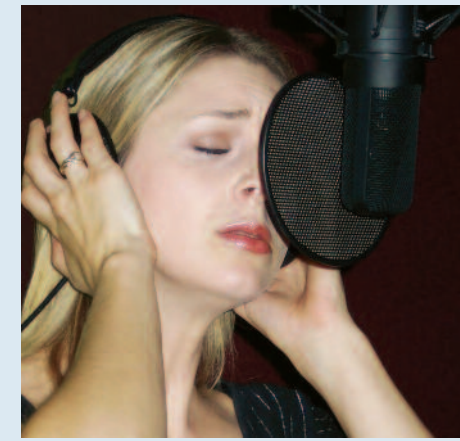
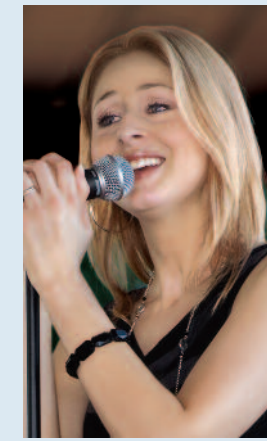


Singing to Save Lives

Jaime Thietten



By Stephanie Longo

If you were to tell a teenaged Jaime Thietten that her future would involve singing to spread a message to the world, she wouldn't have believed you.

"I've always loved singing, but it never crossed my mind to be a professional singer," Thietten said. "In high school, I got awards for singing. Then, someone suggested I try it as a full-time career. I looked at them and laughed because I thought they were joking," she added with a smile.

Fast forward to today. The 33-year-old Idaho native has been singing professionally for over 10 years now, sharing the stage with acts such as Avalon, Michael English, Kenny Loggins and Glenn Frey.

One of her biggest successes has come this year with "My Chance," a song about a woman who had an abortion and regretted it later. It has already won several awards, including 2009 Song of the Year at the Momentum Awards and grand prize in the Ourstage.com music competition. But for Thietten, "My Chance" is not about the awards and recognition, or even knowing this could be the "song that puts me on the map." She said, "It would be nice...but God has a much bigger purpose than that. I just want it to be heard. It isn't about me. I want more people to hear it so that more lives are saved and more healing can come from this song."

'God is so cool'

Thietten prayed about her career choice. "About a year ago, I came to a point where I wondered if I was still doing what God wanted me to do. In prayer one night, He said, 'Jaime, I want you to be a voice for the unborn.'"

Thietten admits that her God-given task was a little daunting. "I thought that no record label in their right mind would touch me with a 10-foot pole with that [pro-life] message, because it is so controversial. But I had to let go and remember that God would carry me through anything. He will always provide if you are doing His will."

Thietten's acceptance eventually brought her "My Chance." "Two weeks after I said 'yes' to the Lord's call, I got the lyrics to 'My

Chance,'" Thietten said. "Coincidentally, it was also my birthday, February 1, 2008. I hadn't realized the irony in all of that until I looked back a few months later. God is so cool! Rick Shadrick and J.T. Tallent wrote the lyrics, and I composed the music. It ended up being a beautiful song that is touching hearts and saving lives. I couldn't ask for more."

A change in perspective

Although today Thietten is a practicing Catholic with a strict pro-life stance, her personal life is also not what she had originally envisioned. Thietten was raised as a Seventh-Day Adventist and converted in 2006 after learning about the Catholic faith from her husband, Pete Espil. He converted in 1999 after being raised a Mormon. Espil now works as youth minister at St. Rose of Lima Church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where the couple moved two years ago so Thietten could be closer to Nashville for her music.

"He would come home to share stuff and I began studying, too," Thietten recalled. "It was more of me trying to convince myself...I had to open my heart. The turning point for me was the Eucharist. When I was confirmed, I cried...It was that profound of an experi-

ence. I realized what was missing from my life for so long."

Thietten also credits Espil as the force behind her shift on abortion. "I haven't always been traditionally 'pro-life.' I knew abortion was wrong, but I felt it wasn't my position to tell another woman what to do with her body," she said. "But as Pete and I [talked], I began to see it differently."

Then her nephew, Tanner, was born. "When I had the opportunity to see my nephew's birth, it changed how I [felt] about abortion," she said. "I saw his little body come out and that was it, I was pro-life. I realized then that I could talk about this...that every baby had a right to life. I felt a new strength within me and a new conviction like never before."

"As much as everyone wants to give the woman the right to do what she wants with her body, there's another body inside of her that doesn't have a choice." Thietten continued, "I get emotional when I think about that because I remember my nephew's little head came out and he wasn't breathing. Some people would say that he wasn't a real person yet. But when you look at that face and you look at that little body, you think, 'How could someone say that it is okay for someone to take that baby's life?'"

The mission behind 'My Chance'

Although "My Chance" has received many accolades, Thietten says that the song's mission goes beyond commercial success. "I know of two lives that have been saved from the song. Even if one life was saved, it would have been worth it."

"This song was also written to help heal women who have gone through an abortion," said Thietten, noting the pain an abortion causes. "This song will hopefully open them up to...healing. God wants them to know He forgives them. My ultimate hope... is that it will open up dialog so that abortion is not such a hush-hush thing anymore."

Another goal is to change how people treat those who had an abortion. She said, "I hope that people don't look at someone who has had [an abortion] with hatred or disgust... I hope it might help people be more compassionate and loving... and understand what they've been through."

"My Chance" also strikes a personal chord. Thietten and her husband have been unsuccessfully trying to conceive a child for the past 10 years. "I see many, many families who want to have children but can't, and I see women who are



pregnant but who don't want children," Thietten sighed. "My hope is that women will realize that there is someone who will love their baby and who will take care of their baby as their own. I want girls to know that if they are in the decision-making process of what to do, they should give that baby the chance to live and give someone like me the chance to be a mother. I think your life will have a

much bigger meaning if you can be a hero to this baby."

Thietten's next steps

Thietten is working on her next album, to be released in fall 2010, and focusing on education. "I think it is what is needed most," she said. At her concerts, you can find pro-life T-shirts, brochures and other material. Eventually, she'd like to stage a PowerPoint presentation that focuses on adoption, abortion and other social issues. "We can pass laws and do all these things, but unless you really educate women and our society as to what this really is, what this really does and how often it really happens, I don't think we will ever get to where we need to be."

Pro-life advocacy is not her only calling. "There is so much more that I want to sing about,"

said Thietten. "God is taking me on a journey and there are more incredible opportunities to touch people's hearts... I have a song called 'Yesterday's News' about the homeless, which will be on my new CD. I just think it is important to talk about subjects that so desperately need our attention. I am excited about the future and so glad that God is orchestrating everything."

"I want to be a voice for the unborn but also a voice for other issues. I want to be a voice for hope and healing that changes lives," said the singer on a mission.

For more information on Jaime Thietten and to hear "My Chance," visit www.jtmusic.net.

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