

Why We Are Opposed to Contemporary Christian Music

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The following is an excerpt from our book
“Contemporary Christian Music: Some Questions Answered and Some Warnings
Given.”

There are many that do not understand why anyone could be opposed to Contemporary Christian Music (CCM). Is it not the music that is played on most Christian radio stations and the music that is available in most Christian bookstores and the music used in churches across the denominational divide? Does it not sing of Jesus Christ and grace and is it not lifted in praise of the living God? How could something so popular and sincere be wrong?

People have many misconceptions as to why someone would oppose CCM. They think that he must believe that good Christian music stopped being written when Fanny Crosby died or that he must be a legalist or perhaps that he is a latent racist or is mean-spirited or that he doesn't like to have fun and doesn't want anyone else to have fun or that he must not like new things.

Personally, I like new things better than old things in many cases. I stay at the cutting edge of technology, for example. But when it comes to my “religion,” I do like it old for the simple fact that it is old. The newest part of my Bible and my Christian faith is 2,000 years old! Bible truth is not contemporary and it will never be considered cool by the world unless it is distorted. Thus I am committed to the old Bible and the old Paths that are taught therein.

It is by the old Standard that I must test every new thing. “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” ([1 Thess. 5:21](#)). “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” ([Acts 17:11](#)).

In this spirit, I have examined the contemporary music and the movement that it represents extensively and have prayerfully tested it with Scripture.

Following are four of the reasons that we are opposed to it.

1. Contemporary Christian Music is worldly music.

2. Contemporary Christian Music is ecumenical music.
3. Contemporary Christian Music is charismatic music.
4. Contemporary Christian Music weakens the fundamentalist stance of a church.

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC IS WORLDLY

The first reason that we oppose Contemporary Christian Music is because it is worldly, meaning it is not separated from the world as the Scriptures demand.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” ([1 John 2:15-17](#)).

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” ([James 4:4](#)).

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” ([Rom. 12:2](#)).

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” ([Titus 2:11-12](#)).

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” ([Eph. 5:11](#)).

When Israel broke down the walls of separation and failed to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, the holy and the unholy, God judged them.

“Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them” ([Ezek. 22:26](#)).

This is an apt description of the CCM philosophy. It puts no difference between the holy and the profane. “All music is holy,” it boasts; nothing is profane. All dress styles are holy; nothing is profane. God is the God of everything.

The worldliness of Contemporary Christian Music is seen in that the contemporary music itself borrows from the world’s sensual rhythms.

Contemporary Christian Music openly and proudly uses any type music in the service of the Lord and refuses to separate from music that is openly used in the worship of the flesh and the devil.

What is worldly music? Worldly music is music that sounds like the music used by the world for sinful activities. John defined the world as “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” ([1 Jn. 2:16](#)). Music that is characterized by these things is

worldly music, and that is certainly true for blues, jazz, rock, rap, reggae, and other forms of modern dance music. This type of music has an intimate association with immorality, drunkenness, drug abuse, gambling, prostitution, and other evils, and it is impossible to disconnect the music from this association. “Sex, drugs, and rock & roll” is not just a popular saying; it is a true saying because “sex, drugs, and rock & roll” go together like peas in a pod.

The chief component of the aforementioned types of music is the heavy back beat. It is called the anapestic beat. This is a poetic term that describes poetry using three syllables with the emphasis on the third -- da-da-DA, da-da-DA. In music, the anapestic or back beat emphasizes the off beat. The anapestic rock beat goes one-TWO-three-FOUR or one-two-THREE, one-two-THREE. This is in contrast with a “straight” or march beat, which has the emphasis on the first beat or on each beat equally -- one-two-three-four, one-two-three-four, or ONE-two-three-four, ONE-two-three-four.

This backbeat is the chief characteristic of pop music. Consider these quotes:

“I felt that if I could take a ... tune and drop the first and third beats and accentuate the second and fourth, and add a beat the listeners could clap to as well as dance this would be what they were after” (Bill Haley, cited by Charlie Gillett, *The Sound of the City: The Rise of Rock and Roll*, p. 14).

“I dig that rock and roll music; it has a back beat; you can't lose it” (Chuck Berry).

“When they play their music, ooh that modern music, they like it with a lot of style; but it's still that same old backbeat rhythm that really, really drives 'em wild” (“The Heart of Rock & Roll” by Huey Lewis and the News).

“It's the beat that gets to you. If you like it and you feel it, you can't help but move to it. That's what happens to me. I can't help it” (Elvis Presley, cited by Steve Turner, *Hungry for Heaven*, p. 35).

The rock musicians themselves describe their music as “sexy” and they claim that the sex lies in the heavy back beat. Consider just a few examples of this:

Irwin Sibling of *Sing Out* magazine said, “**The great strength of rock & roll lies in its beat.** It is a music which is basically sexual, unpuritan...” (*Sing Out*, May 1965, p. 63).

Debra Harry of Blondie says, “**The main ingredients in rock are sex and sass**” *Hit Parader*, Sept. 1979, p. 31).

Jan Berry of Jan and Dean says, “**The throbbing beat of rock provides a vital sexual release for adolescent audiences**” (cited by Blanchard, *Pop Goes the Gospel*).

Chris Stein, lead guitarist for Blondie says, “**Everyone takes it for granted that rock and roll is synonymous with sex**” (*People*, May 21, 1979).

Rapper Luke Campbell of 2 Live Crew says, “**The sex is definitely in the music, and sex is in all aspects in the music.**”

Rocker Tom McSloy says: “**Rock is visceral. It does disturbing things to your body.** In spite of yourself, you find your body tingling, moving with the music” (Tom McSloy, “Music to Jangle Your Insides,” *National Review*, June 30, 1970, p. 681).

Paul Stanley said, “**Rock ‘n’ roll is sex.** Real rock ‘n’ roll isn’t based on cerebral thoughts. **It’s based on one’s lower nature**” (cited by John Muncy, *The Role of Rock*, p. 44).

John Oates of Hall & Oates says, “**Rock ‘n’ roll is 99% sex**” (*Circus*, Jan. 31, 1976).

Allan Bloom, author of *The Closing of the American Mind*, observed: “... **rock music has one appeal only, a barbaric appeal to sexual desire**” (*The Closing of the American Mind*, p. 73).

Simon Frith, author of *Sound effects*, said, “We respond to the materiality of rock’s sounds, and **the rock experience is essentially erotic**” (*Sound Effects*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1981, p. 164).

Dr. David Elkind, chairman of the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study at Tufts University in Massachusetts, said: “**There is a great deal of powerful, albeit subliminal, sexual stimulation implicit in both the rhythm and [the] lyrics of rock music**” (*The Hurried Child*, Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley Publishing Co., 1981, p. 89).

Frank Zappa of the Mothers of Invention said, “**Rock music is sex.** The big beat matches the body’s rhythms” (*Life*, June 28, 1968).

Malcolm McLaren, punk rock manager, said: “**Rock ‘n’ roll is pagan and primitive, and very jungle, and that’s how it should be!** The moment it stops being those things, it’s dead ... the true meaning of rock ... is sex, subversion and style” (*Rock*, August 1983, p. 60).

Adam Ant says, “**Pop music revolves around sexuality.** I believe that if there is anarchy, let’s make it sexual anarchy rather than political” (*From Rock to Rock*, p. 93).

Gene Simmons of Kiss said, “**That’s what rock is all about—sex with a 100 megaton bomb, the beat!**” (*Entertainment Tonight*, ABC, Dec. 10, 1987).

Observe that most of these statements do not refer to rock music in general but to the rock back beat in particular.

The sensual and sexy back beat has been the chief characteristic of worldly dance music since the beginning of the 20th century. It characterized all of the streams of music that fed into rock, including ragtime, boogie woogie, jazz, honky tonk, and Caribbean.

We agree with Dan Lucarini, former contemporary praise leader, when he says: “I am

now convinced that God will not accept our worship when it is offered with music styles that are also used by pagans for their immoral practices. ... He is a jealous God. If you grasp this principle alone, it will change for ever the way you lead a worship service” (Lucarini, *Confessions of a Former Worship Leader*, p. 57).

We agree with Alan Ives, a former rock & roller, when he says: “How do you understand what good Christian music is? It ought to sound different from the rock station, the easy listening station, the entertainment music. When we sing gospel songs in the good old-fashioned way, they don’t sound like anything that the world sings. That’s the way we need to keep it. We can never portray the peace of the Lord with wild, discordant, violent sounds. We can never speak of the love of God with hateful music, the goodness of the Lord with bad music, the majesty of God with low class music, the power of God with puny music, the wisdom of God with stupid music, the holiness of God with unholy music. We can never speak of godliness with ungodly music, of heavenly things with earthly, sensual and devilish music. And we can never speak of being a soldier if we use dance music” (Alan Ives, “How to Tell the Difference between Good and Bad Music”)

A key biblical principle is that Christian music is to be spiritual or holy. “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and SPIRITUAL SONGS, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” ([Eph. 5:18-19](#)).

The term “spiritual” has the same meaning as “sacred.” It means different, set apart to a holy God. Sacred music will be different in character from the world’s sensual dance music.

Contemporary Christian Music does not merely unhesitatingly borrow from the world’s music; it actually boasts of doing so. There is no sense of separation, no sense of sacredness and holiness.

There is much more that needs to be said about the worldliness of Contemporary Christian Music rhythms, but we have already done this in the DVD presentation “Distinguishing between Contemporary and Sacred Styles of Music.” Here we have given biblical principles that apply to music and have carefully illustrated these principles with 65 clips of music. This is available from Way of Life Literature. See the online catalog at <http://www.wayoflife.org>.

The worldliness of Contemporary Christian Music is also seen in that CCM musicians listen to every kind of secular rock music.

They make no attempt to hide this fact and they have no shame for it. When asked in interviews about their musical influences and their favorite music, invariably they list a number of raunchy secular rock musicians.

The following examples could be multiplied endlessly:

“FOURTH WATCH cites groups like U2, the Police, Genesis, Pete Townshend, and the

Alarm as major influences. MEMBERS LISTEN TO A GREAT DEAL OF MAINSTREAM MUSIC, MAKING NO APOLOGIES FOR IT, and they express a desire to play clubs and other non-church settings” (*CCM Magazine*, April 1987, p. 19).

PHIL KEAGGY performs an unholy combination of secular rock and Christian rock/folk, and those who listen to his music are drawn toward worldly rock & roll. On his 1993 *Crimson and Blue* album, for example, he pays “homage to the Beatles” with several of the songs.

When ASHLEY CLEVELAND was asked what music was on her stereo, she replied, “*Living With Ghosts*, Patty Griffin; *What’s The Story Morning Glory*, Oasis; *Exile On Main Street*, the Rolling Stones” (<http://www.ashleycleveland.com/acfacts.htm>). In her concerts, Ashley Cleveland performs a very gritty rendition of the Rolling Stones hit “Gimme Shelter.”

CAEDMON’S CALL said their greatest love in music is secular rock. They mentioned Indigo Girls, Shawn Colvin, David Wilcox, The Police, Fishbone, 10,000 Maniacs (*Lighthouse Electronic Magazine*). The group often performs Beatles music. Cliff Young said one of his favorites is the foul-mouthed Alanis Morissette.

AUDIO ADRENALINE’S *Bloom* album includes the song “Free Ride” from the Edgar Winter Group’s *They Only Come out at Night* album. Rock star Edgar Winter was featured on the cover of this wicked album dressed as a homosexual “drag queen.” The lyrics to “Free Ride” claim that “all of the answers come from within.” This is rank heresy, because we know that the answers do not come from within man but from God’s revelation in the Bible.

STEVE CAMP says, “I’ll have a Foreigner 4 album going in my car.” He also says: “I am dedicated to good music whether it’s pop, Christian, gospel, R&B, blues, jazz, classical, rock or whatever. I just love good music” (Steve Camp, *MusicLine* magazine, Feb. 1986, p. 22).

Some of DC TALK’S musical role models are the Beatles, David Bowie, and The Police, all of which are wicked secular rock groups. dc Talk’s album “Free at Last” contains a song titled “Jesus Is Just Alright,” which was first sung by the Byrds (the song was later covered by the Doobie Brothers). dc Talk’s Kevin Smith said that he listens to mostly secular rock music (*Flint Michigan Journal*, March 15, 1996, B19). dc Talk opened its “Jesus Freak” concerts with the Beatles’ song “Help.” They also performed Jimi Hendrix’s *Purple Haze*. Hendrix was a drug-crazed New Age occultist. Toward the end of their concerts dc Talk played the rock song “All Apologies” by the wicked secular rock group Nirvana, formerly led by Kurt Cobain, a drug-crazed young man who committed suicide.

JARS OF CLAY names Jimi Hendrix and the Beatles as their inspiration (Dann Denny, “Christian Rock,” *Sunday Herald Times*, Bloomington, Ind., Feb. 8, 1998). The lead guitarist for Jars of Clay is said to be a “Beatles fanatic” (*Christian News*, Dec. 8, 1997). When asked by *Christianity Today* to list their musical influences Jars of Clay members

“listed no Christian artists” (*Christianity Today*, Nov. 15, 1999). During their concerts, Jars of Clay has performed “Crazy Train” by Ozzy Osbourne, the filthy-mouthed former lead singer for the occultic rock group Black Sabbath.

AMY GRANT said, “I love to hear Billy Joel, Kenny Loggins and the Doobie Brothers” (*Time*, March 11, 1985).

Dana Key (of DEGARMO & KEY) says that he has been influenced most by B.B. King, Jimi Hendrix, and Billy Gibbons (of ZZ Top) (*CCM Magazine*, January 1989, p. 30).

POINT OF GRACE, on their *Life, Love and Other Mysteries* album, recorded “Sing a Song” by the occultic, antichrist rock group Earth, Wind and Fire.

The worldliness of DELIRIOUS is evident in their choice of “musical heroes,” which include “Radiohead, Blur and other big British modern rockers” (*CCM magazine*, July 1999, p. 39).

When asked what is currently in her CD player, CRYSTAL LEWIS replied: “Michael Jackson, *Thriller*; Billy Holliday; Led Zeppelin; Radiohead, *Ok Computer*; Radiohead, *Kid A*; and Sting, *Nothing Like the Sun* (“Ten Questions with Chrystal Lewis,” *CCM Magazine*, March 2002).

Michael Herman of *Christianity Today* asked the members of THIRD DAY to “name a musician you’d pay to see in concert.” All five members of the band named secular rockers. Tai named U2; Brad, the Cars; David, Phil Collins; Mac, Tom Petty; and Mark, George Harrison (“Guy Talk” interview posted at *Christianity Today* web site, Feb. 26, 2002). Anyone familiar with the music and atmosphere at secular rock concerts should know that a Bible believer has no business there. “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” ([Eph. 5:11](#)).

If parents allow their young people to be influenced by the Contemporary Christian Music world or if they stay in a church that promotes Contemporary Christian Music, this is the type of worldly example they will have. I, for one, certainly don’t want my children or grandchildren following such a worldly example. The work of secular rock & roll is spiritually dangerous in the extreme.

Further, CCM musicians not only listen to and perform secular rock; they even use secular rock in worship to God.

We have seen that contemporary Christian musicians love secular rock; they listen to it in their private lives and they perform it in their concerts and record it for their albums. They even use secular rock in the worship of God.

The “Heart of David Conference on Worship & Warfare,” sponsored by Rick Joyner’s Morning Star ministries, concluded with the praise team singing the Beatles song “I Want to Hold Your Hand” as if God were singing it to believers. The worship leaders were Leonard Jones, Kevin Prosch, and Suzy Wills.

In 2002 I received the following note from a professor at Southern Baptist Seminary: “A couple of my students recently attended Rod Parsley’s World Harvest Church in Columbus, Ohio. They said that the call to worship was a tape playing Van Halen’s ‘Jump!’ Every time David Lee Roth sang, ‘Jump’ the people all jumped.” Van Halen was one of the most popular heavy metal groups of the 1980s and early 1990s. In a concert in Detroit, Michigan, lead singer David Lee Roth yelled out, “We are gathered in celebration of drugs, sex and rock and roll!!!” (*Shofar* magazine, Fall 1983, p. 10). Many of Van Halen’s songs are vile and immoral. A rock critic said a Van Halen concert is “a musical circus of sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll cliches” and noted that “sex is celebrated in a way that makes bike gangs look like morality squads” (*Calgary Herald*, April 28, 1984).

During the Feb. 18, 2002, premier show for the Michael W. Smith/Third Day *Come Together Tour*, the CCM group Third Day took the stage to the strains of the New Age Beatles song “Come Together” (press release, Nashville, April 24, 2002).

The Beatles have been one of the most godless, wicked influences in modern society. In his 1965 book, *A Spaniard in the Works*, John Lennon called Jesus Christ many wicked things that we cannot repeat and blasphemed the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In Lennon’s song “God” (1970), he sang: “I don’t believe in Bible. I don’t believe in Jesus. I just believe in me, Yoko and me, that’s reality.” Lennon’s extremely popular song “Imagine” (1971) promotes atheism. The lyrics say: “Imagine there’s no heaven ... No hell below us, above us only sky ... no religion too/ You may say I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one/ I hope some day you’ll join us, and the world will live as one.”

The worldliness of Contemporary Christian Music is also seen in that CCM musicians are not separated from the world in the way they live.

Roaring Lambs: A Gentle Plan to Radically Change Your World by the late Bob Briner with an introduction by Michael W. Smith is a book that has been promoted widely by CCW musicians, including Jars of Clay, Steven Curtis Chapman, Sixpence None the Richer, Steve Taylor, Michael Tait of dc Talk, and Delirious. It promotes the idea of being like the world to win the world. Briner suggests, for example, that Christians should have the goal of seeing our sons and daughters become the principle dancers in ballet companies instead of looking upon such things as wrong and immoral. Briner says, “...instead of just hanging around the fringes of our culture, we need to be right smack dab in the middle of it...”

It is obvious that the contemporary Christian musicians are “right smack dab in the middle” of modern culture.

That is apparent in the way they dress. The women wear the same form-fitting, peek-a-boo styles that the unsaved wear. The men have the same long hair or punked hair or tattoos or earrings or whatever that the unsaved have. Whatever look the world is promoting, that is the look that CCM follows. I have never heard a contemporary Christian musician warn about immodest or worldly dress in any sort of plain manner.

If there is such a person, he or she is in the most extreme minority.

To promote his first crossover hit, “Place in This world,” Michael W. Smith produced a video that was sensual enough to reach the top 5 on the secular rock cable television station VH-1. The video was produced by the same company that created immoral videos for Prince. It showed “a dreamy Mr. Smith singing and playing the piano in the middle of the desert while a young, pouting, gorgeous woman wanders around in the sand; eventually the two find each other, hold hands, hug, and sort of nuzzle.” Smith admitted that his wife was opposed to him hugging another woman and that his own children said their mother should have been in the video instead of another woman.

Dan Lucarini, who was formerly a contemporary worship leader, warns: “When you combine the sensual dancing with the immodest dress of the women on the platform [in contemporary praise teams], you place a very large stumbling block in front of the men of the congregation” (*Confessions of a Former Worship Leader*, p. 71).

Lucarini describes the worldly influence that even the less radical contemporary Christian musicians have on Christian young people:

“We took teens to concerts given by popular CCM artists. These were not the ‘radical’ heavy metal or hip-hop artists, but the middle-of-the-road performers who seemed to be good role models. But we noticed that the artists, probably under the influence of their recording companies, imitated secular artists in music, concert performance techniques, dress, hairstyle and merchandising. Everything seemed to be geared to making money by winning fans. The poor teens were manipulated in the same way as when they were listening to their secular teen idols. They were hooked in the beginning by safe, careful lyrics and moderate music but the artists *always* progressed to an edgier, rockier and harder music style with a lifestyle and image to match. And the teens followed along. The CCM artists became role models for different kinds of immorality: indecent dress, rebellious images, improper crushes on married men by young girls, lustful interest in sexy females by adolescent males” (Lucarini, *Confessions of a Former Worship Leader*, p. 117).

The worldliness of Contemporary Christian Music is further seen in that the music is even owned by the world.

Contemporary Christian Music is big business today, a half billion dollar a year industry. The CCM industry sold nearly 50 million albums in 2001, raking in more money than the jazz and classical segments of the music business. Revenues from sales of CCM have tripled since the mid-80s. One-quarter of the sales in Christian bookstores are from music. This eventually caught the attention of the world, and most of the major CCM producers and distributors are now owned by secular corporations.

World magazine reported that “secular media companies ... swallowed up more than 90 percent of Christian recording labels in the 1990s.”

WORD ENTERTAINMENT, a secular corporation, is the home of such CCM heavy weights as 4Him, Phil Keaggy, Amy Grant, Mary Mary, Cindy Morgan, Erin O’Donnell, Point of Grace, Sandi Patty, Mark Schulz, Jaci Velasquez, Wes King, Nicole Mullen, and Anointed. A few years ago Word changed hands from one secular corporation to

another. Warner Music Group paid Gaylord Hotels and the Grand Ole Opry \$84.1 million for Word. Warner, a division of AOL Time Warner, also owns Atlantic, Elektra, London-Sire, Reprise, and Warner Bros. Records, and has on its roster such vile secular rock artists as Green Day, Madonna, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

In 1992, SPARROW RECORDS (Avalon, Ce Ce Winons, Carman, Delirious, Margaret Becker, Newsboys, Phillips Craig and Dean, Steve Green, Steven Curtis Chapman, Twila Paris, Zoe Girl) sold out to EMI Christian Music Group, which in turn is owned by the secular corporation EMI Group. EMI owns 70 music companies (Virgin, Capitol, Mosaic, Narada, Astralwerks, etc.) representing some 1,500 artists, including a wide variety of very immoral secular music acts, such as Janet Jackson, Smashing Pumpkin, Mariah Carey, Geto Boys, Spice Girls, Blind Melon, and the Beastie Boys. EMI also owns the music of older groups such as Pink Floyd, Grand Funk Railroad, Radiohead, Iggy Pop, Sex Pistols, Badfinger, the Rolling Stones, David Bowie, Billy Idol, Blondie, and Poison.

Chevrolet sponsored the Michael W. Smith worship tour in 2002.

These are only a very few examples of a practice that is in direct disobedience to the Word of God.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” ([2 Cor. 6:14-17](#)).

Therefore, the first reason that we are opposed to Contemporary Christian Music is that it is worldly, and this is a very serious matter and sufficient in itself to stay away from CCM.

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC IS ECUMENICAL MUSIC

Another reason why we are opposed to Contemporary Christian Music is because it is ecumenical in philosophy and practice.

John Styll, the publisher of *Worship Leader* magazine (which has a distribution of 50,000), made the following telling observation:

“You can have a pretty straight-laced but theologically liberal Presbyterian church using the same songs that are being sung at a wild and crazy charismatic church, but they use different arrangements and adapt the songs to their unique settings” (Styll, quoted by Steve Rabey, “The Profits of Praise,” *Christianity Today*, July 12, 1999).

Why would a “theologically liberal” Presbyterian church, which perhaps hates the old hymns about the blood and adds hymns about mother god and the social gospel to its songbook and which allows preachers to deny that Jesus is God and which thinks unrepentant homosexuals make fine church members, be attracted to contemporary praise music? Why would a Roman Catholic who prays to Mary and who praises God for purgatory (such as the popular charismatic priest Tom Forrest does) be attracted to contemporary praise music?

Don’t you see something wrong with this picture, my friends?

In an interview with *Christianity Today*, Don Moen of Integrity Music said: “I’ve discovered that worship [music] is transdenominational, transcultural. IT BRIDGES ANY DENOMINATION. Twenty years ago there were many huge divisions between denominations. Today I think the walls are coming down. In any concert that I do, I will have 30-50 different churches represented.”

In his book *Making Musical Choices*, Richard Peck makes the following important observation about modern church music.

Ecumenical terms that permeate the CCM scene include “anointed,” “the body,” “united,” “John 17,” “tolerance,” “non-critical love,” “judge not,” “no finger pointing,” etc.

These are terms that identify the philosophy of the End Times ecumenical movement described in [2 Timothy 4:3-4](#) and other passages. The End Times apostasy is characterized by a rejection of strong biblical absolutes and reproof and doctrine and by teachers who pamper instead of preach, who generalize instead of being specific, who are positive rather than “negative,” who build self esteem rather than call for repentance. “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” ([2 Tim. 4:2-4](#)).

Contemporary Christian Music is at home in the most ecumenical of contexts. The same music is perfectly at home in a Roman Catholic retreat or a World Council of Churches conference or a charismatic Laughing Revival meeting.

CCM is the music of ecumenical evangelism, as epitomized by the Franklin Graham and Luis Palau crusades. Billy Graham led the way in this. Consider this description of Graham’s 1997 crusade in San Antonio, Texas.

“More than 700 San Antonio churches representing over 50 denominations have joined together for the Graham crusade, which hopes to attract South Texas youth with big-name Christian rock acts [Amy Grant, dc Talk, Charlie Daniels Band, Michael W. Smith, Steve Green, and Jaci Velasquez] and a Saturday service just for kids” (*Houston Chronicle*, April 2, 1997).

A typical Luis Palau evangelistic “festival” was described by Contemporary Christian Music.com as follows. This one was in Seattle in 2003.

“Musical expressions spanning from southern-fried rock, to smooth soul, to explosive hip-hop swirl through a crowd of over 150,000 Seattle residents nestled within the spacious Marymoor Park on a beautiful summer afternoon. Opposite the stage, professional skaters perform death-defying stunts in front of teens accented by multiple piercings and an arsenal of tattoos.”

Contemporary Christian Music was the music of the largest ecumenical charismatic conference of the last quarter century. This was New Orleans ‘87, held in July 1987, which I attended with press credentials. Approximately 40 different denominations and groups came together under one roof, including Episcopalian, Church of Christ, United Methodist, American Baptist, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church USA, and dozens of others. Fifty percent of those in attendance were Roman Catholics. Roman Catholic priest Tom Forrest delivered the closing message and brought the mixed multitude to their feet when he called for unity. “We must reach the world,” he cried, “and we must reach it the only way we can reach it; we must reach it TOGETHER!” At those words the people became ecstatic, leaping to their feet, shouting, stomping, speaking in “tongues,” dancing, hugging one another. This same priest, speaking at a conference I attended in Indianapolis in 1990, said he is thankful for purgatory because he knows that he will not go to Heaven except through that means. Obviously he does not believe in the once-for-all sufficiency of Christ’s atonement. At the book sales area in New Orleans one could purchase Rosary beads and Madonnas to assist in one’s prayers to Mary. A Catholic mass was held every morning during the conference. The music that held all of this confusion together was CCM. Youth Explosion ‘87 was held at the same time, and 5,000 young people were bombarded with a steady diet of unscriptural teaching, ecumenism, testimonies by sports stars and entertainment figures, and ROCK music.

CCM is perfectly at home in the midst of such ecumenical confusion.

The intimate charismatic connection within Contemporary Christian Music guarantees that it will be ecumenical. The Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International, in its earlier days, popularized a song which proclaimed, “I don’t care what church you belong to.” That was dropped and replaced with a Catholic song, “We Are One in the Spirit,” which proclaims, “We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord and we pray that all unity may one day be restored...” (Michael Harper, *Three Sisters: A Provocative Look at Evangelicals, Charismatics, & Catholic Charismatics and Their Relationship to One Another*, pp. 28, 29). When the Roman Catholic Church sings about Christian unity, of course, it is singing about non-Catholics being united with Rome!

The 1996 CCM hit “Gather at the River” promotes the ecumenical theme:

“Sometimes we don’t see eye to eye/
WE DON’T AGREE; WE DON’T KNOW WHY/
BUT JESUS PRAYED THAT WE’D BE ONE/
For the sake of God’s own Son/
CAN WE PUT AWAY OUR DIFFERENCES/
LAY DOWN OUR PRIDE/
It’s time we start turning the tide” (Joel Lindsey and Regie Hamm, “Gather at the River,” *20 Contemporary Christian Hits*, Vol. 2, Benson Music Group,

1996).

This song is built upon the false ecumenical interpretation of [John 17:21](#), which claims that the unity for which Christ prayed is an ecumenical unity of professing Christians that disregards biblical doctrine. The context of John 17 destroys this myth. In John 17 the Lord emphasizes that the unity He desires is one based on salvation and truth. It is not a unity of nominal Christians with regenerate, sound doctrine with false. It is not a unity that ignores doctrinal differences for the sake of an enlarged fellowship. (1) The unity of John 17 is a God-created unity ([John 17:11](#)). There is nothing in Christ's prayer to indicate that men are to do something to create the unity for which He prayed. *John 17 is a prayer addressed to God the Father, not a commandment addressed to men*. It is not something man needs to do; it is something God has already done. The prayer was answered 2,000 years ago. It is a *spiritual reality* which was created by God among genuine believers who are committed to the Scriptures, not a *possibility* which must be organized by man. (2) The unity of John 17 is a unity in truth. "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. ... Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" ([Jn. 17:8, 17](#)). See also [Jn. 17:19, 6](#), and 14. Christ emphasized that He was praying for those who love and obey the Word of God. This is certainly not a prayer that envisions the modern ecumenical crowd that downplays and ignores the Word of God for the sake of a broad, lowest-common-denominator unity. It is not even a prayer for the New Evangelical crowd with its unscriptural judge not philosophy and its wrong-headed tendency to reduce "essential" doctrine to a short list of "fundamentals," while downplaying the so-called "non-essentials" of God's Word for the sake of peace and unity.

Note, too, that the ecumenical CCM song "Gather at the River" pretends that the doctrinal divisions between Christians are the result of pride ("lay down our pride") and ignorance ("we don't agree; we don't know why"). This conveniently overlooks the Bible's commands about defending the faith and separating from error. Christians who take these commands seriously refuse to be ecumenical, not because they are proud or ignorant but because they desire to please the Lord. This ecumenical song libels Bible-believing Christians who practice biblical separation.

Contemporary Christian Music's influence toward ecumenism is well stated by a man who at one time preached against it, Bob Larson.

"Have you ever seen a bunch of young people (be they Lutheran, Presbyterian, or Baptist, charismatic or evangelical) setting aside their religious idiosyncrasies to jump and shout when Petra walks on stage?... The shared experience will send them back to their own churches LESS THEOLOGICALLY EXCLUSIVE. From that moment on, they are 'not of this world' with all of its petty ecclesiastical divisions" (Larson, *Contemporary Christian Music Magazine*, December 1985).

This statement by Larson is extremely sad. There was a time when he preached against Christian rock, yet he refused to separate from charismatics and others who were walking a path of disobedience and error. He held meetings under charismatic and

ecumenical sponsorship, as well as the sponsorship of other groups and churches which were not scriptural. Now we see the fruit of this disobedience and the reckless disregard for biblical separation. Has God not warned that “evil communications corrupt good manners”?

To characterize doctrinal issues that separate Lutherans and Presbyterians and Baptists and charismatic as “RELIGIOUS IDIOSYNCRASIES,” as Bob Larson does, is ridiculous. It is not mere idiosyncrasies that divide these denominations but serious doctrinal issues. Some of these are the eternal security of the believer vs. the doctrine that a born again Christian can lose his salvation; believer’s baptism vs. infant baptism; Spirit baptism as a part of salvation vs. Spirit baptism as an experience subsequent to salvation; premillennialism vs. amillennialism; and a special priesthood vs. the priesthood of the believers, to mention only a few.

Bill Gaither illustrates the ecumenical philosophy of Contemporary Christian Music. In recent decades Gaither has bridged the wider Contemporary Christian Music world with that of Southern Gospel, and he has stirred his ecumenical philosophy into the mix. The Gaither group provided the music one evening at Indianapolis ‘90, a large ecumenical charismatic gathering I attended with press credentials. One-half of the 25,000 participants were Roman Catholics and the other half represented roughly 40 different denominations, Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Pentecostal, you name it. A Catholic mass was held each morning during the conference, and a Catholic priest delivered the closing message. The Gaithers appeared to be perfectly at home in this unscriptural gathering and entertained the mixed multitude with their jazzy music.

The Gaithers frequently perform and record songs that present the ecumenical philosophy. An example is “Jesus Built This Church on Love” from their *Back Home in Indiana* album. The lead on the song is performed by Candy “Hemphill” Christmas, who travels with the Gaithers. The song is sung at many of the Gaither concerts. It is done in the style of a mid-tempo, jazzy black spiritual with drums and bass guitar emphasizing the back beat. Here are some of the lyrics:

“Do you ever just get to wonderin’/ ‘bout the way things are today?/ So many on board this gospel ship/ Trying to row in a different way/ If we’d all pull together/ Like a family me and you/ We’d come a lot closer to doin’/ what the Lord called us to do.

Chorus: “Jesus built this church on love/ and that’s what it’s all about/ Trying to get everybody saved/ NOT TO KEEP ANYBODY OUT...”

This song implies that the divisions within Christianity are largely if not entirely man-made and unnecessary, that if professing Christians would merely “pull together” and exercise love the divisions would be healed. It is a feel-good sentiment, a nice fairy tale that has wide appeal, but it is unreasonable and unscriptural. The Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles warned repeatedly that false teachers would lead many astray, that there would be false christs, false spirits, false gospels, false churches, doctrines of devils (see [Matt. 7:15-23](#); [24:3-5,11,24](#); [Acts 20:28-30](#); [2 Cor. 1:1-4](#); [Gal. 1:6-9](#); [1 Tim. 4:1](#); [2 Tim. 3:13](#); [4:3-4](#); 2 Pet. 2; 1 [John 4:1](#); Jude; etc.). The book of Revelation predicts a one-world End Time harlot Christian religion (Rev. 17). Those who preach an ecumenical unity

rarely even mention these Bible warnings and never focus on them. They do not tell us plainly where these false christs, false gospels, false spirits, false teachers, and false churches are in Christianity today. They imply, rather, that denominational divisions are largely unnecessary and petty things that could be overcome by a little ecumenical love. There are many problems among Christians that could be healed through love, but it simply is not true that love will heal the major divisions within Christianity. The differences between denominations involve serious doctrinal issues that cannot be ignored and cannot be solved through sentimental songs.

This Gaither song also says the churches are “not to keep anybody out.” That is openly contrary to the Bible’s command to separate from error and to exercise church discipline ([Rom. 16:17](#); 1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; [1 Tim. 6:3-5](#); [2 Tim. 2:16-21](#); [3:5](#); 2 John 8-11; [Rev. 18:4](#)).

Another ecumenical Gaither song is “Loving God, Living Each Other” from the album by that name.

“They pushed back from the table/ To listen to his words/ His secret plan before he had to go/ It’s not complicated/ DON’T NEED A LOT OF RULES/ This is all you need to know/ We tend to make it harder/ Build steeples out of stone/ FILL BOOKS WITH EXPLANATIONS OF THE WAY/ But if we’d stop and listen/ And break a little bread/ We would hear the Master say/ It’s Loving God, loving each other/ Making music with my friends/ Loving God, loving each other/ And the story never ends.”

This song contains more half truths and subtle errors. Love is a very important part of the Christian life, but true Christian love is obeying God’s Word ([John 14:23](#); [1 John 5:3](#)). To say that we “don’t need a lot of rules” ignores the fact that the New Testament is literally filled with commandments! To say that we don’t need to “fill books with explanations of the way” ignores the fact that the Bible instructs us to “study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” ([2 Tim. 2:15](#)). It ignores the fact that the Bible is given for “doctrine” (teaching) ([2 Tim. 3:16](#)), that preachers are instructed to teach others ([2 Tim. 2:2](#)), that older women are instructed to teach younger women ([Titus 2:3-5](#)), etc. Bible teaching certainly involves “filling books with explanations of the way.” That is precisely what the apostles did in the New Testament Epistles. The Bible itself contains 66 books with explanations of the way!

This Gaither song presents a sentimental, ecumenical approach to the Christian life and ministry that is simplistic and appealing to a modern crowd but that is patently contrary to the Scriptures.

Not surprisingly, there is a strong Roman Catholic element within Contemporary Christian Music.

The very popular **JOHN MICHAEL TALBOT** is a Roman Catholic who prays to Mary and believes in dreams and other forms of extra-biblical revelation (including Catholic tradition). He became a lay “brother” in the order of Secular Franciscans in 1979 and lives in Little Portion Hermitage in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. This is the home of the

Brothers and Sisters of Charity, “an integrated monastic community of families, celibates and singles” founded by Talbot and formally recognized by the Catholic Church.

Talbot says Mary is very important in his life. In his book *Simplicity*, Talbot stated: “Personally, I have found praying the Rosary to be one of the most powerful tools I possess in obtaining simple, childlike meditation on the life of Jesus Christ.” The Rosary is largely a prayer to Mary as the Queen of Heaven. In 1984 Talbot said: “I am also feeling the presence of Mary becoming important in my life. ... I feel that she really does love me and intercedes to God on my behalf” (*Contemporary Christian Music Magazine*, November 1984, p. 47).

Talbot’s albums were the first by a Catholic artist to be accepted broadly by both Protestant and Catholic listeners. “In 1988, *Billboard Magazine* reported that Talbot out-ranked all other male Christian artists in total career albums sold. After more than three million sales with Sparrow Records, making him Sparrow’s all-time best-selling recording artist” (Talbot’s web site).

In an article entitled “Our Fathers, and Our Divided Family,” in the Catholic Charismatic magazine *New Covenant*, Talbot called for Christian unity on the basis of the Roman Catholic papacy:

“A Roman Catholic, I respect other Christians. We are especially close to those who value apostolic tradition as well as Scripture. But even in this we face further debates that are obstacles to complete Christian unity. THIS IS WHY THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH INSISTS THAT SCRIPTURE, TRADITION AND MAGISTERIUM ARE NECESSARY FOR A FULLY UNIFIED PEOPLE. WE ROMAN CATHOLICS FIND THIS IN THE POPE AS BISHOP OF ROME, TOGETHER WITH THE BISHOPS OF THE CHURCHES IN FULL COMMUNION WITH ROME. ... May we all hear these ancient truths and experience real conversion of heart” (emphasis added) (John Talbot, “Our Fathers, and Our Divided Family,” *New Covenant*, September 1997, p. 21).

Talbot says Catholic tradition and the papacy are equal in authority with the Scripture. He says the fullest expression of true Christian unity can be found only in fellowship with the Pope of Rome. He prays that his readers will hear this message and experience conversion to Rome. What could be more unscriptural? The apostle Paul said anyone, even an angel from heaven, that preaches a false gospel is cursed of God ([Gal. 1:6-9](#)). The Roman Catholic popes, with their sacramental gospel and blasphemous claims and titles, have been under this curse from their unscriptural origin. Nowhere does the New Testament say the apostles passed on their authority at death. The true apostles were given miracle-working signs to authenticate their calling ([2 Cor. 12:12](#)). Nowhere does the New Testament establish a pope over all of the churches, and nowhere do we see Peter acting as or living as a pope. We don’t need the so-called “church fathers” to explain to us the rule of faith and practice; God has given us an infallible and sufficient rule in the Scripture and the canon was completed in the days of the apostles and sealed with a solemn seal in [Revelation 22:18-19](#). The Scripture is able to make the man of God “perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” ([2 Tim. 3:16-17](#)). If the Scripture is able to make the man of God perfect, there is obviously no need for anything else. And the Roman Catholic tradition is NOT Scripture.

There is room for John Talbot’s apostate theology in the doctrinally confused, heresy tolerant world of Contemporary Christian Music. Talbot is considered a brother in

Christ and is welcomed with open arms, even in the face of God's commands that we mark and avoid those who promote doctrine contrary to that taught by the apostles ([Rom. 16:17-18](#)).

The Devil is using the ecumenical thrust of Contemporary Christian Music to break down the walls between truth and error toward the completion of the one-world apostate "church."

Surveys show that 60 percent of Talbot's listeners are non-Catholic. Talbot said that HE DELIGHTS TO SEE PROTESTANTS WHO NEVER WOULD HAVE DARKENED THE DOORSTEP OF A CATHOLIC CHURCH COME TO ONE OF HIS CONCERTS. "All of a sudden they say, 'Hey, I feel very much at home here. That doesn't mean necessarily I want to be a Roman Catholic, but I feel very much at home worshipping God with other people who are not that different from me'" (John Talbot, quoted in "Interfaith Album Strikes Sour Note," Peter Smith, Religious News Service, Dec. 8, 1996). In 1996 Talbot produced an album jointly with fellow CCM performer MICHAEL CARD, a Protestant. They embarked on a concert tour and the audience was "estimated at 50 percent Catholic and 50 percent Protestant" (*Charisma*, December 1996, p. 29). In March 1996 they performed together for the largest gathering of Catholics in America at the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress. Roughly 20,000 "clergy and laity" attended this congress.

Of this ecumenical venture with Talbot, Michael Card testified: "Doing this project has enabled us to become real friends. And along the way, THE DENOMINATIONAL LINES HAVE BECOME REALLY MEANINGLESS TO ME, AND TO JOHN, TOO" (*CCM Magazine*, July 1996).

It is painfully obvious that doctrinal truth means nothing to these CCM performers. If Card really took his evangelical doctrine seriously he would not yoke together with a man who denies that doctrine and who has the goal of drawing his listeners to the Catholic Church. If the pope is truly the Vicar of Christ and the head of all Christians, it would be wicked to deny it; but if the Catholic papacy is nothing but a man-made tradition, it is wicked to believe it. If Mary is truly the immaculate, ever-virgin Queen of Heaven, it would be wicked to deny it; but if that Catholic Mary is a demonic idol, it is wicked to believe it. If the Catholic priesthood truly is ordained by God, it would be wicked to deny it; but if it has no authority from God and is merely a tradition of man, it is wicked to accept it.

There is no middle ground here. There can be no fellowship between those who hold doctrines this diverse. The Bible says those who teach doctrine contrary to that which the apostles taught are to be marked and avoided ([Rom. 16:17](#)). The Bible wisely asks: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" ([Amos 3:3](#)).

Other Catholic musicians that move easily within Contemporary Christian Music circles are KATHY TROCCOLI, TOM BOOTH, SARAH HART, DANNY LANGDON, and SHERYL CROW.

The *National Catholic Register* mentioned these in an article in the March 8-14, 1998, issue, stating that THEY ARE USING THEIR MUSIC TO "EVANGELIZE"

EVANGELICAL YOUNG PEOPLE INTO THE CATHOLIC FAITH.

KATHY TROCCOLI has been nominated five times as the Gospel Music Association female vocalist of the year. She is a national spokesperson for Chuck Colson's Prison Fellowship.

In an interview with *CCM Magazine* in 1997 she said: "But I'd been very judgmental toward the Catholic church for years, and I've recently been able to go back to it without having a chip on my shoulder. I now have a much greater capacity for--as the album says--*Love and Mercy*."

Troccoli has bought into the ecumenical lie that love is tolerant of various doctrines. She holds an ecumenical, non-judgmental, anti-fundamentalist philosophy:

"Our dogma and legalism strangle the love of Christ right out of us" (Troccoli, *CCM Magazine*, June 1997).

This sounds good to many ears, and there is no doubt that Christian love is important, but godly love is not contrary to holding a strong position on New Testament doctrine. In fact it is impossible to obey the Bible without being deeply concerned about doctrine ("dogma") and obedience to the details of God's Word (which is commonly mischaracterized by the CCM crowd as "legalism"). Jude 3 explains that God has given one faith to His people, and that faith, as recorded in the New Testament Scriptures, is to be preserved and fought for until Jesus returns. It is absolutely impossible to obey Jude 3 and be ecumenical and non-judgmental at the same time. The chief thing that divides denominations is doctrine.

Troccoli's 1997 album, *Love One Another*, has an ecumenical theme: "Christians from all denominations demonstrating their common love for Christ and each other" (Dave Urbanski, "Chatty Kathy," *CCM Magazine*, June 1997). The recording of the title song involved 40 CCM artists: Amy Grant, Gary Chapman, Clay Crosse, Sandi Patty, Michael W. Smith, Carman, Tony Vincent, Jonathan Pierce, Mark Lowry, Phillips, Craig and Dean, Aaron and Jeoffrey, Jaci Velasquez, Lisa Bevill, Scott Krippayne, Sarah Masen, Babbie Mason, Sara Jahn, Carolyn Arends, Vestal Goodman, Paul Vann, Billy and Sarah Gaines, Tim Taber, Sarah Hart, Peter Penrose, Janet Paschal, Beverly Crawford, Phil Joel of the Newsboys, Kevin Smith of dc Talk, Tai Anderson of Third Day, plus the members of Out of the Grey, Beyond the Blue, 4 HIM, Christafari, and Audio Adrenaline.

The song talks about tearing down the walls of denominational division.

"Look around the world today/ There is anger there is hate/ And I know that it grieves His heart/ When His people stand apart/ Cause we're the only Jesus they will see/ Love one another, and live as one in His name/ Love one another we can tear down walls by His grace" ("Love One Another").

The broad range of participants that joined Kathy Troccoli in recording "Love One Another" demonstrates the ecumenical agenda of Contemporary Christian Music. The song witnessed Catholics, Pentecostals, Baptists, etc.,

yoked together and calling for Christian unity. The New Testament warns repeatedly of widespread apostasy among those who claim to be Christians, yet the ecumenical movement ignores apostasy and heresy and calls for almost unqualified unity among professing Christians. While there is little doubt that God is grieved by man-made divisions among Bible-believing Christians, it is not true that the heart of God is grieved by all divisions, because there are divisions He Himself requires. He has commanded that His people separate from those who follow doctrinal error.

Why can Contemporary Christian Music reach across the denominational divides?

The reason the contemporary praise music is so successful ecumenically, so universally popular in this apostate hour, is three-fold:

FIRST, AS A RULE IT IS NOT DOCTRINALLY STRONG AND CLEAR. While there are exceptions, they are only that. CCW sings of Jesus and grace and love and salvation, but in such a doctrinally non-specific manner that the modernists can find their “jesus” therein and the Catholics, their “grace.” False teachers use the same terms that Bible believers use, but they have a different dictionary. They sing about grace but they do not mean the free undeserved grace that comes through faith by the shedding of Christ’s blood *without works or sacraments*. They sing of Jesus, but it is not necessarily the thrice holy Jesus, the mighty God, the everlasting father, of Scripture. They sing of the Spirit, but it might be a strange one that knocks people to the floor and glues them there.

SECOND, THE CONTEMPORARY PRAISE MUSIC IS POPULAR EVEN AMONG UNREGENERATE RELIGIOUS PEOPLE BECAUSE IT IS THE SAME ROCK MUSIC TO WHICH THIS GENERATION IS IRREDEEMABLY ADDICTED. And there are all sorts of rock music, hard, soft, rap, you name it. People are so addicted to rock music today that oftentimes they do not recognize that music is rock unless it is of the most violent brand. I believe that if you took away the rock music, you would see an immediate and dramatic decline in the popularity of contemporary praise. Rock music is very powerful and moving in and of itself, and I am convinced that it plays a large role in producing the emotional high that modern worshippers are commonly seeking. Where would they be without their rock music?

THIRD, THE CONTEMPORARY PRAISE MUSIC REPRESENTS THE POPULAR ECUMENICAL PHILOSOPHY OF POSITIVISM AND SPIRITUAL NEUTRALISM. One thing that is grossly and almost universally lacking from the lives and ministries of the creators of contemporary praise music is a forthright defense of the faith and an exposure of apostasy. Thus Contemporary Christian Music doesn’t “get on anyone’s toes.” But defense of the faith and exposure of error is not an optional part of Christianity. To neglect this ministry is blatant disobedience to the Bible that commands us to “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3). For the most part, the CCM people are those who believe in the myth of “evangelical Catholics” and who praise Mother Teresa as a great Christian. These are the people who refuse to name the names of heretics and who ridicule those who do. Further, the influential names in Contemporary Praise Music

have taken up the neutral ground that allows false teachers to prosper.

The Bible describes massive apostasy at the end of the church age. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” ([2 Tim. 4:2-4](#)).

Contemporary praise music is proving to be one of the most powerful glues to bring together every sort of church in this strange and wicked hour, regardless of its heresies. For reporting purposes, I have attended meetings of a wide range of denominations, Pentecostal, Charismatic, American Baptist, Southern Baptist, Willowcreek, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Anglican, Episcopal, and Roman Catholic, to name some, and the one thing they all have in common today is contemporary music.

Therefore, another one of the reasons why we are opposed to Contemporary Christian Music is its ecumenical nature.

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC IS INTIMATELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

Another reason why we are opposed to Contemporary Christian Music is its intimate relationship with the Charismatic movement.

Charisma magazine, February 1994, made this observation: “Today, praise music has entered the mainstream. Songs that were only sung in charismatic churches a few years ago are now heard throughout mainline and non-charismatic churches.”

Though jazzy music has begun permeating non-charismatic churches only in recent decades, it has been a part of the Pentecostal movement from its inception. Consider the following overview:

“Shortly after it began to emerge in 1901, Pentecostalism sensed through some strange form of intuition that success would come through EMOTIONALLY-CHARGED MUSIC. The first pattern was jazz. Speaking of the years 1901 to 1914, Howard Goss said, ‘WITHOUT IT (JAZZ) THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT COULD NEVER HAVE MADE THE RAPID INROADS INTO THE HEARTS OF MEN AND WOMEN AS IT DID. Neither could we have experienced a constant victorious revival over the fifty years’ (*The Winds of Change*, p. 212). He also noted: ‘It was generally not the conventional church-hymn singing of that era. Entirely unpretentious, there appeared to be neither poetry nor musicianship in the composition. But, there was something far more effective than either. ... WE WERE THE FIRST, SO FAR AS I KNOW, TO INTRODUCE THIS ACCELERATED TEMPO INTO GOSPEL SINGING’ (Ibid. pp. 207, 208). This Pentecostal leader should know for he was the most prominent among the early founders of the Movement” (Wilson Ewin, *The Pied Piper of the Pentecostal Movement*, 1986, pp. 49-51).

Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944), founder of the Foursquare Pentecostal Churches, incorporated jazzy music into her elaborate, sensuous church programs. A contemporary made the following analysis of her success: “She threw out the dirges and threats of Hell, REPLACING THEM WITH JAZZ HYMNS and promises of Glory” (Morrow Mayo of *The New Republic*, quoted in Robert Bahr, *Least of All Saints: The*

Story of Aimee Semple McPherson, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1979, p. 267).

Many of the early rock & roll musicians observed the connection between the music they heard in Pentecostal churches and secular rock music. Ronnie Dawson, one of the 1950s rockabilly stars, started playing electric guitar at an Assemblies of God church. Of rockabilly he says: "It's very similar to the Assembly of God kind of church music, and things that I had taken part in in church" (*Unknown Legends of Rock 'n' Roll*, p. 15).

With the onset of the charismatic movement since the 1960s, which is basically the ecumenical branch of Pentecostalism, THE "JAZZED-UP HYMNS" HAVE GONE MAINSTREAM and have swept throughout much of the professing Christian world.

Contemporary Christian Music and Contemporary Praise Music is largely charismatic music. The large majority of the Christian rock musicians are associated with the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement, **AND PRACTICALLY NONE OF THEM ARE SEPARATED FROM IT.**

The following are just a few of the Pentecostal and Charismatic personalities behind the "jazzed-up hymns" which are being used in non-charismatic churches.

JACK HAYFORD, author of the song "Majesty" and many other very popular worship songs, is pastor of Church-on-the-Way Foursquare Church, the Pentecostal denominational that was founded by Aimee Semple McPherson. Paul and Jan Crouch, of the Trinity Broadcasting Network, and entertainer Pat Boone, are members of Hayford's congregation. Hayford's very popular song "Majesty" teaches Pentecostal doctrinal error when it speaks of "kingdom authority." In the Pentecostal-Charismatic context, "kingdom authority" refers to the false doctrine that Christians today have the authority promised for the future kingdom that will be established at Christ's return. Hayford's "kingdom authority" refers to authority to cast out sickness, authority to bind the demonic rulers of this world system, authority to be prosperous. This was one of the theme songs used at the North American Congress on the Holy Spirit & World Evangelization, held in 1987 in New Orleans and in 1990 in Indianapolis. I attended these with press credentials, and it was at these massive charismatic-ecumenical conferences (40 denominations were represented; 50% of the participants were Roman Catholic) that I first heard the song "Majesty." One of the key speakers was John Wimber, who was promoting his unscriptural "power evangelism" doctrine, teaching that Christians have the same authority today to perform signs and wonders that the apostles had in the first century. Charles and Frances Hunter also spoke at this conference. They teach that Christians have the authority today to heal all sicknesses. This is the "kingdom authority" to which Jack Hayford's song "Majesty" refers. At the St. Louis 2000 conference, which I attended with press credentials, Jack Hayford said that Christians have to learn how to speak in "baby tongues" before they can speak in regular "tongues." This is the type of unscriptural nonsense that forms the waters from which the Contemporary Christian Music flows.

THE VINEYARD churches, formerly led by **JOHN WIMBER**, have had a vast influence through their contemporary praise music. Wimber himself, who was the

manager of The Righteous Brothers before his conversion, wrote many popular contemporary songs, and many of the Vineyard churches are noted for their influential music groups. The Vintage Vineyard Music series is advertised as “Vineyard’s all-time worship classics THAT CONTINUE TO BE SUNG CROSS-DENOMINATIONALLY IN CHURCHES AROUND THE WORLD.”

John Wimber conducted “signs and wonders” conferences in various parts of the world, teaching the error that effective evangelism requires the working of miracles. Wimber spread great confusion through his allowance for extra-biblical revelation. The Promise Keepers (PK) movement was founded by men involved in the Vineyard churches. PK founder Bill McCarthy is a member of a Vineyard church in Boulder, Colorado. The pastor of that church, James Ryle, teaches that God is still raising up prophets and claims to have received many personal revelations from God through dreams and visions.

Wimber moved easily in the most radical of charismatic circles. For example, he was a featured speaker at the North American Congress on the Holy Spirit & World Evangelization in Indianapolis, August 1990. In that forum he joined hands with and preached to 25,000 charismatics, including roughly 12,000 charismatic Roman Catholics, including countless priests and nuns. A charismatic Catholic mass was held every morning of the convention. I was present at this conference with press credentials and heard Wimber speak.

The very popular and influential **INTEGRITY MUSIC** company (Integrity also owns **HOSANNA MUSIC**) rose out of the charismatic movement and the music it spreads to 117 countries is charismatic in nature. Integrity recorded an album at the Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida, where a strange charismatic “revival” broke out in 1995. Don Moen is the “creative director” for Integrity. In an interview with the *Pentecostal Evangel*, a magazine published by the Assemblies of God, Moen described the power of the music recorded at Brownsville: “Because something is imparted when you listen to this tape. I don’t want it to sound spooky or mysterious, but there’s something powerful about embracing the music of the revival. The fire of the revival can stir in you even as you listen to the songs that took place at the Brownsville revival” (“Don Moen Discusses Music at Brownsville Assembly,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, November 10, 1996). The “revival” to which he refers is not a biblical revival; it is a “revival” in which people become drunk and stagger about and fall down and are unable to perform the most basic functions of life. The pastor at Brownsville during the alleged revival, John Kilpatrick, has testified that it has taken him a half hour just to put on his socks when he was drunk with the Brownsville revival spirit. He has lain on the church platform for as long as four hours, unable to get up and unable to exercise his responsibilities as a pastor. His wife has been unable to cook their food or clean the house. Whatever this “revival” is, it is not something that is Bible based. Yet Moen testifies that this spirit can be imparted through the music.

Integrity’s Hosanna! Music worship tapes include songs by **ROBERT GAY**, who records music from alleged prophesies given by charismatic “prophets.” Gay has written hundreds of choruses, and many of them have been professionally recorded. Integrity

has produced twelve of Gay's prophetic songs. Gay claims that the Holy Spirit gives him visions for his songs. Gay is connected with Bill Hamon's Christian International Network of supposed prophetic ministries, which promotes the deception that God is continuing to give revelation through prophets and apostles today. Hamon claims that God will soon raise up new apostles that will operate in the miracle-working power of the first-century apostles and that will unite the churches and denominations. He claims that the Charismatic revival and Promise Keepers are part of this restoration process (Hamon, *Apostles, Prophets and the Coming Moves of God: God's End-Time Plans for His Church and Planet Earth*, 1997).

Another example of the charismatic influence that permeates Contemporary Christian Music is **HILLS CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTRE** in Sydney, Australia, where the worship leader is **DARLENE ZSCHECH**. The music produced by Zschech and this church has gone throughout the world and is used in practically every denomination. This church practices personal "prophecies," "tongues," and other charismatic phenomena. The song "I Believe the Promise" teaches the unscriptural latter rain theology:

"I believe the promise about the visions and the dreams / That the Holy Spirit will be poured out / And His power will be seen / Well the time is now / The place is here / And His people have come in faith / There's a mighty sound / And a touch of fire / When we've gathered in one place" ("I Believe the Promise" from "Shout to the Lord").

We could give hundreds of other examples of how the charismatic doctrine and philosophy permeates Contemporary Christian Music. It could rightly be called Contemporary Charismatic Music. And this is another of the reasons why we are opposed to it, because the Charismatic movement is very, very dangerous.

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC WEAKENS THE FUNDAMENTALIST STANCE OF A CHURCH

A final reason why we are opposed to Contemporary Christian Music is that when it comes into a church (or into the life of an individual) it weakens the church's fundamentalist stance and results in a gradual lowering of standards of morality and doctrine.

The late Gordon Sears, who had an evangelistic music ministry for many years and ministered with Rudy Atwood, was saddened before his death by the dramatic change that was occurring in many fundamental Baptist churches. He warned: "When the standard of music is lowered, then the standard of dress is also lowered. When the standard of dress is lowered, then the standard of conduct is also lowered. When the standard of conduct is lowered, then the sense of value in God's truth is lowered."

Frank Garlock of Majesty Music warns, "If a church starts using CCM it will eventually lose all other standards" (Garlock, Bob Jones University Chapel, March 12, 2001).

The late fundamentalist leader Ernest Pickering gave a similar warning: "Perhaps

nothing precipitates a slide toward New Evangelicalism more than the introduction of Contemporary Christian Music. This inevitably leads toward a gradual slide in other areas as well until the entire church is infiltrated by ideas and programs alien to the original position of the church.”

We can see this happening on every hand today.

CONSIDER THE EXAMPLE OF LANDMARK BAPTIST CHURCH, CINCINNATI, OHIO. It used to be an old-fashioned Baptist church with old-fashioned standards of music and dress and a commitment to the old English Bible.

In the 1990s the church took a turn away from its roots and at the heart of this change was music. In 1996 the church brought in a Campus Crusade band that played “high energy ‘50s and ‘60s rock and roll.”

In 2001, Mat Holman became the pastor. The church web site says, “Being a firm believer that church should be fun and on the edge, Matt puts all his energy into making Landmark a place where everyone belongs.”

The church now features a teen ministry called EnterRuption. “The purpose of EnterRuption is to create a relevant environment for students to bring their friends. We utilize a live band (secular and Christian music), dramas, skits and a relevant message.” I wonder if Paul’s message on Mars Hill, in which he boldly rebuked his listeners’ idolatry and demanded repentance, was “relevant”? I have a sneaking suspicion that the messages presented at EnterRuption aren’t exactly Acts 17 in nature. Somehow, such a message doesn’t fit an atmosphere geared toward “fun” and bathed in rock and roll.

The pop group Jump5 performed at Landmark Baptist Church on Dec. 6, 2003. “The music of the Nashville-based group is thoroughly modern pop, high-spirited and 100% fun.”

CONSIDER THE EXAMPLE OF BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH IN FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA. This church illustrates the changes that contemporary music brings. At one time this church was an old-fashioned Baptist church that believed in separation and was committed to the King James Bible, but for many years the church has been moving ever more gradually in a contemporary direction. By the time the 2002 Baptist Bible Fellowship International conference was held here the contemporary “worship team” was led by four women.

Today the Bethlehem Baptist Church has much gone about as far as you can go away from its roots in the matter of standards. In a letter dated July 3, 2003, Pastor David Stokes said: “With regard to dress and modesty issues, we enforce NO RULE on our folks. ... apparel issues are really of NO CONCERN to us” (emphasis added).

If the pastor really means what he says, then it would be fitting for a Sunday School teacher to come in her bikini! Of course, the pastor probably wouldn’t allow that, which proves that what he really means is that he has rejected the OLD strict conservative

Bible standards and has replaced them with his NEW loose worldly standards. All churches draw lines in dress, but while some draw them using biblical principles, others draw them using the world's principles. Of course, the latter group consistently labels the first group mean-spirited legalists.

Stokes also led the church to drop its "King James Only" clause from the by-laws and he now preaches from the New American Standard Version and the New Living Translation, among others.

In recent years the church's name was changed from Bethlehem Baptist Church to Fair Oaks Church.

One of the church's ministries is Skate Night, which is sponsored by secular skateboarding companies. Thus the church is blatantly yoking together with unbelievers in open defiance of Scripture ([2 Cor. 6:14-18](#)). A description of Skate Night was given by a local newspaper: "CHRISTIAN ROCK THROBS inside the small gymnasium off West Ox Road in Fairfax, just a few decibels louder than the clacking of wheels. ... It's Sunday night and more than 170 teenagers and young adults -- all but one of them male -- line the walls of the Bethlehem Baptist Church gym, waiting their turn to grind and swoop and dive over a maze of makeshift ramps and rails" (*Washington Post*, April 4, 2001).

The church testifies that it is using rock music and skateboarding to win young people to Christ, but the Skate Night web site's gospel presentation is so weak as to be almost meaningless:

"We're not talking about religion; we're talking about a relationship. It's about recognizing that you are not perfect. We've all made mistakes. From pimping and drug abuse to telling a little white lie, we are all in need of a Savior. He doesn't care what you look like, what bad things you have done, or even how good you may think you are. He just wants you to know Him!"

That is not the gospel message that we find in the New Testament. There is no clear explanation of man's sin. There is nothing about God's holiness and justice, nothing about what Jesus did to become our Saviour, nothing about His death, burial, and resurrection. Nothing about the blood. There is nothing whatsoever about repentance or turning. And as for God not caring how good a person might think he is, He most certainly does, because if a person thinks of himself as good in any sense, he cannot be saved. Someone *might* get saved through Fair Oaks Church's Skate Night ministry, but it would be *in spite of* its gospel presentation and not *because of* it.

The Bethlehem Baptist Church paper in 2002 featured a photo of the church's new Youth Pastor, Rob Hoerr. Bedecked with a goatee, an earring, and a P.O.D. T-shirt, this independent Baptist youth director is proudly promoting the Christian rock lifestyle.

P.O.D. is a rock band. The initials are supposed to stand for Payable On Death. The tattoo-covered band members curse in interviews, smoke, watch R-rated movies, and criticize kids "who want to segregate themselves from the world." The group's leader said, "Jesus was the first rebel. He was the first punk rocker going against all the rest of it" (Sonny of P.O.D., www.shoutweb.com/interviews/podo700.phtml). In another

interview, P.O.D. said, “We’re not passing out pamphlets saying ‘Get your life straight or you’re gonna burn in hell” (Sonny, *Guitar World*, Oct 2000, p. 78). Sonny says, “I like Slayer. I like Manson. I like music and this dark imagery” (2001 interview with Theresa McKeon of Shoutweb titled “P.O.D. The Fundamental Elements of God Rock”). He is talking about the antichrist rocker Marilyn Manson. P.O.D. guitarist Marcos says, “You know, everyone is free to rock ---. When we go on stage we go crazy. We are like four guys you should put in a mental hospital” (interview with Hwee Hwee Tan of Singapore, October 2002).

Is that the example you want your young people to follow, dear parents? I say woe unto the worldly youth directors who are leading young people in such paths, and woe unto those pastors who appoint such youth directors!

Thus we can see that Bethlehem Baptist Church has gone a long way down the road from its roots as a conservative, fundamentalist Baptist church, and music is at the very heart of the changes.

CONSIDER THE EXAMPLE OF TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF DETROIT, MICHIGAN. This church was pastored by J. Frank Norris from 1935 to 1950 and by G. Beauchamp Vick from 1950 to 1975. In past days, it was the most prominent church in the Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI). Vick was one of the founders of the BBFI in 1950 and was president of Baptist Bible College. It was a conservative, fundamental Baptist church that eschewed ecumenism, preached strong Bible doctrine, and promoted holy living and separation from the world. It also used only the King James Bible. Preaching in 1975 at the 25th anniversary of the founding of the BBFI, G.B. Vick said:

“It’s become fashionable to use many different versions of the Bible today. ... Listen! This King James Version, our English Bible, the Bible of our fathers and mothers, is the one that has come floating down to us upon the blood of Christian martyrs, our forefathers. It has been, I say, the one text of the Baptist Bible College, and it will be as long as I have anything to do with this school! [loud amens and applause] ... Let’s stick to the old Book.”

In those days at Temple Baptist Church it was the old Book and the old Paths, but that changed in the 1990s.

In 1990 the church got a young new pastor named Brad Powell, and he began to lead the church into a contemporary direction.

The church’s music today is described at its web site: “The PRAISE BANDS provide music for all services. The Praise Bands consist of the piano, synthesizer, acoustic and electric guitar, bass guitar, and drums.”

The church began having CCM concerts in the early 1990s, starting out with the softer rock groups. In September 1993, for example, they had Steve Camp. By October 1996, they featured Michael Card, who is radically ecumenical, working with Roman Catholic

John Michael Talbot (who prays to Mary) and claiming that denominational distinctives are not important.

The music style of the CCM groups at Northridge Church has gotten ever harder. In September 2003, the church hosted Sonic Flood, and Charlie Hall was scheduled to be there in October. In September 2003, the church was scheduled to host Darlene Zschech (pronounced check), who promotes ecumenism and unscriptural charismatic doctrines and practices.

In February 2000 Temple Baptist Church changed its name to Northridge Church of Plymouth, Michigan, after taking a survey of the community and finding out that most people don't like the name Baptist.

CONSIDER THE EXAMPLE OF SOUTHSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH, GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA. This church was founded in September 1946. From 1965 to 1996 it was pastored by Walt Handford. His wife Elizabeth is one of the daughters of the famous fundamentalist evangelist John R. Rice, founder of the *Sword of the Lord*. It was long associated with the Southwide Baptist Fellowship. It was an old-fashioned fundamental Baptist church until the 1990s.

Elizabeth Rice Handford is editorial consultant of *Joyful Woman* magazine, which in the 1990s began to feature ecumenical personalities such as James Dobson and Elisabeth Elliot, both of whom have non-critical affiliations with the Roman Catholic Church.

In September 1993, Southside Baptist Church hosted Ray Boltz for a CCM concert.

That same year Southside gave up the King James Bible in favor of the NIV. In support of this move, the speaker at Southside for the Sunday evening service, September 12, 1993, was Kenneth Barker, chairman of the New International Version translation committee.

By 1994 the church had a staff member who was also employed by the extremely ecumenical Campus Crusade for Christ. In an interview with *Charisma* magazine in 2001, Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright described his philosophy: "I have felt that God led me many years ago to build bridges. I'm a Presbyterian . . . and yet I work with everybody who loves Jesus, whether they be charismatic or Catholic, Orthodox or mainliners. . . . I'm not an evangelical. I'm not a fundamentalist."

In 1996, Charles Boyd became pastor of Southside Baptist Church. He is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary and of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, both of which are New Evangelical to the core.

Southside Baptist Church recently changed its name to Southside Fellowship.

It is good that these churches are changing their names, because they are certainly changing their philosophy. In each case, they will profess that they have not changed

anything important. Brad Powell of Northridge (formerly Temple Baptist of Detroit) claims that by following church growth guru Bill Hybels of Willowcreek, he has not changed anything of significance. For those who have eyes to see, this subterfuge won't fly. If Temple Baptist Church was right and scriptural in its early days, Northridge Church is wrong today, and if Northridge Church is right and scriptural today, the old Temple Baptist was wrong. The doctrine and practice and philosophy of the old church and the new are not compatible. For the Bible believer, the choice between the contemporary church growth philosophy and the old traditional fundamentalist philosophy is not "both and," it is "either or."

The pastors who follow the contemporary church growth principles claim that they are not changing doctrine, only style. That is simply not true. Many of the so-called "style" changes are doctrinal. To allow church members to dress immodestly like the world without any reproof or correction is a doctrinal issue. To borrow the music that the world uses for sexual pleasure and to incorporate that very music into the church program is a doctrinal issue. To claim that music is neutral is a doctrinal issue. To yoke ecumenically with charismatics and such is a doctrinal issue. To say that preaching should focus on the positive is a doctrinal issue. To take [Matthew 7:1](#) and [Romans 14:4](#) out of context to approve a non-judgmental, doctrinally non-controversial approach to the Christian ministry is a doctrinal issue. To use community surveys for planning church policy is a doctrinal issue. To adopt a New Evangelical philosophy is a doctrinal issue.

When a church changes its "style" in these areas, it is undergoing a radical doctrinal change; and continual boasting to the contrary is mere noise without meaning and only deceives the willfully blind. There is little doubt that J. Frank Norris and G. Beauchamp Vick would consider the current "style" at Northridge doctrinal issues.

Therefore, we believe Gordon Sears was right when he said: "When the standard of music is lowered, then the standard of dress is also lowered. When the standard of dress is lowered, then the standard of conduct is also lowered. When the standard of conduct is lowered, then the sense of value in God's truth is lowered."

Conclusion

We have given four reasons why we are opposed to Contemporary Christian Music: because of its worldliness, its ecumenism, its charismaticism, and because of the changes that it brings in formerly fundamentalist churches.

While we do not expect everyone to agree with us on this issue, we would expect that our concerns should be given a hearing and that our scriptural principles not be slighted and dismissed out of hand as "legalism."