

HEART OF THE ARTIST

Colton's "Talkback" session at the Creation Festival turned into an amazing ministry event! This is only a small part of what took place in the crammed room with hundreds of youthworkers. The entire session is available at interlinc-online.com on the YLO Members page.

How did you come to know Christ? What is your background?

I was born and raised in a Christian home. I gave my life to the Lord when I was seven. I felt led to music ministry when I was thirteen. In between then and when you saw me on American Idol I formed a rock band with my sister. We led worship singing for the youth group at my church. I was heavily involved in youth group—my youth pastor was the bomb.com—love him to death. American Idol was something my sister wanted to do more than I did, but I got wrangled into it for a couple of seasons and God used that. God uses the most unlikely of circumstances to prove how powerful He is. God continued to open opportunities for me and after Idol I started writing and praying for which direction He wanted me to go. I didn't know if that was mainstream or Christian music, but He made it pretty obvious that Christian music is where I was going to be, and since then I've been touring and enjoying this opportunity He's given me.

Talk about your time at Grassland Heights Baptist Church—what you learned about student ministry and why you're committed to it.

I was invited out to do a camp with Grassland. It wasn't huge, about 50 kids, but those are my favorites! You really get to know each kid and what they're going through. The worship experiences there were just unbelievable, not because of anything we did but just because the kids were ready for it. I think you learn by experience with youth ministry.

I'm not a youth minister by any means, yet God has given me a strong passion for my generation. (I'm only 22 years old.) You see the statistics of kids that were raised in church and once they go off to college the percentage of kids who are dropping out of church is scary and I think that needs to change. Just by growing up in youth group and seeing the job my youth minister did; man it just added layers in my repertoire.

Outside of the music industry, what passion God has given you?

Ministry has been my passion. If I weren't doing music, I'd find another way to do the same thing. Music is just a tool. So, ministry is my passion. My generation is also my passion. I'm willing to loop everybody in if they're willing to listen. I just know there are core people in my life who have been there for certain things and I'd love to be able to be there for others. So if it weren't music, I'd find another way. I'd do whatever I'd have to do to make sure God gets the glory through it all.

One of my favorite moments in American Idol was when you were eliminated; you dropped down on your knees and worshiped God. How can I get my young men to worship on that level? What reached you?

Having an example to emulate. Guys need to see and experience the pursuit of Jesus right there in front of them. I had a youth pastor who was like a father to me. Between my dad and my youth pastor, I know all these things now because of those figures in my life.

