

# Ministry comes full circle for Carrollton worship leader

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CARROLLTON—Joey Witham’s musical journey has taken many twists and turns.

But Witham sees that journey as the fulfillment of his dual calling—to lead Christians into meaningful worship and to engage nonbelievers in asking the right questions.

Soon after enrolling in Dallas Baptist University, Witham and three friends started a band called Screwtape Letters, named for C.S. Lewis’ classic work of fiction.

Joey Witham's musical journey has come full circle—leading worship on a regular basis and recording albums that not only are relevant to believers, but also spark conversations and pose questions for non-Christians.

“We were trying to be there for those people who would go into clubs to hear music,” Witham said. “People asked questions about the band and its name, so it was a way to open some doors and start a conversation.”

In time, the band members parted ways, but that just marked the beginning for Witham, who believed God was preparing him for a full-time music ministry.

“I think God just got a hold of me and said: ‘I’ve given you this gift, and you

have a passion for me. So, get out there, and use it.' I started out by myself doing small things and then formed a band."

Today, [Witham and his band](#) maintain a busy schedule performing concerts and leading worship at events around the country, including youth camps, retreats, conferences and Disciple Now weekends. In addition, Witham serves as worship leader at [The Ridge Church in Carrollton](#).

When preparing for an event, Witham carefully selects songs he feels will best suit the target audience, with the goal of leading others to Christ.

"First and foremost, we make sure that our goal is to lead people to the throne of God," he said. "Worship is our response to God, for who he is and what he has done in our lives. When we're really approaching worship and our time with God the way we're supposed to, it opens us up to express our love, praise and thanksgiving to God. Music can also be the gateway to listening to God, as we open our ears, minds and hearts."

During his travels, Witham enjoys spending time off the platform—meeting people and hearing stories about how God is working in their lives.

"I have a heart for students and missions," he said. "I feel there are teenagers in our society blinded by what's around them, and they have no idea what they are searching for. As Christians, we must relate to them and give them a solid foundation—Jesus Christ. In missions, it's the same way. Whether it to be locally or abroad, there are simply people lost and empty."

While working with student ministries, Witham has found the walls holding some students away from worship can be attributed to the "busyness" of their everyday lives.

"I'll often notice that some kids aren't really focusing on worshipping God," Witham said. "Some people might say that a lot of these youth have ADD (attention deficit disorder), but I think they're so cluttered with what's

going on in their lives, with school and other stuff, that church becomes another 'thing' for them to check off."

"When they come to church, they don't know how to relax and just be receptive to the Holy Spirit, and we're talking about Christian kids here. I think a lot of it is the distractions that they're faced with."

Witham wants to bring students back to the heart of worship and help them understand what that entails.

"I think we need to be more creative in finding ways to reach youth while transitioning to an attitude of worship. For a lot of them, I don't think they've been taught what worship really means or maybe they don't understand what it means and that God is the audience. We have a great obligation to youth and to leave them a legacy that conveys the attitude of worship.

"Students have so much thrown at them daily, and I have a desire for them to rest in Christ and his love."

For Witham, the musical journey has come full circle—leading worship on a regular basis and recording albums that not only are relevant to believers, but also spark conversations and pose questions for non-Christians.

"One of the e-mails I received was from a girl that said, 'I'm not a Christian, but I wanted to tell you that I've been listening to your CD, and one of the songs is really speaking to me.' We corresponded through e-mail, and she wrote back five weeks later and said, 'I'm now a Christian, and I want to thank you.' Things like that encourage me to press on, keep doing what we're doing and impacting lives for the kingdom."