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Christian rapper Humble T.I.P. makes righteous rhymes

December 01, 2008 | Teresa Dunham

As Christian rapper Humble T.I.P. spits his rhymes in “Let’s Go Get ’Em,” the crowd feeds off of his energy and shouts back the lyrics.

“I jump in the crowd. I throw water on the crowd. We party. We have a blessed time praising the Lord together,” said Humble, who brings his confident strides to the stage at Liberty University’s annual Block Party, inner-city venues, and rural churches all over the East Coast.

Humble added T.I.P. to his name “To Increase Praise” — and that’s exactly what he does.

“I make anthem-type music,” he said. “When you leave a Humble concert, you leave excited about the Gospel.”

A bit of a Superman, 24-year-old Humble blends in by day with his birth name — Jason Lewis — but his higher calling transforms him into something larger-than-life on stage. Listening to his latest CD “Our Turn,” released in August 2008, it might sound like Humble has been rapping for years.

But that’s not the case.

The 2008 Liberty University graduate, currently an admissions counselor for the school, didn’t discover his gift of rhyme until he came to LU in 2003 to study for a career in sport management or fitness. Along the way, he became mesmerized by LU’s music scene — and in particular, he loved the Christian hip-hop music circulating on campus.

Earphones were a permanent fixture when he walked to class. In fact, a DJ from the campus radio station 90.9 FM The Light assumed that Lewis could rap and invited him to come on a

radio show. Lewis had never rhymed before, but the DJ's words inspired him to write some lyrics.

"So I started writing lyrics — terrible, wack, just wack, you know what I'm saying — but you've got to crawl before you can walk," he said.

The elementary rhymes on his notepad eventually gave way to more complex and powerful words until Lewis knew he had something to share. He started rapping at campus events and in rap circles.

Other students recognized his talent, and soon he was traveling with a DJ, a hype man, and others who were passionate about promoting the music. Everyone seemed to come out of the woodwork — from a then-student named P D.O.G.G. who wanted to help him produce independent CDs, to a graphic designer who offered professional quality CD art, and even a videographer who helped Humble make music videos that are wildly popular on YouTube.

"I roll with a squad called Strictly for Jesus," Humble said. "I like to have my brothers in the faith."

Humble's clearly Christian lyrics — forever pointing back to the Death, Burial, and Resurrection — will never be confused with secular music. For him, it's all about promoting the Kingdom, and his motto is "Ministry over Industry."

"You can say hip-hop is false, but the word that we're bringing forth in it ... you can't prove that wrong," he said.

The message isn't always embraced, he admits.

"Especially in the hip-hop industry, everything is so materialistic. Everything is based off of financial wealth, pride, respect, sexuality," he said. "When you come up with something so anti-culture, sometimes it's received well. A lot of the times it's not."

Yet his insistence that life is more than shiny rims, clothes, sex and drugs isn't falling on deaf ears, judging by the 1,000 music plays that he receives on his [MySpace page](#) on an average day.

Humble still marvels at how God chose him.

"At the age of 18, I was not rapping," the Maryland native said. "It was like a sleeping giant. Without God opening up my eyes to that, I wouldn't be spitting [rhymes]."

A preacher's son, Humble once thought God might call him to the pulpit.

"I know I'm a leader, but I didn't know how God would use me," he said. "My heart always told God, 'I don't want to do the pulpit thing. I don't want to do the three-piece suit, 10 o'clock service every Sunday.' That's not me."

Lewis understands that formal worship is effective and important — and that’s why he is in church every Sunday — but it just wasn’t what he believed God wanted from him.

“God flipped that. He said, ‘OK, you want to preach, but you don’t want to do it through a pulpit, so I’m going to dress it up and make it a little more creative, a little more artistic,’” Humble said.

Now a stage is his pulpit, and a youth crowd is his congregation when he performs.

“[God] was just giving us so much favor. I mean, just ridiculous favor,” he said.

No matter where the gift of rhyme takes him, Humble won’t forget his roots at LU.

“I know how Liberty changed my life. I know how important it was for me to be here at that exact point in time,” he said.

Want to hear Humble T.I.P.’s music? Visit his site on [MySpace.com](#) or search for Humble T.I.P. on [YouTube](#) to listen to his featured hits and view music videos.