

WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING TO?

PASTOR J BREAKS IT DOWN!



INSPIRATIONAL

Inspirational music is music that has the principles of God but can cross over on a radio station anywhere. Back in the day, BeBe and CeCe Winans actually came under fire for this approach, but God's message was strongly implied not only in their songs, but also in their lifestyle, which is most important. They were among the first to create this milestone sound, and now, years later, inspirational music gives artists the opportunity to go anywhere and be played on any station—not just gospel stations.

SPOKEN WORD & SOUL

Spoken word music is steadily rising in popularity, especially in more of a young-adult (18-35) type of arena. This demo is being permeated by Def Jam poets and a whole subculture that is almost synonymous with coffeehouse/cafe crowds. You have people that are deeply into just words and poetry—God speaks through this art form as well—words, poetry, and dramatic delivery are the focus; musical instrumentation becomes the base. The soul portion of this segment is influenced by the Marvin Gaye era, when people were writing music from their experiences and from deep within their souls.

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN

Unlike inspirational music, contemporary Christian music actually uses the names "God" and "Jesus" all in it, but it is being done to a beat that is recognized by today's culture. We live in a post-modern era that has created an environment and a culture that's being totally influenced by iPods, iPads, other multimedia products, and the Internet. Society has been infiltrated by all of these different things, and as a result, you have a whole generation that is deeply entrenched in Auto-Tune, synthetic instrumentations, and different ways of hearing music. Contemporary Christian music takes this sound and puts spiritual music on top of it. Contemporary Christian music is exactly what it says: Jesus music with some beat to it.

The ever-changing field of urban worship music offers something for everyone—inspirational, spoken word and soul, contemporary Christian, gospel, worship, and praise—but with so many terms, it isn't always easy to keep up, especially when you may not have been too certain of the differences between all the terms in the first place! With this in mind, *The Frequency* enlisted the assistance of an up-and-coming young music director who is not only up on the traditional terms and formats of yesteryear, but the new-school terms as well. **Pastor Jon DeCuir** from **Victory Bible Full Gospel Baptist Church** in Pasadena, California breaks things down in layman's terms for a quick-and-easy *Go-to-Guide* so that the next time you are singing along with a song or hear a specific sound, you will know exactly what it is you are listening to.

GOSPEL & WORSHIP

Gospel music is a term that people often get mixed up with other things. Oftentimes in the industry, if people see a black choir, they automatically think they are hearing gospel music—this is not necessarily the case. In layman's terms, *gospel music* is always horizontal, and *worship music* is always vertical.

Gospel music will always say something like, "God brought me out of this, so he can bring you out of this." Gospel music talks about things like, "God has not given me a spirit of fear...I'm stirring up the gift." That's gospel. *Worship music* will always say something like, "God, I'm here to worship you. I'm here to acknowledge you." It's direct contact with God. Gospel music talks about things like, "I can sing of your love forever...Here I am to worship you...Here I am to bow down." That's worship.

Basically, *gospel* is experientially based in a person's personal experiences with God. Gospel music brings you to remember what God has done for you, which then causes you to worship him. *Worship* is you talking straight to God.

PRAISE & WORSHIP

Praise is also a vertical situation, but it is done differently than worship. *Praise* is always for what he has done for you, such as "God when I was about to lose my house, you made a way, you are so great." When you're *worshipping* God, it is simply just for who he is.

BOTTOM LINE

If you want to listen to some music that is saying...

- "Lord, I've been going through it, you are going to bring me out, like you always have." That would be *gospel*.
- "Lord, **thank you** for bringing me through it when I lost my house." That would be *praise*.
- "Lord, you are awesome **just because** you are Lord." That would be *worship*.

Now that you know the differences, check out how they sound for yourself all on one album!

PROJECT: I CHOOSE TO LIVE BY VESSEL(S)

Website: www.vesselsandtheband.com

What Wu-Tang is to hip-hop, **Vessel(s)** is ready to bring to the gospel music industry with their album ***I Choose to Live***. Under the tutelage of Music Director and Solomon's Eyes Productions CEO/Founder **Pastor Jonathan DeCuir**, Vessel(s) has created a project with a cutting-edge approach to the world of traditional urban gospel. Fighting the ideas of what music has become, *life music*, as Pastor Jon calls it, is specific stories about real life with something for everybody.

Listening to **Nena Lockhart's** distinctive voice on her inspirational track "Won't Let You Steal My Joy" will have fans of **Christette Michele** bobbing along to their similar melodic-yet-raw tone and jazz-infused style. Spoken word enthusiasts will most definitely feel group member **Jasmine Colbert's** lyrical libations on cuts very reminiscent of soul artist **Jill Scott**, especially on the uplifting track "The Message." **Romaine Jones** has the cool beats and hot flows on contemporary joints like "Keep Pressin'," and then **Tanya DeCuir** and **Darnell Edwards** both bring it back home to the church house with traditional tracks including "Pour Out" and "I Will Praise You."

Wherever you are in your life or your walk, the music of Vessel(s)'s new project ***I Choose to Live*** will meet you exactly where you're at. Listeners will want to ride out to the messages and vibe out to the sounds of this *life music* over and over again.

