



How does one become a minister, a social worker, and a singer songwriter all at the same time? A look at Michael Vincent can begin to answer that question, at least in the case of this one Northern California folk rock songwriter who lives near the ocean and works with people who are hungry, homeless, and often mentally ill.

*“My faith informs my politics. That’s not to say that God told me to believe and practice my faith in a particularly absolutist manner, but rather that my personal understanding of my faith and its traditions instructs me to be aware of, and most especially join with, those on the margins.”*

Michael grew up near Portland, Maine but moved to sunny Southern California two weeks before his 13th birthday. At about this same time, Michael’s childhood interest in popular music began leading to a point where he felt the desire to do something more than just listen to the music that he loved. He wanted to write and sing and play it too. Michael began writing songs with friends from church, forming bands and playing for, and occasionally with, the gospel rock artists of the day.

In the spring of 1977, feeling the call to ministry, Michael completed a BA at San Jose State and followed that with Masters studies in Divinity and Social Work at Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley. With graduation from seminary, Michael began work as the pastor of a progressive church in the South Bay while at the same time working with some of the most at risk people in this generally upscale community. His music was the link that brought these seemingly disparate parts together.

*“For me, spirituality is not separate from the so-called material world and our activities therein. To be spiritual is to have a significantly greater connection with the human condition, and ally ourselves with the needs of others.”*

As the years have passed, the work and the music have grown together and continue to inform each other. From the ups and downs of personal relationship, to the homegrown casualties of war and the overlooked victims of contemporary society, Michael’s music leaps across easily defined categories to flesh out daily life in lyrical form. Michael is excited about these new directions in his music and he says he’s looking forward to what he expects to be a wide variety of musical settings and opportunities.

*I’ve really settled into a good spot in my life where it isn’t about some sort of big rock star dreams, but it’s about the music, and about just putting yourself out there. I have a feeling there’s more to come, in terms of bigger stages and things like that, but that’s not what I’m aiming for. I feel like I’m making a difference and I plan on being around, and doing that, for a long time.”*