Meet a Missionary

As you seek to find out the truth behind Hip Hop I pray that you will let a missionary to the culture give you a social and biblical understanding of one of today's most controversial and influential urban realities. Inherent in my name is my function—Ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:20). Like all of God's servants, I am a representative of his kingdom, sent out to communicate God's biblical prescriptions and preferences. Also, like all of God's people, I display the marks of being part of a sub-cultural context. Based on when and where I was born, my sub-cultural preference is biblically filtered hip hop culture. When I say "hip hop culture" I do not refer to the wide array of unbiblical, unethical and immoral practices of many hip hoppers, but rather the neutral aspects of the culture (i.e. forms of artistic expression, slang, fashion, music flavor, etc.), which are subject to the person who is in control of them. When Satan is in control of any of these components, then his agenda will be forwarded. Place a Spirit-filled individual in the context of any of these components and the glory of God is reflected through the proper use of earthly resources. Christians have always had to dwell within this tension—we are in the world but not of it (John 17:15-19). As Israel did, we will look very much like our neighbors accept for where transformed by our theology. Believers have always had the responsibility of not retreating, but rather penetrating godless societies to infuse them with biblical theology. To insure that the whole world is reached, God burdens our hearts differently, and crafts our frames for different mission fields.

Meet My Mission Field

The hip hop community is one the most needy, yet one of the most neglected by the community of faith (the church). Sadly this is often justified in the name of holiness, because at first glance it would seem noble to flee from such a godless people. I plead with you to remember Jonah who was sent to preach repentance to the most aggressive, godless, and vicious people of his day. Jonah did not want to go because he hated the people so much, but even more he knew that God had a tendency to forgive even the foulest group that repents. Â“Ah Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness, One who relents from doing harm" (Jonah 4:1-2). Jonah wanted Nineveh judged, not saved. Sometimes it seems like the church wants Hip Hop destroyed, not cleaned up, but God will have people from every culture worshipping Him before His throne.

The Motivation for the Music

The Thesis is built on the premise that Hip Hop needs a robust witness of Jesus Christ. Hip Hop has rarely seen one who unashamedly identifies with the people of God, while at the same time dwells among the hip hop community as an indigenous missionary. One of the most beautiful scenes to witness is a person who is clearly of the hip hop persuasion in appearance, but is even more known for dominating Christ-likeness. Faith does not negate culture, it informs, improves, and corrects it. Therefore Hip Hop before Christ may be a mess, but Hip Hop in Christ can be as glorious as the treasure in clay pots (2 Corinthians 4:7). There are efforts that I currently know of that encourage church people to evangelize hip hoppers only as long as the hip hoppers agree to forsake everything about hip hop culture. Missionaries have been known to go to other countries to transmit Christianity only to transmit more than their theology, but also their cultural preferences. The church is in danger of doing the same thing with regards to Hip Hop. They are trying to give a new generation their Christian faith as well as their "church" culture. Even worse, this narrow-mindedness often leads to a failure to accept the hip hoppers who are in Christ, and their ministry contributions. This is a sad commentary, but even sadder, it's not new.
As a hip hopper who has learned to sift this culture through the filter of Scripture, The Thesis is one way for me to address both the church and hip hop culture. I want to see churches offer liberty where they can and unity where they should. One of the attractions to the Nation of Islam for many hip hoppers is the fact that they embrace and esteem the hip hop generation and all their achievements. They affirm the culture where they can, but the Nation of Islam still speaks out against things in hip hop that should be discouraged. Sadly they understand Hip Hop better than the church and they promote a better integration of culture and faith than the church. To overstate the case slightly, the church will make the hip hopper trade the MPC drum machine for a tambourine, the fitted cap for a bonnet, a baggy pair of cargos for a three-piece suit and street slang for church jargon. This is most discouraging because as a Christian who clearly connected to hip hop, I see no inherent biblical glamour to these things. These are cultural preferences that were meant to be freely enjoyed or denied. We are to achieve unity of the faith, but not dress, dance style, lingo and the like.

I used the platform of a CD for multiple purposes and to reach a couple of audiences.

I wanted to display a biblically sifted hip hop understanding so that the church would become open to my counsel and the culture would become open to my message.

I wanted to explain the origins and essence of Hip Hop so that people would be able to distinguish between what Hip Hop is and what Hip Hop is used to promote. There is a vast difference between what it was and what it has come to represent.

I wanted to admonish the people of the hip hop community since so much godlessness does exist in it. I wanted to champion Christ’s rule in Christian Hip Hop and proclaim this as both an antidote and an alternative to what is provided in most secular Hip Hop.

I sought to elevate the personal worth of Jesus Christ in the eye of the hip hop community.

I wanted to direct people’s attention to the root of hip hop’s problem, which is not the “hip” or the “hop”, but the heart. The sinful condition of us all guarantees that when we come together with other sinners, godlessness is certain. The only hope at this point is the gospel’s changing power. That’s why in CM fashion the gospel is clear in The Thesis.

My desire is that moms and kids could love this project’s message. If Hip Hop is driving a cultural and generational wedge between parents, pastors, and young adults/youth, then some reconciliation needs to take place. I pray this album can create an atmosphere for this kind of reconciliation.

A Mission’s Mindset

It is easy to abandon what you repel you, or demonize what you don’t like or understand. However, the Great Commission does not afford the church that prerogative. Some would rather throw Hip Hop out along with the sin that easily besets it rather to play catch-up in getting a proper understanding of it.

As a whole, The Thesis follows an Isaiah 6 pattern. There Isaiah lumps himself in with the unclean people of society, but God cleanses him. Then God announces that He is looking for someone that He can send to the sinful society. And out of gratitude and inner zeal, Isaiah requests to be the ambassador sent to his people. What you then have is the cleaned version going to the unclean version to proclaim the way to be cleansed. The Thesis is the work of a hip hopper who has been cleansed by God’s grace, and who now has something to say to his natural surroundings.

- From http://www.crossmovementrecords.com

Here is an audio link talking about hip hop culture, music and Christianity. It’s really good and I HIGHLY recommend it. (http://wmny.mediacast1.com/holycultereradio/audio/newcommonshow.wma) http://wmny.mediacast1.com/holyculteradio/audio/newcommonshow.wma

Some good quality Christian rap artists in my opinion are.
The Cross Movement
The Ambassador
Phanatik
T.R.U.E. Life
Shai Linne
Timothy Brindle
Flame
da Truth
Redeemed Thought
Christcentric

(http://www.holycultureraio.com/) Click Here to Listen to Biblical Holy Hip Hop

Peace and God Bless!

Re: Holy Hip Hop, Christian Rap etc., on: 2005/7/7 9:59
Excellent... thank you. I checked out the website for the record company, and I am very impressed. This is a breath of fresh air...

Krispy

Re: - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2005/7/7 10:01
I wish the Adult Contemporary genre had lyrics as solid as this....guess that's why I listen to a lot of older stuff.

I like that site bro.