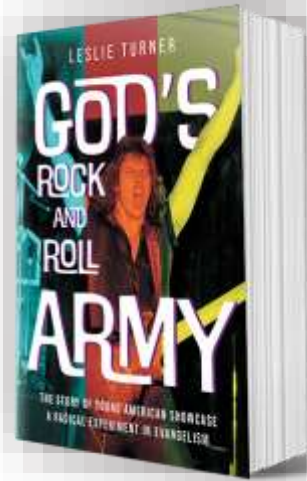


Contact: Encourage Publishing (812)987-6148

Email: info@encouragebooks.com

Website: www.encouragepublishing.com



Release date: April 1 2022

GOD'S ROCK AND ROLL ARMY

The Story of Young American Showcase A Radical Experiment in Evangelism

By Leslie Turner

BOOK TRAILER

<https://www.tinyurl.com/GRRAtailer>

"I will never forget that day!" The true story of a radical experiment in evangelism as told by those who lived it.

Between 1968 and 1991, over 10 million teenage students across the United States and Canada had a shared experience: one day they were called from class to their gymnasium, where they cheered their way through a rock and roll show the likes of which most had never seen. Students saw young men with rock star personas, iconic clothes, and wild hair, whose musical talent was only exceeded by their extreme showmanship. In fact, you may still have a Free Fare or Freedom Jam poster rolled up in your closet.

Thousands of students each month came back for an evening show, and it was there, in the final few minutes of the night, that the illusion of "sex, drugs, and rock and roll" so prevalent in that era was broken. Then, as hard-core rockers testified about their life in Jesus, roughly a million young lives across 23 years were changed. Along the way, something else happened. Every year, dozens of young people joined in this radical experiment in evangelism. Within each one of them, a transformation occurred, and an indelible bond formed.

This is the story of God's Rock and Roll Army, the jaw-dropping and miraculous events they experienced, and the lessons they learned. From their accounts, you will find the key to building strong faith leaders, and you may find the courage for your own radical experiment in evangelism. **What did you do with your ticket?**



About the author

Leslie Turner is a nationally published contributing writer in multiple books and has been a featured guest columnist for nationally recognized business and higher education publications.

Prior to "God's Rock and Roll Army," Turner co-wrote "Diving into the Deep" (2014, Encourage Publishing), and has edited multiple books as the owner and founder of Encourage Publishing, an award-winning independent Christian publishing house.

[For hi-res photos, to receive an ARC, or to schedule an interview with the author, editor, or publisher contact Encourage Publishing.]



Inspirational Non-fiction

6"x9" - 222 pages
112 images

Paperback SRP: \$24.99 US

ISBN: 978-1-7343231-7-7

Ebook SRP: \$ 9.95 US

Hardcover SRP: \$39.99 US

ISBN: 978-1-7343231-6-0

RESELLERS:

Order POD through Ingram or offset [through the publisher](#) at 55% discount for resellers (Resellers tab on our website).



812.987.6148

1116 Creekview Circle,
New Albany, IN 47150-2028

Fax: 812.945.3359

info@encouragebooks.com

www.encouragepublishing.com

More about the author and Encourage Publishing

Leslie Turner has two successful blogs: [The Power of CHANGE, the Mercies of FAITH](http://healthy50s.blogspot.com) (healthy50s.blogspot.com) shares inspirational short stories and serials about people she has met and her own experiences. [The Power of SMALL – Smart Tips for Storytellers](http://encouragepublishing.blogspot.com) (encouragepublishing.blogspot.com) focuses on authors and the publishing industry and is also linked through the encouragepublishing.com website home page. Leslie's next inspirational biography will tell the stories of several ordinary people who experienced miracles and overcame extraordinary challenges, to be published early 2024.

Leslie received two degrees with high distinction from Indiana University, Bachelors of Arts in both Music and Spanish. She has completed her first year toward a Master's in Instructional Design, which she hopes someday to complete. Prior to publishing, she worked in higher education, technology, business and marketing for over twenty years. Leslie and her husband attend Graceland Baptist Church in New Albany, Indiana.

Encourage Publishing is an award-winning independent publisher with multiple imprints, primarily in the inspirational space. They publish print, audio and ebooks as well as music projects, and are currently working on a children's "You and Me" book package that ties Christian music play lists into the parent-child reading experience (2022), and a multi-media grief support project that will use uplifting stories and both original and mainstream music to help those experiencing loss (2023). Encourage Publishing is a hybrid/traditional book publishing company established in 2014, releasing five new books in 2022.

Editorial and Marketing Notes:

"God's Rock and Roll Army" is a non-fiction book written in the Christian world view that shares an amazing, challenging, and uplifting true story of what we can accomplish if we are willing to say "yes" to God. The book aims to encourage a bold, creative approach to evangelism, and also to demonstrate the power both in actively discipling the next generation and in shared front-line ministry experience. **Book trailer:** <https://www.tinyurl.com/GRRAtailer>

Specifically, the book traces the genesis of Young American Showcase, a company that formed, trained, and sent out up to eight rock bands per year through three decades to tour the United States and Canada with the mission of winning the hearts back of youth who were lost to the illusion of "sex, drugs, and rock and roll," and pointing them straight to Jesus. Wildly successful, tens of millions of youth saw these over the top performers and, across over thirty years, millions responded to the call given at the end of each night show. Students turned in their tickets by the hundreds every night for every band, expressing their newfound faith, asking for more information, or embracing a childhood faith they had abandoned. Hence the question asked at the end of the book, "What did you do with your ticket?"

Interviews of those who were there capture the struggle, the excitement, the growth, the dangers, and laughter that accompanied each group. Readers see the rules, the lessons, some of the missteps, and the results, and may find nuggets of truth to help them step out and launch their own radical experiment in evangelism.

Cultural interest in the topic of music in any genre remains strong across all media. Spiritual growth, outreach, and Christian leadership are strong topics in ECPA's 2021 best-seller's list, including titles from a roster of top-selling authors such as Michael Todd, Rick Warren, Louie Giglio, T. D. Jakes, Marshawn Evans Daniels, and Bob Goff.

Encourage Publishing has multiple titles under the specific themes of creative evangelism, deepening your faith, and Christian leadership. The audience for this particular title trends toward Millennials and younger, though men and women of all ages and cultures will benefit from the message.

Marketing efforts include:

1. Initial market analysis, pre-launch promotion, website and media kit launch, initial review campaign
2. Book signings and media interviews, podcast interviews
3. Social media and both online and in-person launch campaigns and advertising
4. Targeted seasonal ad and award campaigns as opportunities arise

For hi-res photos, to receive an ARC, or to schedule an interview contact Encourage Publishing.

PROLOGUE: Bartow, 1968

1968 seemed an unlikely year to start. Bartow, Florida was certainly an unlikely place. Bartow, named after a Confederate general, founded by slave-owning cattle magnate Jacob Summerlin, and birthplace of Segregationist governor and Senator Spessard Holland, would be the place to put the stake in the ground.

At the end of January 1968, media coverage of the TET Offensive brought Americans face to face with the undeniable horrors of the Vietnam War. The U.S.S. Pueblo was captured by North Korea, its crew interrogated and thrown into a P.O.W. camp. April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King was assassinated, and the race riots that ensued across the following months cost dozens more lives and millions of dollars in damage across the country. Students around the globe protested the Vietnam War throughout the year, and on June 5, Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated. The rise of violent anti-government groups challenged a country struggling to understand its own problems, and the youth, students in their teens and twenties, seemed to be at the center of it all. Young people rose up around the world to question authority, to protest, to demand change, to express themselves through violent or illegal acts, and to embrace the growing counter culture of sex, drugs, and rock and roll.

All of these events created an urgency that made 1968 the year a young husband and father of three little children, Lowell Lytle, decide to try something that had never been done before, something extraordinarily risky, in order to recapture the hearts of America's disenfranchised youth and turn them back toward God. More specifically, he wanted to let them know the allure of "sex, drugs, and rock and roll" was nothing but an illusion, just as much as their assumptions that Christianity was far away from their burgeoning cultural identity. He wanted to show teens across America that a life with God at the center could be exciting and life changing, and could give them solid ground in an unstable and fallen world. What followed was more than two decades of a wildly effective youth evangelism ministry that broke all of the rules, slayed all of the assumptions of evangelism, and wound its way straight into the heart of the battlefield, the place where Christianity had been summarily dismissed more than a decade before, the public school system. It was an outrageous plan—an experiment in radical evangelism—and it worked.

During those years, over 10 million high school and middle school students in every state in America and in every province in Canada, students who were born roughly between 1950 and 1980, had a shared experience: one day they were called from class to their school auditorium, gymnasium or cafeteria, where they screamed and cheered their way through a rock and roll show the likes of which most had never seen. The music groups were called "Free Fare," "Freedom Jam," or "The Edge," with a couple other experimental groups along the way. Students saw young men with rock star personas, iconic clothes, and wild hair, whose musical talent was only exceeded by their extreme showmanship. The dazzling musicians gave the crazed assembly of teens a dynamic performance that left them wanting more, and then offered the pumped-up audience a chance to come back in the evening for just that. Thousands upon thousands of students each month came back after school hours for an evening show, and it was there, in the final few minutes of the night, that the illusion of "sex, drugs, and rock and roll" was broken and lives were forever changed—more than a million lives across 23 years—and the ripple became a current that continues to roll forward to this day.

Along the way, something else happened. First one, then four, then a dozen, then many dozens of young men and a handful of women each year joined Lowell and his wife, Barb. Year after year, they fought the battle together. Within each one of them, a transformation occurred, and an indelible bond formed. This is the story of God's Rock and Roll Army, those young men and women who gave themselves wholly to this great experiment, sometimes risking their lives, always sacrificing their plans, their time, and their own will to it. This is the story of the changes each of them experienced, of the often jaw-dropping events that occurred, and of the extraordinary men and women who led them through it all. Through the following true accounts, you will get to know several of the Showcase family members who enlisted in this extraordinary experiment. Their experiences will shock you, inspire, and entertain you. You may even recall seeing one of these bands come through your school, in the United States, Canada, even Australia. You may still have a poster tucked away in your closet. You may be one of the million or so lives that were forever changed.

Looking back at 1968, one cannot miss the similarity to today. Are the young people of this generation not also disillusioned toward the stalwarts of faith and country? Are they not losing hope in the future? Perhaps it is time for another radical experiment. Maybe you are the one to do it.

A disclaimer: this is not a story about Christian music. That's a wonderful story to tell, and as this experiment in evangelism was unfolding, Christian music was experiencing its own explosion. But these bands never played a note of Christian music. They were Christians playing Top 40 Rock and Roll—"the devil's music," as many churches at the time believed. That was the extraordinary hook. And it worked, beyond all measure.

Several key themes emerge when one reads these first-hand accounts, and lots of questions. Whether you are a leader in need of a vision, or a visionary in need of a push forward, you can glean inspiration from these pages: a number of concepts, rules, and methods for turning a group of strong-willed, egotistical individuals into a fine-tuned single unit, an unstoppable family who, together, accomplished the unimaginable. You will observe in their leader some character traits you may want to emulate. You may armchair quarterback the twists and turns that led this experiment to run its course. You may be inspired to try a radical experiment of your own. You will undoubtedly question some of the tactics, but you will not be able to deny the results.

And, almost unbelievably, it all started in Bartow.