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## **A VERY LOUD QUIET TIME**

*A Review of SONICFLOOD*

by Stephen J. Bennett

SONICFLOOD is a contemporary Christian band which has released one album (self-titled, by Gotee Records in 1999). The band, based in Nashville, is made up of four members: Jeff Deyo, Jason Halbert, Dwayne Laring, and Aaron Blanton.<sup>1</sup> Their music is alternative rock with a liberal dose of strings (violins, etc.). The music is definitely guitar-driven and is often more of a “super-sonic deluge” than merely a “sonic flood.” Their album is, however, designed as a praise and worship album with the result of, as one member of the band put it, a very loud quiet time.

“Sonicflood” is defined on their website as follows:

SONICFLOOD ('so-nik 'flud): noun- 1. refers to the cleansing flood that God washes over us as He gets rid of the old in us and creates the new; 2. modern rock praise and worship band on Gotee Records, continuing to remain on the cutting edge of the youth praise and worship movement in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

The name of the band comes from Revelation 19:6 which refers to the praise of a multitude which sounded “like the roar of rushing waters

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<sup>1</sup>The lineup has changed since their album was recorded (see <http://www.sonicflood.com>) but the original members were scheduled to release a new album.

<sup>2</sup><http://www.sonicflood.com/textonly.html#bio>

and like loud peals of thunder”<sup>3</sup> (NIV). The writer of these words was no doubt familiar with the Hebrew word for “multitude,” which is also used for the roaring or raging of the sea. The idea is that a great multitude makes a great sound, as does the sea, or the rushing of the waters. So this band’s sonic flood joins the praise of the multitude from nations which were promised in the fatherhood of Abraham (Gen 17:4f.). And they can rage!

While the style of music may be more or less appealing depending on taste, the message of this album has a very definite holiness appeal. No wonder the website definition given above speaks of God’s cleansing away of the old. The focus of the songs on their album is on Jesus Christ, a radical commitment to and relationship with Him, and more explicitly, holiness. There is even a song called, simply, “Holiness” (track 7):

Holiness, holiness is what I long for  
Holiness is what I need  
Holiness, holiness is what You want from me.

“Faithfulness” and “brokenness” are substituted for “holiness” in the other verses (songwriter is Scott Underwood, 1994). Perhaps it would be better if the song ended with “holiness” instead of “brokenness” as brokenness is not so much the result of holiness as the prerequisite. And instead of “holiness is what You want from me,” I would sing “for me” so that it is quite clear that human holiness comes from God, and not from people. Apart from this, “Holiness” is a great reminder of what mature Christian discipleship heads toward.

Two other songs on the album focus explicitly on the holiness of God. “Holy One” is written by members of the band (track 3). This song emphasizes God’s faithfulness and uniqueness (elements of His holiness) and puts this in the context of changing the hearts of His people.

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<sup>3</sup>“Deeper Waters: Drowning in the Music of Sonicflood,” *Praise Release 3/2* (2000): 9 [published by Praise Incorporated, see [www.praise.com.ph](http://www.praise.com.ph)].

I could never quite express  
 The beauty of your holiness.  
 You're the Holy One.

“Open the Eyes of My Heart” also emphasizes worship of God in his holiness (track 11, written by Paul Baloche, 1997). The singer, in desiring to see the Lord, sings “holy, holy, holy.” The opening track, “I Have Come to Worship You,” also emphasizes the uniqueness of God in His worthiness: “Only You are worthy of the praise this heart brings” (written by Jeff Searles, 1995).

The relational aspect of holiness is featured in several songs which focus on a believer's relationship with God. “I Want to Know You” draws on Philippians 3:14 for its imagery (the album insert lists several Scripture passages for each song)(track 4, written by Andy Park, 1995):

I am reaching for the highest goal  
 That I might receive the prize  
 Pressing onward, pushing every  
 hindrance aside  
 Out of my way  
 Cause, I want to know You more.

The Christian's dependence on God is explored in “My Refuge” (track 5, written by Deyo, Otto Price, and Halbert).

I take my weakness to the foot of the cross  
 There's nowhere else  
 That I'd rather be  
 Than where there's more You, Lord  
 And where there's less me.

The line “[when] there's nothing that's true” betrays, perhaps, the postmodern milieu of this album. A new generation of Christians has come to realize that truth is not to be found in propositions or logic or science, but is a person, Jesus Christ. Truth is some *one* to know, not so much some *thing* to know, although another song has the line “I'm happy to be in the truth” (“I Could Sing of Your Love Forever,” track 6,

written by Martin Smith, 1994). “I Need You” also focuses on dependence on God (track 10, written by Deyo and Halbert, 1998).

Radical discipleship provides the connection with holiness in “Carried Away” (track 8, written by Deyo and Halbert, 1998). This is a missionary’s favorite as the singer expresses a desire to be “swept out to sea,” and asks, “How could I begin to settle?”

I wanna get carried away  
I wanna be tossed by Your waves  
I don’t care where or how deep  
I’m gonna jump in with both feet.

A focus on Jesus Christ is expressed in Sonicflood’s version of “Something about that Name” (track 9, written by William and Gloria Gaither, 1970). The everlasting nature of our Lord is expressed as He will outlive all kings and kingdoms. Only the holy God is like this. The album closes on this note with “The Heart of Worship” (track 12, written by Matt Redman, 1999). This song recognizes that Christian holiness is primarily a matter of the heart. Worship is more than a song, more than merely going through the motions of a ritual, because Jesus is looking much deeper within, looking at the heart. The consecration of the heart is expressed in the lines “All I have is yours / every single breath.” And in that moment of consecration, the focus of worship, of life, turns away from the worshiper and turns again to Jesus Christ. And that is what holiness is all about.

I’m coming back to the heart of worship  
And it’s all about You  
All about You, Jesus  
I’m sorry Lord for the thing I’ve made it

When it’s all about You  
All about You, Jesus.