

Voices of a New Generation

For the last year, **Gabriel Ahn** and the Southern California youth ministry he leads have been praying for what he believes will be the greatest revival the world has ever seen. “We fall on our face, we humble ourselves before God,” Ahn says. “That’s why we call ourselves Remnant—the remnant of Israel was the group of people who chose not to turn themselves to idolatry, to the sexual sin of the nation, who set themselves up to be holy and consecrated to the Lord. The nation of Israel was birthed out of that remnant.” Ahn is hardly alone. The 20 young leaders featured on the following pages are encouraging Christians of all ages to seek God passionately, become His disciples, expect the miraculous and affect change in the world. Some are recent college graduates, others are parents themselves. But in diverse ways they are all doing their part to take the gospel to the next generation.

Joel Stockstill, 29, is a third-generation preacher whose father, Larry Stockstill, leads one of the largest congregations in Louisiana—Bethany World Prayer Center in Baton Rouge. But since the younger Stockstill took the helm of the church’s youth ministry, 220, he has been casting his own shadow. In just five years, 220 has grown from 70 students to more than 7,000, and roughly 100 teens come to Christ each week. Through its cell-based model, 220 has planted student-led Bible clubs in virtually every high school in the Baton Rouge area, and it is quickly duplicating that progress in junior high schools, which he says is where 10- and 11-year-olds are beginning to experiment with drugs, sex and violence. Stockstill, who is also lead pastor of Bethany’s north campus, has struggled with his health since he was 12 and recently had to cope with the death of his wife. But he says the challenges make him even more determined to affect the younger generation—which at 70 million is the largest group of teens in U.S. history. “I believe that millions are going to come in

to the kingdom from this generation,” he says. “It drives me to see that come to pass.”

Rani Hong’s mother thought she was doing the right thing when she gave her daughter to a foreign worker who promised to give her a better life. But what the 7-year-old from southern India really entered into was a life of slavery. She was beaten and abused for a year before being sold into the black market. That eventually landed her in the U.S., where a Christian family adopted her at age 8. Today Hong, 36, and her husband, Trong, a Vietnam native who was also abducted as a child and forced into servitude, advocate for an end to human trafficking through their nonprofit Tronie Foundation (). The couple has seen six bills signed into law in their home state of Washington, and they are helping build homes for victims of severe abuse. “I think as Christians we are called to stand up and be a voice to the oppressed,” says Hong, who is a mother of four. “The church needs to wake up and say: ‘Wow. This is what’s going on in my world.’ And we need to say we will not allow another child to be sold into slavery. This is Christ’s passion.”

Tye Tribbett has been wowing fans of gospel music since his breakout 2002 song “No Way” helped re-energize urban praise and worship. With his group, Greater Anointing, Tribbett, 31, has been nominated for a Grammy and is a Stellar Award winner, but he knows there’s a pastoral ministry in his future. “I’ve been running from that for a long time, and I’ve accepted the fact that [the music ministry] is going to evolve into a preaching ministry,” he says. The son of a Pentecostal pastor, Tribbett is known for challenging listeners with his message. The title track of his latest project, *StandOut*, encourages Christians to be set apart and not conform to the world. Having sung backup for well-known secular hip-hop and R&B artists, Tribbett has lived the message he sings. And though it has hurt to lose some longtime friendships, he believes he’s called to help raise up a generation that will display

God's glory. "Above all, God wants His glory in the earth," Tribbett says. "He wants people to talk about Him nonstop. He wants these kids to get saved so He can get glory. God says: 'I want My glory in the earth. I want people walking the earth talking about My goodness.' "

Jaeson Ma knows his plan is ambitious, but he believes planting churches on university campuses across the U.S. is key to stoking an emerging revival and, ultimately, fulfilling the Great Commission. "It's not about gathering Christians; it's about penetrating completely lost individuals—it's about missions," says Ma, 27. As president of Campus Church Networks, Ma has seen campus-based house churches spring up at 50 colleges. Each campus has anywhere from one to 200 "simple" congregations led by students who disciple other students to plant similar "churches." Ma, an ordained pastor through Ché Ahn's Harvest International Ministries, went to Singapore and China to study the church-planting model Ma says has produced explosive church growth everywhere except the U. S. Ma, a frequent speaker at youth and prayer events and author of *Jaeson Ma, The Blueprint: A Revolutionary Plan to Plant Missional Communities on Campus*, believes that can change with his generation. "If these students can win people to Christ and do church with them there, when they graduate ... they will be able to be church planters wherever they go," Ma says. "If you can change a campus, you can ultimately transform a city, a society."

Kari Jobe has been singing since she was 2, and knew by age 10 that "ministry would look like worship." She has since sung before thousands at ministry conferences and as one of six worship pastors at her church, 15,000-member Gateway Church in Dallas. But no matter how large the audience, Jobe, 27, captures the intimacy in worship that she nurtured as a child singing in a prayer closet her father helped her fashion out of a box. "It all goes back to that prayer closet," she says. "I learned as a child that if I'd get away, my life would be

different.” As a student at Christ for the Nations Institute, Jobe began leading Throne Room worship nights that she says would leave her and other worshipers peeling themselves off the floor. Jobe wants the music on her upcoming project, her first on a major label, to take listeners to a similar place. “I want the glory of God to fall, just creating an atmosphere on the CD, where it fills the house or the car with His presence, where [listeners] may have to pull over and let God minister life, healing and hope—all those things.”

Leeland Mooring is considered to be something of a prodigy. He wrote his first song, “Shine,” at age 11 and signed a songwriting deal at age 15. Today the band that shares his first name is one of the most critically acclaimed in Christian music and earned both Grammy and Dove award nominations for their debut project, *Sounds of Melodies*. Mooring, 20, says he and his brother, Jack, the group’s keyboardist, practically grew up on the road leading worship at revival meetings with their parents. Even today, the inspiration for most of his songs come through times of prayer. With the release of Leeland’s second project, *The Opposite Way*, Mooring wants to impart in his generation the courage to stand out. “It’s our heart’s desire to help raise up a new generation of worshipers who aren’t afraid to live different from the world,” he says, “who aren’t afraid to live the opposite way.”

Gabriel Salguero spends his days directing the Hispanic Leadership Program at Princeton Theological Seminary. But the Pentecostal pastor says his call to mentor young leaders extends far beyond those Ivy halls. “In some of our [church] circles we’ve ignored the Josephs, the Daniels, the Esthers,” says Salguero, 34, who speaks at both Christian and secular mentoring events. “I want to talk with graduate students and young professionals and tell them how they can take their Christianity in to those spheres [of life], to the leadership positions. ... If we refuse to enter all spheres of life, what

we're doing is leaving it to others. What I'm trying to tell people is: 'Fear not. If God is calling you to that, go.'" A doctoral student at Union Theological Seminary, the preacher's kid of Puerto Rican descent believes revival should bring more than individual transformation. "Revival [means] that our whole society has to change," he says. "We need people who want to build hospitals, who want to build schools and talk about genocide ... because it's not a separate thing from revival—it's at the heart of revival."

Leslie Ludy had no idea the story of how she and her husband met and married would resonate so strongly among young Christians, but the couple's book *When God Writes Your Love Story* became a best-selling relationship book in the Christian market. And when she wrote her simple message about the hallmarks of true beauty, she was again surprised that it struck such a chord among college-age women. "Within one month of the book coming out, we were getting over 20,000 unique visitors to the Web site []," says Ludy, a 32-year-old mother of two. "Here we are four years later and those numbers are still going up." At Authentic Girl retreats, Ludy encourages young women to find their identity in a relationship with Christ and not to be defined by the culture's standards of beauty. Perhaps what's more important to Ludy is to motivate women to spend their lives serving others rather than themselves. She points to heroines of the faith such as missionary Jackie Pullinger and 19th century British reformer Elizabeth Fry. With so many young women finding their identity in guys, Ludy encourages her readers to be one of the few who makes other choices. "I do not want my life to be all about me," Ludy says. "I want to be one of the few who is radically devoted to Jesus Christ."

Da' . has a very clear ministry goal—he wants to make music and disciples of Christ, and not necessarily in that order. A graduate of Philadelphia Biblical University and the Institute of Jewish Studies, the Grammy-nominated rapper is part

musician and part apologist. With the other artists at Cross Movement Records, a leading producer of Christian hip-hop, Da' ., whose given name is Emmanuel Lambert Jr., says rap is just a vehicle to help him fulfill his mission. "At the end of the day, every Christian has a responsibility to preach the gospel, to make disciples," the 30-year-old says. "Whether you hear us rap or hear us preach, you're really challenged to become more of a student of the Scriptures. So that at the end of the day what is being produced is the fruit of the Spirit. That's what the Word of God produces. It produces the character of God."

Evangeline Weiner is just 24, but but she is no novice in ministry. Homeschooled as a child, she traveled in ministry with her dad, Bob Weiner, of Weiner Ministries International, and began leading seminars of her own at age 11. Today, as director of Aglow International's Generations Project, Weiner is showing other young adults how to fulfill their God-given destiny and affect what she calls the seven mountains of influence—politics, business, arts and entertainment, science and innovation, architecture and engineering, family and the church. By doing so, she believes the next generation can transform society. "I really just felt that God has put on my heart to see this generation go after everything God has called them to do," says Weiner, whose 2007 book *The Calling of a Generation* gives readers a blueprint for becoming world-changers. "I want to be able to change my generation for God."

Zach Hunter was 12 when he first learned about African-American history and the abolitionist movement that ultimately freed the slaves. "I learned about all the great men and women who fought for justice, and I was wishing I could have been born earlier to do something," he says. Then he found out about the modern slave trade and eventually started collecting change to help free men, women and children worldwide who were trafficked for labor or sex. The campaign led to a nonprofit organization, Loose Change to Loosen Chains, which has

inspired dozens of other youth to affect change in the world. Author of *Be the Change: Your Guide to Freeing Slaves and Changing the World* and *Generation Change*, Hunter, 16, doesn't know what he wants to study in college but he does know one thing. "I know what I want for my generation—I want us to become really passionate about God, about helping people, a generation that goes down in history, a generation that cares."

Matt Sorger first experienced the miraculous at age 14 when his mother was healed of several debilitating illnesses. Today the 34-year-old evangelist and prophetic minister is determined to help others experience the tangible glory of God. A graduate of Zion Bible Institute in Rhode Island, he served as a coordinator for TheCall New York and has since traveled the world evangelizing the lost and leading healing crusades. In the United States, he's seeing an increased hunger for the supernatural—and He believes God is answering with a spiritual awakening that will bring a heavier weight of God's glory. "It is in its infant form, but whole cities [will be transformed]," he says. "[Revival] has to get out in the world and begin to impact the society we live in."

Amena Brown knew from a young age that she was called to talk. What she didn't know was that she would use spoken-word poetry to illuminate God's glory and communicate biblical truth. Through her "performance poetry," which she presents at Christian events such as the Passion and Fusion conferences for young adults, as well as at secular "poetry slam" competitions, Brown is helping the church reclaim the arts. "I think it's cool to see how some of the constraints are coming off," she says. "I'm looking forward to seeing what God is going to do with art in general in opening our eyes as believers to how big God is."

Gabriel Ahn has studied with some of the best acting coaches

in the nation and was on track to begin pursuing acting full time when a sermon gripped him with an unexpected burden. "I realized that what I was longing for more than anything was revival—in my life, in my peers, in my church, in my city and the world," says Ahn, 28. Without being asked, he laid down his acting aspirations and later became the leader of Remnant, a young-adult ministry at Harvest Rock Church in Pasadena, California, where Ahn's father, Ché Ahn, is senior pastor. He believes the revival he's been praying for will touch the world. "I believe we're stepping into what will be the greatest revival in the history of the world," he says. "It's ... going to sweep across every demographic you can think of. ... We're grateful for what we have, but we're hungry for more."

Vicky Beeching began leading worship at her Pentecostal church at the ripe old age of 13. But when the England-born songwriter sensed a call to music ministry, she headed to Oxford to earn a degree in theology. Her song "There Is No God Like Our God" became one of Vineyard U.K.'s all-time best-selling releases, and "All That I Need" and "At All Times" were played around the world. A frequent teacher at worship and songwriting workshops, Beeching, 29, says her mission is to "give people a vision of walking into the very presence of God—to paint the invisible wonders of His greatness." She says Christians should expect to do great exploits for God much like Smith Wigglesworth, George Whitefield and the Wesley brothers did. "I think we can really expect that in our day," she says. "I think God just wants to speak and move and do some really powerful things through very ordinary people like us in our day. My heart is just that people would dare to believe that they could be part of that."

Joshua Mills had never played a note in his life before he had a supernatural experience in a Pentecostal church as a teen. After that, he says, he would spend hours at the keyboard in worship everyday, and God would teach him songs. "Every day I would spend two or three hours in my bedroom by myself and

worship God,” says Mills, 29. “He would teach me the songs because I never really knew how to play. I never learned how to write worship songs. It came note by note. That’s how I came into the worship ministry.” Today Mills leads New Wine International, based in Canada and California, and travels the world ministering in song and teaching people about the supernatural power of God. “I believe right now more than anything ... the move of the Spirit is coming to cause us to trust Him more,” he says. “The uncertainty about the election ... world peace ... economics—God is causing us to come into this revelation of who He is and be able to rest in the fact that He is supernatural and that He’s greater than anything that could happen in the natural. We won’t be able to trust the means of man or the traditions of man.”

Gospel artist **Kim Burrell** is well-known for her smooth, jazz-influenced vocals. But in recent years, Burrell hasn’t been sure what to call herself—a singer who ministers or a minister who sings. She’s been known to lay hands on concertgoers and pray for their healing. Burrell, 36, says a woman in Florida regained a pulse after she prayed for her—an experience that she says built her faith. Rather than choosing between pulpit ministry and singing, Burrell says she just wants to be obedient to what God asks of her. In 2005, Burrell founded Ephesians 4, a conference series to mentor young musicians. “[I want] to see people become what God has called them to be,” she says. “People who can walk with boldness and not just rely on their gift to define who they are, that He would prove to the world who He is through yielded vessels, that we would concentrate on only letting Him shine through.”

David Kinnaman got Christians’ attention in 2007 when he released *unChristian*, an insightful look at the views of young Americans. Among the findings: Today’s 16- to 29-year-olds tend to hold negative perceptions of Christianity, viewing the church as hypocritical, insincere, anti-gay, judgmental and overly political. Although the statistics can be jarring, the

Barna Group president sees them as an opportunity for the church to develop more effective ways of reaching that generation. "I like to say that we provide the brutal reality of our present condition but with hope," Kinnaman says. "My personal mission is to be a bridge to realize both the potential and peril to equip a new generation of spiritual leaders to live out a kingdom reality." A charismatic pastor's son from Arizona, Kinnaman, 34, thought he would follow in his father's footsteps. But an internship with The Barna Group set him on a different path. Kinnaman believes his next project will again open eyes—it's about the elements that contribute to people sticking with their faith from high school through college.

Brian Hunter admits he's a big-city kind of guy. But when the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) minister sensed God's leading him and his wife to plant a church in Tallahassee, the sleepy Florida capital that is also home to two universities, he packed his bags and moved east from Ohio. Today draws roughly 1,200 each week and has seen 700 people come to Christ since the church was founded in 2002. In September the church opened a second campus—part of Hunter's strategy to plant congregations in all four corners of the city to combat what he sees as a resistance to church growth in Tallahassee. Hunter considers the church's progress a miracle. A bacterial infection he contracted on a mission trip to Mexico in 2005 left him fighting for his life. Three years later, the 32-year-old still lives in constant pain, taking seven pain medications each day and continuing to undergo chemotherapy. Still, the innovative city boy in the small town continues to dream big. He hopes to one day launch an Internet campus and a church network that spans the globe.

Christian audiences were listening to **Matt Maher's** worship music long before they knew his name. His songs, including "Your Grace is Enough," "Unwavering" and "For Your Glory," have been recorded by Christian artists Chris Tomlin, Bethany

Dillon, and Phillips, Craig and Dean, respectively. Now a recording artist in his own right, Maher, a Catholic charismatic, wants simply to lead people into an intimate encounter with God that allows them to hear God speak directly to them. "God wants to speak directly to His people now," he says. "I just stand up and try to help the people of God get to a place, through the Holy Spirit, of receptivity, where they can receive from God directly. ... That direct hunger—that changes people, the crutches go away, they don't need people to walk them through anymore. And I think it's going to benefit the worship of the church."

Adrienne S. Gaines *is former news editor for Charisma magazine. Former Charisma Assistant Editor Leigh DeVore contributed to this report.*