weeks I received a welcome unlike any other I’ve had at church: I can still remember most of the sermons I heard there and in between interviewing Arnie’s fellow freaky candidates I would be dashing off to their mid-week meetings. (“Hurry up Arnold from Different Strokes. I’ve got a study on Habakkuk to go too!”)

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Faith in fashion

Marla Boehr is a committed Christian in her early twenties and one of the hottest new faces on the international modelling circuit despite having only started two years ago. She grew up in Alberta, Canada and has spent the past year travelling the entire world’s number one agency. Marla: I’ve been travelling the entire time. In the last two weeks I’ve been in Montreal for the Banana Republic show and an Elle shoot, London for Lancome last week, Paris to work with Peter Lindberg on a Warehouse campaign, back to London now and then to Arles in three days to work with Peter again on a Harper’s Bazaar editorial. It’s been completely crazy...

C: How did you get started?
M: I was scouted by an agency at a famous rodeo meeting near my hometown in Canada.

C: What’s your biggest achievement so far?
M: I know I still get frustrated by the lack of ability to plan my life, see where I’m going to be in a week’s time etc., but it seems like it is coming together for me now, and now that I’m being paid for the work it makes the ambiguity much easier to deal with. I think it just gets more ambiguous, the further up the ladder you go in this industry.

C: What do you think about modelling as a teenager but also having to do the Prada/Miu Miu catwalks, which can pay extremely well. It’s a bizarre system of delayed gratification.
M: Yes, my timing was terrible, but I decided to quit out of complete exhaustion.

C: How did you feel about going to Milan for the Banana Republic campaign, back to London now and then to Arles in three days to work with Peter again on a Harper’s Bazaar editorial. It’s been completely crazy...

C: What happened after that?
M: Well, to be honest, and this may sound weird, I wanted to quit. I was just exhausted and I had reached this point where I had been travelling for months, living with friends, paying for my own flights and was just frustrated at doing all this work for very little money. I know it sounds crazy to feel like this after doing Prada in Milan, but even a lot of the prestigious brands don’t pay well for shows because they feel they don’t need to. So I went home to Canada, spent some time with my family and told my agency that I’d had enough.

C: How did your agency respond?
M: They were worried about it – they wanted me to keep going because they felt like I was so close to a major breakthrough after doing Prada. But I was so tired of doing all this work with the promise of being paid at some time in the future, when it was incredibly demanding.

C: People often don’t realize that the early years are usually spent in poverty for most people in fashion, despite the travelling and apparent glamour. Also, the more prestigious the magazines the less you get paid. But you have to do them in order to get the top advertising campaigns, which can pay extremely well. It’s a bizarre system of delayed gratification.
M: Yes, my timing was terrible, but I decided to quit out of complete exhaustion.

C: What do you feel about the future?
M: A day later my booker in London called and said that Lancome wanted me to fly in and do a shoot in London and then Paris – and that they were paying me, of course.

C: Nice timing! So your agency was sold on its potential and said that Lancome were interested in a long-term contract? I’ve been travelling the entire time. In the last two weeks I’ve been in Montreal for the Banana Republic show and an Elle shoot, London for Lancome last week, Paris to work with Peter Lindberg on a Warehouse campaign, back to London now and then to Arles in three days to work with Peter again on a Harper’s Bazaar editorial. It’s been completely crazy...

C: How do you feel about the future?
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C: Nice timing! So your agency was sold on its potential and said that Lancome were interested in a long-term contract?
M: I've been a Christian family all my life, and it was a result of a major breakthrough after doing Prada. But I was so tired of doing all this work with the promise of being paid at some time in the future, when it was incredibly demanding.

C: Would you say you feel a sense of God’s calling in the industry?
M: I would. I was often approached about modelling as a teenager but never gave it much thought. After being scouted at the Stamped and decided to give the matter over to God's given me. There are people of faith in almost every line of work and I think that’s the way it should be. There are some parts of modelling that I wouldn’t want to be involved in but so far I’ve been able to do great work.

C: Did you grow up in a Christian family?
M: Fortunately I did grow up in a Christian family and I became a Christian at an early age. My faith is definitely a fundamental part of who I am as a person and a model.

C: How does your faith help you deal with the ups and downs of the industry?
M: My faith keeps me stable. During the most difficult times, especially when I’m unsure about the future, I’ve relied on God and His promises. In fashion it’s crucial for me to remind myself that my self-worth and value come from God and not from what the industry thinks, which can change from season to season. Personal prayer is always a source of incredible strength and I know that others are praying for me as well. Most of all, I know that I am never alone.
Nothing can shake me

THE ARTISAN PROFILE

RUSS JONES

Here's a little bit of drama for this issue of Artisan. Not quite Casualty, ER or Dr Kildare but I do type whilst lying on a hospital bed awaiting my next course of chemotherapy (praise God) – a nasty concoction of drugs similar to mustard gas that makes you better. Bring it on! Before I go any further and have you weeping in the aisles, heaping pity upon me, I have to make it clear that this is about God and Jesus, to their glory, and not a cry for sympathy. For those of you who don’t know my story and me, I was diagnosed with stage one lymphoma at the end of February this year and am now a fully-fledged member of the cancer club. No one really expects this to happen to them and I was no exception. Being a fit, healthy-eating ‘young’ man who recently completed a triathlon, cancer was not really an option. Being philosophical there are no written rules. Nowhere, to my recollection, has God or anyone else guaranteed that this life is going to be one easy trip or that I would reach that ripe old age of three score years and ten. In fact, prior to the diagnosis, God had already begun to prepare me for this situation (...party time the first of the drugs are being administered). He had given me a series of verses so as to put my head in the right space.

“There’s far more to this life than trusting in Christ. There is suffering for Christ. And the suffering is as much a gift as the trusting” (Philippians 1:29 The Message). This sums it up really. Also, having recently read the book “Heavenly Man”, the story of a Chinese church leader whose suffering goes beyond comprehension, I have come to realise that God does not wrap us up in cotton wool and give us a life of Riley. In fact, if we really want to know Jesus then we need to be able to relate to what he went through and what he stood for.

Continuing on in Philippians 4:6-7

“Don’t fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God’s wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It’s wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the centre of your life.”

Again, perfect for the situation. There were also other verses and situations, which meant that by the time of the diagnosis being delivered, God had me in a place where I was ready to deal with what was coming. Of course, there is the initial shock when one hears such news, but I was in a good place and felt God’s peace from day one. I made decisions that I was not going to be angry or worried but instead use this situation to see God glorified.

From the outset there have been so many stories to tell. Firstly, as I said, God was preparing me for this situation, not only spiritually and psychologically but also financially. Being self-employed and not having any insurance I could have been struggling financially through this time. But God had it covered. I was head hunted for a consultancy job late last year, which paid very well and has provided ‘sick pay’ for this period. Also, I flew all the way to Taiwan for one gig (I’m a DJ) that paid extremely well and I managed to stop in Thailand on the way home and have a holiday virtually for free. This meant that I was rested physically and ready for what would lie ahead.

Once diagnosed I found a new boldness in my faith, a desire to pray more, and reading the Word has taken on a new dimension. Within the first week I found myself praying for a friend in a nightclub and I have taken the opportunity to let many friends know how God has been looking out for me, the peace he has given me and just how great it is to have a faith in Jesus.

Since starting treatment God has continued to bless me. I have had minimal side effects. I have only been sick once, have had no ulcers in the mouth, and although my hair did fall out I am now saving money on hair and shaving products. Most of the time I feel fine and can continue somewhat of a normal life, except for competing in triathlons. After my first treatment the tumours on the side of my neck were all gone and on the following consultation with my doctor he said that this was amazing as he would not expect these results until the end of the whole course.

I deejayed at a gig not long after diagnosis and to finish off what had been a pretty special night already I had time for one more record but about ten that I wanted to play. One of the possible choices was a particularly hot and funky gospel track that I’d recently picked up but had never played out. Should I play it? Would it fit in? (It was not the normal style I would play). How would it be accepted? It was a dilemma. But what the heck, you only live once. Thirty seconds in and the crowd were going nuts. “Rewind” was being shouted (only used for the biggest tunes) and so it was... REWIND. I was jumping up and down, hands in the air, praising God; the club was truly rocking, people were asking what the record was and saying that it was best song of the night. God was in the house. AMEN. I could continue with many stories. I would rather not have cancer of course but God has blessed me through the whole situation. I have learnt a lot, been forced to slow down and take stock, and there have definitely been positives to come out of it. So far the results are looking positive and I could have the all the clear by midsummer.

As I continue to type, the drugs are starting to take effect. Sleep and nausea are knocking at my door and it’s time to sign off. When I started I wished to finish in order to give glory to God, to give you hope with where you are at and encourage you to keep the faith, be bold and stay focused. As a friend recently said to me, “It’s all about Jesus.”

“Nothing can shake me; he’s right by my side. I’m glad from the inside out, ecstatic; I’ve pitched my tent in the land of hope. I know you’ll never dump me in Hades; I’ll never smell the stench of death. You’ve got my feet on the life-path, with your face shining sun-joy all around.” (Acts 2:25-26)

Russ has a new CD compilation released early July “Future World Funk, On The Run” on Ether music and will be touring the UK, Asia and the States through August and September (God permitting) www.futureworldfunk.com

Since Russ wrote this article we are happy to report that he has been given the all clear which is great news!
In the past white leisure suits, cheesy pink flamingos and random shootouts have fogged the image of Miami. Well, fear no more, for we can share the overflowing handful of excitement that this city has to offer!

Culture: South Beach is where most travelers prefer to stay. It’s a glitzy and beautiful place that definitely needs to be seen. Keep in mind that it’s very tourusty and is only a portion of Miami, and that most residents of the beach area have moved there from other states or countries. As well as the beach, it’s also known for its nightlife and star-studded atmosphere; you can people watch as well as see Art Deco design buildings. There is the cute Ocean Drive and Lincoln Road Mall to stroll, shop and stop at for a café. You will be sharing the pavement with a huge variety of people, from beach bums to drag queens. Be sure though to dedicate some time to trekking around some of the “Mainland”.

Don’t be surprised if you are greeted in Spanish or with an “air kiss”. Latin Americans make up about 80% of South Florida and if you want a genuine Cuban experience drive down Calle Ocho (SW 8th St.) through Little Havana. For something to eat stop at La Carreta or Versailles and order aropa vieja, palomilla, medianoche or picadillo; sharing a colada (high voltage, shot-sized Cuban caffeine hit!) with a friend or stranger is also a must. Watch your surroundings and listen to the Spanish (part English/part Spanish) conversations… they can be very entertaining!

If you’d like to get a glimpse of the gangster standard that exists here then check out the bootie-bassed-out cars on Ocean Drive and Grand Avenue in the Grove. On the weekends you’ll find the Latino boys cat-calling from their low rider pimped-out cars to all the ladies strolling the sidewalks. Also, drive along SW 40 Street on a Thursday night to see car and motorcycle clubs all gathering in the many shopping plaza parking lots. Watch out for the drag racers!

Nightlife: If you are up for staying out late there are a lot of places on Washington and Ocean Drive. Most clubs get going late (otherwise known here as “Cuban Time”) and go on until 5am. Some hot spots for dance are Pawn Shop (hipsters), Crobar, Nikki Beach, Space (hugel). Opium Garden, SoHo, I/O Lounge (Saturdays = indie/artsy scene; last Sat of month = Miami Beach Night), The District, Nocturnal, and much more.

Live Music: Tobacco Road (with old blues, rock bickers, hippies, etc.), I/O Lounge, Churchill’s Pub (gritty punk, rock, noise, and electronic shows… be careful of this neighborhood), Jazid (with Miami’s world-known DJ Le Spam and the Spam All Stars), Sweat Records (indie/punk shows), Van Dykes Café (best jazz night), Jakes and Bougainvillas. Your best bet is to pick up a “New Times” to see what is happening daily.

For a drink or two: Stop by any of these local favorites: Fox’s, The Abbey, The Bar, Titanic, Home, Delano, Cafétera, Buck 15 and Sky Bar.

Arts: Being involved in the Arts, Entertainment and Media circles of Miami is great timing at the moment as there is a fresh excitement happening here. The city is younger than most of the major US cities and has recently begun to take hold of its cultural identity; galleries and alternative art spaces are springing up all over the place. The arrival of Art Basel Miami Beach and the NADA art fair attracts thousands of the most important art enthusiasts in the world. The New American Airlines Arena was also built just a few years ago and hosts large concerts, sports games and major events including the MTV Music Video Awards. The Hip-Hop weekend and Winter Music Conference are also other massive events that happen annually. A new huge Performing Arts Center will be completed next year and is also bringing in noteworthy acts. Due to the good weather during the winter, Miami is famous for its fashion and film industries. It is often common to run across photo shoots at random locations.

For performances there are multiple options: Gusman Theater, Miracle Mile Theater, Jackie Gleason Theater, Coral Gables Playhouse, Coconut Grove Playhouse, Miami City Ballet, Mad Cat Theater and the New World Symphony.

Places to see great contemporary art are: Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami, The Bass Museum, The Miami Art Museum, The Rubell Family Collection, Margulies Collection, Miami Art Central, The Design District with all its spaces (Moore Space, Placemaker, Bas/Fisher Invitational), The Wynwood Art District (Frederic Snitzer Gallery, Rocket Projects, Kevin Bruk Gallery, Locust Projects, Ingalls & Assoc., Dorsch Gallery), ArtCenter of South Florida and Art South in Homestead. Pick up an “ArtCircuits” guide from any art space.

Underground: For those of you that like to do something that’s not as touristy and are into the underground activities, go shopping at a strip mall full of thrift stores called Flamingo Plaza on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Stop by Sweat Records or Uncle Sam’s to browse the musical selection, see an independent or foreign film at South Beach Cinema and the theater in Cacockl, or rent at Lion Video. For a random interesting spot go to Jimbo’s on Virginia Key: www.jimboplace.com

Nature: For a peaceful nature excursion take an airboat, canoe or bike ride in the Everglades. At this National Park you will experience and learn about the only ecosystem of its kind in the world. There are alligators, tropical birds, wild boars, panthers and all sorts of endangered wildlife. On the way south stop at “Robert Is Here” for an amazing all-natural fruit shake or fresh produce. Other worthwhile places to scope out the scenery are: Matheson Hammocks, Fairchild Tropical Gardens, Bear Cut, Key Biscayne, The Florida Keys, Shark Valley and the Gator Farm in Florida City.


History: Miami has a rich but young history that has developed over the last one hundred years. You can visit The Cuban Freedom Tower, Venetian Pool, Coral Castle, Vizcaya Mansion, Biltmore Hotel, Cauley Square, The Deering Estate, The Barnacle and the Cuban Museum to see where it’s all come from.

Cheap one-of-a-kind local eating: On the beach go to Tap Tap, Pizza Rustica, Big Pink and San Loc. On the mainland go to Taco Rico, Enriquetta’s, Andiamo’s and Cassola’s.

Finer Dining: One Ninety, Soyka, Kumi, Joe’s Stone Crab, Bed or Mandarin Oriental

Scenic Drives: Aside from Calle Ocho, other nice drives can be found along Old Cutler Road, Coral Gables, the Rickenbacker Causeway, 195, Key Biscayne and Krome Avenue.

Where not to get lost: Overtown, west end of Grand Avenue, Little Haiti and south of Caribbean on Old Cutler.

Churches: If you are around on a Saturday or Sunday and want to visit a local church go to University Baptist Church (Saturday evening service), St. Louis Catholic Church in Pinecrest, New Birth Baptist (hip hop service), The Vineyard, Calvary Chapel, Pinelands Presbyterian, or The Lighthouse. At this point there aren’t really any alternative churches but some are in the works.

Other Organizations: International Arts Movement – Miami (iam_miami@yahoo.com); Undivided Miami (www.undividedmiami.org); www.relevantmagazine.com/churches.php (this has a decent link of Miami churches).

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**Film**

Artisan prayer network in relationship with MasterMedia Int and Hollywood Prayer Network.

MasterMediaInt.org
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Thousands of people around the world praying every day for Influencers in Media, Arts and Entertainment.

"time to get your knees dusty"

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Contributors:

MARLA BOEHR
Marla has found herself in demand on runways across Europe, and spectacularly made headlines in March 2005 when Miuccia Prada booked her to walk exclusively for Prada/Miu Miu, in Milan.

JASON CARTER
British guitarist Jason Carter travels around the world performing an eclectic mix of Flamenco, Jazz and Classical Guitar. He has recorded a wide range of CDs for Sony, EMI, ASV and ARC Music. Jason is currently working on a project in Helsinki, bringing together elements of Flamenco, Rap, Opera, Jazz, Indian, Arabic and Hip-Hop, involving mainly Finnish Musicians.

STEVE COLE
Steve is the founder of Artisan in London, married to Rachel and has two children Sam (4) and Jasmine (2). Steve is looking forward to welcoming our friends from Paris and New York to the Olympic games in LONDON in 2012! (just announced!)

MAKOTO FUJIMURA
Mako is the founder of the International Arts Movement, a board member of the National Endowment for the Arts and a painter whose work explores a combination of contemporary American abstract expressionism and traditional Japanese art of Nihonga.

ANDY HUTCH
Andy has been travelling around the world as a lighting director for a globally renowned musical artist. Andy has also worked as a Director of pop video’s for the likes of Basement Jaxx and a photographer for other leading artists.

RUSS JONES
Russ is a promoter and programmer of the club night 'Future World Funk' along with DJ Cliffy. The FWF project has led to 7 highly successful compilation CD’s which has also led to gigs all over the world. A new CD compilation was released early July on Ether music and will be touring the UK Asia and the States through August and September 2005.

NATASHA LOPEZ DE VICTORIA & MONICA LOPEZ DE VICTORIA
Natasha and Monica are a Miami based Visual Artists who collaborates under the name TM Sisters and are involved with IAM Miami.

VIKKI LUYA
Vikki is the publicity director for Sony Columbia Films in London.

COLIN PATERSON
Colin was a Pop music columnist for the Guardian newspaper before joining the BBC to present an entertainment news TV show. He is now entertainment correspondent for BBC Radio 2 and Radio 5 and co-presenter of a Saturday morning programme with Eamonn Holmes on Radio 5.

DISCLAIMER
The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of Artisan.

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