

# **Replacing Hymns with Contemporary Praise Music**

**By David Cloud**

*Past generations of believers sang with joy the great hymns of the faith. These were of inestimable benefit in living a godly and happy life with the Lord. The hymns have now been replaced with a music that is generally repetitive, doctrinally weak, and often sung in the same style as secular popular music. The following gives an insight as to why there is a huge and harmful difference between the Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, Fanny Crosby, Philip Bliss, Ira Sankey kind of music, and that which is known today as CCM.*

A growing number of fundamentalist singers, churches, and schools are adapting music from the field of Contemporary Praise Music even though they remain opposed to it in principle. Typically they use the words of the songs while changing the rhythm somewhat and omitting the bass guitar, drums, and heavy backbeat.

Three of the top charismatic-ecumenical music companies are Integrity, Maranatha, and Hillsong. About 75 of the top 100 contemporary worship songs are included in the latest Southern Baptist hymnal.

Contemporary Praise Music is dangerous because it is ecumenical in philosophy and practice. It is one of the most powerful glues of the end-time ecumenical movement.

John Styll, the publisher of *Worship Leader* magazine, 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, be attracted to contemporary praise music? Why would a Roman Catholic who prays to Mary and praises God for purgatory (such as the popular charismatic priest Tom Forrest does) be attracted to contemporary praise music?

Do you not see something wrong with this picture, my friends? And now we have gullible, ill-informed fundamentalists and Bible-believing Baptists adopting the same music!

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,’ ‘tolerance,’ ‘non-critical love,’ ‘judge not,’ ‘no finger pointing,’ etc.”

These are terms that identify the philosophy of the end-time ecumenical movement described in 2 Timothy 4:3-4 and other passages. The end-time 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, who refuse to delineate truth from heresy, and who ignore the Bible’s warnings about apostasy.

*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 Praise Music is at home in the most ecumenical of contexts. It is the music of ecumenical evangelism, as epitomized by the Franklin Graham and Luis Palau crusades.

It is also charismatic music. The overwhelming majority of the popular contemporary praise songs come from a charismatic context, and the modern charismatic movement is rife with error and spiritual confusion.

Tim Fisher makes the following important comment:

“There are many CCM performers who do not believe the Bible, yet we allow them to sing in the homes of our people on a daily basis without warning. If you would not allow a charismatic preacher in your pulpit, why let one sing to your people? I am not trying to portray all charismatics as unsaved, but we certainly do not want them as our teachers. To keep doctrine pure, we must separate from those who teach false doctrine and never give them an audience in our churches” (The Battle for Christian Music, p. 122).

For Bible-believing separatist churches to use this music is unwise in the extreme.

## **A DIRECTORY OF POPULAR CONTEMPORARY PRAISE MUSICIANS**

The popular contemporary song writers that are being used by fundamentalist churches include the following. All of these people are radically ecumenical and the majority are charismatic in theology. Not one of them takes a clear stand against end-time apostasy.

PAUL BALOCHE is worship leader at the charismatic Community Christian Fellowship of Lindale, Texas. Their 2002 Leadership Summit featured Ricky Paris of Vision Ministries International, who calls himself an apostle and is said to give “apostolic covering” to Vision Church of Austin, Texas. Baloché’s *Offering of Worship* album was recorded at Regent University in Virginia Beach, which was founded by the radical charismatic ecumenist Pat Robertson. As far back as 1985, Robertson said that he “worked for harmony and reconciliation between Protestants and Catholics” (Christian News, July 22, 1985). Some of the Regent professors are Roman Catholic and Regent’s Center for Law and Justice has a Roman Catholic executive director. According to Frontline magazine, May-June 2000, a Catholic mass is held on Regent’s campus every week.

GERON DAVIS is committed to the “Jesus Only” Pentecostal doctrine that denies the Trinity and baptizes only in Jesus’ name. He wrote *In the Presence of Jehovah* and *Holy Ground*, which is the No. 2 best-selling contemporary praise song. Bill Clinton invited Davis to sing the song at his inauguration. Barbra Streisand, who is not a Christian, included the song on her 1997 New Age inspirational album *Higher Ground*.

BRIAN DOERKSEN, author of *From Everlasting to Everlasting* (You Are God), is affiliated with the Vineyard churches of Canada. See Vineyard Churches for more information.

RICK FOUNDS, author of *Lord, I Lift Your Name on High*, is radically ecumenical. His popular song is described as a “little four-chord flock-rocker” that “hurdles denominational barriers effortlessly” (*Worship Leader Magazine*, March/April 1998). It was one of the theme songs of the ecumenical Promise Keepers movement. He has authored hundreds of other contemporary praise songs, including *Jesus Draw Me Close*, *I Need You*, and *I Love Your Grace*.

KEITH AND KRISTYN GETTY list the Beatles as a major influence for their melodies. Their goal is to “bring everyone together musically” and to “write songs that contemporary, traditional and liturgical churches could use” ([www.keithgetty.com](http://www.keithgetty.com)). Their popular songs include *Don’t Let Me Lose My Wonder*, *In Christ Alone* (penned by Keith and Stuart Townsend), *Speak, Oh Lord*, and *The Power of the Cross*. Keith arranged some of the songs on Michael W. Smith’s *Healing Rain* album.

STEVE GREEN is a popular CCM musician who has sung at ecumenical forums such as the Religious Broadcasters Association annual convention, Moody Bible Institute’s Founders Week, Billy Graham crusades, and Promise Keepers rallies. He has performed at a half dozen Promise Keepers meetings since 1993. At the Promise Keepers Atlanta Clergy Conference in 1996, Green sang, *Let the Walls Come Down*, referring to PK’s goal of breaking down of walls between denominations. Several Catholic priests were present at that conference, and Dr. Ralph Colas, who attended the event, described it in these words: “The big beat, contemporary music brought the ministers to their feet...” Steve Green belted out repeatedly “Let the Walls Come Down.” The 40,000 clergy shouted, whistled, clapped, and cheered as they worked to a higher and higher pitch of emotion. Dr. Colas said: “While there may be some good things said at a PK conference, this meeting included compromise, ecumenism, apostasy, Jesuit casuistry (end justifies the means), and hyper-emotionalism, along with a theology based on relationships rather than Biblical truth.”

JACK HAYFORD, author of the song *Majesty* (which teaches the Pentecostal kingdom-now theology) and many other very popular worship songs, is pastor of Church-on-the-Way Foursquare Church, a Pentecostal denominational founded by the female pastor Aimee Semple McPherson. Paul and Jan Crouch, of the Trinity Broadcasting Network are members of Hayford’s church. Speaking at the St. Louis 2000 conference, Hayford told how his daughter approached him one day concerned that her “tongues speaking” was mere gibberish. He encouraged her that the believer must first learn to speak in baby tongues before he speaks in adult tongues. Hayford claims that in 1969, as he approached a large Catholic church in Southern California, God spoke to him and instructed him not to judge Roman Catholicism. He says he heard a message from God saying, “Why would I not be happy with a place where every morning the testimony of the blood of my Son is raised from the altar?” (“The Pentecostal Gold Standard,” *Christianity Today*, July 2005). Based upon this “personal revelation,” Hayford adopted a neutral approach to Catholicism, yet the atonement of Jesus Christ is NOT glorified on Roman Catholic altars. The Catholic mass is an open denial of the doctrine of the once-for-all atonement that we find in the book of Hebrews. Note what the Vatican II Council said about the mass: “For in it Christ perpetuates in an unbloody manner the sacrifice offered on the cross, offering himself to the Father for the world’s salvation

through the ministry of priests” (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, “Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery,” Intro., C 1, 2, p. 108). This is only a small part of Rome’s wicked heresies, and it is impossible that God would encourage Jack Hayford to look upon the Roman Catholic Church in any sort of positive, non-judgmental manner. Hayford has acted on this “personal revelation” by yoking up with Roman Catholic leaders in conferences throughout the world. For example, he joined hands with thousands of Roman Catholics, including hundreds of Catholic priests and nuns, at the North American Congress on the Holy Spirit & World Evangelization in St. Louis in 2000.

GRAHAM KENDRICK, one of the most prominent names in Contemporary Praise Music, is the author of popular songs such as *From Heaven You Came*, *Meekness and Majesty*, *Shine Jesus Shine*, and *Such Love, Pure as the Whitest Snow*. One of his objectives is to break down denominational barriers and create ecumenical unity. He was the co-founder of the ecumenical March for Jesus, which has brought together every type of denomination and cult including Roman Catholics and Mormons. A biography at Kendrick’s web site boasts: “Crossing international and denominational barriers, his songs, like the popular *Shine Jesus Shine*, have been used from countless small church events to major festivals--including Promise Keeper rallies, Billy Graham crusades and a four million-strong open air mass in the Philippines capital Manila, where the Pope ‘swung his cane in time to the music.’” Kendrick is charismatic and promotes the heretical “kingdom now” theology and Word faith doctrine. He is a member of the Ichthus Christian Fellowship and welcomed the so-called Toronto Blessing. Graham claims that he was “baptized with the Holy Spirit” in 1971 after attending a charismatic meeting. He says, “It was later that night when I was cleaning my teeth ready to go to bed that I was filled with the Holy Spirit! ... and I remember lying at last in my bed, the fixed grin still on my face, praising and thanking God, and gingerly trying out a new spiritual language that had presented itself to my tongue with no regard at all for the objections thrown up by my incredulous brain! ... That was a real watershed in my Christian experience” (Nigel Smyth, “What Are We All Singing About?” <http://www.freedomministries.org.uk/ccm/nsmyth1.shtml>).

MICHAEL LEDNER, author of *You Are My Hiding Place*, is senior pastor of the Pentecostal (Four Square) emerging Desert Streams Chapel in Scottsdale, Arizona. It describes itself as “a post modern, relevant and relational” church.

MARTY NYSTROM is a graduate of the Oral Roberts University, which is a radical Word-Faith Pentecostal institution. He is a member of Overlake Christian Church in Kirkland, Washington. His background includes service with Christ for the Nations, and he has a long-standing affiliation with Integrity Music. His popular songs include *As David Did*, *As the Deer*, *Forever Grateful*, *Enter His Gates*, *Come to the Table*, *I Will Come and Bow Down*, *In Christ Alone*, and *More of You*, and *Times of Refreshing*.

DAVID RUIS is a worship leader at the Toronto Airport Church where people roll on the floor, bark like dogs, roar like lions, laugh hysterically, and get “drunk in the spirit” during their “revivals.” Ruis’s song *Break Dividing Walls* calls for unscriptural ecumenical unity between all denominations.

MARTY SAMPSON, author of *God Is Great/All Creation Cries to You*, is a worship leader in the radically charismatic/ecumenical Hillsong Church in Sydney, Australia. See Darlene Zschech for more information.

MICHAEL W. SMITH is another prominent name in contemporary praise. His contemporary praise albums sell millions of copies. In 1979, he joined Belmont Church near Nashville, a Church of Christ congregation which had moved into the charismatic movement. His pastor was Don Finto. I heard Finto speak in 1987 at the North American Congress on the Holy

Spirit & World Evangelization in New Orleans. Of the roughly 40,000 in attendance 50% were Roman Catholic. A Catholic mass was conducted each morning of the convention, and priest Tom Forrest from Rome brought the final message. In a message I heard Forrest preach in 1990 in Indianapolis, he said that he was thankful for purgatory, because he could only go to Heaven through purgatory. Michael W. Smith supports this ecumenical confusion. In 1993, he performed for the Roman Catholic World Youth Day in Denver, attended by Pope John Paul II. In 1997, Smith joined the Roman Catholic Kathy Troccoli and 40 other CCM artists to record Love One Another, a song that talks about tearing down the walls of denominational division. Smith testifies that he has had many charismatic experiences, though he doesn't like the label "charismatic" because of "negative baggage associated with the term." At a Full Gospel Business Men's meeting he was "slain in the spirit" for 15 minutes and "laughed all the way home" (Charisma, April 2000, p. 55). Another time he felt "a bolt of electricity go through my body from the top of my head to my toes--wham!" He also started laughing uncontrollably--"rolling on the floor," "hyperventilating"--on that occasion. *Inside Magazine* interviewed Smith in 1991 and noted that his music is influenced by Alan Parsons. The interviewer said: "There's also the influence of such groups as Alan Parsons in your music" (*Inside Music*, January/February 1991, p. 23). Smith's quick reply was "DEFINITELY!" Parsons is one of the most occultic rock musicians. One of his songs is openly titled *Lucifer*. In 1993, Smith said, "... you're always going to have those very, very conservative people. They say you can't do this; you can't do that ... you can't drink; you can't smoke. ... It's a pretty bizarre way of thinking" (*The Birmingham News*, Feb. 1993, p. 1B).

JONATHAN STOCKSTILL, author of *Let the Church Rise*, is the worship leader at the charismatic Bethany World Prayer Center in Louisiana and the front man for the rock fused Deluge Band.

CHRIS TOMLIN, author of *We Fall Down, Holy Is the Lord*, and *How Great Is Our God*, holds the non-judgmental, ecumenical philosophy. He says, "Conservatives and charismatics can stand in one room, listening to the same music, worshipping the one true God. Music unites" ("The United State of Worship," *Christianity Today*, Aug. 2003). Tomlin is a former staff member of Austin Stone Community Church in Texas, which holds the emerging church philosophy. It has an extremely weak doctrinal statement that allows the widest possible ecumenical relationships.

STEWART TOWNSEND, author of *How Deep the Father's Love for Us*, is a member of Church of Christ the King in Brighton, United Kingdom. It is a charismatic church that promotes the radically ecumenical Alpha program. He says that he is excited that *How Deep the Father's Love for Us* is used "by all sorts of churches." He describes the "extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit" that have occurred during his charismatic worship (S4W.com). This refers to things such as spirit slaying, holy laughter, and shaking.

The VINEYARD CHURCHES, which were led for decades by the late John Wimber (1934-1997), have had a wide influence on contemporary praise music. Wimber himself, who was the manager of the secular group The Righteous Brothers before his conversion, wrote many popular 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." 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 by allowing for extra-biblical revelation. The Promise Keepers movement was founded by men involved in the Vineyard, including founder Bill McCartney. Though Wimber was not Pentecostal, he

accepted and popularized many false Pentecostal-type practices, including “slaying in the Spirit,” prophecy, “words of knowledge,” and Pentecostal-style faith healing. Wimber was a radical ecumenist who frequently spoke on the same platform with Roman Catholic priests and apparently saw no serious problem with their doctrine. In 1986, Wimber joined Catholic priest Tom Forrest and Anglican Michael Harper at the European Festival of Faith, an ecumenical meeting in Birmingham, England. The Festival leaders sent the pope the message, “We are ready to join you in the united evangelism of Europe” (Australian Beacon, March 1988). Wimber actively encouraged the reunification of Protestants with the church of Rome. “During the Vineyard pastors’ conference, he went so far as to ‘apologize’ to the Catholic church on behalf of all Protestants ... He stated that ‘the pope, who by the way is very responsive to the charismatic movement, and is himself a born-again evangelical, is preaching the Gospel as clear as anyone in the world today’” (John Wimber, Church Planting Seminar, audio tapes, 5 volumes, unedited, 1981, cited by Pastor John Goodwin).

DARLENE ZSCHECH and her HILLSONG worship band recently performed for the Catholic Youth Day in Sydney, with the Pope present. Zschech’s song *I Believe the Presence* from her *Shout to the Lord* album preaches false Pentecostal latter rain theology.

MERCYME is a rocking contemporary band that is ecumenical and charismatic. The band was formed in 1994 and “gained mainstream recognition with the crossover single, ‘I Can Only Imagine.’” In 2009, Billboard magazine named the band the Christian song artists of the 2000s and the song “Word of God Speak” was named Christian song of the decade.

MercyMe’s songs are used by fundamental Baptist churches that have the philosophy of “adapting” contemporary music. For example, “Word of God Speak” was performed at Lancaster Baptist Church, Lancaster, California.

The band’s music has gotten progressively harder. The album *This Life* is described as “dance floor ready ... a breezy style that’s part Beatles, part Electric Light Orchestra ... slamming pop ... a unique El Paso vibe with a long and winding guitar part and standout bass.” In describing the album *Coming Up to Breathe*, thefish.com says, “MercyMe will rock you. The boisterous rock & roll context of their “worship services” has caused even their own lead singer and song writer Bart Millard to question whether the “worship” at their concerts is really directed to the Lord. “When you’re on stage and the crowd starts going crazy, it’s almost a little frightening...After a while you start to wonder: Are they worshipping the Father? What exactly is going on?”

([www.ccmagazine.com/news/stories/11535185/mercyme](http://www.ccmagazine.com/news/stories/11535185/mercyme)).

Like the vast majority of the influential contemporary praise musicians, MercyMe is radically ecumenical. In early 2011 they included Roman Catholic Matt Maher on their Rock & Worship Roadshow. MercyMe is also in the business of breaking down the walls of separation from the world. In their “Cover Tune Grab Bag” series they sing such things as “Jump” by Van Halen and “Thriller” by Michael Jackson (complete with choreographed Jackson-style dancing).

MercyMe’s popular “Word of God Speak” worship song is pure charismatic mysticism. Consider the lyrics: “Word of God speak, would you pour down like rain, washing my eyes to see your majesty... The “Word of God” here is not the Bible; it is a mystical feeling, a direct revelation. It is the same thing that is taught by the Contemplative Prayer movement that was borrowed from Rome’s dark monastic past and that is currently sweeping through evangelicalism. It is this type of mysticism that led CCM song writer Jack Hayford, author of “Majesty,” to say that while he was driving past a Catholic church God told him not to criticize it and he has heeded that “voice.” It is the same mysticism that convinces charismatics that they are communing with God through “tongues” even though it is nothing

but ecstatic gibberish. It is the same blind mysticism that makes an individual think he is “basking in the Spirit of God” when he falls to the floor.

MercyMe is responsible before God, and so is every fundamental Baptist pastor and song leader who brings this music into their churches.

## **MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP EXPERIENCE**

Having studied Contemporary Christian Music since the 1970s, I have identified six elements of the music that work together to create the sensual experience sought by contemporary worshipers. These are as follows:

- \* Syncopated dance rhythm
- \* Unresolving chords
- \* Sensual vocal techniques
- \* Electronic modulation
- \* Rise and fall in intensity
- \* Repetition

### **Syncopated Dance Rhythm**

Irwin Silber, a communist who desired to see social degeneration that would overthrow the “old order,” observed that rock music has this power and it lies in its backbeat rhythm. He wrote: “The great strength of rock & roll LIES IN ITS BEAT. It is a music that is BASICALLY SEXUAL, unpuritan” (Sing Out, May 1965).

I can concur with this statement, along with thousands of others who have been “transformed” by the power of rock & roll music. It was the “beat” of rock that reached into a Christian home and captured my heart and soul as a teenager in the early 1960s. I can testify that the influence was indeed “basically sexual, unpuritan.”

And the heavily syncopated rhythm, the rhythm that literally grabs the body and encourages it to move in a modern dance fashion, is a MAJOR part of the contemporary worship experience.

The heavily syncopated rhythm is what has always made rock & roll sensual party music. That's its very essence. John Makujina says, “Rock's danceability is due predominately to its emphasized syncopated rhythms” (Measuring the Music). The very name rock & roll was a euphemism for fornication. Since the 1950s, the phrase “let's rock” has meant “let's party, let's drink, let's get high, let's do as we very well please.”

Rock music has always been about living as you please and thumbing your nose at authorities. It was summarized by the Rolling Stones in 1965: “I'm free to do what I want any old time.” And by The Animals: “It's my life and I'll do what I want/ It's my mind, and I'll think what I want.” And by the Mamas and Papas: “You got to go where you want to go/ do what you want to do.” And by the Isley Brothers: “It's your thing/ do what you want to do.”

And this licentious anti-God philosophy has been driven by the heavy dance syncopation.

Graham West, a pastor in Australia who has a background in writing, recording, and producing pop music, says, “When you take away the accent from where the strong beat should fall the human body is instinctively inclined to move into the gap and mark where the missing accent should be” (video presentation “The Rhythm of Rock”).

Some common types of syncopated dance rhythm are the back beat, the silent beat, the staccato beat, and beat anticipation.

The backbeat, which rockers and social commentators have identified as “sexy,” has been the chief characteristic of worldly dance music since the beginning of the 20th century. It was the rhythm that drove ragtime, the blues, boogie woogie, jazz, big band swing, and honky tonk or Western swing.

Fifties rocker Bill Haley said: “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.”

Indeed, it was! The backbeat drove a virtual revolution.

The backbeat emphasizes the offbeat, such as one-TWO-three-FOUR.

The backbeat is in contrast to the straight or march beat, which has the emphasis on the first beat or every beat equally:

one-two-three-four, one-two-three-four or  
ONE-two-three-four, ONE-two-three-four

The silent beat is another type of syncopated dance rhythm. By simply dropping a beat, a sensual rock effect is created

Da Da Da Da, Da Da Da Da

vs.

Da Da - Da, Da Da - Da

In the staccato beat the notes are clipped.

Da Da Da Da, Da Da Da Da

vs.

Dop Dop Dop Dop, Dop Dop Dop Dop

Beat anticipation, as Graham West explains in his video presentation *The Rhythm of Rock*, is a type of syncopation that falls at the end of a phrase and is unresolved; it is as much a major element of rock as the backbeat. It can create the jerky rock feel even when the other types of syncopation aren't present. It leaves the listener anticipating something that is not there and the body wants to fill in the gap. Beat anticipation is a major part of contemporary worship music, and fundamentalist churches that are “adapting” contemporary worship songs are typically buying into the beat anticipation, not understanding that they are actually performing soft rock ballads. They think that since they don't have drums and a bass guitar thumping out a heavy backbeat that they have removed the rock from Christian rock, but nothing could be farther from the truth. (We give examples of the previous types of dance syncopation in the video series “Music for Good or Evil,” which is available from Way of Life Literature.)

The sensual dance rhythm of rock music has addictive, transformative power. Dan Lucarini, a former contemporary worship leader, led churches from using traditional hymns to a contemporary worship program, and in the book *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement* he describes how he did it. The key was starting out with “soft” rock, which acts as an addictive, transformative influence on the congregation. He writes:

“The rock was softer, but it still contained the rock rhythm that undeniably appeals to our flesh. The listener soon develops a craving for it. **JUST LIKE AN ADDICT, THERE IS NO**



TURNING BACK. What happens over time is a steady slide down the slippery slope away from all traditional music into the latest, edgiest contemporary styles.”

Graham West issues the same warning:

“Once you begin listening to soft rock, you begin sliding down that slippery slope to the more aggressive forms of rock. SOFT ROCK BEGINS TO ORIENT THE WHOLE WAY OF PERCEIVING MUSIC AROUND RHYTHM and away from melody. Your musical interest will change. Hymns will seem dull in comparison to your newly acquired tastes. It's a progression I've seen over and over again in the lives of Christians. IT'S A DOWNWARD SPIRAL. It happens in the lives of individuals; it happens in the lives of families; it happens in the lives of churches.

"There is a GRAY AREA OF IGNORANCE ABOUT THE POWER OF POP SYNCOPATION. And the devil, taking advantage of this, being not only the master musician but also the master of subtlety, comes along to a strong fundamental church or a Bible college and he offers his wares of CCM rock ballads. It sounds great. There's no drums, no wild electric guitars, no obvious back beat, just the piano or guitar and the singer. And it's almost the same as the songs that they used to sing, except the rhythm kind of trips a little bit. But that's O.K. because it's exciting, and the young people love it. The problem is that when the rhythm does that little trip it means that the music contains a basic, distinctive rhythmic feature of all rock & roll since its inception in the 1950s. In this way, before you've even known it, you've been deceived by the subtle strategy of Satan. This is the blind spot that Satan is using to his advantage. He knows that once a church accepts rock ballads, complete capitulation is almost inevitable.

“In the case of vigilant, serious-minded Christians, he has to start them up at the very top of the slope with very gentle rock so that the conscience doesn't scream out, 'This music is wrong!' Just as long as he can get you started, he has won, because just like a drug pusher he knows that his users will want more and more of that sensual rhythm” (Graham West, *The Rhythm of Rock*).

Many churches that are adapting CCM think they are removing the “rock” from Christian rock, but they are actually just toning it down to “soft rock.”

See <http://www.wayoflife.org/adaptingccm/index.html>

## **Unresolving Chord Cadence**

Another major element of the sensual contemporary worship experience is the unresolving chords.

Contemporary worship music tends to use a chord cadence other than the “perfect” or “authentic” cadence, which is used by the old hymns and which resolves back to the first tone. A “weak cadence” or an “imperfect cadence” does not resolve in this way. It is always more “feely.”

In the video series *Music for Good or Evil* we give audio examples of this.

Pastor Tim Kelly of Maine has taught music theory for almost 25 years and was previously deeply involved in the pop, rock, new country rock, rap, R&B music culture. He makes the following observation about contemporary praise music:

“The emphasis is on the IV chord. The V chord is always called the dominant chord in music, but in CCM it is avoided as often as possible. It doesn't resolve. Music works like this: You have a question (phrase) and then an answer (phrase). There is tension and then release

(resolve). Contemporary praise music seems to present questions with no answers, no absolutes. It is wispy and draws on the emotions, with no intellectual purpose or guide. This is the philosophy of the Devil.”

### **Sensual Vocal Styles**

Another major element of the contemporary worship experience is the sensual vocal techniques that have been borrowed from the morally corrupt pop music field.

There is the BREATHY STYLE, in which the microphone is held extremely close to the singer's mouth. This gives a feeling of intimacy and sexuality. Elvis Presley and other pop sex god “crooners” used this technique to great effect, and contemporary Christian musicians follow this pattern.

Then there is SCOOPING AND SLIDING, by which instead of hitting the note cleanly and directly, there is a slide from above or below its true pitch. It adds a great sensuality to the music. The 1950s book *How to Sing for Money* said, “Scooping is a common practice ... as a swing effect.” Thus, the scooping technique was created as part of the commercial dance music scene, and it works with the syncopated rhythm to create the sensual atmosphere that dancers desire. It is a technique that fits the night club, the bar, the gambling den. But it has been adapted by contemporary Christian musicians and Southern Gospel performers.

These styles are not only sensual; they draw attention to the singer, which is another major element of both secular pop and contemporary Christian music.

### **Electronic Modulation**

Sometimes contemporary praise is performed with acoustic instruments only, but typically it incorporates fullblown and very loud electronic instruments with reverberation, echo, feedback and other types of electronic modulation. This is used to intensify the sensuality of the music and to create a mystical atmosphere.

## **The Rise and Fall of the Intensity of the Music**

A contemporary worship experience typically involves a dramatic rise and fall in the sound level and intensity of the music. This is used to create an emotional roller coaster. One minute your body is twisting and jerking to ear splitting rock & roll and the next minute you are immersed in a near trance-inducing atmosphere in which the music is toned down and less physically demanding but more mystical.

### **Repetition**

CCM has been called 7/11 music — seven words sung 11 times.

Actually, the repetition can be much more extensive than that. In Kevin Prosch's song “Signs and Wonders,” the words “signs and wonders, healings, deliverance” are repeated at least 20 times and the words “the kingdom of God is here” are repeated at least 25 times. At the 1996 Heart of David conference, they sang Prosch's “Praise the Lord, Oh My Soul” for 20 minutes, and they sang another song for over three hours!

This music is indeed transformational. By yielding to it, the CCM crowd is carried along into a “tangible experience.” When combined with the syncopated, body-jerking rhythms, the electronic modulation, the unresolving chord progression, the rise and fall of the intensity,

and the sensual vocal styles, the repetition can have a hypnotic effect on those who yield themselves unreservedly to the experience.

We have seen that the transformative power of contemporary worship music lies both in its enticing philosophy of "liberty" and in its sensual, addictive music.

## **WARNINGS ABOUT ADAPTING CONTEMPORARY PRAISE MUSIC INTO FUNDAMENTALIST CHURCHES**

I want to give three warnings about this.

**FIRST**, it is a bad example and a potential bridge to CCM.

To adapt from the field of CCM gives people the idea that CCM is safe. Churches that borrow from CCM are probably not spending a lot of time warning about it.

**SECOND**, it can create an appetite for sensual, worldly music.

Those who borrow from CCM, listen to CCM. If the music people in a fundamentalist church are adapting songs from CCM, they are doubtless listening to it. That is a dangerous thing, because the rock music that permeates CCM is very sensual and addictive. It creates an appetite for the profane and spoils one's appetite for the sacred.

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).

To borrow from and adapt from the field of CCM is a dangerous thing, because the rock music that permeates CCM is very sensual and addictive.

**THIRD**, it is disobedience to God's command to separate from error.

The Word of God says, *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them* (Romans 16:17).

Separation from error is God's prescription for spiritual protection.

The overwhelming majority of Contemporary Christian Music is produced by Charismatics, and the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is unscriptural and spiritually dangerous in the extreme.

## **PLENTY OF EXCELLENT SACRED MUSIC AVAILABLE**

There is an absolute wealth of sacred music available, both old and newer. There is no reason why Bible believers should dig around in the bin of CCM in an attempt to find something wholesome. We do not need to borrow things from the worldly crowd.

See the Way of Life article "Suggested Sacred Music Recordings." For CDs available in the UK, see for example the sixty hymns in the *Redemption Hymnal*, Kingsway Music; *Hymns Triumphant*, Sparrow Recordings. Also, the Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, Fanny Crosby, Philip Bliss, Ira Sankey and other great hymns are available in the *Hymn Makers* series, Kingsway Music.

For more information we recommend *The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements: History and Doctrine* (book), *Contemporary Christian Music: Some Questions Answered and Some Warnings Given* (book), and *Dangers of Contemporary Worship Music* (DVD), which are available from Way of Life Literature.

The above material is condensed from two *O Timothy* articles by David Cloud: “Fundamentalists Adapting Contemporary Praise Music” May, 2009; “The Transformational Power of Contemporary Worship Music” Dec. 2011, (Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org). Note: *The Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians* is a free download.

***Experience has shown that once CCM is introduced (usually with the more moderate “door opener” songs and along with the overhead projector and the “Nashville” sound of a guitar) it does not remain static, but soon becomes a substantial part of a church’s music program. For many it has been a hotline back to the music of their pre-conversion days. And notably, a survey of the above songs and of CCM generally will show that far less is said about the Sacrificial Death and Blood of Christ. At Bethel we do not use CCM, but seek to develop an appreciation for the great traditional, revivalist hymns.***

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