

Whosoever South

Goin' Home

Rowdy Eunice
Sarah Eunice
Mike Mitchell

In tracing the roots of country-infused rap/hip-hop trio Whosoever South, it's clear that no amount of coincidences could possibly add up to the south Georgia-based group's extraordinary story. The only explanation is that each storied chapter was unequivocally God-ordained, not just during the group's official 2008 formation, but going all the way back to each members' earliest recollections.

Nowadays singers/songwriters/rappers Rowdy Eunice, Sarah Eunice and Mike Mitchell may be wholeheartedly committed to serving the Lord, but their perspectives weren't always focused in that direction. In the case of Rowdy, he almost didn't even make it out of his mother's womb alive after four different doctors insisted on an abortion due to a perilous pregnancy. But as God's plan would have it, when his mom was entering the hospital for the procedure, Rowdy's dad just so happened to be coming through the same emergency room doors after sustaining an injury at work. At that very moment even in the midst of medical chaos, the young couple pledged to raise the baby no matter what the complications.

Thankfully, Rowdy was born healthy, though his childhood wasn't set on a foundation of faith. Nonetheless, God was orchestrating the meeting of not only a future musical partner, but also his would be wife Sarah, which started as a friendship in seventh grade. Though Sarah hadn't been officially introduced to the Lord at that point either (other than a few childhood formalities), the pair eventually tied the knot, started a family and also sparked many creative collaborations with their longtime friend/fellow artist Mike. That latter member had a better understanding of spiritual culture (not to mention some genetic musical roots) thanks to a steady childhood diet of church, talent shows alongside his semi-professional singing mother and a state championship-winning high school chorus, but he still experienced a severe period of straying.

By the early 2000s, all three artists were on the fast track to success thanks to Rowdy's stint in the regionally successful mainstream act Solid Ground (an ironic name considering his conversion was forthcoming), which featured Sarah and Mike as guest vocalists. After opening up for major mainstream players like Kanye West, Outkast, Ciara and Goodie Mob, record label interest starting pouring in, but everyone's personal lives were spiraling out of control.

"It was so close to breaking big that it was scary," Rowdy says of Solid Ground. "But many of the people we were in business with wound up dead or in prison and all of that fell apart, which wound up saving our lives in more ways than one."

As everyone was separately sobering up from the world of parties, drugs and music industry excesses, Rowdy and Sarah found themselves in church by 2006, officially

crossing the line of faith from simply knowing about Jesus historically to personally dedicating their lives to Him. Despite being on the verge of stardom prior to becoming born again, music was the furthest thing from their minds as they dug deep into the word and simply strove to get their lives on track. But God had other goals for the longtime collaborators, as evidenced by Rowdy's seemingly out of the blue knock at Mike's door one day after their mainstream musical partnership fizzled.

"One Sunday Rowdy asked me 'why don't you come to my church?' and even though I'd been going on and off, I was out chasing the world and it wasn't my main priority at the time," recalls Mike. "But since that day, I've been going ever since and living 100% for the Lord. I'm now married as well, have three girls and two boys and all my kids know the Lord as well."

As everyone's inspiring conversions were officially cemented, the pals' musical stars aligned again when Rowdy, Sarah and Mike reconvened as Whosoever South in 2008, dedicating their music entirely to Christ. Immediate evidence comes from that very namesake, which was inspired by John 3:16 and Romans 10:13, coupled with a nod to their geographical heritage (also the site of several hundred concerts while supporting three underground albums). Come 2013, the group graduated to the national spotlight with the full-length album *Goin' Home* under the production direction of Asaf Fulks (whose stable is full of platinum-selling Grammy and Emmy Award winning artists).

"There's been tremendous growth from the time God first called us to form this group through today," reflects Rowdy. "We went from getting beats off the internet to top notch producers and recording in a closet to building a studio. But most importantly, we've grown in the Lord and His mission for us is very clear: to win souls for Christ."

While sharing their testimonies is an essential component of the new project and live show, Whosoever South's infectious and inventive blend of what some call "country crunk" is the main catalyst for reeling in the masses. The blend is certainly unconventional, akin to street savvy influences like TobyMac and Lecrae colliding with something that might be found on the T Bone Burnett-produced *O Brother Where Art Thou* soundtrack, complete with banjo, harmonica, guitar, trumpet, bass, piano, dobro and cello.

"It's like a genre all its own because we don't fit into any one genre," notices Rowdy of the group's compelling anomaly. "It's not really been done before, but it's not all that complicated either. It's just a combination of good music: country, bluegrass, gospel and rap music all mixed together."

A perfect case in point comes from the rhythmic, roots rockin' lead single "Where We From," which talks about the group's unceasing work ethic amidst a simple southern lifestyle filled with dirt roads, farms and good old fashioned food. On a more evangelistic note, "All The Time" is a bluegrass/gospel/country stomper encouraging believers to let their light shine, while the title track is a down home jam with an equally assertive message.

“When we wrote ‘Goin’ Home,’ we wanted to get that old bluesy type of feel from back in the day,” confirms Rowdy. “We wanted to remind listeners that this world is not our home and that one day we’ll leave here and go to our final destination. Hopefully it will be a reminder to not get caught up in the stresses of daily living, but a reminder that we’re just passing through.”

In order to spread those very words to as many people as possible, Whosoever South plans to hit the national touring trails, beefing up a resume that already boasts practically every town between the Atlanta area and Jacksonville, Florida. Thus far word of mouth has found the trio turning in headlining performances at traditional venues, churches, schools and various Fellowship of Christian Athletes events, plus opening slots for familiar favorites like Fireflight, Sonicflood, After Edmund and Jason Bare.

“We bring a very high energy to an audience and we also have a dance crew that’s choreographed about half of our songs, which means no one sits throughout the whole show,” offers Rowdy with a laugh. “But our primary mission is preaching the word. Music’s just the instrument, and throughout the concert, our main concern is to preach what’s on our heart.”

“Our audience is literally from two to 82-years-old,” continues Sarah. “We’re a diverse group of people with a diverse audience, but we don’t see any colors amongst ourselves. The problem of the world isn’t a skin issue, it’s a sin issue.”

No matter the size of the crowd or level of future success, it’s evident Whosoever South’s goals are grounded in the Gospel, or as Mike so succinctly sums up, “to share the love of Jesus with everybody.” And considering the incredible journey each member’s been on both personally and professionally, there’s not a corner of the world too challenging for them to attempt sowing a seed, especially since they’re all survivors in more ways than one.

“Christ came to save sinners and our goal is the streets,” adds Rowdy. “We love the church, but the church is the barracks to go and get sharpened and armored up for the war in this world. We certainly want to encourage those that already know Jesus, but our number one priority is to talk to people who don’t. We get so many praise reports of parents who email us and say their son wouldn’t have ever listened to Christian music, but there was something in our sound they identified with. But we’re not seeking man’s approvals, just doing what God has called us to do and trying to draw closer to the Lord in the process.”

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