

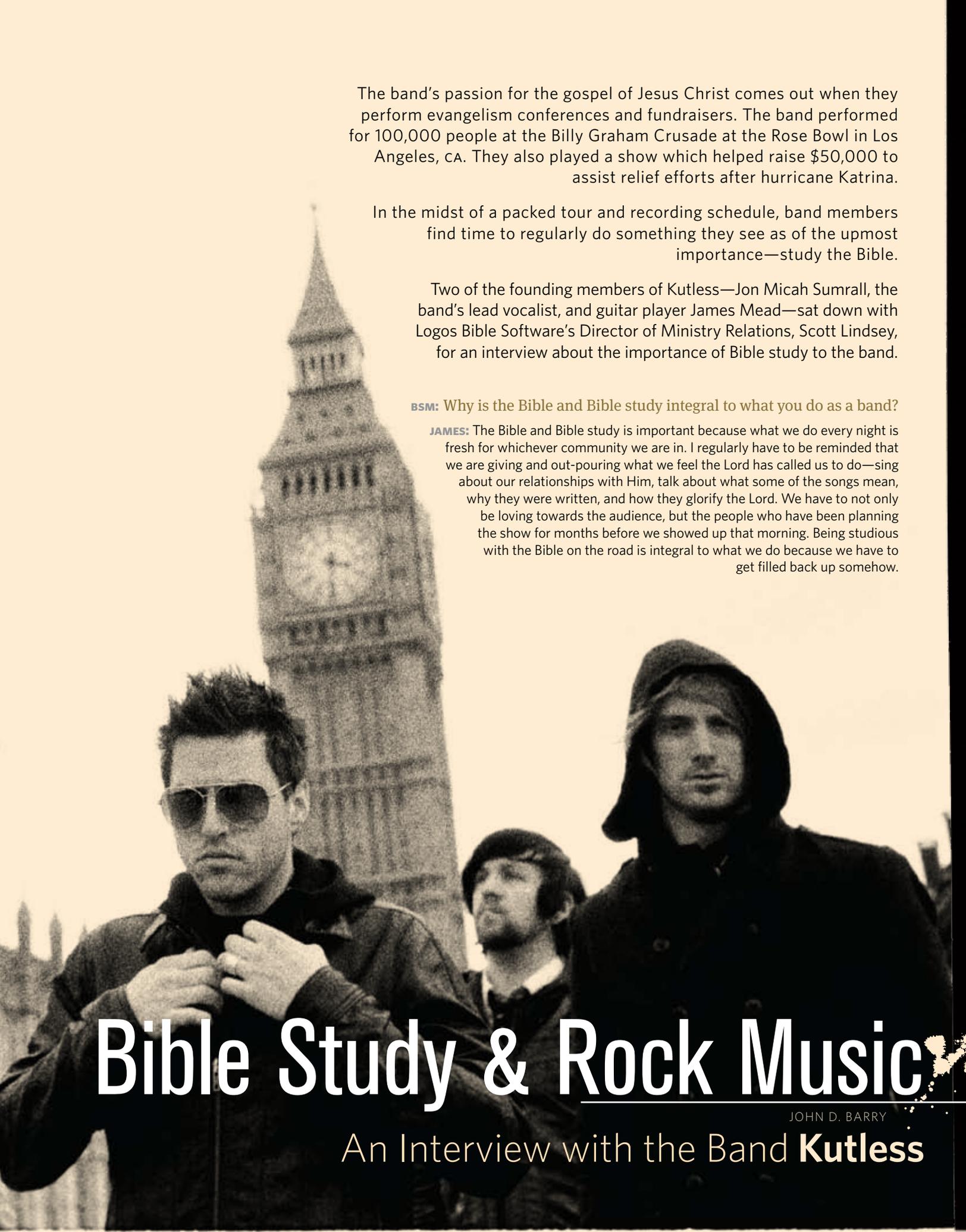
“Christ took our beating and paid
the wages of our sin (Rom 6:23).

He took our cuts for us ...

leaving us ‘Kutless.’”



The rock quintet Kutless has brought this message to a massive fan base. The band sold over 180,000 copies of their debut self-titled album, and 250,000 copies of their 2003 album “Sea of Faces.” Kutless started out as a campus worship band at Warner Pacific College, originally called “Call Box.” Today, three different singles by the band have reached the top of the Christian music charts.



The band's passion for the gospel of Jesus Christ comes out when they perform evangelism conferences and fundraisers. The band performed for 100,000 people at the Billy Graham Crusade at the Rose Bowl in Los Angeles, ca. They also played a show which helped raise \$50,000 to assist relief efforts after hurricane Katrina.

In the midst of a packed tour and recording schedule, band members find time to regularly do something they see as of the utmost importance—study the Bible.

Two of the founding members of Kutless—Jon Micah Sumrall, the band's lead vocalist, and guitar player James Mead—sat down with Logos Bible Software's Director of Ministry Relations, Scott Lindsey, for an interview about the importance of Bible study to the band.

BSM: Why is the Bible and Bible study integral to what you do as a band?

JAMES: The Bible and Bible study is important because what we do every night is fresh for whichever community we are in. I regularly have to be reminded that we are giving and out-pouring what we feel the Lord has called us to do—sing about our relationships with Him, talk about what some of the songs mean, why they were written, and how they glorify the Lord. We have to not only be loving towards the audience, but the people who have been planning the show for months before we showed up that morning. Being studious with the Bible on the road is integral to what we do because we have to get filled back up somehow.

Bible Study & Rock Music

JOHN D. BARRY

An Interview with the Band **Kutless**

BSM: As a band, how do you stay on track with God?

JON MICAH: When we get off track with God it is usually corporate. We tend to slide together quite frequently. It is like a family. If you look at the typical family, if the parents are not doing well, then the kids are not doing well. Likewise, if the parents are doing well, the family as a whole often does well. It seems to be that way a lot with the band. If there are a couple of us not doing well, we are all heavily affected by that.



BSM: As a band who has studied whole books of the Bible together, like Romans, what are some of the difficulties you experience when studying the Bible, and how do you deal with these difficulties?

JON MICAH: The hardest thing for us is carving out the time for everyone to sit-down together and study.

JAMES: I called most of the bands on our Creation Tour and talked to them about a study model for the road. I said to them, "I want us all to be feeding each other on tour. It does not have to be this 'blow me away' theological revelation for everyone on the tour, but every night let's bring the focus back to Jesus, the grace and simplicity of his gospel; the reason why we are at a venue to begin with." I said, "Let's take turns—10 minutes—to just talk, pray and sing a couple worship songs."



BSM: What is it like to study the Bible on the road?

JON MICAH: I have always been a fan of starting out my day reading the Word, but that didn't work so well for me on tour—we are up late, get up early, and are then rushed off to interviews. Before I realized it, I had gone for or five days without reading the Bible. At some point, I came to the realization that I can always stay up a little bit longer to read my Bible. No matter what, your basic needs each and every day have to be met—you have to do whatever it takes to make sure you stay in the Word.

JAMES: When we are on our tour bus, I have a rule that I cannot get out of the bunk in the morning until I have read a chapter in the Bible. Usually I make myself do that rather quickly, because I have to visit the restroom. The Bible paired with intense motivation works really well!

We try and do what we can to stay in the Word. All of us in the band have iPhones, so throughout the day when we are thinking about a verse and wonder where it is, we just look it up on an application on our iPhone.

JON MICAH: The other day someone gave me a wallet that has a little printed New Testament Bible inside. It is a cool deal because you have your wallet, with your billfold, and a little New Testament Bible just slid in there. I think it's important to have a way to get into the Word whenever, wherever, and however you can, especially when you travel.

JON MICAH: Even if you do not get into real deep theological study, and it is just real simple, refocusing for 10 or 15 minutes a day to read the Bible helps. Even if you just read a chapter, let it be, and do not say anything about it, it is still the Word of God, it never goes out void. There is a purifying effect that happens from just reading it that is incredibly valuable.

JAMES: What I have noticed from our tours in the past is that when we all agree to set the mood for a tour, it opens up more times throughout the day where we get into big discussions. I have been on tour with bands where the mood was such that we talked about things like the rapture from an eschatological perspective. As you set the mood, and really as any Christian in their individual life does, the imminence of the Lord has the opportunity to make you live differently. It opens up the conversations you have with others.

JON MICAH: Bible study is so important, yet it is easily neglected. We know not to make excuses, but I think that everyone has a hard time in their lives trying to stay in the Word; I think diligence is a common human struggle. Not being in church regularly puts you in a very dangerous place. If your study of the Bible gets neglected for a while, you can find yourself in a place where you really did not expect to be. You wake up one day, or you get home, and you say to yourself, "Wow, how did I get here? What happened to my walk with Christ?" My pastor growing up said, "You are never sitting still, you are either moving forward, or moving backwards."

Go to Kutless.com

BSM: How much does your Bible study affect your song writing?

JAMES: When writing a song, a little bit of everything comes into play. It involves what the Lord has personally taught us through our circumstances growing up, what he has put on our heart, and what we learn sitting in church going through the Word as our pastor speaks.

BSM: Being a band that regularly speaks and sings to thousands of people, there must have been times when your cup felt like it was half empty. Can you tell us about one of these times, and what you did to get through?

JON MICAH: I had a massive shoulder injury that I got skiing at Mt. Hood. I tore almost everything possible in my shoulder. It took me about two years to get healthy again—I was in a sling and had two surgeries on my shoulder. Making music and being on tour during that time was very frustrating for me. I often said, “God why have you placed me in a situation where I can’t do very well?” My Dad, who has a bad back and has had surgery on it, said to me, “The one thing that I have learned is that when I’m laid out and can’t do anything, the one place I can look is up.” The pain caused me to refocus. When I reflect on these difficult times in my life, I realize that God was getting my attention. I was so busy that it was the only way God could get my attention. Every once in a while it seems that God says, “I’m going to slow you down, I’m going to take you out, and here is what you are going to learn.” I think it is easy for us, especially young men, to have an almost invincible mentality—“I can go do anything I want, I can accomplish anything I want.” You get so focused on what you are going to do that you forget to focus on how frail you really are, how much you need a Savior. If it wasn’t for all these hard difficult times where I experience pain, I wouldn’t understand what it is like to have good times. You can’t have the high times without the low times.

BSM: Do you try and incorporate theology, doctrine or Scripture into your music?

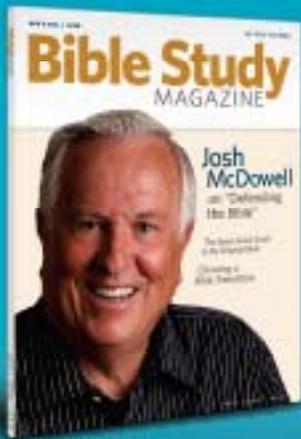
JON MICAH: Occasionally, but I feel like the one thing that we are supposed to do is convey God’s love. I don’t feel like music is the place to prove a point doctrinally or theologically. I feel like music is the place to express what God has placed on our hearts. We try and make our music lyrically encouraging, and ultimately point back to God.

With over 180 shows scheduled last year alone, and a forthcoming album, Kutless manages to stay very busy, but their love for the Bible and Bible study has never grown dim. At the heart of what they do, and who they are, is the Word of God—an encouragement to us all. **BSM**

For a limited time, download a free track by Kutless at BibleStudyMagazine.com/Kutless



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