

# Richardson-based band wants to point students toward Christ

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RICHARDSON—With songs rooted in Scripture, the Texas-based worship band Sixteen Cities use their music and message to help young people gain a deeper understanding of the Bible and its practical application to their lives.

“Contrary to the way most bands start, we actually had a mission statement before we had a name,” lead singer Josiah Warneking said. “To this day, we remain focused on that same mission—to be a relevant voice for our generation, pointing them to Jesus Christ.”

The group found inspiration from a passage in the Old Testament book of 1 Chronicles that described the men of the Israelite tribe of Issachar as those “who knew the times and seasons of their generation.”

“We discovered that God gave 16 cities to the tribe of Issachar as their inheritance in Joshua 19:22,” Warneking said. “We felt like this was the name that our band should have, because it serves as a reminder that we are called to be like the men of Issachar and to point our generation towards Christ.”

In addition to Warneking, the group consists of guitarist Josh Miller and drummer Chad McCutchen.



Sixteen Cities band

members are (left to right) drummer Chad McCutchen, lead singer Josiah Warneking and guitarist Josh Miller. “When Josh and I were freshman in high school, we went to our school’s See You At The Pole rally,” Warneking said. “We were discouraged to see only a small handful of students praying for our school, so we decided to start a campus ministry to reach our school.

“Long story short, God used that ministry to make a huge impact on our campus, and by our senior year, there were over 500 students gathered for our school’s See You At The Pole. We realized that God could use our ministry of music in a big way, so we went into full-time ministry after graduating high school.”

Although the band members grew up in Oregon, they sensed God opening doors for their music ministry in Texas, while also providing opportunities to assist student ministries around the state.

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With a desire to influence audiences around the globe for Christ, band members recently spent three weeks in Denmark and England working with various ministries and schools.

"During this tour, we were able to share the gospel with students who had never heard about Christ," Warneking said. "On one particular day, we were performing for a group of several hundred students when our guitarist felt God urge him to share the gospel and invite students to respond and trust in Christ.

"By the grace of God, over 40 students raised their hands to trust in Christ and became followers of Jesus. This is just one example of how Christ uses a bunch of ordinary guys like us to impact lives for his glory."

Despite their travel schedule, the group remains committed to serving their own church. On Sunday mornings, Sixteen Cities leads worship for the contemporary service at The Heights Baptist Church in Richardson.

In addition, the group frequently leads worship for student ministry

gatherings at Valley Ranch Baptist Church in Coppell.

Wherever the band performs, their desire is to bring people into a closer relationship with God.

“It can be so easy to become overwhelmed by hectic schedules and to-do lists and forget the things that are truly important in the kingdom of God,” Warneking said. “I’ve been learning how to prioritize things in a different way, making things like family and relationships the most important part of life.

“Ministry is a good thing but can quickly become destructive if my relationship with God and my family are not being nourished. So much of what I rely on is temporary, and 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 teaches us to fix our eyes on eternal things, because the brief troubles we face pale in comparison to the eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison that we are eagerly awaiting.

“We aren’t your typical musicians. People often think that we’re cool because we wear skinny jeans and play instruments, but the reality is we’re just a bunch of regular, ordinary people who are being used by God in an extraordinary way.

“The reality is that everything we’ve accomplished is credited 100 percent to God, and we’re in awe of his surpassing grace and blessing on our lives. We know we don’t deserve anything, but because of his great love, we are able to live out the lives he has laid before us.”