

"To me, my primary goal is to communicate truthfully with people. If I can communicate truthfully the life of the spirit and the always-accompanying struggle along the way, then ministry happens as a natural result of that."

Bob's ability to write songs about other than typical "spiritual" topics has always made him stand out. He sees spiritual themes everywhere, even in the least holy of circumstances. His approach to ministry also follows the same line of reasoning – that our lives are intricately woven with the sacred and the human, and that honest communication is ultimately most effective.

If you tell Bob Bennett his songs don't sound much like religious music, you're likely to evoke a smile. After all, he has always lurked outside the fringes of Contemporary Christian Music, crafting songs that detail not only his joys and victories, but also his disappointments, struggles and failures.

Bob's acoustic folk-style recordings have honestly confronted the messy side of human existence over the years. But those who have discovered his depth, wit, honesty and musicianship consider him to be one of Christian music's foremost songwriters. His classic tunes "Matters of the Heart," "Come and See," "A Song About Baseball," and many others reveal a songwriting proficiency unmatched among his peers.

Bob was born in Downey, California, in 1955. He picked up his first guitar at age nine and formed a rock 'n' roll band in high school. In the late seventies he converted to Christianity and his songwriting began to reflect his newfound faith. His career was launched with the release of his 1979 folk-style debut recording *First Things First*. Three years later came *Matters of the Heart*, a recording Contemporary Christian Music Magazine voted 1982's "Album of the Year," ranking it among the top 20 Contemporary Christian Albums of all time.

Soon after the release of his next recording, *Non-Fiction*, he served as opening act on Amy Grant's Unguarded Tour. *Lord of the Past: A Compilation* followed, with its title song reaching number one on the Christian radio charts in early 1990, followed by his second number one song, "Yours Alone." Later that year Bob joined Michael Card on his Way of Wisdom tour, performing in front of sold-out audiences across the country. *Songs from Bright Avenue* was released in 1991, a collection of songs he wrote while struggling with the dissolution of his marriage. The years that followed were a time of emotional healing, regrouping and moving forward with his life. 1997's *Small Graces* reflected some of that progress.

In 2002, Bob signed with Steve Bell's Signpost Music which yielded *The View from Here*, part of a series of simpler-production albums being released by the label. Re-recorded versions of "Lord of the Past", "Man of the Tombs", and "Still Rolls the Stone" breathed new life into some of these older classics along side of newly-written gems like "The Kings of Summer Street" and the title song.

Collaborative projects with Bruce Carroll and Billy Sprague (*Return of the Killer B's*) as well as master fingerstyle guitarist John Standefer (*Six String Prayers*) followed. In 2009, Bob wrote and recorded his first Holiday collection *Christmastide* which featured many newly written songs for the Season as well as some eclectic covers. Along with friends Billy Batstone and Alex MacDougall, Bob then collaborated on *Jesus Music Again* (2011) which surveyed many of the classic Jesus People Era songs done in a more wooden, acoustic fashion.

Joy Deep as Sorrow, the completion of which was generously crowd-funded via a Kickstarter Campaign, was released in 2012. Of the album, Shawn McLaughlin wrote in Christian Musician magazine: “Bennett has already released two of the faith-based medium’s greatest albums (1982’s *Matters of the Heart* and *Songs from Bright Avenue* which followed 10 years later). That *Joy Deep as Sorrow* is every bit their equal, coming almost 35 years into his ministry, is a testament to Bennett’s gift as well as his staying power.”

Bob’s latest release is *Live at Judson University*. The recording captures a one-night-only in-concert performance where Bob is joined by Dr. Warren Anderson and a special extended gathering of both current and alumni choir members. The evening was recorded at the end Homecoming Week in September 2016 and the setlist covers a wide range of Bob’s songs. A couple songs are even sung by students with Bob accompanying on guitar.

Of his music, Bob says,

“I think that accomplishing some sort of ministry by playing music is a completely faulty, frail method that God still manages to use. My primary goal is to communicate truthfully with people. If I can communicate truthfully the life of the Spirit and the always-accompanying struggle along the way, then ministry happens as a natural result of that. If something deep and profound happens, I’m as amazed and grateful as anyone else!”

Deliberately subjective in his lyrics, Bob Bennett allows listeners to eavesdrop on his personal observations and then decide for themselves if the words ring true. Ultimately, he reaches into hearts, using his abilities to craft language and music to tell the stories inside each of us.

Here is what other artists say about Bob Bennett:

"A poet of a songwriter, words are never wasted, notes always hand-picked and perfectly positioned. A full range acoustic guitarist, Bob flows up and down the neck with a jazzman's efficiency."
Michael Kelly Blanchard, Recording Artist

"Bob Bennett is one of the most gifted songwriters any of us know about. He is able to listen to the parable of his own life and share with us what he hears the Lord saying to him and to us all."
Michael Card, Recording Artist

"There have been possibly only a handful of truly gifted artists in the brief history of Contemporary Christian Music, but Bob Bennett has got to be, in my opinion, the most gifted of the lot. The element of integrity in his song lyrics is indescribable. **Glenn Kaiser**, Rez Band/Jesus People USA

“A gifted poet and musician - Bob Bennett is a thought-provoking artist. His insight challenges me.
Amy Grant, Recording Artist

"When I hear Bob Bennett's music, I'm reminded that there are still songwriters and artists among us who wear honest hearts on their sleeves." **Phil Keaggy**, Guitarist/Recording Artist