

Kutless Keeps Focus on the Cross

Even after performing with three generations of Grahams—Billy, Franklin and Will—at several **evangelistic** events, members of the band Kutless still felt amazed to be walking through the doors of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association to lead worship several weeks ago.

“We are grateful to be here now and to have been included on the platform at so many crusades,” said lead vocalist Jon Micah Sumrall. “I remember so many of those evenings when we were privileged to be part of seeing people come to Christ. Those are some of the most memorable and powerful moments we’ve had in the 10 years of doing this.”

That passion to engage on the front line of evangelism is the common thread that unites the members of this Oregon rock-meets-worship collective.

“There is no greater calling than the **Great Commission**,” Sumrall said. “That’s our goal and our hope—to share the **love of Jesus** Christ with as many people as we can.

“We really care about the bigger picture, and it’s helpful when everybody in the band and crew have the same heartbeat,” he explained. “We’ve been given a platform with our music to be able to share a message. That opportunity is to share God’s love with someone that’s never experienced it before, and when we see people experience that for the first time—it’s one of the most amazing things in the world.

“That tends to be the thing that drives us.”

Lead guitarist Nick DePartee agreed: “The more we see people’s lives being changed by music—and it has nothing to do with us; God has just used this band and we’re blessed to be part of

it—but I think that's where the success and the satisfaction comes from.

"We feel like we're doing our job, and we're doing what God's called us to do when we see lives being changed," said DePartee.

Even the band's name reflects its focus on how a relationship with **Christ transforms** people. Sumrall explained: "Simply put, when Christ died on the cross for our sins He bore all the cuts and bruises we deserved, leaving us without those cuts, and therefore 'Kutless.'"

The band's latest album, *Believer*, points listeners to the finished work of the cross. In the first radio single, "Carry Me to the Cross," Kutless emphasizes that it's only through Jesus' sacrifice that we are able to be saved. The title track, "Believer," affirms that "there's not a greater love that you'll find in this life."

And while you can still hear the band's rock roots on the record's tracks, the overall tone is worshipful—a word that doesn't scare the members of Kutless.

"The act of worship is a beautiful and wonderful thing," said guitarist James Mead. "It can help us to draw closer to God. I've come to think of it over the years as a means of expressing to God that you are His child, that you trust Him.

"As we lift our hands to God," said Mead, "it's us expressing to Him that we trust Him as our Father, and we desire Him to 'pick us up, please, and carry me through this. I have a need that I need You to fulfill.'"

Although Kutless creates strong worship experiences through their music, Sumrall knows there are many other ways to worship: "Worship goes far beyond just singing songs. You see all these different acts throughout the Bible of how we can worship God."

And while the phrase has become rather clichéd in some Christian circles, Sumrall is sincere in adding that he believes “worship really *is* a lifestyle. It’s more than just singing songs on Sunday morning.”

Sumrall noted that our most profound worship is found in how we live. “I think that happens in the way we conduct ourselves. I think one of the most beautiful testimonies that we can have is just our life. And it’s living daily in everything we do, and bringing glory to God and doing everything as unto Him.”

Click here to read the original story on the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association’s website.