

# It's a Worship Revolution

Worship artist David Crowder is taking Christian music to a whole new level. And he's doing it from a Baptist church full of college students.

By University Baptist Church standards, it's a typical Sunday morning worship service. Of course, a normal meeting for the Waco, Texas-based ministry looks little to nothing like most of the country's congregational gatherings.

Inside the dimly lit sanctuary, housed in a converted Safeway grocery store, about 800 formerly disillusioned students from nearby Baylor University are engaged in worship. Many raise their hands; some dance; others stand quietly in contemplative prayer.

Moments after leading worship, David Crowder exits the platform and enters an adjacent hallway feeling especially good. The song selection seemed to be on target. The congregation responded to his admonitions. And the band that shares his name sounded better than ever.

Still caught up in the emotional euphoria of the worship experience, Crowder is nearly run over by a small, overactive boy. Seconds later, a young woman whisks by, frantically chasing her escaped pupil. The commotion jars Crowder out of his reverie and a curious thought hits him.

"Who's having the more authentic worship experience this morning?" he wonders aloud. "Is it me and the rest of these people who just got through singing some stuff or is [it] this other gal who gave up spending a morning with her friends to chase some little kid that's probably driving her up the wall?"

Whose experience in worship is more valid at that point?"

This is just one of Crowder's countless epiphanies—those life-altering, paradigm-shifting thoughts that come without any warning. He seems to welcome such thoughts, which challenge his preconceived notions about God, life, worship and the church. And perhaps that's why the 35-year-old music pastor, recording artist and nationally recognized worship leader is embraced by so many young adults who struggle to connect with the traditional church.

And for a guy whose name has become synonymous with corporate teen and young adult worship, it's surprising to find that he is reluctant to view worship music as the primary tool for reaching younger generations. "I think we've elevated music to a place where it can't bear the weight of what we've asked it do," Crowder says. "It has wound up being the sum total of what we experience and think of worship as.

"It will fold under the weight. It's a brilliant, beautiful thing to use music, and I think it's maybe even why music exists. Yet it can really do damage if that's the sum of what our understanding of worship is."

### **Death of a Salesman**

Crowder never set out to be the face of modern worship—a title he quickly passes off to his good friend Chris Tomlin. In fact, he never meant to be in Waco past the four years it takes to get a bachelor's degree from Baylor University, which is affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

"The last thing I planned, goal-orientedwise, was come to

school, graduate, move back home to Texarkana and sell insurance for my dad," Crowder says. "And obviously I can't even fathom doing that now. Can you see me on your front steps? 'Hey, have you thought of your kid's future?'"

"All of this has been a left turn, but looking back you can see all the tools were there waiting."

Crowder grew up in Texarkana, Texas, where he was immersed in a highly traditional church culture. But his family's interest in varied worship experiences had him caught between two extremes.

"I really had this schizophrenic Christian upbringing," Crowder remembers. "My parents were really devout in their faith. We would spend a typical Sunday morning with the Southern Baptist, East Texas thing going on.

"But Sunday nights we would go to whatever charismatic movement was happening. Wherever the Spirit of God had landed in town, that was where we were on Sunday nights."

Although watching his parents being pulled "between those two polar opposites" was often confusing, he says now he can appreciate the experience as it has helped him feel comfortable in virtually any church environment. But as a teenager and young adult, Crowder distanced himself from the trappings of church life.

When Crowder flew the coop to study music at Baylor, he found that he wasn't alone. In fact, he quickly discovered that of the 14,000 students who called Waco their temporary home, more than half were not regularly attending a church of any kind.

Hoping to do something about the problem, Crowder and fellow student Chris Seay decided to start a progressive church that would appeal to younger generations. Seay, whose father was a Baptist preacher, would serve as the teaching pastor, and Crowder, who was studying music at Baylor and had played in his youth group band, would lead worship.

Because they shared the same church background, Crowder and Seay—now pastor of the cutting-edge Ecclesia church in Houston—did the sensible thing: They went to the Southern Baptist state mission board for funding. Crowder admits he wasn't crazy about the idea. He assumed the powers that be would consist of "a bunch of old folks with gray hair."

"In my head I had this moment pictured, and it was stereotypically Baptist," he admits. "We were going to the Baptist state mission board, and these guys are the ones that hold the moneybags so to speak. Even before I stepped into the room I knew who they were in my head.

"We walked into this room and sure enough it fit the description. I was like: 'I knew it! I knew it!' And I was looking at Chris like, 'This is so not going to fly.' Here's a bunch of young college punks going: 'Hey, give us money. We want to start a church.' I thought it was the most ridiculous thing ever. There was no way they were going to go for it."

But as soon as they started to share their vision with the men, something remarkable happened. The board members became engrossed in the concept and immediately jumped at the opportunity to help the young, would-be campus pastors. Some were even moved to tears.

That moment changed Crowder, who then began to appreciate his heritage more than ever before. But in reality, University Baptist Church (UBC) was not going to look or feel like a typical Southern Baptist congregation.

Instead, it would eventually become a haven for young people who had given up on the traditional church. The ministry's stated goal was to "engage the whole person with all of his/her senses in a balanced experience of God that shields itself from emotionalism or intellectualism."

Their fresh approach caught on, and the church quickly grew into the hundreds with services on Sunday and Wednesday nights. "Before you've heard anything happen from the stage, we want you to know it's OK to be who you are, however you're put together," Crowder says.

"We want you to be able to express yourself to God in a really authentic way. You don't have to look a certain way. You don't have to posture a certain way. We want to create an atmosphere that breeds diversity and encourages diversity so that nobody needs to feel like they need to look like the person next to them or react to moments the same way."

As the church has grown, so has Crowder. He used to experience fear before he mounted a platform. In preparation for worship services, Crowder would become very intense and focused.

"I would all of the sudden get into a spiritual posture so to speak," he says. "What that would do is lessen all of the rest of my experience with God. It would turn this moment into something more holy than the one that preceded it. I felt like that was not a really good way to follow Christ. Most of it

was fear-driven.

“So what I’ve tried to do and remind myself is that the rest of my day is as important as that moment [of leading worship]. It’s not a more sacred moment, so it shouldn’t look much different. It doesn’t say that I don’t rely on the Holy Spirit’s leading. What it means is I think it’s as important to rely on the Holy Spirit’s leading in those moments preceding and following.

“It makes those moments as important. So what it then does is turn that moment into looking like the rest. Music all of the sudden is an extension of who I was before and who I’ll be after.”

### **A Passion for Worship**

For the first several years, Crowder lived in a virtual vacuum at UBC. He was so caught up in local ministry he never gave thought to how his burgeoning talents as a worship leader and writer might impact the rest of the world. And despite his current status as a national figure in the worship music scene, it’s still something with which he’s not completely comfortable.

“I tend to look at what I’m doing through really small lenses in that I’m at a little church in Waco, Texas, and I’m writing songs to articulate faith to this little group of people,” Crowder says.

“That’s about the extent of what I allow myself to feel. I’m aware that, granted, these songs will leak out and get elsewhere and be in a lot of people’s mouths, but I don’t know

those people. I know these people [at UBC].”

But from the early days of UBC, the music Crowder was creating with fellow Baylor students Jack Parker, Jeremy Bush, Mike Dodson and Mike Hogan resonated with a largely untapped group of worshipers in churches and on college campuses well beyond Waco. With their rock-influenced sound and reflective lyrics that probed difficult spiritual questions, the David Crowder Band (DCB) were unwittingly revolutionizing modern worship.

“David’s music was finding a place in the body of Christ that no one else’s music was filling,” says Louie Giglio, founder of the Passion conferences and a former campus pastor at Baylor. “I could see that, and it finally came down to David saying he didn’t think anyone was that interested [in his music], and my role was to say to him that these weren’t his songs.

“That’s an important hurdle for every worship leader to get over. These songs are coming from God. They may come through you, but they’re coming from God.”

Giglio, founder of Sixsteps Records, helped the band fund its first professional recording and added them to the Passion lineup in 1999. The following year they headlined the event where 40,000 students gathered for corporate worship.

In 2002, the release of *Can You Hear Us* marked Crowder’s official leap into the Christian music industry as a bona fide national recording artist, although the band had already appeared on a pair of Passion projects. That was followed by the 2003 release of *Illuminate* and 2005’s highly acclaimed concept record *A Collision*.

In the last five years, DCB has been responsible for a slew of popular worship anthems, including “Here Is Our King,” “No One Like You,” “Our Love Is Loud,” “Wholly Yours” and “Only You.”

Known for his experimental approach to writing, producing and recording, Crowder showed his range and surprising appreciation for traditional music with last year’s *B Collision: The Eschatology of Bluegrass*. In fact, concertgoers shouldn’t be surprised to hear the band break into a modern-day hoedown at any given moment.

“David is a genius,” Giglio says. “There’s no doubt about that. I don’t say this with any bias at all, but I think David Crowder Band is the best band around.

“I’d stack them up with anybody—period. People say they’re the best Christian band there is. I was at the Grammys and I heard some pretty good bands, and I think the David Crowder Band is as good as any band there is in America.

“I don’t mean that in a sense to puff Crowder up, but he’s got a real unique sensibility about music. He’s a far more advanced musician than anybody out there. The stuff that goes through his head is on a different plane than most people.”

And people outside the Christian music industry agree. While Crowder is a big fan of Christian bands such as Switchfoot and . . . , who have made massive inroads into mainstream music circles, his own band’s popularity within the secular marketplace has steadily grown. Crowder has befriended such interested onlookers as Spin journalist Andrew Beaujon, author of *Body Piercing Saved My Life*, and Jimmy Eat World drummer Zach Lind.

A perennial critic's favorite, DCB has received media coverage from the New York Times, Fox News and CNN. And the Dove Award-winning band ended 2006 by claiming the title of MSN's Artist of the Year—beating out nominees such as Prince, Christina Aguilera, Kenny Chesney and INXS. MSN commented that “[David Crowder Band has] single-handedly redefined what contemporary Christian music should sound like.”

“That’s huge for us because that’s so much of what we’re trying to do,” Crowder says. “We can see it visibly here when you’re living life with these people and you know these songs fit into their lives. But to have people that don’t have any connection to us or a relationship with us say the same thing is huge.

“It makes it worth all the effort, worth all the difficulty in finding our feet in two different streams. It makes us feel like things can change. We can make a small impact here.”

### **It's Just Music**

With the band's latest project, Remedy, set to release this fall, Crowder has come a long way since his early days when he had no desire to appeal to audiences beyond a five-mile radius of Waco. It's still a struggle keeping the balance between being a worship pastor and having a national platform as a recording artist for a new generation.

The band rarely misses a Sunday service despite a hectic touring schedule and has taken many red-eye flights back to Waco to ensure it stays that way. But even amid the hype that surrounds the music scene, Crowder understands that worship is bigger than his band or the group's songs.

“It’s just music,” Crowder says. “We’re just ... putting some words to it and singing to God for a little bit. Yes, there have probably been some moments when, for me personally, that experience has been life-changing and altering. But for the most part, it’s just music.”

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### **Raising a Fist at Death**

How God used David Crowder’s music to help his church heal after a tragedy.

In October 2005, as David Crowder Band was touring the country in support of its heralded album *A Collision*, the group received tragic news. University Baptist Church’s pastor, Kyle Lake, had been electrocuted by audio equipment while baptizing a church member. He was 33.

For several months, Crowder withdrew from the public eye as his pastor and close friend’s death made headlines. “Everyone wanted to talk about it, and most of it had to do with the spectacle rather than concern,” Crowder recalls.

The two had attended school together and were the same age. But even more ironic is the fact that Lake’s teachings played a major role in the writing and production of *A Collision*—and that the concept record tackled the dubious topic of death.

Crowder says that unique reality didn't make Lake's sudden passing any easier to deal with. But he believes God used the pastor's messages, which were laced throughout the songs, to help comfort the University Baptist Church family.

"We were supporting this record about death, singing these songs and then our pastor dies," Crowder says. "We needed those songs more than anybody did."

To produce *A Collision*, Crowder followed a 20-page script—written in part by Lake. The album wasn't supposed to be a commercial success due to its subject matter and unconventional song layout. But the album resonated with Crowder's fans and won over a substantial new group of listeners as well.

Crowder was as surprised as anyone by the project's appeal. "We were trying to discuss death and our mortal position here on earth in light of our Christian faith," Crowder says. "By the end of the record, we finally wind up raising our fists to the air and wind up saying that our belief is that death doesn't win."

### **Let Every Generation Praise Him**

Dozens of new worship artists are taking Christian music to a new level of passion and intimacy.

Their music is loud. Their message is bold. But these young worship leaders aren't just trying to make a statement. They want to lead their generation into a fresh experience with God—and as a result they are writing the soundtrack for a move of the Holy Spirit that is touching hearts around the globe.

Here are some of the many leaders in this youth-led worship movement.

### **Charlie Hall**

For the last 15 years, Charlie Hall has given the church some of its favorite modern worship choruses, including “Salvation,” “Freedom Song” and “Give Us Clean Hands.”

Hall’s early lyrical offerings made him a mouthpiece for the popular, college-driven Passion movement. His last two albums—*On the Road to Beautiful* and *Flying Into Daybreak*—found the Oklahoma City native experimenting more than ever before.

“Music in [and] of itself is a sacrament,” Hall says. “It’s powerful and symbolizes so much of spirituality. It gets inside your soul. It’s more than just sticking God lyrics into a rock song.

“One of my biggest desires is that when we play and don’t even sing that people would feel their heart rise up and worship God.”

And though newer, more artistically innovative songs such as “Micah 6:8” and “Song of the Redeemed” may not appeal to every church, Hall believes God has a broad purpose for his music.

“I’m realizing over time that yes, God takes me through stuff for me, but He uses it so much for other people,” Hall says. “I know He’s trying to speak things to me and to other people through me.

“God gets glory from our pain, our failures, our misunderstandings and our confusion. With my music, I want it to capture people musically as well as spiritually and emotionally.”

### **Desperation Band**

On the surface, Jared Anderson’s successful foray into modern worship might have seemed like a foregone conclusion. After growing up in New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the young worship leader attended Oral Roberts University, where he recorded a pair of independent records in his spare time.

But even he admits that it took some time before the idea of diving into full-time ministry started to make sense. “I battled with that for a while,” Anderson says. “I thought being a worship leader was everyone’s plan B—that going back to the church was kind of settling.”

Anderson finally caved in to his calling and formed Desperation Band, an electric-driven pop-rock group whose music is quickly becoming a nationwide phenomenon. Songs such as “Amazed,” “Rescue” and “Hear Us From Heaven” are just a few of the modern standards that Anderson originally penned for his church.

“There’s a philosophy of freedom at the church and the leadership that empowers people into whatever comes out naturally, letting people do what’s in them to do,” Anderson says. “That’s created an environment of innovation.”

Anderson is especially concerned about how his music can

impact even the hardest of hearts. “The big ideas have to translate all the way through to the secular world if it’s going to last,” he says.

### **Lisa McClendon**

Lisa McClendon broke new ground when in 2003 she debuted on Integrity Music’s label with her worship project, Soul Music. But the 29-year-old preacher’s kid from Florida says she doesn’t want her jazz and soul-influenced music to overshadow the message in her songs.

“It’s not really about the sound. It is about the message,” she says. “The sound is my personality, but the message is all Christ.”

With songs such as “Stuck,” which tackles the challenges of marriage, and “Grace, Grace, Grace,” McClendon says she seeks to be transparent. And although vulnerability can be challenging, she says it’s worth the effort when listeners say her songs helped save their marriages or change their lives. “It’s all worth my transparency,” she says. “It’s all worth me putting it out there on an album as the Lord would allow me to.”

Now living in Nashville, Tennessee, McClendon leads a busy life as a songwriter, producer, owner of Diamond Girl Music, wife and mother of two. She says she couldn’t find balance without keeping focused on Christ.

“I have to spend time with God,” she says. “I get up every morning at 5:30. ... I go in my studio, and I just play worship [music], and I just sit for 30 minutes. Then I start reading

[the Bible] and letting the Lord minister to me. But if I don't do that I can feel it. I can feel everything being unbalanced."

## Leeland

While most high school and college students are figuring out what they want to do with their lives, the young members of the alternative-rock worship band Leeland have already mapped out a long-term future together. And it's not the allure of fame and fortune that drives them.

"We want to sell a lot of albums," keyboard player and background vocalist Jack Mooring says. "We want to play in front of thousands of people. But if we do all of those things and haven't won anyone to Jesus, I would hate to stand before the throne of God with some gold records in my hand and no souls behind me."

Mooring's younger brother Leeland, the band's namesake, first caught the attention of Christian music insiders as a 15-year old prodigious songwriter from Baytown, Texas. He signed a writing contract with EMI and two years later parlayed his success into a record contract for the band. Leeland's first national release, *Sound of Melodies*, has brought the band critical acclaim and a sizeable fan base.

But clinging to its Assemblies of God roots, Leeland has a goal in mind that is bigger than writing hit songs. "We're young, and we're flowing in the Holy Ghost, and we want to tell other kids that they can do that too," Leeland Mooring says.

"Our mission is to see kids who are spiritually dead to be

revived and feel God's presence again and actually seek after God."

## Rojo

Emmanuel Espinosa was an elementary school student watching his parents minister in the church they led in Ures, Mexico, when he realized music had the power to change lives. "I saw what music would do to people. And I saw what God would do through music," he says.

"So when I was around 10 or 11, I said: 'I'm going to serve God, and I'm going to do it through music, and I'm going to do it around the world.'"

It was another 13 years, including six years of touring with worship leader Marcos Witt, before Espinosa set off on his own and released a CD with Rojo, the Texas-based band he had formed. "For the first year, we wouldn't sell one CD, and they wouldn't invite us anywhere," says the 31-year-old bassist, singer and songwriter.

"And all of a sudden, it just exploded, and we sold 100,000 copies, and we started traveling all over Latin America and the U.S. and Spain and Japan. ... For us, it's very clear that it's not us. It's God."

Since then the Spanish-language rock-influenced worship band has released four albums, the most recent being *Con el Corazón en la Mano* (Rey Vol Records), and was nominated for a Latin Grammy Award in 2004. But more than receiving critical acclaim, Espinosa says the band wants to help their young listeners experience true worship.

“Worship is giving yourself completely to God,” he says. “God is not looking for perfect people or talented people; He’s looking for entregados—people who give themselves to God.

“We can be entregados and not be perfect. And we can be entregados even if we have doubts and we have issues. And that’s the kind of people God is looking for.”

### **Tree63**

In late 1996, Tree63 was formed on what seemed at the time to be nothing more than a whim. After a few jam sessions among newly converted believers and a 30-minute slot at a Christian beach festival, the band’s earliest foundations were laid.

And as the South African pop-rock worship band wraps up its first decade together, lead singer John Ellis is continually amazed at how differently this unplanned journey has unfolded.

“As really new Christians, we had virtually no idea about Christian music, much less that it was subdivided into categories like modern worship,” Ellis says. “That was really disappointing for us to discover.”

Since those early days, the trio has enjoyed international acclaim. Employing a musical style that has drawn flattering comparisons to European rockers such as U2, Coldplay, Delirious and Big Country, Tree63 is known for hit songs such as “Treasure,” “Joy” and “Look What You’ve Done.” But unlike their secular counterparts, these guys offer an unusual depth of spirituality.

Ellis admits that he still struggles with the whole entertainment vs. worship debate, but one thing he is sure of is the need for more prophetic ministry within Christian music.

“We’re all about the prophetic,” Ellis says.

“There’s hardly enough space for that dynamic to work in the confines of a three-minute pop song, but on stage we’re always waiting for the Holy Spirit to take over. The songs are merely the form, and God can use them to either speak or entertain or edify or prophecy—whatever He chooses.”

### **Reuben Morgan**

When people think of Hillsong, nine times out of 10 the name Darlene Zschech comes to mind. But in the last few years one of Zschech’s protégés—fellow Australian Reuben Morgan—has effortlessly come into his own with a sound that reflects an innovative mix of traditional and nontraditional influences.

“I get inspired by so much other music and so much other art,” Morgan says. “The church is getting better at—and needs to keep getting better at—releasing people into what they really feel God’s given them to do and not trying to control it.

“We’re diverse. Everybody’s different and everybody has a different calling.”

Now focusing on his ministry as a lead worshiper away from Hillsong, Morgan is also involved in efforts to plant churches all over the world. As a result of his extensive travels, he

believes the atmosphere of true worship among believers is thickening every day.

“People are more passionate than ever,” Morgan says. “I think God’s stirring the church. For the most part, churches are singing the same songs no matter where you go, which is pretty incredible. Even in countries that don’t speak English, they’re still singing the same songs.”

Morgan, who has penned such congregational favorites as “I Give You My Heart,” “My Redeemer Lives,” “Hear Our Praises” and “Every Day,” says the purpose of worship is to get real before God. “I’m really not one for anything but what’s authentic,” Morgan says.

“People need to know why they’re worshipping. We need to be speaking about Christ so people can respond appropriately to Him. I think it helps when people can kind of let go.”

### **Vicky Beeching**

Vicky Beeching is not interested in being a music celebrity. And this singer-songwriter takes her role as a worship leader seriously.

“I’ve always really loved the phrase ‘lead worshiper,’” she says. “I think it’s definitely not being a music leader; it’s definitely not being someone who just sings through a microphone. You really have to set the standard in your own heart and life of worship. Other people hopefully see that as infectious and catch hold of it.”

Beeching, 28, was born in Canterbury, England. As a young teen she began leading worship for her youth group and at other venues around town. Sensing a call to worship ministry, she earned a degree in theology from Oxford in order to better fulfill her destiny.

Now in the U.S., Beeching is leading a whole new audience in worship and has released two albums, Yesterday, Today and Forever and Painting the Invisible. Her piano- and guitar-based melodies have a hint of rock, and Beeching's high energy ushers listeners into full praise and worship.

She says God deserves wholehearted worship purely because of who He is.

"It's completely unrelated to what He's done for us or hasn't done for us or how we do or don't feel," she says. "It's not in any way dependent upon changeable things. ... He is who He is, and He will always be deserving of complete worship."

Through her music Beeching hopes to create "a safe atmosphere where people could experience more of God, where they can be vulnerable, they can really unveil all their heart and just be really who they are and allow God to step close."

## **J. Moss**

When J. Moss burst onto the gospel music scene in 2003 with The J. Moss Project, he and his production partners Paul "PDA" Allen and Walter Kearney (collectively known as PAJAM) quickly became the genre's next big thing.

But Moss is hardly a rookie. He grew up on the music of his aunt, Mattie Moss Clark, and his father, Bill Moss Sr., who fronted the popular 1970s group The Celestials. Then in the 1990s, he began making a name for himself through PAJAM, which has produced hit songs for the likes of Pattie Labelle, Trini-tee 5:7 and N-Sync.

Although his solo project tackled such themes as sexual purity and worship as a lifestyle, Moss is not usually thought of as a worship leader or worship artist. Yet in January he and his crew released the innovative project PAJAM Presents Sing to the Lord—a collection of popular modern worship choruses tailored to appeal to fans of urban contemporary music.

Moss says the worship project challenged him to re-examine his spiritual life. “I spend more quality time talking to God and more study time in the books so that everything I say is backed up in the Word or testimony,” Moss says.

And with the recent release of Moss’ second solo record, V2, the award-winning artist has learned a lot about adversity, patience and doing business God’s way. “My faith assures me that God does things in His own time,” Moss says. “The beauty of God taking you through things is there’s always a lesson. It’s not about the victory party or the symbolism of what you go through. It’s the lesson.

“So I’ve been doing everything in my power to make the whole being of J. Moss the absolute best possible presenter and carrier of the gospel.”

**Hector Sotelo Band**

Héctor Sotelo grew up singing and listening to music. But when the Mexico native was 14, he received a prophetic word during a church service that took his interest in music to a whole new level. “In that prophecy [God] said, ‘I have placed the love of music inside of you ... and don’t ever forget, I am the music,’” he recalls.

Sotelo says that experience caused him to view music ministry as his calling. And today the 27-year-old hopes to inspire other young people to find their purpose in Christ. “Everywhere I go, pretty much our message is living for God, doing something for God,” he says. “We want to tell this generation they actually have a purpose for being here on this earth. And you actually need to do something for God, not just sit in church.”

Now living in Houston, Sotelo describes his music as “British rock with a Latin influence.” His song “La Viña,” on his 2003 debut release, *El Lugar*, was widely played on Christian and secular radio across Latin America. “I never intended for [the album] to be played on secular stations. I never thought that it would,” he says. “Then I would get these e-mails from people ... saying because of the album they came to church and received Christ.”

Sotelo released his sophomore project, *Una Vez Más*, in October through Integrity Music Latin. He says his music, drawn from his own experiences with God, is encouraging his young listeners to give Christ their all. To Sotelo, that’s what worship is all about. “Anything you do can be an act of worship,” he says. “Even if you wash dishes for your mom, if you do it with the right attitude it can become an act of worship. Whatever you do, if you’re trying to glorify God through it, that is an act of worship.”

## Shane & Shane

The modern worship team of Shane & Shane have more in common than their first names. Truth is, this Duncanville, Texas-based duo share a keen understanding of where their critically acclaimed vocals and unique acoustic guitar instrumentation comes from.

“Everything we see here on the earth is just a fringe on the garment of God, a tiny peek at who He is,” Shane Barnard says. “I consider that everything, not just the normal things we think of—trees, creation, etc.—but everything that has been created, whether it’s a laptop, a guitar amplifier, you name it, everything is a reflection of God’s amazing creativity.”

With a pop-driven sound that occasionally invokes folk music, Barnard and his longtime friend Shane Everett have inspired a sizeable audience that tends to be made up of young adults looking for a fresh approach to worship music. The duo made waves as an independent artist before signing to a label and producing such top-selling albums as *Carry Away*, *Upstairs* and their latest project, *Clean*.

Shane & Shane has done so by recording an unusual mix of songs that might include a Twila Paris remake (“He Is Exalted”) or the compelling original “Fringes,” which was inspired by the 26th chapter of Job. According to Barnard, the duo doesn’t select songs because of how old or new they are. They make choices based on how those songs stand up to the ultimate standard—God’s truth.

“No matter how we feel, the truths are absolute,” Everett adds. “When I sing a wrong note, it’s distracting, but it

doesn't change the truth of the message.

"We're called to do this. We're called to proclaim the greatness of God."

### **Tye Tribbett**

For Tye Tribbett, there's only one way to sum up what he and the group he founded, Greater Anointing, are all about. "It's kingdom music," he says. "It is not directed toward one race of people or one genre. It's universal. We represent the kingdom."

The young singer-songwriter-producer from Camden, New Jersey, has broken down walls like no one in the gospel music industry since Kirk Franklin emerged in 1993 with massive crossover success. Tribbett and Greater Anointing have toured with country singer Faith Hill and gained the respect of everyone from Usher and Will Smith to Jill Scott and Mary J. Blige—all the while promoting straight-up worship and an uncompromising gospel message.

"This is basically about spiritual warfare," Tribbett says. "And the way we fight is not against flesh and blood, but principalities. We fight with our praise. This is an all-out attack against the enemy with praise and worship."

And on Tribbett's latest album, *Victory*, he uses hip-hop, gospel, rock and just about everything in between as a weapon to take back what Satan has stolen from the church, as referenced in the popular track "I Want It All Back."

“I’m stepping toward the enemy,” Tribbett says. “Some church folk are scared to fight these things. But I feel like we come in the spirit of David—this young boy who knew how to praise and worship.

“The Bible says David ran to meet the Philistine. He ran to Goliath. We’re saying, ‘Devil, we’re not scared of you.’”

To hear music samples from these artists, visit [charismamag.com/worship](http://charismamag.com/worship).