

# A Plea to Southern Gospel Music Fans



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### **Companion Web Page**

A companion web page is found at  
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There are working links in this eBook  
but the above page will reflect any  
corrected or changed links.



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“When your Christian life is built upon and maintained by a fleshly, emotional, subjective experience, that is how you operate when anyone challenges it with objective Biblical truth. These ... folks have been led astray and failed by their spiritual leaders, who will be held accountable for not truly watching for their souls. True salvation should naturally bring with it a loyalty to God’s Word above all else. **I’m telling you, most Independent Baptists, especially in the south, are charismatic-like in their theology. The Bible is only something to validate their experience, instead of their experience being tested by the Word of God. THEY ARE IN MANY WAYS SLAVES TO THEIR FEELINGS INSTEAD OF BOUND TO THE SCRIPTURES.**”

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# A Time of Great Change

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32).

This book is a plea for Southern Gospel music fans to wake up and tear down the bridges that are being built from conservative Southern Gospel-loving homes and churches to the world itself and to the one-world church represented by contemporary Southern Gospel and CCM.

It is a plea to wake up to incremental steps that are bringing God’s people ever closer to the world, the flesh, and the devil.

I know by long and sad experience that many Southern Gospel fans do not listen to biblical warnings and reproofs. They treat biblical reprovers as carnal critics and refuse to give serious attention to the warnings.

I am publishing this warning for those who are true disciples of Jesus Christ and who therefore “continue in” His Word (John 8:31-32). They love Christ and His Word above the closest friendships and relationships (Luke 14:26), certainly above music! True disciples of Christ esteem all of God’s precepts concerning all things to be right, and they hate EVERY false way (Psalm 119:128). They “prove ALL things” by God’s infallible Word. They have a testing mindset.

Those who do not live like this are not true disciples of Jesus Christ, and I can say this on the authority of the clear teaching of God’s Word.

God’s Word plainly states that the professing Christian who is not skillful in using the Bible and does not live his

Christian life by constantly discerning both good and evil is a baby at best.

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. **But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil**” (Hebrews 5:12-14).

Dangerous bridges are being built from the vast majority of Southern Gospel-loving homes and churches to the world of contemporary Southern Gospel and beyond to the world of Contemporary Christian Music. And a more spiritually dangerous world does not exist.

I am seeing very conservative Southern Gospel groups that used a simple bluegrass-tinged style just a few years ago move beyond that to ever-increasing adaptation of the world’s musical styles. A drift like this has no bottom, as we have witnessed time and time again.

**I am seeing this progression everywhere among Southern Gospel fans. Important lines are being erased.**

One reason is that even a little “country style” Southern Gospel creates an addiction to and an appetite for jazzed-up rhythms and sensual vocal styles (e.g., scooping, sliding, improvisation, breathiness, vocal rasping).

Another reason is that the vast majority of Southern Gospel singers have moved into the “progressive/contemporary” sphere, probably because that is where the real money and prestige is, and even the most conservative people are being gradually influenced by the contemporary Southern Gospel crowd because they are letting the guard down and aren’t being careful enough about biblical separation.



As we will see, this bridge building has born carnal fruit since it first began in the 1920s. It is bearing carnal fruit in this generation, and it will bear apostate fruit in the coming generations.

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

## **My Experience with Music**

I grew up with Southern Gospel. The Southern Baptist church my family attended faithfully in central Florida had gospel singings on some Sundays. Following the morning service, we would have a glorious “dinner on the ground,” featuring tables piled high with the tastiest southern dishes the ladies could concoct. The kids would romp around as the tables were prepared, then the pastor would pray and everyone would dig into their favorite foods. The variety was incredible, but there were always some dishes that didn’t last through the first line. When the meal was finished, everyone gathered back in the church auditorium for the sing. There would be some congregational singing and then the gospel quartets would start up. These were local groups since we didn’t rate professionals.

Having played and studied music for more than 50 years, I know the character of music. I was the first chair clarinetist in an 80-member award-winning band in high school.

As for rock and roll, not only did I love it; I lived it. After returning from an Army tour in Vietnam, I hitchhiked across America, selling drugs, going to jail, joining a Hindu society. In the summer of 1973, God gloriously saved me in a motel room in Daytona Beach, Florida, through the ministry of a traveling preacher, and immediately gave me a great love for His Word. I have been a passionate student of God's Word and a preacher of God’s Word ever since.

One of the first things God dealt with me about was music. I wrote my first book on music more than 40 years ago, and I

have been studying about, writing about, teaching about, and warning about that issue ever since.

I know rock & roll. I know how to discern rock & roll even when it is played softly on a piano without any drums or electric bass.

I know Southern Gospel. I have read most books that have been written on Southern Gospel, including biographies of many of its key players. I attended the National Quartet Convention in 1999 with press credentials at the personal invitation of the convention's executive director.

And I know contemporary music. I have studied Contemporary Christian Music and Contemporary Worship Music and contemporary Southern Gospel extensively and prayerfully over the decades, with an open Bible before me, because one of my life verses in Christ is "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good," and because I want to help protect God's people and obey God's call upon my life to "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2).

## **The Danger of Incrementalism**

The world of Southern Gospel has changed greatly since its inception at the beginning of the 20th century, and the changes have not been for the good.

Nearly each decade has witnessed an increase in commercialization, entertainment orientation, borrowing from the world's music styles, worldly living, and ecumenism.

The changes have not happened overnight. They have happened incrementally, which is the devil's winning program.

Consider the following music clips which show the changes in the Speer Family and the Blackwood Brothers from the 1940s/1950s to the 1970s/1980s.

For updates or changes to links see: [www.wayoflife.org/plea/](http://www.wayoflife.org/plea/)

- \* [Speer Family 1940s](#)
- \* [Speer Family 1960s](#)
- \* [Speer Family 1980s](#)
- \* [Blackwood Brothers 1955](#)
- \* [Blackwood Brothers 1960s](#)
- \* [Blackwood Brothers with Elvis 1970s](#)

If error happens gradually, only a few observe it or care about it. The Bible twice warns that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9), but in practice most Christians don’t believe this. They even criticize those who warn about “small errors.” They treat them as nit-pickers and trouble makers and critics of good ministries, and by the time the majority see that something is wrong, it is too late to do anything about it.

## **A Time of Great Change**

We are living in a time of great change in fundamentalist and Bible-believing Baptist churches. There is a widespread collapse of biblical separatism.

When I was saved in 1973, the major thing that distinguished fundamental Baptists from Southern Baptists was biblical separation, but that distinction is disappearing and there is a merging of philosophy. We live in a day of blending.

A large number of the fundamental Baptist churches that existed in the 1970s and 1980s have either ceased to exist or have capitulated to the contemporary philosophy. This happened to Highland Park Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee, home of Tennessee Temple where I was trained

for the ministry. These institutions became contemporary, renounced separatism, and died.

By the late 1980s Highland Park and Tennessee Temple were experiencing dramatic changes. There was a large influence from Liberty University and Word of Life, both of which had long been in the New Evangelical orb. By 1989, Tennessee Temple music groups used “soft rock” at the Southwide Baptist Fellowship (*Calvary Contender*, Oct. 15, 1989). In 2005, Highland Park hosted a Christian rock concert in its main auditorium featuring Bebo Norman, Fernando Ortega, and Sara Groves. In April 2006, the school’s College Days featured Toddiefunk and the Electric Church.

\* [Highland Park Baptist Church congregational 1974](#)

\* [Highland Park Baptist Church choir 1978](#)

\* [Toddiefunk “Crazy”](#)

What is happening today among fundamental Baptist churches is exactly what happened in evangelicalism in the 1950s when the “neo” evangelical philosophy spread through churches and para-church organizations. From its inception, the hallmark of the New Evangelicalism was the rejection of separation. Harold Ockenga, who claimed to have coined the term “neo-evangelicalism” in 1948, defined it as “A REPUDIATION OF SEPARATISM” (foreword to Harold Lindsell’s *The Battle for the Bible*).

The New Evangelicalism aimed at a more positive, less judgmental, more pragmatic philosophy as opposed to the “negativism and isolation” of fundamentalism.

The rejection of separation is not always open rejection. Fundamentalists who are giving up on separation today are rarely as bold as Harold Ockenga. In the beginning, at least, lip service is still given to biblical separatism. But the rejection is evident in many ways, such as the following:

*The rejection of separation is seen in a lack of emphasis on separation.* It has been said that “no position can be

maintained without a campaign.” In my observation, it has been a very long time since the average fundamental Baptist church campaigned on biblical separation. When is the last time that any of the largest Independent Baptist churches and schools hosted a conference on biblical separation? Far more campaigning is spent in justifying the softening of separation.

*The rejection of separation is seen in carelessness in associations, carelessness in reading, carelessness in the books that are recommended, carelessness in the materials that are used.*

*And the rejection of separation is seen in carelessness about the music issue. Contemporary music is almost always at the heart of the changes. It is both a cause of the change and a reflection of the change.*



# The Lines Are Being Erased

For updates or changes to links see: [www.wayoflife.org/plea/](http://www.wayoflife.org/plea/)

In this time of great change, lines are being erased that should not be erased. We are witnessing a great blending effect. We are witnessing incremental changes, but always in the direction of the world.

This is evident in a major way in the world of Southern Gospel.

There is little separation remaining today between old-style Southern Gospel and contemporary Southern Gospel.

At the same time, the lines between contemporary Southern Gospel and Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) are being erased.

Bridges are being built from old-style Southern Gospel to contemporary Southern Gospel and to CCM. There is a great blending and merging.

Bridges from old-style Southern Gospel are bridges to a most dangerous world. **There isn't much difference between the world of contemporary worship music represented by the Newsboys and Chris Tomlin and Hillsong, and the world of contemporary Southern Gospel represented by the Talleys, the Hoppers, Greater Vision, the Martins, and Brian Free and Assurance.**

Reference the following clips at [www.wayoflife.org/plea/](http://www.wayoflife.org/plea/)

- \* [Talleys](#)
- \* [Hoppers](#)
- \* [Brian Free and Assurance](#)

Contemporary Southern Gospel hits are charted together with Country music hits under the label "Country Gospel Music Chart." Country is "secular," while Country Southern Gospel is "Christian," but there is no difference in the music itself.

It is all fleshly music that gets people emotionally addicted to the world's music. And like all addictions, it is never satisfied so there is a progression into more and more of the world's sensuality.

Most old-style Southern Gospel musicians have moved into the contemporary sphere over the past 20 years. They have been influenced by the commercialization of the music. They have accepted the "music is neutral" philosophy and use any kind of worldly music on occasions. They have accepted the "judge not," broad tent ecumenical philosophy, and while a few still give lip service to believing in separation, they are much more fervent in calling for unity and tolerance than for separation.

This was evident at the Burlington Tent Revival which ran from May to July 2016.

\* [Burlington Revival congregational music](#)

The fundamental Baptist leaders of the revival and their friends and associates would profess to believe in separation, but this is less evident with each passing year in any practical way. On the last night of the conference, they invited the Vice President of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association to lead in prayer from the platform, and lead evangelist C.T. Townsend posted a photo of himself with the Graham people with the caption, "What an honor to have the Vice President and other members of the Billy Graham Association under the tent with us last night as they came to see & be a part of the BurlingtonRevival."

For a fundamental Baptist evangelist to honor an organization that has done much to promote ecumenical unity with Rome is clear evidence of a breakdown in biblical separation. (For extensive documentation of the Graham organization's unity with Rome see *Billy Graham's Sad Disobedience*, a free eBook available from [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org).)



The Speer Family illustrates the great changes in Southern Gospel. They began singing in 1921 and were associated with the Vaughan Music Company. In 1941, they joined Stamps-Baxter. In the early years they were a simple harmonizing singing group accompanied by a piano. George and Lena Speer died in the 1960s, and the group was led by their sons Ben and Brock. By the 1980s, the Speers were jazzed up. Ben Speer is the director of the Gaither Homecoming Series which promotes ecumenism and the use of any kind of worldly music for “the glory of God.”

\* [Speer Family classic](#)

\* [Speer Family 1985](#)

Consider the popular Southern Gospel song writers today. Their music bridges every realm of Southern Gospel and Contemporary Christian Music.

For example, Michael Farren and Joseph Habedank are co-authors of “Big Enough,” a song that is covered by the very conservative Clark Family on their “My Mind Is Made Up” album. Farren is the contemporary worship leader at Gateway Church in Franklin, Tennessee, and former member of the CCM band Pocket Full of Rocks. Farren says, “I LOVE WRITING ACROSS ALL GENRES ... CCM, country, Southern Gospel, etc.” ([weareworship.com/us/worship-leaders-2/michael-farren/](http://weareworship.com/us/worship-leaders-2/michael-farren/)). Habedank is a progressive contemporary Southern Gospel musician who traveled with the Perrys.

\* [Clark Family “Big Enough”](#)

\* [Joseph Habedank “Big Enough”](#)

Here we see the growing association between the most conservative Southern Gospel people and the worlds of contemporary Southern Gospel and CCM, because instead of separating from the Michael Farrens and Joseph Habedanks, the Clark Family borrows their music with no warning to their listeners.

In the Internet age, this is inexcusable because anyone who listens to the Clark Family albums and wants to know more about their musical sources is only a Google search away from being influenced by CCM.

So bridges are being built from the most conservative elements of Southern Gospel to contemporary Southern Gospel. And any bridge to contemporary Southern Gospel is also a bridge to Contemporary Christian Music in all of its aspects, from rock to rap.

There is also zero separation between CCM and contemporary Southern Gospel today.

In 2015, National Quartet Convention president Les Beasley was a board member of the Gospel Music Trust Fund that sponsored a “United We Stand” concert. One theme was ecumenical unity, and many of the biggest names in CCM participated, including Michael W. Smith, the Newsboys, 4Him, and Amy Grant. CCM unity encompasses Roman Catholic musicians such as Kathy Troccoli, John Michael Talbot, and Matt Maher. The conference was a showcase for the CCM philosophy that “music is neutral” and that any music can be used to glorify God. The concert began with a piano and orchestra piece, but subsequently every type of hard rock music was performed.

\* [United We Stand 2015 introduction](#)

\* [United We Stand 2015 intro music](#)

\* [United We Stand Michael W. Smith](#)

\* [United We Stand Newsboys](#)

All of the popular commercial Southern Gospel groups are yoked together with CCM and Christian rock in the Gospel Music Association (GMA). In fact, famous Southern Gospel people helped establish the GMA in 1964. The founding took place at the National Quartet Convention that year. Members of the original GMA Board of Directors included Urias and Meurice LeFevre of the famous LeFevre singing family, James Blackwood of the Blackwood Brothers, Hovie Lister and

James Wetherington of the Statesmen, and J.D. Sumner of the Stamps.

In was the GMA, in turn, which in 1969 began issuing the worldly Dove Awards for outstanding achievement in the Christian music industry. The vice president of the GMA that year was Hovie Lister, one of the biggest names in Southern Gospel. The Dove Awards, in turn, have honored Contemporary Christian Music artists of every stripe, including hard rock groups such as Bride, the Newsboys, Petra, and dc Talk. Roman Catholic singer Kathy Troccoli was nominated Gospel Music Association's female vocalist of the year five times. The GMA even awarded a Dove Award to Amy Grant's *Behind the Eyes* album, which was not Christian in any sense.

\* [Dove Awards 2016 DC Talk](#)

The well-known Southern Gospel groups are yoked together with and are supportive of the rock and roll, ecumenical-charismatic CCM crowd. There is no separation from and no reproof of the error of CCM by the commercially-successful Southern Gospel people. They are peas in one worldly pod.

The great changes that are happening in Southern Gospel can be seen in the late Vestal Goodman (1929-2003), who has been called the "Queen of Southern Gospel Music." She and her husband Howard formed the Happy Goodman Family, one of the most popular Southern Gospel groups. At the dawn of Contemporary Christian Music or Christian rock, the Goodmans took out a full-page ad in the September 1971 edition of *Singing News* to criticize the direction of the Gospel Music Association. "It seems that you have decided to promote and condone the more hippie oriented crowd, and night club acts, other than the gospel music." The Goodmans said that "many other groups" held their views about the direction of Southern Gospel in the 1970s.

Though the Happy Goodmans criticized the hippie oriented crowd and night club acts, they themselves contemporized Southern Gospel incrementally throughout their career. They “popularized a hard-singing style, which subverts blend in favor of accentuating the downbeat of lyrical phrases.” They put on a worldly show, really. “The ending brought crowds roaring to their feet in delight at the way the sound managed to teeter precariously between chaos and control, buffoonery and beauty, this world and the next” (Douglas Harrison, *Then Sings My Soul*, p. 92).

\* [Happy Goodmans](#)

By 1997, Vestal Goodman joined Roman Catholic Kathy Troccoli and 40 CCM rockers and contemporary Southern Gospel singers (e.g., Mark Lowry) to record *Love One Another*, a song with an ecumenical theme: “Christians from all denominations demonstrating their common love for Christ and each other.” The song talks about tearing down the walls of denominational division. The broad range of participants who joined Kathy Troccoli in recording “Love One Another” demonstrates the ecumenical agenda of Contemporary Christian Music and contemporary Southern Gospel. The song witnessed Catholics, Pentecostals, Baptists, Nazarenes, etc., yoked together to call for Christian unity. A prominent representative of the Southern Gospel world was right in the midst of this unscriptural alliance.

\* [Love One Another 1999 Goodman and Lowry](#)

I could multiply these examples almost endlessly.

The blending really exploded in the 1990s when the Gaither’s *Homecoming* concert and video series dramatically increased the popularity of Southern Gospel music in this generation. It brought new economic opportunities for those who were willing to relax their musical standards and cease being careful about their ministry relationships.

\* [Gaither Homecoming “Farther Along”](#)

Bill Gaither believes the lie that music is neutral. During a concert tour in New England in 1986, Gaither admitted that he had changed his musical style due to the influence of the “world’s culture.” It is a clear example of the Bible’s warning that “evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33). Gaither said he believes there is a place for Christian rock, expressing his philosophy of music in these words:

“God speaks through all different kinds of art forms and musical styles and musical forms” and the “format itself is not necessarily spiritual or non-spiritual” (*FBF News Bulletin*, March-April 1986, p. 3).

The following is an eyewitness description of the Gaither’s appearance at the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis in 1980:

“The Bill Gaither Trio entertained 15,000 Southern Baptists on Sunday evening with a musical program worldly enough to make any true believer weep. The music was so loud that some people left and others put their hands to their ears to block the intense amplification of the music” (Robert S. Reynolds, “Southern Baptists on the Downgrade: Report on the 1980 SBC Convention in St. Louis,” *Foundation*, Volume VI, Issue 1, 1985, p. 9).

Gaither has used every type of worldly music. During the disco craze in the late 1980s, the Gaither Trio even recorded a disco album (*Calvary Contender*, August 15, 1989).

Most Southern Gospel people today have accepted the idea that music is just a matter of style, and they move from one type of music to another with ease.

Consider The Isaacs. They are on the conservative side of Southern Gospel and largely use acoustic string instruments and a folksy, blue-grassy style, but they can slip into rock & roll with ease. Consider the following two clips from the same performance:

\* [Issacs folk style](#)

\* [Isaacs rocking](#)

Bill Gaither has influenced great numbers of Southern Gospel groups, and at the same time he has built bridges from Southern Gospel to the world of CCM by mentoring many of the popular Christian rockers, including Sandi Patty, Russ Taff, Michael English, Carman, and the members of Whiteheart (*CCM Magazine*, July 1998, p. 20).

\* [Gaither Trio Reunion 2012 Taff English](#)

Gaither has also pushed the ecumenical philosophy throughout Southern Gospel. In his autobiography, *It's More Than the Music*, Gaither stated that one of the fringe benefits of playing their concerts in “neutral, non-church environments” was that people from “all church denominations” attended. “Before long, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, charismatics, Catholics, and Pentecostals were all praising the Lord together. Subtly, the walls between denominations began to crumble ...” (p. 115).

Gaither's *Hymns for the Family of God* was purposefully “nondenominational” and included devotional readings from a wide variety of Christians, including heretics such as Deitrich Bonhoeffer (one of the fathers of Neo-orthodoxy), Malcolm Muggeridge (a liberal Roman Catholic who did not believe in Christ's virgin birth or bodily resurrection), and Robert Schuller (who wickedly redefined the gospel in terms of his humanistic self-esteem theology).

The Gaithers provided the music one evening at Indianapolis '90, a large ecumenical charismatic gathering I attended with press credentials for reporting and warning. One-half of the 25,000 participants were Roman Catholic. A Catholic mass was held each morning, and Catholic priest Tom Forrest from Rome brought the closing message. At an earlier conference in 1987, Forrest said that purgatory is necessary for salvation. Roughly 40 denominations were present at Indianapolis '90, and the Gaithers were perfectly at home in this unscriptural gathering and entertained the mixed multitude with their jazzy music.

See the chapter “The Gaithers” for extensive documentation of Gaither’s compromise and vast influence.

The changes in Southern Gospel are reflected in the National Quartet Convention (NQC), which brings together a large majority of Southern Gospel groups today. I attended the NQC with press credentials in 1999 at the personal invitation of the executive director. If you stripped away the words, the music is that of the world. The main event was basically a country rock concert. Every group that was featured the night I attended used a bass guitar and drums to create a backbeat and other types of heavy dance syncopations. It is the “Nashville sound.” Some of the lyrics were Christ-honoring, but the worldly music distracted greatly from the message. It is the mixture of the holy with the unholy. It is confusion.

And the National Quartet Convention philosophy is ecumenism. During the presentation of *Singing News* awards, one of the speakers thanked the leaders of the convention for “THEIR ABILITY TO BRING TOGETHER CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONAL LABELS BY THE MEANS OF MUSIC.” This unscriptural philosophy was evident on every hand. There were Baptists of all stripes, Lutherans, Pentecostals, Charismatics, Church of God, Nazarene, Jesus Only (who deny the Trinity), Church of Christ, and many others. It was a Southern Gospel ecumenical hodgepodge.

And the situation within the world of Southern Gospel has gotten much worse since the 1990s.

## **The Changes Are Evident even in the Most Conservative Groups**

Most lines of biblical separation have already *been* erased, and the remaining lines are *being* erased in this generation.

This means that the churches that use Southern Gospel are being connected with many false and dangerous things. Bridges are being built from nearly every Southern Gospel-

loving church to the world of contemporary Southern Gospel and beyond to the world of Contemporary Christian Music. And a more dangerous spiritual world does not exist.

See the free eVideo *The Foreign Spirit of Contemporary Worship Music*

\* [The Foreign Spirit of Contemporary Worship Music](#)

The changes are evident even in the most conservative singing groups.

**Consider the Inspirations of North Carolina.** They started out as a simple harmony singing group and they have remained more conservative than many of the Southern Gospel groups, but they are part of the commercializing trend in Southern Gospel and their music has gotten more jazzy and showy through the years (with the thumping bass and leg shaking after the fashion of Statesman's Jim Wetherington). Their philosophy has gotten ever more "judge not" and their associations ever more "broad tent." You can find them anyplace today, at the National Quartet Convention or the Southern Gospel Hall of Fame. They would probably say that they believe in biblical truth and separation, but they don't lift a voice against the great sin and error of the Southern Gospel world. For the sake of the bottom line, they have narrowed their message so that it does not include plain reproof and rebuke of the very error that their Southern Gospel listeners are engaged in, the error that we are exposing in this report.

**Consider the Clark Family.** This is a very conservative Independent Baptist singing group. They are based in Solid Rock Baptist Church of Berlin, New Jersey. The pastors of Solid Rock are Charles Clark, Jr., and Charles Clark III. The Clarks influence many individuals, families, and churches by their music albums, web sites, Twitter feed, YouTube channel, and conferences.

One member of the family told me that he is opposed to CCM and "progressive/contemporary southern gospel."



This profession might be sincere, but there can be no doubt that the Clark Family is building bridges to contemporary Southern Gospel, whether unwittingly or not, and there is no significant difference between CCM and contemporary Southern Gospel. Contemporary Southern Gospel is merely a branch of the larger world of Contemporary Christian Music.

The influence of contemporary Southern Gospel is evident in the Clark Family's recent albums. Those who say that they are opposed to "progressive/contemporary Southern Gospel" should prove it by separating from it in a scriptural manner, which means completely, and reproving it publicly for the sake of those who are being influenced by it.

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*" (Ephesians 5:11).

Following are some of the songs the Clark Family has borrowed from CCM and contemporary Southern Gospel in their recent albums.

The incrementalism is evident in that this extensive borrowing from the contemporary world is a relatively new thing in their ministry, compared to their earlier albums.

I include links to the contemporary renditions of these songs. One of the members of the Clark Family argued that since "we sing our own vocal style and record our own tracks using instruments we feel appropriate," they are not building associations with the contemporary authors. But that is an impossibility in this day and age. This Clark Family member said, "I've never even heard of many of the people you mention," referring to the groups that have popularized the music they sing, but this isn't true for most young people who do a lot of Googling and Facebooking, etc.

The song "You Are God Alone" on the Clark Family album "Blessed" is written by Billy and Cynthia Foote and popularized by William McDowel, Marvin Sapp, and Phillips Craig and Dean. Billy Foote is Director of Music

Composition at Trinity Fellowship in Amarillo, Texas (along with Molly the Associate Pastor of Worship).

\* [Cynthia Foote rendition of “You Are God Alone”](#)

The song “Blessed Be Your Name” on the Clark Family album “Blessed” was written by Matt Redman and popularized by Chris Tomlin and Newsboys. Redman is one of the most influential contemporary worship musicians. He supports the Worship Central training school sponsored by Alpha International, the radically ecumenical charismatic organization that was birthed from the “laughing revival” at Holy Trinity Brompton, London. When asked in 2011, “Who are your musical influences?” Redman replied, “All sorts. But all time favorite must be the Beatles. I love it now that my five kids even get into their music” ([louderthanthemusic.com/document.php?id=2526](http://louderthanthemusic.com/document.php?id=2526)).

\* [Matt Redman rendition of “Blessed Be Your Name”](#)

The song “With Each Borrowed Breath” on the Clark Family album “Blessed” is by Jody McBrayer. McBrayer, who is called a “CCM powerhouse vocalist,” is a former member of the Christian pop group Avalon and is an out-and-out CCM rocker. He was also on Benny Hinn’s traveling staff. McBrayer released the song in mid-February 2016 and the Clark Family recorded it less than two months later according to their Twitter feed.

\* [Jody McBrayer rendition “With Each Borrowed Breath”](#)

The song “He Knows My Name” on the Clark Family album “I Believe” is by Annie and Kelly McRae. The McRaes are in the mainstream of contemporary Southern Gospel, having appeared at the National Quartet Convention, performed in the Gaither Homecoming Series, and toured with the brashly anti-fundamentalist Mark Lowry.

\* [McRae’s rendition of “He Knows My Name”](#)

The song “Walking Her Home” on the Clark Family album “Blessed” is by Mark Schultz. He is a CCM artist who has “tasted success on the mainstream adult contemporary charts” ([www.todaychristianmusic.com](http://www.todaychristianmusic.com)). He “landed the top spot on Billboard’s Christian Adult Contemporary Songwriter list.”

\* [Mark Schultz rendition of “Walking Her Home”](#)

The song “Yes I Believe” on the Clark Family album “I Believe” is by Joel Lindsay and Tony Wood. They are contemporary musicians and writers whose songs are used widely within CCM. In his online biography, Wood calls Bono of U2 “quite possibly one of the coolest musicians on the planet.” The song “Yes I Believe” was made popular by Point of Grace and is heavily identified with this CCM pop group.

\* [Yes I Believe - Point of Grace rendition](#)

The song “I Want to Be That Man” used on the Clark Family album “You Are God Alone” is by Lee Black and Ricky Free. It was popularized by Brian Free and Assurance, a mainstream rock & roll Southern Gospel quartet. Ricky Free is Brian’s son. He is a drummer who has toured with country rockers, pop artists, and CCM musicians. Ricky has recorded many award-winning songs for country, CCM, and Southern Gospel stars.

\* [Brian Free rendition of “I Want to Be That Man”](#)

The song “Never Walk Alone” on the Clark Family album “I Believe” is by Jeremy Johnson and J.P. Williams. Johnson is a CCM musician/song writer whose songs are used widely within Contemporary Christian Music. Johnson is the contemporary worship leader at the Church at Station Hill in Spring Hill, Tennessee. He has toured with Charlie Daniels, Ricky Skaggs, and Randy Travis. “Never Walk Alone” was popularized by Southern Gospel rockers Brian Free and Assurance.

\* [Brian Free rendition of “Never Walk Alone”](#)

The song “Big Enough” on the Clark Family album “My Mind Is Made Up” is by Joseph Habedank and Michael Farren. Farren is the contemporary worship leader at Gateway Church in Franklin, Tennessee, and former member of the CCM band Pocket Full of Rocks. He has written many CCM hits, including “Let It Rain,” popularized by Michael W. Smith. Farren says, “I love writing across all genres ... CCM, country, Southern Gospel, etc.” (weareworship.com/us/worship-leaders-2/michael-farren/). Habedank is a progressive contemporary Southern Gospel musician who traveled with the Perrys.

\* [Joseph Habedank rendition of “Big Enough”](#)

The song “Everything to Me” on the Clark Family album “My Mind Is Made Up” is by contemporary worship leader Chad Cates and popularized by Avalon. Cates is a Dove Award winner who has worked with Rebecca St. James, jazz CCM artist Mandisa, and others.

\* [Avalon rendition of “Everything to Me”](#)

This is the kind of erasing of lines that is taking place everywhere in Southern Gospel circles, including the most conservative.

The Clark Family would say that by using the music of these people they are not giving a recommendation of them, but when you Google these songs, you don’t find the Clark Family or any other very conservative gospel group in the top listings. Instead, you are immediately brought into contact with the CCM, progressive Southern Gospel, and Country song writers and artists that we have listed. Anyone who is curious about the source of these songs on recent Clark Family albums or other conservative Southern Gospel albums and decides to check it out, is immediately brought into contact with these people.

In this Internet age, no conservative Southern Gospel group today can say they are guiltless of the influence of their musical “borrowings.”

God’s Word forbids association with the world of ecumenical, end-time apostasy as represented by Contemporary Christian Music and contemporary Southern Gospel.

“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).

Worldliness and a non-judgmental, anti-separatist, ecumenical philosophy is most definitely contrary to the doctrine we have learned in God’s Word. The world of CCM and progressive Southern Gospel is the world of apostasy described in 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

“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.”

It is “living after your own lusts” Christianity. It is “I’m not going to let anyone tell me how to live” Christianity. It is the Christianity of rebels who are not solidly under the authority of God’s Word. They renounce “strictness” and call for “liberty.”

**For another example of the blending and bridge building and erasing of lines, consider the Burlington Tent Revival of Burlington, North Carolina, that ended in July 2016.** It was driven by Southern Gospel. New Hope Baptist Church, the host church where the revival began, is deeply in love with Southern Gospel. The service/atmosphere is largely driven by the music and specifically by the ragtime piano player. One visitor said, “These people could write the book on Southern Gospel.” On a typical Sunday morning, there were “three choir songs, two specials, and perhaps one

congregational song.” And yet during the sermon “How to Continue in Revival,” the pastor said, “In too many churches you can’t tell the church song from the honky-tonk.” Not being properly educated about music, the pastor doesn’t understand that he is talking about his own church and his own revival meetings.

\* [Burlington Revival Congregational](#)

This is sincere, conservative, Independent Baptist Christianity in the South, and there are many good and biblical things, but when it is examined more closely, it is often as shallow as a cow pond. From the music to the preaching, it is largely whoop and holler. Solid biblical substance and holy separation tends to be lacking in the lives of the people, from the old to the young.

These churches are already weak, and the bridges that are being built from these churches to contemporary Southern Gospel will bring great destructive changes in the coming generation.

Even now, how many of the young people in these churches are really on fire for God, with a fervent first love for Christ, separating from the world from the heart, dying to self, seeking God’s perfect will? What percentage of the youth group can be described in these terms? And yet this is true biblical Christianity, not whooping and hollering on Sunday and loving Country rock and worldly video games and world-filled Facebook pages or worse on Monday.

Burlington Revival evangelist, C.T. Townsend, is known as a conservative Southern Gospel preacher, but he records contemporary Southern Gospel music and he builds bridges to contemporary Southern Gospel by supporting his even more contemporary relatives and by not plainly exposing and reproving contemporary Southern Gospel. Consider the following two testimonies that expose the blending that is happening in even the most conservative Southern Gospel circles:

“C.T. Townsend’s brother, Brian, is a full-blown contemporary pastor in Georgia that C.T. has verbally supported. CT’s father-in-law married Brenda Ruppe of the Ruppe family, who were featured singers on the Gaither Homecoming specials. Her daughters formed the singing group ‘The Sisters’ and sing contemporary Southern Gospel music and have very immodest clothing in some of their photo shoots. I know we are not guilty because of family ties, but we become guilty when we promote our worldly families and their music, which C.T. has done publicly for years without any reproof.”

\* [Ruppe Sisters at Gaither event](#)

\* [CT Townsend “I Held On”](#)

This blending and merging and bridge building is no small matter. It is unscriptural and spiritually dangerous, and it will bear rotten fruit both now and later.

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33).





## Style vs. Standards

I recognize that there are different legitimate styles of Christian music.

Some might not like an operatic style like Hale and Wilder or a country-tinged (or folk-tinged) style such as that of the Marshall Family, but a style of music in itself is not necessarily right or wrong.

We have lived for decades in South Asia, and I have traveled to about 40 countries, and I recognize that there are legitimate cultural differences in Christian music. The style of hymns written indigenously by our churches in South Asia is somewhat different from a Western style.

**But not everything in Christian music is a matter of style.**

The contemporary principle that “music is neutral” is a lie and a heresy. Music is a form of language, and there are biblical principles that must be applied to music to determine whether it is worldly or sacred, and when music is intimately identified with the world in the sense of being identified with rebellion and lasciviousness, it is worldly and wrong.

The music of God’s people is to be spiritual (Colossians 3:16). Spiritual means holy. It refers to that which is separated *unto* a holy God *from* the unholiness of this world.

☑ Spiritual music is music that is not conformed to the world (Romans 12:2).

☑ Spiritual music is music that is not according to the realm of spiritual death (Ephesians 2:1).

☑ Spiritual music is music that is not according to the course of this world (Ephesians 2:2).

☑ Spiritual music is music that is

☑ not according to the desires of the flesh and of the old mind (Ephesians 2:3).

☑ Spiritual music is music that is not according to the vanity and darkened understanding of the old mind (Ephesians 4:17-19).

☑ Spiritual music is music that is unspotted from the world (James 1:27).

☑ Spiritual music is music that is not in friendship with the world (James 4:4).

☑ Spiritual music is music that does not pertain to the “former lusts” (1 Peter 1:13-15).

☑ Spiritual music is music that does not pertain to the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16).

In light of these clear standards that should guide every aspect of the Christian life and ministry, when music is intimately identified with the world in the sense of being identified with rebellion and lasciviousness, it is worldly and wrong. The music of God’s people is to be spiritual (Colossians 3:16). Spiritual means holy. It refers to that which is separated *unto* a holy God *from* the unholiness of this world.

Based on these biblical principles, it is always forbidden by God’s Word to use the world’s sensual party music in the service of Jesus Christ. This is why I cannot accept that the rock music that stirred me to rebellion and sensuality before my conversion can be sanctified to be used in the service of the holy God I serve today. I absolutely loved rock & roll before I was saved, and I didn’t want to give it up. The reason I did was that I wanted to obey God’s Word in everything, and I have never regretted it.

And I don’t want the world to sneak into my Christian music.

If I must err, I will err on the side of caution, because that is safety.

We follow these same principles in South Asia. We refuse to use the sound of Asian pop music or music used by Hindus and Buddhists in their idolatrous practices. It is a

matter of identification. We want our songs to be “spiritual” or “sacred” (Col. 3:16), holy, set apart, different, distinct in character from worldly music as defined by 1 John 2:16. We recently published a new Nepali hymnal containing a lot of indigenous music, and it is based consistently on the aforementioned biblical principles.

Southern Gospel is founded on the same fundamental error as CCM. It puts Christian words to the world’s music, thus mixing the holy with the unholy, which is confusion and a great sin.

God’s people are instructed to “put difference between holy and unholy” (Lev. 10:10). Making this difference in every area of life is a major part of a sound Bible ministry. Biblical separation is an essence of true holiness. It is separation *to* a holy God *from* every unholy thing.

Separation is exactly what a majority of Independent Baptist churches are giving up, not all at once, but gradually. I have witnessed this over the 43 years I have been an Independent Baptist, and the renunciation of separation has increased dramatically over the past decade. The separation is getting softer and quieter, and some Independent Baptists have already brashly renounced it as the New Evangelicals did 60 years ago.

For Southern Gospel churches that still profess to believe in separation, we would warn that your musical associations have the potential to destroy all separation in the next generation. The world of CCM and contemporary Southern Gospel despises separation and those who dabble with and build bridges to that world are eventually influenced by that philosophy. The renunciation of biblical separation is very pleasing to the flesh, and we all have the flesh.



# Shallow Lyrics

For links to the videos see: [www.wayoflife.org/plea/](http://www.wayoflife.org/plea/)

The lyrics to many of the popular Southern Gospel songs are very weak, doctrinally.

They are emotional, feel-good songs that are easy to “showboat,” meaning they are designed to show off vocal techniques and jazzy rhythms, but the message is extremely shallow. They don’t deal with essential doctrines such as repentance, conversion, confession, holiness, obedience, and separation from the world. Even the gospel is presented in a vague fashion. The songs are not solidly Bible based. They are often man-centered, focusing on man’s needs.

Many of the popular Southern Gospel songs fall into this category, such as “I’ll Fly Away,” “Just a Little Talk with Jesus,” and “There’s a Rainbow.”

In “I’ll Fly Away” the words “I’ll fly away” are repeated 24 times in the short song.

\* [“I’ll Fly Away” Crimson River Quartet](#)

The lyrics to popular newer songs like “He Knows My Name” and “The Broken Ones” could be sung by unconverted church members with “blessing” but no conviction.

**“He Knows My Name”** by the McRaes

He counts the stars one and all

He knows how much sand is on the shore

He sees every sparrow that falls

He made the mountain and the seas

He’s in control of everything

Of all creatures great and small

CHORUS

He knows my name

Every step that I take

Every move that I make  
Every tear that I cry  
And He knows my name  
When I'm overwhelmed by the pain  
And can't see the light of day  
I know I'll be just fine  
Cause He knows my name  
I don't know what tomorrow will bring  
I can't tell you what's in store  
I don't know a lot of things  
I don't have all the answers to the questions of life  
But I know in whom I believe

#### CHORUS

He knew who I was when he carried the cross  
He knew that I would fail him but he took the loss

#### CHORUS

Every step that I take  
Every move that I make  
Every tear that I cry  
And he knows my name

When the shallow lyrics to this song are sung to sensual music with sensual voice techniques, it is a recipe for emotional “blessing,” but it is seriously lacking in biblical substance. In fact, “He knew I would fail him but he took the loss” is not a sound gospel message. Christ didn’t take a loss; He took my sin.

Southern Gospel doesn’t encourage a careful examination of lyrics, but the Bible does.

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Th. 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).

“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14).

“Let all things be done unto edifying” (1 Cor. 14:26).

It is the message of the song that edifies and sanctifies, not jazzy music and sensual chord sequences and sensual vocal techniques, so the lyrics must be examined carefully to make sure that we are not singing heresy and that we are not singing vapid, emotional, sweet nothings.

Consider “**The Broken Ones**” by Jerry Salley, J.B. Rudd, and Vip Vipperman

Maggie came home one day with a raggedy, Raggedy Ann.  
She said “Mama, look what I found in the neighbors garbage can.”

It had a missing left arm, and a right button eye hanging by a thread

She carried it gently up to her room and laid it on her bed with her other dolls.

Chorus:

She loves the broken ones, the ones that need a little patchin' up  
She see's the diamond in the rough and makes it shine like new  
It really doesn't take that much, a willing heart and a tender touch  
If everybody loved like she does, there'd be a lot less broken ones.

Twenty years later in a shelter on Eighteenth Avenue  
A seventeen year old girl shows up all black and blue  
with needle tracks in her left arm, almost too weak to stand,  
She says, "I'm lost and I need help", as Maggie takes her hand  
And says, "Come on in!"

Bridge:

If you call her an angel, she'd be quick to say to you  
She's just doing what the one who died for her would do  
Love the broken ones, the ones that need a little patchin' up  
See the diamond in the rough and make it shine like new  
It really doesn't take that much, a willing heart and a tender touch  
If everybody loved like He does, there'd be a lot less broken ones  
If everybody loved like He does, there's be a lot less broke ones.

Again, this has no biblical substance. One can read any theology into the song. It is so weak that it fits liberal social gospel theology, faith-works theology, even Catholic or Mormon or Jehovah's Witness theology.

Even some of the popular Southern Gospel songs that have a fairly biblical message are made shallow by the distracting music which overwhelms the message with an entertainment emphasis or is confused by an unscriptural element being thrown into the lyrics.

Consider the song "**My God is Real**," sung by countless Southern Gospel groups.

The lyrics include a repetition of these words: "He's real, I can feel him deep within. ... My Lord He's real, I can feel him in my soul."

This is the Pentecostal, Holiness, Stamps Baxter heresy that says I can and should feel God. Where does the Bible support this? Where does it teach that the believer can feel God? Where does the Bible tell us how this is done? In light of the Bible's frequent warnings about the danger of spiritual delusion, how would you know that it is God you are feeling and not a spirit of deception? This song encourages the great error of living the Christian life by one's emotions, which is extremely unstable and spiritually and emotionally dangerous.

\* ["My God Is Real" Florida Boys](#)

A comment left on the YouTube rendition illustrates the emotional approach to Christian music: "Love the Florida Boys singing this beautiful song. This song has got some power in it. That it makes the hair rise on my arms."

We are to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good," and only that which is good, and this song does not pass the standard of God's infallible Word.

Another example of the shallowness of popular Southern Gospel songs is "**Just a Little Talk**" by Cleavant Derricks and



sung by countless Southern Gospel groups. Here are some of the lyrics:

I once was lost in sin, but Jesus took me in  
And then a little light from heaven fills my soul.  
He bathed my heart in love, and He wrote my name above  
And just a little talk with Jesus makes me whole.  
(Now let us) have a little talk with Jesus  
(Let us) tell Him all about our troubles  
(He will) hear our faintest cry  
(He will) answer by and by  
(When you) feel a little prayer wheel turning  
(And you) will know a little fire is burnin'  
(You will) find a little talk with Jesus makes it right.

\* [“Just a Little Talk with Jesus” Masters V](#)

There is no clear gospel or salvation message here. “I once was lost in sin, but Jesus took me in” is so vague that any false gospel can fit there. And what does “feel a little prayer wheel turning” mean? Buddhists have prayer wheels, and I’ve seen them used all over Asia. Did Derricks visit the Far East before writing this strange song? This aside, the emphasis of the song is on feeling.

The reason it is popular is its jazzy tune and the fact that it lends itself to vocal “showboating.”

Another example is “**Step into the Water**” by Kirk Talley, who was singing with the Cathedrals when he wrote the song in about 1979.

It’s time we, the people, stand up for what is right.

It’s time we squared our shoulders back and raised our swords to fight.

For the Bible is my weapon and the Spirit is my shield.

The Church needs more of its members to be workers in the field.

There is victory for the Christian who walks the narrow way.

There has been a prize appointed for the soul who does not stray.

Though I want to live for Jesus, and be all that I can be.

So, that I can rest with Him forever, live eternally.

## CHORUS

Step into the water

Wade out a little bit deeper

Wet your feet in the water of His love

Step into the water

Wade out a little bit deeper

Come join angels singing praise to the Lamb of God

“Step into the Water” has some biblical lyrics, but the heart of the song is the jazzy chorus, which is the reason for its popularity. It is almost impossible to sing it without dancing and “showboating,” which is the essence of a Southern Gospel hit. The concept of stepping into the water and wading out a little bit deeper has no biblical support. The only New Testament image of stepping into the water is that of baptism, and baptism is a picture of salvation. Deep water is nowhere used as a picture of the Christian life in Scripture. The problem is worse than that, though. “Step into the Water” preaches a false gospel, which might come from the influence of Talley’s early years in Free Will Baptist churches that teach the doctrine of “conditional security” or “holding out faithful.” The song teaches that by living for Jesus one can rest with Him forever. That is salvation by faith plus works.

The vagueness and lack of doctrinal clarity that permeates so many of the popular Southern Gospel songs is why many worldly people love Southern Gospel. It “speaks to them,” but it does not convict, save, sanctify, and separate them. You can see this in the mixed multitudes at Southern Gospel concerts and conventions. You can see it in comments left on the YouTube editions of songs such as “He Knows My Name” and “The Broken Ones,” which are left mostly by women who are being emotionally impacted, but not necessarily spiritually changed.

Consider the song “**Send the Rain**” that was used at the Burlington Tent Revival.

\* [Send the Rain - Burlington Tent Revival](#)

“Regarding the Burlington Revival: This video clip is of the July 22 revival meeting which has been touted as the most successful meeting of the entire revival. There were a supposed 100 people saved that day. It is one of Burlington Revival’s most viewed clips on YouTube. And I can’t tell you how many times I’ve heard pastors reference this specific meeting where all these people got saved in one night. ... the link I gave above has a timestamp that starts at 39:30. As this time they begin singing a song which they sing until the 1 hour mark. They sing this song over and over again for 20 minutes until everyone is worked up and in their emotions. People ‘get saved’ during this time, but this song gives no mention of the Gospel whatsoever. The song they sing is called ‘Send the Rain’ which is written by Aaron Butler of the Christian Rock band Ol’ Skool. You can visit their biography here - [www.unsigned.com/olskool](http://www.unsigned.com/olskool). I’d like to point out a quote they made from this biography regarding their own music: ‘*Our music has a lot of roots in southern gospel, but with a touch of rock. We like to call it Southern Rock Gospel.*’” (from a reader, Aug. 26, 2016).

Amazingly, “Send the Rain” promotes Pentecostal Latter Rain heresy. Note the following lyrics:

“Send the rain/ Send the fire/ Send the wind/ Send the Holy Ghost in power/ Send the rain.”

The Independent Baptist leaders of the Burlington meeting either did not recognize this heresy or didn’t care that they were singing false teaching, so long as it “stirs people up” and gets them to the altar. (See *The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements*, available from Way of Life Literature, for a study on latter rain theology.)

CCM and contemporary Southern Gospel singers like doctrinally weak lyrics because they want a big tent ministry.



# Southern Gospel Dance Rhythms

The world's pop music has danceable rhythms. It is composed of a wide variety of danceable syncopations.

Dance music uses heavy syncopation to create a jerky, dancy feel. Syncopation is “shifting the accent to a weak beat or to an off beat” (Miller, Taylor, and Williams, *Introduction to Music*). It is “a general term for a disturbance or interruption of the regular flow of rhythm.” It comes in hundreds of forms.

“All dance music makes use of syncopation” (Rick Snoman, *Dance Music Manual*, p. 44).

“Rock's danceability is due predominately to its emphasized syncopated rhythms, which invite the listener to supply the missing beats either mentally or through a series of physical gestures” (John Makújina, *Measuring the Music*)

Dance syncopation affects the body. The late Graham West said, “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.”

Syncopation itself is not wrong. It should be used “sparingly for special effects” (Philip Seyer, “Syncopation in Music and Dance”).

And “good syncopation” always *resolves* back into the normal, unsyncopated rhythm.

Syncopation used in moderation can enliven the music without sensualizing it. It doesn't make your body want to move in a pop music way. Consider *Joy to the Lord*.

It is a matter of emphasis and predominance. A little bit of syncopation is not wrong, but when it becomes predominant it is highly addictive and quickly spoils the saint's taste for sacred music.

In pop music, syncopation is a “fundamental constant presence.” When jazz musician Duke Ellington said, “It don’t mean a thing if it ain’t got that swing,” he was referring to the heavy, constant, unresolving syncopation that creates a dancy feel.

Unrelenting syncopated rhythm 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. It was the rhythm that drove ragtime, the blues, boogie-woogie, jazz, big band swing, and honky-tonk or western swing.

Southern Gospel has borrowed from the world’s dance music since the 1930s.

First, it borrowed from ragtime and boogie-woogie, which originated in the houses of prostitution and the gambling dens of Memphis and New Orleans.

For links to all videos see: [www.wayoflife.org/plea/](http://www.wayoflife.org/plea/)

- \* [Ragtime Scott Joplin Entertainer](#)
- \* [Ragtime syncopation](#)
- \* [Ragtime Lily of the Valley](#)
- \* [Boogie Woogie Cleo Brown 1936](#)
- \* [Boogie Woogie gospel](#)

Once the trend began, there was no end of borrowing from the world. As the world’s pop music has become more sensual through the decades, Southern Gospel has grown ever more worldly.

- \* [Hinsons](#)
- \* [Crabb Family](#)
- \* [Martins “God Is Good”](#)
- \* [Greater Vision “He’ll Still God”](#)

There are many types of dance syncopation that are prominent in pop music and that create the physical feel and sexuality of the music.

Consider seven of these: the back beat, the silent beat, the staccato beat, the swing eight, the break beat, and the anticipated beat.

### **The back beat**

The backbeat, which rockers and social commentators have often identified as “sexy,” is a prominent characteristic of the world’s dance music.

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 to this would be what they were after.”

Indeed, it was! The backbeat powered a global social revolution.

The backbeat is the opposite of the straight or march beat, which has the emphasis on the first beat or on every beat equally:

one-two-three-four, one-two-three-four

or

ONE-two-three-four, ONE-two-three-four

\* [“The Stars and Stripes Forever” U.S. Army Field Band](#)

The backbeat emphasizes an offbeat, such as

one-TWO-three-FOUR

or

one-two-THREE-four

\* [Backbeat on the drum](#)

When you try to march to backbeat rhythm you have something like the brass jazz bands in New Orleans. In this clip they are marching at jazz saxophonist “Doc Watson’s” funeral.

\* [Olympia Brass band - Doc Watson’s funeral band](#)

## The silent beat

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

## The staccato beat

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

The following clip is staccato style singing by CCM artist Tommy Walker:

- \* [“We Will Remember” by Tommy Walker](#)

## Beat anticipation

The late Graham West, a skilled, highly trained musician who wrote pop music jingles before he was a pastor, explains beat anticipation in his video presentation *The Rhythm of Rock*.

Beat anticipation 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 music as the backbeat. It can create the jerky, dancy rock feel even when 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 changes the feel and message of a song. Consider the example of “Jesus Loves Me” played traditionally with a straight beat, played with beat anticipation, then played with even more syncopation.

- \* [“Jesus Loves Me” traditional](#) (audio)
- \* [“Jesus Loves Me” beat anticipation](#) (audio)
- \* [“Jesus Loves Me” jazzed up](#) (audio)



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, liking the feel of it and often 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.

The backbeat, the silent beat, the staccato beat, and beat anticipation are just some of the many kinds of dance syncopation that go into the creation of rock and pop music in general. *The Rhythm Bible* has “over 1,000 examples of rhythmic figures common in jazz, rock, Latin, blues, funk, and other styles -- rhythms that make contemporary sounds so exciting.”

The point is that rock is made up of many types of syncopation, but they all have the same type of effect on the body. Whether rock is soft or hard, quiet or loud is irrelevant. It matters not if it is played in an electric bass guitar, a violin, a saxophone, or a piano. It affects the body and makes you want to dance.

And the heavy syncopation is why pop music is so physical and why many rock musicians have identified it as sexual.

“Perhaps it is sexy ... but what music with a BIG BEAT isn’t?” (Jimi Hendrix, cited from David Henderson, *Scuse Me While I Kiss the Sky: The Life of Jimi Hendrix*. p. 117).

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

Wise Christians who want to glorify Jesus Christ and obey His Word do not want any element of sexuality in their music!

Just a small amount of off-beat syncopation can change the entire feel or message of a song and orient it from the spiritual to the sensual.

## Sensual Chord Progressions

Contemporary Worship Music and contemporary Southern Gospel often use a chord progression that heightens the sensual experience.

Unresolving cadence is a type of chord progression that doesn't resolve naturally, and it is a major element of contemporary worship music.

It is a chord cadence other than the "perfect" or "authentic" cadence, which resolves back to the first tone. A "weak cadence" or an "imperfect cadence" does not resolve in this way. It is always more emotional and "feely."

For links to the videos see: [www.wayoflife.org/plea/](http://www.wayoflife.org/plea/)

\* [Unresolving chord progression](#) (audio)

One discerning musician who analyzed many contemporary worship songs observed, "What we were noticing in all of these songs -- 'Awesome God,' 'Here I Am to Worship,' 'Lord I Lift Your Name on High,' -- which are not the hard CCM but they are light CCM. All of them use the non-resolving cadence. They go to the 4 instead of the 1 and you are left feeling restless. It builds you up and leaves you feeling restless, uneasy."

We aren't saying that using an unresolving cadence from time to time is wrong in itself. The problem is that this is a *predominant characteristic* of CCM. The solidarity of the resolutions is not there. This is not something that happens once in a while; it is a *major* characteristic of CCM. It is everywhere.

And the unresolving cadence is showing up increasingly in very conservative churches because the people enjoy its emotional power without recognizing its fundamental character and the danger of creating sensual appetites in music.

An example is Travis Clark of the Clark Family singing the McRae's "He Knows My Name."

\* [Travis Clark "He Knows My Name"](#)

When I first mentioned this piece by Travis in a brief report, someone commented to a member of the Clark family, "How can a man go after children?" but we're not "going after children." That is the knee-jerk emotional reaction of someone who isn't in the habit of testing everything by God's Word. We're warning about sensual music that is creeping into Bible-believing churches and is affecting the younger generation. Travis is performing Christian music in churches, under a spotlight no less, and it has been posted online to influence people anywhere in the world. It is a public issue, a music issue, and an adult issue.

Travis has inadvertently learned to imitate the world with his pop/sliding style of singing, and he has learned that from contemporary Southern Gospel musicians.

But the music is also a problem.

Baptist pastor Tim Kelly of Maine, who has taught music for more than 25 years and was previously deeply involved in the pop, rock, new country, rock, rap, R&B music culture, analyzes Travis's performance as follows:

"You have good, solid, traditional, structured, balanced music. And then you have bridge music which tries to bridge the gap between good and bad (unstructured, unresolving) music. This is neither. It is completely unstructured, having no resolution of any kind, breaking almost all the music rules. This is the chord progression that never has a descending fifth (the only resolving progression). This is mystical, unstructured and purely emotional. If you Google 'the world's most emotional music,' you get 'New Age' music that has the exact chord structure in order to make it unstable/emotional. ... This, like the new version of 'Complete in Thee,' reflects all the characteristics of the world. As experts say, this kind of 'nonresolving' chord structure 'bypasses the mind and

feeds only the emotions/body/flesh.’ **You will not find one traditional hymn with this chord layout. This is designed to work up emotions with no intellectual filter.**

The number also is filled with bad syncopation and vocal scooping. Let alone, the lyrics are shallow at best” (Tim Kelly, email, November 22, 2016, pastortimkelly@gmail.com).

Pastor Kelly makes an additional comment about the unresolving chord sequence:

“The emphasis [of contemporary worship] 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. The chording pattern creates music that is weak, nebulous, wandering, abstract, no rules, just feelings. Everything is unresolved, without structure. It is pure emotion without the intellectual governing factor. Our emotions, feelings and experiences should always be governed by God’s Word, truth, facts, knowledge. God’s love never steps outside the bounds of His righteousness. This same philosophy needs to permeate every aspect of our lives, or else we see the consequences: fleshly, carnal.”

Pastor Kelly warns that unresolving chord sequences are sensual and drug like.

“When you have the chord progression of I-V-IV, that is not a cadence. It doesn’t resolve. Praise and worship music takes a progression like this and repeats it over and over and over. This unresolved progression repeated so much is hypnotic. It is like a drug. You do not even need a rhythm. Ending on the IV chord creates a purely emotional experience which many cults use to open up the human soul, like a drug or drum rhythm. New Age, witchcraft, Celtic pagan worship, contemplative worship, etc., all use weak chord progressions to create an emotional experience to ‘open up the human soul to the spirit world.’ It is about a mystical experience.”

Another discerning musician says:

“The deceptive cadence is charismatic in effect. It never resolves, so it builds you up and you want to say it again and you want to say it again and it gets you into this emotional frenzy where that you feel that you are really worshiping God.”

A former member of a charismatic youth group makes the same observation:

“I have been reflecting on that experience. And the music pushes you to a place of unsolidarity. You become an emotional mess. The music lifts you up, up, up emotionally, then drops you. It is an emotional roller coaster. It leaves you in a vulnerable place emotionally. I was always depressed. In high school, music was my drug. It is an opiate that really affects you.”

# The World's Singing Techniques

God instructs His people to sing spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16). Spiritual means holy. It refers to that which is separated *unto* a holy God *from* the unholiness of this world.

There are clear biblical principles that are to be applied to every aspect of the Christian life, including music, and by examining these biblical principles we can discern spiritual from worldly music.

We listed principles of biblical separation in the chapter on rhythm, and the same principles apply to vocal styles, so we will repeat them here.

☑ Spiritual music is music that is not conformed to the world (Romans 12:2).

☑ Spiritual music is music that is not according to the realm of spiritual death (Ephesians 2:1).

☑ Spiritual music is music that is not according to the course of this world (Ephesians 2:2).

☑ Spiritual music is music that is not according to the desires of the flesh and of the old mind (Ephesians 2:3).

☑ Spiritual music is music that is not according to the vanity and the darkened understanding of the old mind (Ephesians 4:17-19).

☑ Spiritual music is music that is unspotted from the world (James 1:27).

☑ Spiritual music is music that is not in friendship with the world (James 4:4).

☑ Spiritual music is music that does not pertain to the “former lusts” (1 Peter 1:13-15).

☑ Spiritual music is music that does not pertain to the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16).

The world's pop music has long employed singing techniques that add a strong sensual or fleshly element. It is physical, appealing to the body. It appeals to and stirs up sensual emotions. It is sexual. The world readily acknowledges this, and the world loves these styles because of the sensual, sexual effect.

Christian artists who borrow from the world's music also borrow the world's singing techniques. This is true both in the realm of Contemporary Christian Music and Southern Gospel, but it is not wise or godly.

In the past, there were Southern Gospel groups that didn't use the world's vocal techniques. They hit the notes cleanly and did not try to distort their voices. An example is the old Chuck Wagon Gang.

For links to the videos see: [www.wayoflife.org/plea/](http://www.wayoflife.org/plea/)

\* [Chuck Wagon Gang](#)

We could also give examples from the shape-note singing movement. It emphasized simple harmony and rhythm that were not adapted from the world of licentious dancing and drinking. The rhythms were straight. The vocalizing was also straight, meaning the notes were hit in a simple, clean manner. There was no sensual element. It was spiritual and not conformed to the world (Romans 12:2).

\* [Shape note singing Rutherfordton, North Carolina](#)

\* [Shape note singing Mt. Zion, Kentucky](#)

## Vocal Sliding and Scooping

**Vocal sliding** is slipping and sliding the voice between notes. It is also called *glissando*.

**Scooping** is attacking a note from above or below its true pitch instead of hitting the note cleanly and directly. It is singing "unnecessary pitches below the first note or below the second one." It is also called flipping.

These techniques are often used together.



\* [Scooping and sliding “In Christ Alone”](#)

These techniques add a greater element of sensuality and emotionalism to the music.

The 1940s book *How to Sing for Money* said, “Scooping is a common practice ... as a swing effect” (Charles Henderson, p. 36).

Thus, the scooping technique was created as part of the commercial dance music scene, and it works with the jerky syncopated rhythm to create the sensual atmosphere that modern dancers desire.

Musicologist Walter Everett identifies the sensuality of this technique. He says, “Many rock vocalists reach out to their audience largely through the PHYSICALITY of their singing” (*The Foundations of Rock: From “Blue Suede Shoes” to “Suite: Judy Blue Eyes,”* 2008).

“Sliding gives the word some grit and attitude” (Molly’s Music).

Scooping has even been described as “sexual utterances” (Charles Brown, *The Art of Rock & Roll*, 1983, p. 68).

One would think that Christian vocalists would want to get as far from “sexual utterances” as possible!

Elvis Presley and countless other pop sex gods and goddesses have used these techniques to great sensual effect, but never to a godly effect.

Regarding scooping and sliding, Dr. Frank Garlock warns:

“The identical methods employed by the world to make the sound sensual are now being used by many popular contemporary Christian music vocalists. Yet many Christians either do not realize or deliberately ignore the fact that **this is no longer ministry, but pure, sensual, flesh-gratifying entertainment.** ... Scooping is one of the most popular methods of producing a dance hall effect. ... A second characteristic of a worldly sound is flipping below and above the actual written melody line. Listen again to Henderson as he comments on this technique:

‘The classically trained singer has an ingrained respect for any written melody, and hesitates to tamper with it. The born swinger, on the other hand, looks on written melody as simply a convenient starting point for his variations’ (Charles Henderson, *How to Sing for Money*, 1940, p. 85). Is sacred music meant to swing?’ (Frank Garlock and Kurt Woetzel, *Music in the Balance*, 1992, pp. 83, 94).

Dr. Garlock identifies the scooping and sliding techniques as sensual swing effects that have no role in sacred Christian music. As we have seen, the word “sacred” means “spiritual,” which is the opposite of worldly.

Walter Everett observes further, “Classical singers traditionally strive for constant beauty of tone, but this is rarely of interest to rock vocalists, who reject the dogma of there being one ‘right’ way to do anything” (*The Foundations of Rock*).

This is a telling statement by a secular musicologist. Note that rock vocalists don’t care about beauty of tone, but God’s people should strive for beauty in everything because we serve the God of beauty and order, and we are singing about His lovely character.

Further, rock singers contort their voices and slip and slide around the notes because they have rejected absolute truth. Their singing style reflects the philosophy of moral relativism which permeates modern pop music.

The world’s style of singing reflects the licentious rock philosophy, regardless if it is used by Christians or non-Christians, liberals, emergents, evangelicals, charismatics, or fundamentalists.

Dr. Frank Garlock observes,

“The identical methods employed by the world to make the sound sensual are now being used by many popular contemporary Christian vocalists. These techniques include swaying and dancing, scooping, vocal sliding, flipping below and above the actual written melody,

whispery, breathy voice, and delayed vibrato. The style itself reflects and projects a philosophy.”

Vocal scooping and sliding is not only sensual and reflects a relativistic philosophy, it also draws attention to the singer, which is another major element of both secular pop, contemporary Southern Gospel, and contemporary Christian music.

Consider the comments posted at the YouTube rendition of “In Christ Alone” which we linked to earlier. The comments call attention to the singer and her voice rather than to the message.

“Beautiful voice.”

“What a great voice you have.”

“You got a great voice!”

“You are wonderfully gifted!!!”

“Love your voice!!”

By this technique, attention is immediately drawn to the singer, which is what the world is seeking, but it is not a godly practice in the worship of a thrice-holy God who has proclaimed that He will not give His glory to others.

“For mine own sake, *even* for mine own sake, will I do *it*: for how should *my name* be polluted? AND I WILL NOT GIVE MY GLORY UNTO ANOTHER” (Isaiah 48:11).

Christian musicians who in any sense share in God’s glory while supposedly singing for His honor are committing a great sin.

Yet by aping the world, the very presentation style, technique, and environment of contemporary worship lends itself to exactly that. The singers and musicians are prominently displayed before the congregation. The auditorium is often darkened and spotlights are used to draw more attention to the singers and musicians. Typically the lead singers are attractive people; their dress fashions are sensual; their voices are “shown off”; they move to the music’s rhythm; their images are projected on large screens;

there are close-ups of faces, tight shots of instruments, sweeping pans of the worship team.

This is precisely the same technique used in secular forums to glorify rock gods. Secular rock gods don't say to themselves, "I'm going to go out there and bless my fans." It's not about blessing the fans; it's about showing off the "artists."

Modern technology produces the most intense glorification of musicians in human history.

Why are contemporary Christian singers and musicians so eager to ape the world?

## **Improvisation**

Closely associated with scooping and sliding and flipping is improvisation. The vocalist uses his or her voice to improvise on the melody to enhance the rhythm and the sensuality of the music.

Again, it is a "swing effect" with its roots in the blues, jazz, and other forms of licentious music that birthed 1950s rock & roll. It's about breaking rules.

Dr. Frank Garlock says,

"The word in contemporary music is improvisation. When an instrumentalist or vocalist improvises, he composes and performs simultaneously on the spur of the moment without any specific preparation. New Age music is also constructed on this idea. Charles Henderson writes: 'Now, apart from the primitive, driving rhythm that lifts the fur on your spine and starts your feet tapping in spite of yourself, what is the outstanding feature of any hot band? The answer--IMPROVISATION--spur of the moment 'faking' on the written melody and rhythm' (Henderson, *How to Sing for Money*, p. 159). In other words, 'do your own thing,' blend in, but not in any regimented, prescribed, or planned manner. Again, this same philosophy, which is teaching relativism and promoting music which exemplifies it, is the basis for the New Age

Movement. This is the opposite of unity, the opposite of ‘one sound.’ ... It is a sound which is characterized by polarization and discord rather than oneness and unity. The sound of sacred music needs to be the opposite of the sound which was just described” (*Music in the Balance*, pp. 155, 156).

The queen of improvisation is Aretha Franklin. On Thanksgiving Day 2016 she took 4.5 minutes to sing the “Star Spangled Banner” at a Detroit Lions football game because of the extensive improvisation.

\* [Aretha Franklin singing “Star Spangled Banner”](#)

An example of vocal sliding and flipping and improvisation can be seen in the following video clip from the 2013 Christmas program of Lancaster Baptist Church, Lancaster, California:

\* [Lancaster scooping sliding](#)

## **Breathy Tone**

In this vocal technique, the microphone is held extremely close to the singer’s mouth and there is a breathiness behind the notes and tone.

It is also used to start a sound with a breathy onset.

The soft, breathy style gives a feeling of intimacy, sensuality, and sexuality. “It is a vocal effect that is used throughout contemporary music. ... It creates real intimacy. It’s very much like the singer is whispering” (“Using Breathy Tone in Your Singing,” Voice Council).

In *The Art of Rock and Roll*, Charles Brown describes the vocal tricks that Elvis Presley employed. “By softening his voice for certain passages he could create a personal effect, which made the women in the crowd feel that he was singing directly to them” (*The Art of Rock and Roll*, 1983, p. 68).

\* [Joy Williams “Do They See Jesus in Me?”](#)

## Vocal Fry

Another popular technique from pop music is vocal fry. It is also called vocal creaking, vocal rasp, popcorning, glottal scrape or rattle.

It is a throaty, rasping, creaking, croaking, distorted vocal sound typically used particularly at the beginning or of musical phrase. It isn't a clear sound, but it is "a wavering inside the lowest range of the voice."

It is sensual. It has been called "a sexy raspy voice" (Jade Joddle, speaking skills coach).

It "packs a raw, emotional punch in pop music" ("Vocal Fry," gizmodo.com).

"It is used to give the impression of intimacy and nearness, or to indicate that the singer is about to break down emotionally and cannot go through with the song" ("Description and Sound of Creak," CVT Research).

"It is used as an effect for heightening emotion. It brings a sense of intimacy" ("Using Creak or Vocal Fry in Your Singing," Voice Council).

It also reflects the relativistic, "law breaker" character of the world's music.

Vocal fry is used by popular rock singers such as Janis Joplin, Britney Spears, Mariah Carey, Enrique Iglesias, Michael Jackson, and Stevie Wonder.

\* [Enrique Iglesias "Hero"](#)

Vocal fry is often found in Contemporary Christian Music and Southern Gospel because the singers are imitating the world of pop music, either wittingly or unwittingly.

The clip we played earlier by Joy Williams, which is filled with the breathy singing style, also has a lot of vocal fry.

\* [Joy Williams "Do They See Jesus in Me?"](#)

Yet as we have seen, vocal sliding, scooping, improvisation, breathy tone, and vocal fry are all techniques

that come from the sexualized world of pop music. They are used to create sensual effects in the listeners.

Things associated with sensuality and sexuality have *no place* in Christian music.

“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” (Romans 12:2).

“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19).

“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Ephesians 2:2-3).

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” (Ephesians 4:17-19).

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

“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).

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation” (1 Peter 1:13-15).

“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God” (1 Peter 4:1-2).

“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).

The music of a holy God should contain no aspect of the world’s sensual ways. It is unholy confusion. It is sin. It is a reflection of the end-times “after their own lusts” apostasy (2 Timothy 4:3-4).



# The Emotional Power of Music

The world's pop music appeals to the emotions. It reaches "the heart" more than "the head." It is music to be felt.

And Southern Gospel has had this emphasis for a very long time.

Emotional music is a type of mysticism, which is an experience-oriented approach to life rather than an intellectual.

God gave man emotions. Emotions have an important place in man's life, but we are fallen people in a fallen world and we must keep the emotions in the right place. They must be kept under control of the Spirit of God and in conformity to the Word of God and not allowed to lead one's life.

Music is the perfect vehicle for emotional mysticism. It has been called "the language of the emotions." Dr. Richard Pellegrino, a brain specialist, says,

"[Music has the uncanny power] to trigger a flood of human emotions and images that have **the ability to instantaneously produce very powerful changes in emotional states**. Take it from a brain guy, in 25 years of working with the brain, I still cannot affect a person's state of mind the way that one simple song can" (*Billboard*, Jan. 23, 1999).

Robert Jourdain says,

"Music seems to be the most immediate of all the arts. ... Music possesses us. ... It really is as if some 'other' has entered not just our bodies, but our intentions, taking us over" (*Music, the Brain and Ecstasy*, 1997, p. 328).

Rock/pop music has always been mystical. It is all about being "hooked on a feeling." The lyrics have never been the most important element. Rock is not so much about thinking as it is about emoting. It is enjoyed more with the body and soul than the heart and mind.

Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones expressed it this way: “The minute *rock'n'roll* reaches the head, forget it. Rock'n'roll starts from the neck down” (Victor Bokris, *Keith Richards: The Biography*).

Rock videos are pure mysticism. Bob Pitman, founder of MTV, said: “The strongest appeal you can make is emotionally. If you can get their emotions going, make them forget their logic, you’ve got ‘em” (“MV Is Rock Around the Clock,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Nov. 3, 1982).

Rock god Jimi Hendrix explained the transformative power of music as follows,

“I can explain everything better through music. You hypnotize people and when you get people at their weakest point, you can preach into their subconscious what we want to say.... ATMOSPHERES ARE GOING TO COME THROUGH MUSIC, because the music is a spiritual thing of its own ... The music flows from the air; that’s why I CONNECT WITH A SPIRIT, and when they come down off THIS NATURAL HIGH, they see clearer, feel different things” (“An Infinity of Jimis,” Hendrix interview with Robin Richman, *Life* magazine, Oct. 3, 1969).

The most emotional, mystical element of rock is not the lyrics; it is the music itself.

“Heavy rock is body music designed to bypass your brain ...” (Dave Roberts, *Buzz* columnist, a Christian rock magazine in Britain, April 1982).

“Don’t listen to the words, it’s the music that has its own message. ... I’ve been stoned on the music many times” (Timothy Leary, New Age guru and promoter of LSD, *Politics of Ecstasy*).

“[Rock music] is THE STRONGEST DRUG IN THE WORLD” (Steven Tyler of Aerosmith, *Rock Beat*, Spring 1987, p. 23).

**The world's mystical, emotional approach to music has been adapted by all branches of Christianity.**

### **The emerging church**

Leonard Sweet says, "Mysticism begins in experience; it ends in theology" (*Quantum Spirituality*, p. 76).

Sweet is talking about the emerging church, but he could be talking about a very large portion of the Southern Gospel world.

### **The Pentecostal and Charismatic movements**

From the beginning, the emphasis has been on seeking an experience, and that experience requires that one "open up to God" and "stop putting God in a box," which means to stop testing things carefully by Scripture and just "go with the flow of the Spirit."

From the beginning, Pentecostal tongues were mere mind-numbing gibberish. A newspaper reporting on William Seymour's meetings at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California, called it "Glibby Bluk," to describe the fact that it was meaningless gibberish (Larry Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William J. Seymour*, p. 302). Pentecostal Larry Lea's "tongues" at Indianapolis '90 went like this: "Bubblyida bubblyida hallelujah bubblyida hallabubbly shallabubblyida kolabubblyida gloooooory hallelujah bubblyida." I transcribed this directly from the audiotapes of the messages which I heard while attending with media credentials.

A chapter in the influential book *These Wonderful Gifts* by Michael Harper is entitled "Letting Go and Letting God." This is the charismatic approach. The believer is instructed to stop analyzing experiences, to stop "setting up alarm systems" and "squatting nervously behind protective walls." Harper says the believer should step out from behind his "walls and infallible systems" and just open up to God.

This is a recipe for spiritual delusion.

## **Contemporary Worship Music (CWM)**

Contemporary worship has a powerful mystical orientation. It is designed to create an emotional experience, as opposed to the older sacred music style that sanctifies through the edifying of the mind and heart by the song's message. In traditional worship, the music is there only to carry along and fortify the words; the words are the most important thing.

Graham Kendrick, one of the biggest names in Contemporary Christian Worship, says, "The old way of preaching and singing began to give way to an expectation that ... God would visit us, and we'd EXPERIENCE HIS PRESENCE IN A TANGIBLE SORT OF WAY" (Interview with Chris Davidson of Integrity Music, June 11, 2002).

The mission of Integrity Music is "helping people worldwide EXPERIENCE THE MANIFEST PRESENCE OF GOD" ([integritymusic.com](http://integritymusic.com)).

Every part of contemporary worship music is geared to creating this emotional experience: the dance rhythms, the unresolving chord sequences, the sensual vocal styles, the repetition, the rise and fall of the intensity, etc.

CCM artist Joy Williams says: "I believe in the power of nuance and telling a story that DRAWS OUT EMOTION WITHOUT SPELLING IT OUT. ... I find myself really drawn to nuance because I feel like that is where I have been affected by music. Take Sigur Ros: I DON'T EVEN UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY ARE SAYING, BUT THE MUSIC MOVES ME AND DRAWS EMOTION FROM ME, and I FEEL like there is glory in that" ("Finding Her Own Voice," *Christianity Today*, March 3, 2009).

## **Southern Gospel**

Southern Gospel is also emotion oriented. A typical Southern Gospel service or concert is all about a feeling! It's about getting excited and whooping and hollering, maybe

even running around and jumping over the pews if we're really in the Spirit.

\* [Southern Gospel shouting service](#)

Hovie Lister of the Statesmen could “turn the listeners’ emotions on and off just like that” (Steve Taylor, *Hungry for Heaven*, p. 31).

Laverne Tripp had “the ability to sway a crowd of people with his crying and country-sound singing” (H.T. Spence, *Confronting Contemporary Christian Music*, p. x).

This is typical Southern Gospel singing. It aims directly for the emotions.

As we observed in the chapter “The World’s Singing Styles,” emotions aren’t wrong in themselves but when emotions lead in the Christian life and music, it is unscriptural and dangerous.

Commenting on the 2016 Burlington Revival in Burlington, North Carolina, which was driven by Southern Gospel music, one discerning brother observed:

“When your Christian life is built upon and maintained by a fleshly, emotional, subjective experience, that is how you operate when anyone challenges it with objective Biblical truth. These ... folks have been led astray and failed by their spiritual leaders, who will be held accountable for not truly watching for their souls. True salvation should naturally bring with it a loyalty to Gods Word above all else. **I’m telling you, most Independent Baptists, especially in the south, are charismatic-like in their theology. The Bible is only something to validate their experience, instead of their experience being tested by the Word of God. THEY ARE IN MANY WAYS SLAVES TO THEIR FEELINGS INSTEAD OF BOUND TO THE SCRIPTURES.**”

That is one of the great errors of and dangers of Southern Gospel today.

Many of the most popular Southern Gospel songs are oriented toward emotion.

Consider Bill Gaither's hugely popular song "**He Touched Me,**" which is considered one of the "top 100 greatest songs in Christian music."

Shackled by a heavy burden  
    'Neath a load of guilt and shame  
Then the hand of Jesus touched me  
    And now I am no longer the same  
He touched me, Oh, He touched me  
    And Oh the joy that floods my soul  
Something happened and now I know  
    He touched me and made me whole  
Since I met this blessed Savior  
    And since he cleaned and made me whole  
I will never cease to praise Him  
    I'll shout it while eternity rolls  
Oh He touched me, oh He touched me  
    And oh the joy that floods my soul  
Something happened and now I know  
    He touched me and made me whole.

The true gospel *can be read into* this song, but the lyrics themselves present no clear gospel message. There is only a vague reference to being shackled by a heavy burden and being cleansed and made whole. There is no mention of sin, the sacrificial death of Christ, or His resurrection, which is the only saving gospel message (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

The reference to "a load of guilt and shame" can be interpreted as being laden with sin and under God's judgment, but it can also be interpreted in any number of other ways in today's heresy-filled Christian world. It can even be interpreted psychologically as a loss of self-esteem.

Any false gospel will fit into this song, so it is entirely ecumenical, and Gaither has publicly stated that this is one of his major goals with music. (See the chapter "The Gaithers.") A Roman Catholic who trusts Jesus *and* Mary, a Pentecostal

who is “holding out faithful,” a Mormon who has experienced a “burning bosom,” even a “gay Christian” such as Marsha Stevens who “feels” confident of God’s acceptance can be “blessed” by this song.

The emphasis of the song is not on a sound doctrinal content, but on being touched, joy flooding the soul, shouting. The emphasis is on emotion.

This is pure Southern Gospel.

The music’s emotional emphasis and lack of strong biblical substance tend to encourage a mindset wherein the hearers don’t carefully test everything by Scripture. They are led by their emotions rather than by God’s Word. Typically, they don’t go to church to grow through doctrinal teaching with serious biblical and spiritual depth; they go to church to feel something, and that carries over into their daily lives.

The vapid music tends to create a weak Christian life and practice, and it is one that grows weaker with each passing generation. There are exceptions, but lovers of Southern Gospel tend not to be serious students of God’s Word. They are content with bits and pieces. They like their preaching to be as emotional and fleshly exciting and as biblically shallow as their music.

When they hear biblical instruction and reproof about music, they react emotionally rather than as mature Christians as described in Hebrews 5:14.

I have seen this throughout the Southern Gospel world, and it has been true for decades.

**The Bible warns against the emotional, mystical approach.**

***The emotional, mystical approach is contrary to the Bible’s warning to be soberminded.***

“Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober” (1 Th. 5:6).

“But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation” (1 Th. 5:8).

“That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience” (Titus 2:2).

“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children” (Titus 2:4).

“Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded” (Titus 2:6).

“But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer” (1 Peter 4:7).

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

To be sober is to be spiritually vigilant, constantly alert, on guard, cautious, on the lookout for enemies and deception. It is the mindset of a Christian who knows that he has powerful, relentless, unseen enemies, and he must be on guard.

To be sober means to be in control of your mind. It means to prove ALL things (1 Thess. 5:21). It means to “try the spirits” (1 John 4:1). The Bible warns that the simple man is gullible and “believeth all things,” whereas the prudent man “looketh well unto his going” (Prov. 14:15). The gullible individual attends a CCM or Southern Gospel concert or “Camp Meeting” or church service and lets his emotions go wild and is not in a testing mindset. He doesn’t believe in “judging.” He doesn’t like “negativity” and “criticism.” He is not on the lookout for spiritual danger. He just goes with the flow of the meeting and the music. The prudent man, on the other hand, knows that this world is filled with spiritual danger, that the devil appears as an angel of light and his ministers as ministers of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:14-15), so he tests *everything* by God’s Word, both in church and out of church.



***The emotional, mystical approach is contrary to the Bible's warning about the deception of the human heart.***

“The heart is deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9).

As a consequence of the deception of the fallen human heart, the Bible warns, “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered” (Proverbs 28:26). The Bible says, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Prov. 3:5-6).

Again, this is the careful, alert, sober, testing mindset that the wise child of God will have at all times in this fallen world.

Any Christian music that tries to stir up my emotions and carry me into an emotional experience is deeply suspect.

I don't want to be *emotionally or physically controlled* by Christian music. I want to *think about* Christian music. Good Christian music does not aim to stir the emotions or move the feet. It aims to impart truth to the heart and mind, and that truth then edifies and sanctifies the life.

Observe that it was in the context of Christian music that Paul warned about being drunk.

“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” (Ephesians 5:18-19).

Spiritual Christian music is not to be associated with drunkenness in any form, which is to be controlled by a foreign substance. One can be drunk with wine, liquor, drugs, the pop culture, fashion, music, and any other thing that takes control of my mind and heart so that I am no longer sober and rational and spiritually alert.

***The emotional, mystical approach is contrary to the Bible's emphasis on living by faith.***

“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17).

“But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6).

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

“Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed” (John 20:29).

“For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7).

“So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

The true Christian life is a life of faith lived according to God’s Word. Faith is not sight or feeling. It is believing God’s Word. It does not come by emotions; it comes by God’s Word.

When this important truth is applied to Christian music, we learn that our music must be oriented exclusively to teaching God’s Word. Only by that means are God’s people strengthened in their faith and enabled to please God.

If music is oriented toward emotionalism rather than the clear teaching of God’s Word, that is not the ministry of true faith, it is a sensual counterfeit.

Southern Gospel’s emphasis on emotionalism is unscriptural and very dangerous.

## Musical Danger in the Internet Age

A person involved in the music ministry of a conservative Independent Baptist church that is heavily involved with Southern Gospel recently said to me by email,

“Maybe I should, but I do not concern myself with the author as much as the message, this has served us well since we run in mostly very conservative circles.”

This has never been a wise or scriptural practice, since the Bible plainly warns about the danger of “evil communications” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

But it is doubly unwise and dangerous in the Internet age when any one can Google a song writer and instantly come into intimate contact with him by listening to his music and being influenced by his doctrine and philosophy of life.

This wasn’t true even 20 years ago. In former times, if a songwriter was a little “off,” the people wouldn’t be significantly influenced by him beyond the particular song they heard in church.

Church leaders and music people must be *much* more careful today.

In the words of a friend, “Using songs made popular by CCM artists if for any other reason is dangerous because it introduces the youth directly to the CCM artists when they like what you sing and Google/YouTube it to learn it.”

It should be obvious that this day, of all days, is not the time to be careless and ignorant about music.

We have witnessed the downfall of many formerly “good conservative churches,” and we have seen that music plays a major role in these changes. It should be obvious that the wrong music has transformational power in a negative sense and that young people in particular are being wrongly influenced on every hand.

I have documented this in the book *Why Most Churches Will Be Emerging within 20 Years*, which is available as a free eBook from [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org).

## Using Martin Luther vs. Using CCM

It is popularly argued that if we are to be “picky” about musical associations then to be consistent we would have to discard the hymns of Protestants such as Luther or Wesley, but this argument holds no water. It is an argument based on ignorance of the transformational power of Contemporary Christian Music and the danger of the world it represents.

The old Protestant hymns were different in character from contemporary worship music. They did not borrow from the world’s party music. (See “Did Luther Use Worldly Music” and “Did the Wesleys Use Tavern Music” at [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org).)

And the old Protestants weren’t building the end-time, one-world church, but the CCM and contemporary Southern Gospel crowds most definitely are.

The old Protestants condemned Rome boldly and were separated from her, even calling her the harlot of Revelation 17, but the CCM and contemporary Southern Gospel crowds are rushing to embrace her, or at the very least flirting with her from a distance. (See “Contemporary Christian Music and Rome” at [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org).)

I have never heard of a Baptist church becoming Lutheran by singing “A Mighty Fortress” or becoming Methodist by singing “Love Divine,” but I have heard of many Baptist churches becoming contemporary by singing contemporary songs.

The world of Contemporary Christian Music is the world of rock & roll, charismatic mysticism, C.S. Lewis, *The Shack*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the emerging church, *The Message*, Brennan Manning, “Christian homosexuality,” Leonard Sweet, Rick Warren, contemplative prayer, and unity with Rome.

We have documented this in the video presentation *The Foreign Spirit of Contemporary Worship Music*

\* [Foreign Spirit of Contemporary Worship Music](#)

Further, we live in a different world today because of technology that allows people to easily communicate with and associate with musicians.

Even when Luther or Wesley or Fanny Crosby were alive, if you sang their music in a Baptist church, the members had no way to develop an intimate association with the hymn writers so that they could sit at their feet and be influenced by everything they believed and represented.

That is not true today. We can read the song writer's blogs, browse their Facebook pages, follow their Twitter accounts, listen to their music on YouTube. We can surf the links from these musicians to their friends and associates and be influenced by the entire dangerous world of contemporary music.

There is no doubt that this is happening in churches everywhere because of the carelessness, ignorance, lack of wisdom, and refusal to heed biblical reproof on the part of so many pastors and music leaders.

# A History of Southern Gospel

The history of Southern Gospel illustrates the danger of an incremental slide toward the world.

At the turn of the 20th century, white gospel music was music that was sung in churches.

It was fashioned by the shape-note singing movement, which began at the turn of the 19th century at the dawn of the Second Great Awakening and had spread rapidly. It got a new impetus after the American Civil War, which ended in 1865.

In shape-note music, musical notes are given different shapes, and by this method congregations could more quickly learn how to read music. (An experiment conducted in the 1950s by George Kyme found that “students taught with shape notes learned to sight read significantly better than those taught without them,” “[Shape Note Effectiveness](http://www.liquisearch.com/shape_note/effectiveness_of_shape_notes),” [www.liquisearch.com/shape\\_note/effectiveness\\_of\\_shape\\_notes](http://www.liquisearch.com/shape_note/effectiveness_of_shape_notes).)

There was a four-note system (*fasola*) and a seven-note system. The four-note system predominated until the establishment of a seven-note publishing company Ruebush & Kieffer in 1866, founded by two Civil War veterans, one Confederate and one Union. Their most popular songbook, *The Temple Star*, sold more than half a million copies. The seven-shape notation “anticipated the melodic and harmonic developments that would come to define twentieth-century white gospel.” Many other hymnbooks were published using shaped notes.

Shape-note singing schools were held in churches and camp meetings, led by a traveling singing master who would stay in one location for days or weeks. The focus was on sight singing, music theory, harmony, and song leading. “A singing school would be a large social event for a town; sometimes nearly everyone in the town would attend and

people would come for miles. ... In this way, singing schools resembled tent revivals” (“Singing School,” *Wikipedia*). In *These Happy Golden Years*, the famous American writer Laura Ingalls Wilder described attending a singing school as a young woman and being courted there by her future husband. It was a tradition that a photo would be taken of the participants of the singing school at the end of the program.

The singing of the shape-note movement emphasized simple harmony and rhythm that were not adapted from the world of licentious dancing and drinking. The rhythms were straight. The vocalizing was also straight, meaning the notes were hit in a simple, clean manner.

Consider the following examples:

- \* [Shape note singing Rutherfordton, North Carolina](#)
- \* [Shape note singing Mt. Zion, Kentucky](#)

This was gospel music in the South until the 1920s. (It wasn’t called Southern Gospel until about mid-way through the 20th century.) It was spiritual and not conformed to the world (Romans 12:2).

Between the 1920s and the 1950s, Southern Gospel music underwent four significant changes.

- (1) It was commercialized.
- (2) It was taken out of the churches and put it into hands of publishers and promoters.
- (3) It was jazzed up with worldly musical styles.
- (4) It became a form of entertainment.

The Stamps Quartet of the 1930s “not only sang the most popular gospel songs of the day, but gave an all-around entertainment program” (Bob Terrell, *The Music Men*, p. 39).

Gospel music publisher Harper and Associates advertised their Southern Gospel music as “Family ENTERTAINMENT with a message, entertainment that a Fair or civic organization can sponsor and NOT FEEL LIKE THEY’RE GETTING TOO CHURCHY.”



Harper and Associates founder Herman Harper was instrumental in getting live coverage of Southern gospel music on the Grand Ole Opry, a major country-rock forum. The fact that the same crowd that loved Hank Williams and Roy Orbison also loved commercial Southern Gospel is clear evidence of the latter's worldly character.

Professional Southern Gospel quartets were born in the early part of the 20th century as business enterprises. Prior to that, quartets were mixed (men and women) and "sang in their churches simply for the spiritual edification of the congregation" (*The Music Men*, p. 54).

The inventor of the professional male gospel quartet was James Vaughan (1864-1941), a Nazarene who hired a quartet in 1910 to represent his music publishing company (which he had founded in 1902). Vaughan is often called "the father of Southern Gospel music." The Vaughan Quartet performances at churches, revivals, and conventions were a means whereby Vaughan sold music. "In this way the groups promoted their sponsor and created a market for the songbooks" (David L. Taylor, *Happy Rhythm*, p. 7). By the late 1920s Vaughan had 16 full-time quartets on the road. In 1921, the pioneering Vaughan cut the first record for his new recording company, and in 1922 he built the first radio station in Tennessee, all with the goal of promoting his music.

In 1924, the V.O. Stamps Music Company was founded by Virgil Stamps (1892-1940), a Baptist. With business ideas he had learned while working at the Vaughan Publishing Company, Stamps founded a music school, published music, and put his own quartets to work. After Stamps was joined by J.R. Baxter, Jr., the company became Stamps-Baxter and would become hugely influential. Stamps-Baxter hymnals promoted biblically shallow, jazzed up, emotional-impact songs such as "I'll Fly Away," "Just a Little Talk with Jesus," "Precious Memories," "I Won't Have to Cross Jordan Alone," "Angel Band," "Keep on the Firing Line," "Just a Little Closer

walk with Thee,” “Little Is Much When God Is in It,” “I Am Bound for the Promised Land,” “Give the World a Smile,” and “Farther Along.”

Both Vaughan and Stamps encouraged a **popularity cult** around the members of the quartets.

Stamps sold songbooks “as mementos of professional singers’ popularity and fame” (Douglas Harrison, *Then Sings My Soul: The Culture of Southern Gospel Music*, p. 85).

“Vaughan’s rise and influence initiated a shift in white gospel culture from amateurs singing together at singing schools and conventions to professional quartets increasingly defined by their roles as performers and celebrities.”

These companies eventually created the popular all-day and all-night gospel music singing conventions.

Vaughan’s early quartets sang in a simple and straightforward harmonizing manner.

\* [Vaughan Quartet late 1910s “My Troubles Will Be Over”](#)

By the late 1920s, the professional Southern Gospel quartets were adapting rhythms and vocal styles from the world. In the following clip of the Vaughan Quartet in 1928, you can hear the beginning of vocal sliding and a ragtime piano.

\* [Vaughan Quartet 1928 “His Charming Love”](#)

The new “Southern Gospel” style featured “tag lines in accompanying voices, chromatic lower-neighbor note and passing notes, and in the refrain a walking bass lead with several interjections. The harmony was simple and very rhythmic. A ragtime style was added later to the piano accompaniment (commonly called the ‘stomp beat’), which made the sacred and the secular indistinguishable” (H.T. Spence, *Confronting Contemporary Christian Music*, p. 120).

As we have seen in the chapter “Southern Gospel Dance Rhythms,” a major pioneer of the ragtime gospel piano style was Dwight Brock, who played in one of the Stamps quartets.

“Brock played a rhythm piano style; some thought it sounded a little like Dixieland [jazz] or razzamatazz. ... Thousands of pianists would copy his style in the years to come. ... IT WAS REVOLUTIONARY BECAUSE IT JAZZED UP GOSPEL MUSIC JUST ENOUGH FOR THE SECULAR PUBLIC TO CATCH ON. Dwight’s nephew, Brock Speer, who sings bass for the Speer Family today, said when his uncle was a boy in the early teens--he was born in 1905--he heard a circus drummer playing syncopated rhythms on snare drums, and said to himself, ‘I wonder if I could do that on the piano?’” (*The Music Men*, pp. 38, 39).

\* [Stamps All Star Quartet Dwight Brock piano](#)

The ragtime piano style was created in the brothels and bars and gambling dens of Memphis and New Orleans. Ragtime and boogie-woogie were major elements in the development of the blues, jazz, and eventually rock & roll.

\* [Ragtime Scott Joplin Entertainer](#)

\* [Ragtime syncopation](#)

\* [Ragtime Lily of the Valley](#)

\* [Boogie Woogie Cleo Brown 1936](#)

\* [Boogie Woogie gospel](#)

The pulsing rhythms of ragtime, boogie-woogie, blues, and jazz were used in their original settings because they were sensual, even sexual. They didn’t want “straight” music; they wanted “sexually syncopated sounds.”

“Like the whorehouses in New Orleans and St. Louis, the Gayoso houses provided employment for Memphis’s early ragtime pianists ... The Gayoso brothels gave many white Memphians their first dose of SYNCOPATION and the blues. Compared to the pallid ballads and sentimental ‘heart songs’ that the Victorian era offered, that

‘WHOREHOUSE MUSIC’ would have been EXCITING in any situation. Given the extra tang of forbidden fruit, of social and moral taboos being broken all around, those SEXUALLY SYNCOPATED SOUNDS proved irresistible” (emphasis added) (Larry Nager, *Memphis Beat*, p. 26).

The type of rhythm that is at home in a brothel and drinking den or other sin hole has no place in Christian music, yet it was adapted by Southern Gospel pianists when they wanted to liven up the music and make it more widely acceptable as a form of entertainment.

This principle was wrong then, and it is wrong today.

“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” (Romans 12:2).

Though the seeds were present in the 1920s and ‘30s, it was not until the late 1940s that Southern Gospel began to promote a full-out, entertainment-oriented, jazzed-up approach to Christian music on a large scale.

Before that the quartets were not very flashy. W.B. Walbert, the manager of the Vaughan Quartet during the 1920s, “was a spiritual man who did not believe that a quartet should do anything showy to detract from the gospel messages in the songs” (*The Music Men*, p. 33).

At the same time, these early professional quartets were gradually pushing the boundaries. Incrementalism was at work, and the fruit was evident in succeeding generations.

Walbert’s son, James (1918-2009), the grandson of James Vaughan by his daughter Grace, began playing the piano backwards, playing with his elbows, and otherwise putting on a show to entertain the crowds. “His father frowned on such routines, thinking that they detracted from the experience of hearing the songs performed as they were written, but audiences loved Walbert’s piano excursions” (“SG History 101: Accompanists,” [absolutelygospel.com](http://absolutelygospel.com)). James

performed with worldly entertainers such as Judy Garland and Liberace and wrote worldly hits such as “When I Saw You Walking Down the Street” and “Enchantment” ([barglow.com/adam/biography.htm](http://barglow.com/adam/biography.htm)). Though trained classically, he applied the “music is neutral” philosophy to Christian music. He was known for “his skill at blending the styles of American pop, jazz, and standard church music” ([averyfineline.com/2009/08/06](http://averyfineline.com/2009/08/06)). James was inducted into the Southern Gospel Music Association Hall of Fame in 2004.

This illustrates the negative power of incrementalism (incremental steps toward the world) on the succeeding generations. The much more cautious adaption of the world’s music by James Vaughan and his son-in-law W.B. Walbert set the stage for the more abandoned approach of James Walbert and others of his generation.

The 1940s and 1950s witnessed an explosion in the popularity of Southern Gospel, driven by entertainment groups such as the Blackwood Brothers and The Statesmen.

This is called the “Golden Age” of Southern Gospel, and concerts attracted up to two million people per year (Scott Matthews, “A Review of Douglas Harrison’s *Then Sings My Soul*,” *Hollins University Review*, Nov. 13, 2012).

\* [Crowd shouting welcome to the Stamps](#)

The Statesmen featured Hovie Lister’s ragtime, honky-tonk piano, and this style has dominated popular Southern Gospel ever since. (This does not mean that the Statesmen sang only jazzy music. Some of their numbers were sacred renditions of good Christian music. An example was “What a Savior,” featuring tenor Rosie Rozell.)

\* [Statesmen Hovie Lister piano](#)

The following brief history of Southern Gospel is by a man who researches rock music. He has correctly observed the close connection between jived up Southern Gospel of the

1940s and 1950s and early rock & roll (though he himself is not opposed to the jiving).

“The white gospel quartets of the 1950s, when [Elvis] Presley started to study them, were every bit as exciting as their black counterparts, USING SHOW-BIZ HYPE, WHIPPING UP CROWDS AND CREATING STARS. Reporting on an all-night sing in Atlanta, Georgia, for *The Saturday Evening Post* (June 1956), Furman Bisher compared the audience response to the Oak Ridge Quartet to bobby soxers’ swooning for Frank Sinatra. ‘Women out there shrieked, and a couple of young girls rushed to the stage edge to snap pictures of the tenor who was holding that high note the way a trumpet player prolongs a “ride,”’ wrote Bisher. ...

“Presley idolized such gospel stars for the rest of his life. His particular favorites were J.D. Sumner, the tall, stringy bass vocalist with the Blackwood Brothers, who also went to the First Assembly of God Church in Memphis, and Jake Hess and Hovie Lister of the Statesmen Quartet (which actually had five members). An ordained minister, LISTER IS OFTEN CREDITED WITH BRINGING SHOW BUSINESS TO QUARTET SINGING. At the time he said, ‘If it takes shaking my hair down, beating a piano like Liberace or Piano Red to keep these young people out of beer joints and the rear seats of cars, I’ll do it. The Devil’s got his kind of entertainment. We’ve got ours. They criticize me, say I’m too lively for religion, but I get results. That’s what counts’” (emphasis added) (Steve Turner, *Hungry for Heaven*, pp. 29-31).

Lister’s philosophy was pragmatism; whatever works is right. The same philosophy permeates the Contemporary Christian Music field today. Hovie Lister and the Statesmen were forerunners of CCM. God has *not* instructed us to do whatever “gets results,” but to obey His Word regardless of the results. The sole authority for faith and practice is the Bible, and we are to test everything by God’s Word. If it is Scriptural, it is right; if it is not Scriptural, it is wrong,

regardless of how well it appears *to work*. God's Word plainly forbids His people to love the world. It is therefore impossible to please God by adapting the things of the world to the service of Christ. Liberace was a talented homosexual entertainer who helped corrupt the morals of America. It is a serious error to adapt his sensual, worldly ways to Gospel music. Where does God's Word encourage us to copy the world? To the contrary, we are instructed not to be conformed to the world (Romans 12:2).

Nowhere do we see the Lord Jesus Christ or the apostles entertaining people in the name of the ministry. We do not see them putting on a worldly show to draw a crowd. We do not see them adapting themselves to the spirit of the age. We do not see them attempting to manipulate people by worldly means. In Scripture, we do not see God's people going for this type of thing. It would have been undreamed of in the early churches, except by the church at lukewarm Laodicea and by worldly Demas (2 Timothy 4:10).

There was not a hint of Hollywood worldliness and pragmatic philosophy in the Lord's apostles. The apostle Paul stated that he depended *solely* upon the power of the Holy Spirit and not upon any human gimmick. "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:2-5).

We return to Steve Turner's overview of the history of Southern Gospel:

"White quartet singing had developed in the 1920s ... they began to develop showmanship and gimmicks during the 1940s. ... Hovie Lister, a dashing young man with long, dark wavy hair and an Errol Flynn mustache, LOVED TO SHAKE IT ALL UP FOR THE LORD. He joined with

Crumpler and Jake Hess to form the Statesmen Quartet, which was to become one of the first supergroups of white gospel, catapulting the music to commercial acceptability and SETTING THE STYLE FOR EMERGENT ROCK 'N' ROLLERS BRED ON HOLY MUSIC.

“Although much was made of the evils of dancing, show business, jukeboxes and television, THE SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL QUARTETS WAS LARGELY DUE TO THEIR PRESENTING MUCH OF THE SAME GLOSS AND EXCITEMENT in an acceptable context. The songs were about loving your neighbor, being holy and not giving in to ‘modern religion,’ but THE PERFORMANCES DREW FROM POP, BLUES, COUNTRY, RAGTIME AND JAZZ. ...

“Don Butler, now director of archives for the Nashville-based Gospel Music Association, was the Statesmen Quartet’s manager during the 1950s. ‘They were sensational,’ he remembers. ‘Hovie Lister had no peer in showmanship. He created a tremendous rapport with the audience. HE COULD TURN THEIR EMOTIONS ON AND OFF JUST LIKE THAT. ... HOVIE WOULD JUMP ONTO A PIANO AND SHAKE HIS LONG BLACK HAIR INTO HIS FACE WHILE THE REST OF THE GROUP DANCED ON STAGE. They were the first quartet to use four individual microphones. Before that everyone had gathered around one mike” (emphasis added) (Steve Turner, *Hungry for Heaven*, pp. 29-31).

Hovie Lister’s “approach was loud, fast, swingy, and pop” and that “he would do whatever it took to get the loudest applause, the biggest laugh” (Gaither, *Homecoming*, p. 133).

Lister was characterized by ‘flashy dress, oversized rings, and upbeat entertainment style” (*The Music Men*, p. 146).

The Statesmen made large sums of money from their appearances, selling Gospel music to the world. In the 1950s, the Blackwood Brothers and the Statesmen would receive \$1,000 to \$1,500 per night for their music shows, which was a huge amount of money for the time.



Not content with this, the Statesmen sold their services to the Nabisco Company in the 1950s. Lister became their spokesman, emceeding for Nabisco commercials. At their peak they were making a half million dollars per year. That would be more than five million dollars or more per year in today's dollars, and that was only one branch of their commercial singing empire. The group performed on the Nabisco television show. "In their personal appearances, the Statesmen participated in a complete merchandising campaign on behalf of their sponsor..." (Taylor, *Happy Rhythms*, p. 53). One photo in David Taylor's history of the Statesmen shows the group performing in front of a large wall mural of a woman dressed in a short skirt as "the Sweetheart of the South" for Nabisco Vanilla Wafers. This very risqué fashion (for the time) was part of Nabisco's advertising campaign surrounding the Statesmen. For their work with Nabisco the group recorded music with Wade Creager's dance orchestra at the Biltmore Hotel in Atlanta.

Lister and the Statesmen (and their many cohorts and imitators) went so far beyond that which was traditionally acceptable in Christian music in the middle of the 20th century that some Christian radio stations would not play their music. In fact, some stations broke their records in protest! This occurred in 1955 when they recorded some gospel songs with a "New Orleans jazz flavor." The instrumental group that backed the Statesmen on the album included country guitarist Chet Atkins, Ernie Newton on the stand-up bass guitar, and Farris Coursey on drums. For the recording, the Statesmen had formed what was essentially a country-rock band. They pioneered the CCM practice of using unsaved musicians on their recordings.

One preacher protested Hovie Lister's boogie-woogie piano style by calling it "stripping music" (David Taylor, *Happy Rhythms*, p. 55). That old preacher is mocked by the contemporary crowd, but he was right. That music was born in brothels and filthy strip clubs.

\* [Statesmen Hovie Lister piano](#)

The Statesmen's bass singer, Jim "Big Chief" Wetherington, moved his legs in ways strangely reminiscent of how Elvis moved to rock & roll.

\* [Statesmen Wetherington leg shake](#)

Rock historian Peter Guralnick, in *Last Train for Memphis*, observes that "preachers frequently objected to the lewd movements."

Jake Hess, another member of the original Statesmen, noted,

"He [Wetherington] went about as far as you could go in gospel music. The women would jump up, just like they do for pop shows" (Peter Guralnick, *Last Train for Memphis*, p. 48).

In one of their early hits, *Happy Rhythm* (1950), the Statesmen actually used the phrase rock and roll to describe what they were doing! "There's a happy rhythm keeps a-rockin' and a-rollin'." This was set to a "rollicking, boogie setting" (Taylor, p. 34).

\* [Statesmen "Happy Rhythm" 1950s](#)

\* [Statesmen "Happy Rhythm" 1990s](#)

Yet the term "rock & roll" originated in the sleazy side of the black culture as a euphemism for fornication.

Describing the popular Southern Gospel quartets of the 1950s, Wally Varner of the Melody Masters testified:

"I guess the Melody Masters were one of the wildest organizations, for the lack of a better word, that I've ever worked with. I used to turn flips and things like that. ... In those days **GOSPEL MUSIC WASN'T AS SPIRITUAL, IT WAS MORE ENTERTAINING.** We had a rambunctious type of program, but we also had some beautiful singing that we would settle down to" (Taylor, *Happy Rhythms*, p. 22).

The Bible says it is impossible to serve the flesh and the Spirit at the same time.

*“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Galatians 5:16-17).*

If Christian music isn't spiritual, then it is of the world, the flesh, and the devil.



# Incremental Worldliness

There have been two distinct sides or camps to Southern Gospel. We could label them conservative vs. contemporary.

The conservative Southern Gospel people have used music solely to glorify Jesus Christ and edify the saints. They have been more reluctant to jazz up the music with worldly rhythms and sounds, though that is quickly changing today. The singers and musicians who represent this category have tended to live godly, Christ-honoring lives.

The contemporary side has used music for entertainment. They have sought to jazz up Christian music with the world's rhythms in order to appeal to a wider audience. The singers and musicians in this category have often tended to live spiritually careless, worldly lives.

This distinction has been evident from the inception of commercialized Southern Gospel. Even in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s, there were many churches which refused to participate in the "jazzy" side of Southern Gospel and which refused to allow worldly Southern Gospel musicians to ply their wares. One of the reasons why so many of the popular Southern Gospel groups of that era sang in school auditoriums and other secular venues was because "some churches would not permit these 'jazzy' singers to perform in church houses" (*The Music Men*, pp. 64, 65).

Two camps within Southern Gospel were already evident in the 1920s.

James Vaughan had a commercial goal with his music, but his higher goal was the spiritual edification of his hearers and he did not introduce worldliness into the music. He "emphasized holiness and living a sanctified life, separated from the world" and his groups "avoided any style that would draw attention to oneself" (*Homecoming*, p. 76). Vaughan lived an exemplary Christian life and "never used tobacco in any form, never swore an oath, and never drank intoxicating

beverages” (*The Music Men*, p. 28). He “knew the Bible as few men did.”

V.O. Stamps, on the other hand, exemplified the worldly camp. Stamps was an intemperate man, a heavy smoker who died young of diabetes. He would order two-pound steaks and follow that up with three pieces of pie. At one of his All-Night Broadcasts he drank 46 sodas, most of them Coca-Colas (*The Music Men*, p. 122).

This camp within Southern Gospel was far less careful about spiritual matters and had no conviction about putting on a full-blown show with their music. Even in the earliest years, the Stamps Quartet was described as “an entertaining fivesome” (*The Music Men*, p. 39). (The fifth member was the pianist.) Their theme song was “Give the World a Smile,” which featured strong rhythm with the bass singing melody and the upper voices singing an afterbeat. “Then, on the repeat chorus, they sang a boom, boo, pang, pang effect like a rhythm guitar” (Ibid.). Their ragtime pianist was the aforementioned Dwight Brock, who “jazzed up gospel music just enough for the secular public to catch on.”

\* [Stamps “Give the World a Smile”](#)

Music that appeals to “the secular public” is not spiritual music!

Many of the popular Southern Gospel groups of the 1950s and ‘60s were characterized by worldly living. Drinking, smoking, drugs, womanizing, and divorce has been a common feature of a large portion of Southern Gospel.

The Statesmen’s first tenor, Bobby Strickland, observed that Southern Gospel quartets often reach a certain level and “then something happens.” He believed the reason for this was that “they don’t live right” (*The Music Men*, p. 97).

The Sunshine Boys were formed by Ace Richman, a swing band entertainer who witnessed the profitability of gospel quartets. When he added “Western swing” to gospel songs, he saw that “people liked them even better” (*The Music Men*,

p. 190). Richman was “the man who put swing into gospel,” jazzing it up even more than ragtime. The Sunshine Boys were pure entertainment. They did not testify of Jesus Christ, preaching the gospel, or give invitations. Richman told preachers, “We do not testify; we are an entertaining group. You pay us to sing these songs, and we’ll sing ‘em. But that’s all.”

Laverne Tripp, who sang with the Sierra Quartet and the Blue Ridge Quartet, was infamous for his carnal living.

The piano player with the Sierra Quartet was a known homosexual.

At one Kingsmen Quartet concert a screaming, hair-pulling fight broke out between the bass singer’s ex-wife and his girlfriend.

In December 2014, Pastor Ray Cunningham sent us the following information:

“During the summer of 1980 there was an all night Southern Gospel singing at the Boutwell auditorium in Birmingham, Alabama. There was also a huge rock concert going on at the civic arena. My plan was to pass out tracts at the rock concert then head over to the gospel singing. While walking up the alley way beside the Boutwell Auditorium, I stopped to witness to a young man all dressed up beside a side entrance. I asked him if he died today would he go to heaven. He said he didn't know for sure. I witnessed to him. That young man was Joel Hemphill. I asked him concerning the members of his group if salvation was necessary for being part of the group or was the litmus test only that they could play and sing their music well. Salvation was never an issue he said. I found this to be true through out the Southern gospel industry. At different events I would slip to the back doors and find the people smoking etc. I was a young Bible college student at the time. This greatly disturbed me, and if that wasn't bad enough then the CCM started which was even worse.”

J.D. Sumner and the Sunshine Boys were infamous for their worldly lifestyles. They smoked, drank, cavorted with women, etc. “The Blackwoods, three months before their air tragedy, were not the only ones who referred to him [Sumner] and his cohorts in the Sunshine Boys as infidels” (Gaither, *Homecoming*, p. 160). J.D. Sumner almost lost his marriage because of his moral recklessness. He went on to sing bass with the famous Blackwood Brothers, then with the Stamps Quartet.

J.D. Sumner and the Stamps toured with Elvis Presley from 1969 until his death in 1977, performing backup for “the King of Rock & Roll” in sin-holes such as Las Vegas night clubs. The Blackwood Brothers also backed up Elvis in Las Vegas.

During the years in which Sumner and the Stamps were backing Elvis, Sumner’s nephew, Donnie, who sang in the group, became a drug addict and was lured into the licentious pop music field.

Ed Hill, one of the singers with the Stamps, was Elvis’s announcer for two years. It was Hill who concluded Elvis’s Las Vegas concerts with, “Ladies and gentlemen, Elvis has left the building. Goodbye, and God bless you.”

The Jordanares performed as background singers on Elvis Presley records and as session singers for other raunchy rock and country recordings. The Jordanares provided vocals for Elvis’s 1956 megahit “Hound Dog.” They toured with Eddy Arnold as well as with Elvis. They also performed on some of Elvis’s indecent Hollywood movies.

Members of the Speer Family (Ben and Brock) also sang on Elvis recordings, including “I’ve Got a Woman” and “Heartbreak Hotel.”

After Elvis’s death, J.D. Sumner and the Stamps performed concerts in his honor, singing Elvis Presley rock & roll hits! At the National Quartet Convention in 1999 I purchased an audio cassette recording of one of these concerts.



The September 2002 edition of *Singing News*, which covers Southern Gospel Music, contained a full-page ad promoting Dolly Parton's Dollywood entertainment center in Tennessee. Dollywood is the location of the Southern Gospel Hall of Fame. It's all about money. Dolly Parton is the epitome of immodest dressing and is comfortable in the midst of Hollywood's moral filth. She starred in the filthy R-rated movie "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas."

Dolly Parton says, "God isn't the monster in the sky that I grew up with [in the Church of God]. He's a feelin' within you" (*Parade*, Nov. 2, 1980). "God is a feeling" fits the Southern Gospel approach.

In 2014, she criticized Christians who are intolerant of the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual) community. She said,

"They know that I completely love and accept them, as I do all people. I've struggled enough in my life to be appreciated and understood. I've had to go against all kinds of people through the years just to be myself. I think everybody should be allowed to be who they are, and to love who they love. I don't think we should be judgmental. Lord, I've got enough problems of my own to pass judgment on somebody else" ("Dolly Parton Q&A," *Billboard* magazine, Oct. 24, 2014).

Dollywood hosts an annual Southern Gospel Jubilee as well as an annual gay and lesbian day.

These sad facts could be multiplied. Someone might protest that I am blackening the entire Southern Gospel music field with a relatively few worldly examples, but that is not the case. The worldliness is not limited to a very narrow portion of Southern Gospel. At the same time, I readily acknowledge that there are godly people who sing Southern Gospel.

Southern Gospel as an institution does not plainly and publicly rebuke the worldliness of its musicians and, in fact, honors worldly people. It is extremely rare for even the most

conservative Southern Gospel singers to reprove the sins and errors of contemporary Southern Gospel.

For example, in spite of J.D. Sumner's worldliness, he has been highly exalted in the Southern Gospel music field. Sumner died in 1998, and the Southern Gospel Museum and Hall of Fame was built partly in his honor. He was mentioned frequently and honorably at the National Quartet Convention that I attended with press credentials in September 1999. There was no warning about how he glorified wicked Elvis Presley and performed rock & roll music.

Worldly music and worldly living are intimately associated. Carnality produces spiritual blindness and powerlessness.

“Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11).

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able” (1 Cor. 3:1-2).

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:12-14).

Dr. H.T. Spence explains how that carnality and lukewarmness affect one's spiritual sight:

“Many Christians see some things, but because their hearts are still in a carnal state (in a sympathy for the world), their sight is distorted. ... A Christian, even if he is faithfully working in the vineyard for Christ, can possibly

have a lukewarm life. According to Revelation 3:17, lukewarmness in a Christian's life (and it does not matter if he is a leader in the church or not) produces blindness. Some men who have been viewed as the authorities of music, who have led in the forefront years ago in the Christian circles, are now compromising the principles of God's word with their music. Dear reader, it is an evidence of either lukewarmness or backsliding. Their music has become eclectic and dialectic with sounds of this age" (*Confronting Contemporary Christian Music*, 1997, p. 8).

H.T. Spence, vice president of Foundations Bible College & Seminary, is a fundamentalist historian and teacher who has taught music, history, and theology for more than three decades. He received part of his music training at Bob Jones University. In the late 1960s, he sang with a gospel trio called The Seminaries. At the time he was a Pentecostal and was singing in Pentecostal churches. In his book on CCM he observes that popular Southern Gospel quartets were singing in the same churches, and on three occasions his trio appeared with Laverne Tripp and the Sierra Quartet. He describes how that Tripp attempted "to influence our young trio to change its style" by dressing in a contemporary manner and by adopting an entertaining stage presence. They refused to heed Tripp's counsel and on the third occasion they walked out of the program. The following is Dr. Spence's testimony:

"I was born in a Pentecostal home in October 1948 at a time when my grandfather was bishop of the Pentecostal Holiness Church. ... I received a call from God for the ministry in my college freshman year (1966), and was chosen to sing in a male trio called The Seminaries; we traveled and ministered to churches on the weekends, representing the seminary I was attending at that time. Although the Pentecostal music was not the best even from the beginning, there were definite changes coming by the late 1960s. ... During the two years I was part of the

group, we came in contact with the Southern Gospel quartets who were making their appearance in the Pentecostal churches. At times, we were appointed to sing in the same services. One gospel music personality I remember was Laverne Tripp, who then had a reputation for his vacillation to backsliding, including his drinking, yet AN ABILITY TO SWAY A CROWD OF PEOPLE WITH HIS CRYING AND COUNTRY-SOUND SINGING. He was with the Sierra Quartet at that time (whose piano player was a known homosexual). He tried to influence our young trio to change its style, but his flair of clothing and aggressive presence on ‘stage’ was truly too much for us. During a third mutual service with him, we as a trio walked out. The Pastor met us out at the parking lot and inquired of our action. We told him in a most honorable way that we could not share the service with such a man as Mr. Tripp. The Pastor agreed with our appraisal of him, but he said, ‘IT DRAWS THE CROWD.’ With that remark, we left. Eventually, sad to state, our piano player married one of the sisters of Laverne and was sucked into the vortex of ‘Southern Gospel Music.’ Mr. Tripp went on to become lead singer for The Blue Ridge Quartet when Elmo Fagg left the group. During his years with that national quartet, he was given to heavy drinking and drugs. An invitation came to him during that time to go solo on the Las Vegas strip. Some years ago he supposedly came back to the Lord. He has become a permanent fixture with TBN along with his wife and children (who now have families of their own). His own personal recording studio is part of the lucrative business he has come to enjoy through the CCM medium” (H.T. Spence, *Confronting Contemporary Christian Music*, 1997, pp. x, xi).

This testimony opens a window into a large portion of the ecumenical, entertainment-oriented Southern Gospel scene of recent decades. New books on Southern Gospel by Bill Gaither and others tend to ignore or gloss over its worldliness, but the Bible warns loudly of this danger.

“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).

Worldliness can be forgiven by repentance and confession, but it must not be overlooked or excused. Worldly ministers produce worldly fruit.

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 5:7).

Dr. Spence’s testimony also reminds us of pastoral responsibility in protecting churches. When Spence and his trio protested against worldly music, the host pastor, though admitting that the musicians were carnal, excused it because “the people liked it.” People-pleasing pastors will answer to God for their disobedience to the Scriptures.



# The Gaithers

Bill and Gloria Gaither represent the heart and soul of Southern Gospel today.

Donna Hilley, president of Sony-Tree Music, said “the Gaithers are to Christian music what the Beatles are to pop music” (“Bill Gaither,” Encyclopedia.com).

They are graduates of Anderson College, a Church of God school, and attend a Nazarene church. “A Nazarene church man himself, he has nevertheless moved progressively in his artistic career to the expressive left of the Nazarene holiness tradition” (“Denomination and Style,” Averyfineline.com, 2008). See also “Church of the Nazarene Denomination,” christianity.about.com/od/Nazarene-Church.

The Gaithers have written some very popular gospel music, such as “He Touched Me,” “Thanks to Calvary,” and “There’s Something about That Name.”

Since the early 1990s, the Gaither’s *Homecoming* concert and video series dramatically increased the popularity of Southern Gospel music in this generation. More than 100 *Homecoming* videos have been produced.

Sadly, the Gaithers have used their vast influence to promote the lie that music is neutral and thus to encourage the ever deeper inroads that the world has made into Southern Gospel. They have also promoted the “non-judgmental” heresy and the unscriptural ecumenical movement with its doctrinal tolerance and its lack of concern about doctrinal purity.

## Music Is Neutral

In the 1980s, Gaither capitulated to Contemporary Christian Music’s foundational premise that “MUSIC IS NEUTRAL,” meaning that music in itself is morally neutral and that any type of music can be used to glorify God.

During a concert tour in New England in 1986, Gaither admitted that he had changed his musical style due to the influence of the “world’s culture.” It is a clear example of the Bible’s warning that “evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33). Gaither said he believes there is a place for Christian rock, expressing his philosophy of music in these words:

“God speaks through all different kinds of art forms and musical styles and musical forms” and the “format itself is not necessarily spiritual or non-spiritual” (*FBF News Bulletin*, March-April 1986, p. 3).

The following is an eyewitness description of the Gaither’s appearance at the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis in 1980:

“The Bill Gaither Trio entertained 15,000 Southern Baptists on Sunday evening with a musical program worldly enough to make any true believer weep. The music was so loud that some people left and others put their hands to their ears to block the intense amplification of the music” (Robert S. Reynolds, “Southern Baptists on the Downgrade: Report on the 1980 SBC Convention in St. Louis,” *Foundation*, Volume VI, Issue 1, 1985, p. 9).

Gaither has used every type of rock rhythm in his music. During the disco craze in the late 1980s, the Gaither Trio even recorded a disco album (*Calvary Contender*, August 15, 1989).

For more about the neutrality of music see the video series *Music for Good or Evil*, available as free eVideo downloads.

\* [Music for Good or Evil](#)

## **Bill Gaither and Rome: The Ecumenical Philosophy**

Bill Gaither has had an ecumenical philosophy from the beginning of his musical career. In his autobiography *It’s*



*More Than the Music*, he states that one of the fringe benefits of playing their concerts in “neutral, non-church environments” was that people from “all church denominations” attended. “Before long, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, charismatics, Catholics, and Pentecostals were all praising the Lord together. Subtly, the walls between denominations began to crumble ...” (p. 115).

Gaither’s *Hymns for the Family of God* was purposefully “nondenominational” and included devotional readings from a wide variety of Christians, including heretics such as Deitrich Bonhoeffer (one of the fathers of Neo-orthodoxy), Malcolm Muggeridge (a liberal Roman Catholic who did not believe in Christ’s virgin birth or bodily resurrection), and Robert Schuller, who has wickedly redefined the gospel in terms of his humanistic self-esteem theology.

The Gaithers provided the music one evening at Indianapolis ‘90, a large ecumenical charismatic gathering I attended with press credentials for reporting. One-half of the roughly 25,000 participants were Roman Catholics. A Catholic mass was held each morning, and Catholic priest Tom Forrest from Rome brought the closing message. At an earlier conference in 1987, Forrest said that purgatory is necessary for salvation. Roughly 40 denominations were present in Indianapolis. The Gaithers were perfectly at home in this unscriptural gathering and entertained the mixed multitude with their jazzy music.

The Gaither Vocal Band performed at the Promise Keepers’ second major men’s conference in Boulder, Colorado, in 1994. In joining hands with Promise Keepers, the Gaithers were joining forces with one of the most radical ecumenical organizations. In an interview with the Catholic publication *Our Sunday Visitor*, Promise Keepers founder Bill McCartney said that full Catholic participation was his intention from the start. “Back in 1992, at our first stadium event, we very clearly stated from the podium that we eagerly welcomed the participation of Roman Catholics, and we’ve

had scores of Roman Catholics attend and go back to their churches excited” (*Our Sunday Visitor*, July 20, 1997, p. 10). *The Tidings* (March 31, 1995), a Roman Catholic paper, stated that Catholics were encouraged to participate in Promise Keepers because “there is no doctrinal issue which should cause concern to the Catholic Church” and “there is no attempt at proselytizing or drawing men away from their [Catholic] faith to another church.” Catholic priest John Salazar spoke at a Promise Keepers meeting in Plainview, Texas, in December 1995 (*Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, December 3, 1995). The Promise Keepers field representative for the upper Midwest at that time, Steve Jenkins, was a Roman Catholic. A *Promise Keepers Wake Up Call* brochure distributed in San Louis Obispo, California, urged pastors, churches and their men to attend special rallies during March 1996, one of which was held at the St. Rose Catholic Church in Paso Robles. In 1997 Promise Keepers appointed a Roman Catholic, Mike Timmis, to its board of directors. One of the speakers at several of 1997 PK rallies was Roman Catholic priest Jim Berlucchi (“Making New Catholic Men?” *Our Sunday Visitor*, July 20, 1997, p. 10). In June 1997, Promise Keepers hosted a Catholic Summit at its headquarters in Denver, “sounding out Catholic volunteers and leaders from around the world” (Ibid.). Promise Keepers organized a Roman Catholic mass as part of its Rich Stadium conference in Buffalo, New York (*The Humanist*, Sept. 19, 1997).

### **Bridging Southern Gospel with CCM**

Bill Gaither has done much to bridge Southern Gospel with Contemporary Christian Music.

He has mentored many of the popular Christian rockers, including Sandi Patty, Russ Taff, Michael English, Carman, and the members of Whiteheart (*CCM Magazine*, July 1998, p. 20).

\* [Gaither Trio reunion 2012 Taff English](#)

In 1999, Gaither joined forces with hard-rocking dc Talk founder Toby McKeehan to “create a new modern worship music label, 40 Records” (*CCM magazine*, July 1999, p. 11).

The goal was “to STRETCH THE BOUNDARY OF WORSHIP MUSIC” and to “give a youthful spirit to worship music for ANY DENOMINATION ...”

Speaking of this music company, Gaither said: “I view building bridges of understanding of different cultures and PHILOSOPHICAL POINTS OF VIEW as part of my calling. UNITY DOES NOT DEPEND ON OUR CONSENSUS OF OPINION, but on our unity in Christ” (*CCM magazine*, July 1999).

This is a heretical and dangerous statement. Biblical unity *does* depend on a consensus of opinion about doctrine. Ephesians 4:1-6, which speaks of Christian unity, says there is only “one faith” (verse 5). This refers to the body of truth delivered by the Spirit of God to the apostles and prophets who wrote the New Testament Scriptures.

Philippians 1:27 also speaks of Christian unity, and it demands “ONE MIND striving together for the faith of the gospel.” That is certainly not a description of modern ecumenism.

See also 1 Corinthians 1:10. “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.**”

Timothy was instructed to allow “no other doctrine” in the churches he was overseeing (1 Timothy 1:3). That is the strictest stance possible on the issue of doctrinal purity.

According to the apostle Paul, believers are not to unify with those who teach false doctrine; they are to *separate from* them (Romans 16:17).

God's Word is directly opposed to the ecumenical philosophy.

Gaither's friends Toby McKeehan and dc Talk are ecumenical and accept Roman Catholics as brothers and sisters in Christ in spite of Rome's false sacramental gospel and its heresies pertaining to the papacy, Mary, the priesthood, the mass, the saints, etc. When Pope John Paul II visited America in January 1999, dc Talk joined hands with hundreds of thousands of Catholics to welcome him. Featured at a Catholic youth rally connected with the Pope's visit, were dc Talk, Audio Adrenaline, Rebecca St. James, Jennifer Knapp, The W's, and the Supertones (*CCM Magazine*, April 1999, p. 12). dc Talk's Kevin Max praised Catholic youth for coming out to hear the pope, describing John Paul II as "someone with something of substance to say" (*Ibid.*). Each attendee received a rosary with instructions about how to pray to Mary.

The Gaithers frequently perform and record songs which present an ecumenical philosophy. For example, "SONGS THAT ANSWER QUESTIONS" from their *Back Home in Indiana* album has the following lyrics:

"Don't want to spend my life a preachin' sermons/ that give answers to the questions no one's asking anywhere/ When there's so much pain and hurting/ there's no time to be searching/ for the needles in the haystacks that aren't there/ I wanna spend my time a wearin' myself out for Jesus/ with the news a cure's been found to heal our land/ Stead of making lists, inventing creeds/ that aren't concerned with people's needs/ I'll show 'em how to touch the nail scarred hand/ Don't wanna spend my time prayin' prayers/ Bombarding heaven with requests to rain down fire on saints who care [unclear]/ In our methods we may differ, but if Christ the Lord we live for/ May we not forget the enemy is OUT THERE."

This vapid song contains half-truths and subtle errors, which are more dangerous than plain and obvious errors.

While it is true that God's people are to show people how to "touch the nail scarred hand," it is not true that preaching is to be limited to "answering questions people have." The preacher is instructed to preach the whole counsel of God and the whole Word of God (Matthew 28:20; Acts 20:27; 2 Timothy 3:16 - 4:1-2).

The Bible warns that it is apostates who heap to themselves teachers that scratch the ears of those who itch for new things rather of loving the pure truth of God's Word (2 Timothy 4:3-4). This prophecy sounds very much like what the Gaithers are singing about.

Also, it is not wrong to "make lists" or "invent creeds" that aren't concerned with people's needs. The lists and creeds mentioned in this song refer to doctrinal studies and statements of faith. Doctrinal studies must, first of all, faithfully represent Bible truth, regardless of whether or not it meets "people's needs." Sound Bible doctrine does meet man's deepest needs, of course, but that does not mean that Bible doctrine meets the *felt needs* of unsaved or carnal people. The unsaved does not feel he has a need to be told he is a sinner or that he is has no acceptable righteousness before God or that he is to repent or he will go to hell, and the carnal does not feel that he needs to die to self or to separate from the world, etc., but the Bible tells us all of these things.

This song encourages the hearers to despise doctrinal study and biblical research and sound teaching, and this is exactly the attitude typically found in the ecumenical movement and even in weak Southern Gospel churches. This is a recipe for building the end-time one world "church."

And it is *not* true that the divisions among Christians are merely about differing methods or that differing methods are not important. Take baptism, for example. Many denominations "baptize" infants, while others baptize only those who have trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and shown evidence of the new birth. Some sprinkle; others

immerse. These are differing doctrines and methods, but they are not insignificant and should not be ignored.

And it is *not* true that the “enemy” is limited to things “outside of” the churches. The Bible warns of false teachers, false christ, false spirits, false gospels, deluding spirits, doctrines of devils--all of which will be found within churches and among professing Christians (Acts 20:29-30).

Also it is *not* true that fundamentalists or biblical separatists are praying for fire to fall on those with whom they disagree doctrinally. That is a vicious libel upon biblical fundamentalists who wish no harm upon anyone but who are guilty only of loving Jesus Christ and caring deeply about the truth of His Word.

The unscriptural and very dangerous message of this song is propelled in the hearts of the listeners by the effective means of a country-rock rhythm and repetition.

Another ecumenical song sung by the Gaithers is “JESUS BUILT THIS CHURCH ON LOVE” from their *Back Home in Indiana* album. The song is sung at many of the Gaither concerts and is done in the style of jazzy black gospel with heavy drum and bass guitar backbeat.

“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 all professing Christians would merely “pull together” and exercise love, the divisions would be healed.

It is a feel-good sentiment, a nice fairy tale which has wide appeal, but it is unreasonable and unscriptural. The Lord

Jesus Christ and His apostles and prophets warned repeatedly that false teachers would lead many astray, that there would be false christs, false spirits, false gospels, false Christians, false churches, and doctrines of devils (e.g., Mat. 7:15-23; 24:3-5, 11, 24; Acts 20:28-30; 2 Cor. 11:1-4, 13-15; Galatians 1; Ephesians 4:14; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:13; 4:3-4; 2 Pet. 2; 1 John 2:18-19; 4:1; Jude; etc.). (For examples, see “False Christs and False Gods” in the *Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians*, available as a free eBook from [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org).)

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 where these false christs, false gospels, false spirits, false teachers, false Christians, and false churches are in today’s Christian world. They imply, rather, that the denominational divisions are largely petty and could be overcome by more ecumenical love. There are many problems among Christians that can be healed through love, but it simply is not true that love will heal the major divisions within Christianity. These divisions involve serious doctrinal issues that should not be ignored and cannot be solved through sentimental songs.

This Gaither song also says the churches are “not to keep anybody out.” That is blatantly contradictory 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; Titus 3:10-11; 2 John 8-11; Rev. 18:4).

Another ecumenical Gaither song is “LOVING GOD, LOVING 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."

The song contains many half-truths and subtle errors. While love is an essential part of a godly Christian life, 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 rules! The book of Ephesians alone, the epistle that exalts salvation by grace alone without works (Eph. 2:8-10), by my count contains 88 specific "rules" for God's people.

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) and that preachers are instructed to teach other men (2 Tim. 2:2), that older women are instructed to teach younger women (Titus 2:3-5), etc.

Bible teaching does indeed involve "filling books with explanations of the way." That is precisely what the apostles did in their Epistles. The Bible itself contains 66 books with "explanations of the way"!

This Gaither song presents a simplistic, sentimental, wrong-headed approach to the Christian life and ministry which appeals to a modern crowd living by their emotions, but which is patently contrary to the teaching of God's Word.

## **Gaither Warns against Judging**

In an interview with Kim Jones, a tattooed female rocker who writes a column for the Roman Catholic publication *Holy Spirit Interactive*, Bill Gaither said:

"Finger pointing is never, I think, of God. Because I know that Scripture 'judgment is mine, saith the Lord.' When we



get out of the judgment business and just get into the being business, the being what God wants us to be, it will take care of itself" (*Holy Spirit Interactive*, Dec. 6, 2004).

The level of biblical ignorance reflected by this statement is frightening, especially when we consider the vast influence that Bill Gaither wields among churches in this generation.

First of all, the Bible nowhere says, "Judgment is mine, saith the Lord." It says, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). The believer is taught to give place unto wrath and to avoid avenging himself upon his enemies, because that is strictly God's business.

On the other hand, though the believer is forbidden to judge hypocritically (Mat. 7:1-5) and forbidden to judge in matters in which the Bible is silent in this dispensation (Rom. 14:1-5; Col. 2:16), as in matters such as diet and holy days, he is most definitely taught to judge things in the sense of testing them by the Word of God and condemning them if they are in error. The believer is to judge sin in the church (1 Cor. 5:12). He is to judge preaching and teaching (1 Cor. 14:29; Acts 17:11). He is to reprove the unfruitful works of darkness, which requires judging whether something is a work of darkness (Eph. 5:11). He is to judge false teachers (Mat. 7:15-23).

As a matter of fact the Bible says that "he that is spiritual JUDGETH ALL THINGS" (1 Cor. 2:15). That is a very far-reaching statement. The spiritual man knows that he lives in a world of sin and spiritual darkness and error and he is warned repeatedly in the Bible about the danger of false teaching and apostasy and spiritual deception. Thus he carefully tests everything by the light of God's Word. The spiritual man does not judge by his own thinking; he judges by the holy Word of God, which he has in the Scriptures.

The Gaither's non-judgmental philosophy is dead wrong.

## Conclusion

The Gaithers represent the heart and soul of Southern Gospel music today. Their “homecoming” specials have brought together most of the well-known Southern Gospel groups, from the Statesmen to the Florida Boys. Those who have participated in these gatherings have put their stamp of approval upon the ecumenical-rock side of Southern Gospel by not separating from those who are guilty of these things and by not lifting their voices to reprove them.

The Bible instructs us to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11).

Revelation 18:4 warns God’s people to come out from among the apostasy of the last hours “that ye be not partakers of her sins.”

2 Timothy 3:5 instructs God’s people to turn away from the end-time apostasy that has a form of godliness but denies the supernatural power thereof.

COMPLICITY WITH DOCTRINAL AND SPIRITUAL ERROR MAKES ME A PARTAKER WITH THAT ERROR. 2 John warns that even to bid God speed to a false teacher makes me “partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 11).

I realize this is a very hard line and one that is completely foreign to the thinking of this ecumenically-crazed age, but this is what the Word of God says.

The Gaithers have no excuse for their disobedience to God’s Word. When the Gaithers greet 12,000 Roman Catholics, including many priests and nuns, as brethren in Christ and “minister” to them in music, as they did at Indianapolis ’90, they are partakers of the evil deeds of Rome.

It is wrong to associate with those who walk in open disobedience to God’s Word and to support them with record sales and to bring their music with its ecumenical philosophy into our churches and homes.

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us” (2 Thessalonians 3:6).



## A Plea

We plead with the Lord's people to be more careful about music.

We plead with the Lord's people to stop taking the dangers so lightly and treating the music issue largely as one of mere "style."

We plead with the Lord's people to get better educated about music. Ignorance might be bliss, but it is not spiritually wise, and it won't stand at the judgment seat of Christ. There is no excuse for not knowing anything about song writers and musicians today when it is so easy to Google them.

We plead with the Lord's people to be more careful about associations and about building bridges to compromising people who are, in turn, bridges to even greater spiritual dangers.

We plead with you to do this for the sake of your own ministry and family, for the sake of your grandchildren, and for the sake of those you influence.

It is always right to move in a wiser, stronger, more scriptural direction as opposed to a weaker direction.

Contemporary worship music is a bridge to many dangerous things. It has transformational power.

If the negative influence doesn't come overnight, it will come eventually.

If the influence doesn't change the older people, it will change the younger ones.

If the contemporary philosophy doesn't permeate the church in this generation, it will in the next.

For those of us who still believe in biblical separation and therefore agree that lines must be drawn, why can't we agree that the lines should be drawn at the safest place? Why not "approve things that are excellent" as opposed to borderline and questionable (Phil. 1:10)?

Why try to find something legitimate within the dangerous world of contemporary worship music or contemporary Southern Gospel?

What is the motive for that? Is that the wise and godly and safe position?

For the sake of the next generation, we need to keep *all* contemporary influences out of our churches and homes to every possible degree, and we need to do the work of serious, ongoing education that will protect the Lord's people.

Instead of mocking and sidelining and blacklisting those few voices that are warning about these things and are providing documentation to back up the warnings, why not listen to them and treat them as friends of the truth rather than fools and enemies?

Every independent Baptist church that doesn't take this matter seriously and doesn't educate itself seriously and doesn't take a strict stand will be well down the emerging road within a decade, or two at the most.

Contemporary music is *that* powerful and it is *that* much at the heart of end-times apostasy.

We would plead with pastors to face this issue and make the effort to educate both themselves and their people. To leave it up to a music director is to abdicate responsibility. Many materials are available. One doesn't need a master's degree in sacred music to understand this issue at a practical, fundamental level.

We plead with Bible-believing churches to establish godly standards of music and be consistent! To condemn "CCM" while using contemporary Southern Gospel is not consistent. To say you are opposed to Contemporary Christian Music while using soft rock and "adapted" CCM is not consistent.

It is better to err on the side of being too careful and too "strict" than too tolerant. No one will be hurt by a music standard that is too "strict," but there is plenty of spiritual danger in being too loose.

I plead with the Lord's people to consider the following materials, asking only that you listen and read prayerfully and "prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

I don't expect anyone to agree with me on all points, but at the very least, you will be challenged and you will be better educated about the dangers of contemporary Christian music and contemporary Southern Gospel.

A friend in Christ,  
David Cloud

"Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful" (Proverbs 27:6).

Here are resources available on our website. For links see:  
[www.wayoflife.org/plea/](http://www.wayoflife.org/plea/)

\* "The Transformational Power of Contemporary Praise Music"

\* "The Foreign Spirit of Contemporary Worship Music"

\* "Southern Gospel Music- The History and Danger of Southern Gospel Music"

"Baptist Music Wars" deals with every major point pertaining to the music issue in Baptist churches today, including the scooping/sliding singing style.

\* "Baptist Music Wars"

"The Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians" is a nearly 600-page directory which includes contemporary Southern Gospel Musicians.

\* "The Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians"

"For the commandment *is* a lamp; and the law *is* light; and reproofs of instruction *are* the way of life" (Proverbs 6:23).





# When to Avoid Southern Gospel

In summary, we offer the following practical guidelines about when to avoid Southern Gospel.

## When It Uses Worldly Rhythms

We should avoid Southern Gospel when it uses the world's sensual pop/rock dance rhythms.

Southern Gospel has always been too quick to use ragtime, boogie-woogie styles.

The late Bruce Lackey, who was the Dean of Tennessee Temple Bible School in the 1970s, played piano professionally in bars before he was saved. He warned that much of the Southern Gospel music would be at home in these licentious environments because the rhythm is the same.

Boogie-woogie is boogie-woogie, regardless of the words which accompany it. It arose from the same sleazy side of the “juke joint culture” as rhythm & blues and jazz. It is sensual dance music and is not fitting for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Southern Gospel is being immersed in the larger world of CCM and is adopting the “Nashville sound” of commercial music. You cannot serve the Spirit with fleshly music. Sensual music is very enticing to the flesh; thus it is extremely attractive.

Like everything associated with the flesh, sensual music is addicting. It creates an appetite for more and more worldly music.

God has called us to deny the flesh; to die to self (which refers to our old fleshly nature).

Though it is not always easy to know exactly where to draw the line with rhythm in Christian music, the best place to draw the line is to draw it as far from the world as possible. If the music *sounds* worldly, it *is* worldly!

Our goal as Christ-honoring Christians should not be to stay as close to the world as possible without becoming completely worldly, but to stay truly separated from the world according to the clear teaching of God's Word.

We are to avoid even the appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:21).

We are to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11).

We are not to be conformed to this world (Rom. 12:2).

If a piece of music would be comfortable in a bar, then we should not use it in church.

### **When It is Associated with Charismatic/ Ecumenism**

We should avoid Southern Gospel when it is associated with the charismatic-ecumenical movement.

This movement is at the very heart of the end-times apostasy that is fashioning a one-world "church." It is dangerous in the extreme and must be avoided in obedience to the Scriptures (Rom. 16:17).

I care not how pleasant the Gaithers and the Imperials and many other popular groups might be; I must reject them because they are openly flaunting the Bible's command to separate from error. If I listen to them, I am in grave danger of picking up their spirit of compromise. Not only is it wrong, but it is grossly hypocritical for a church that preaches against the ecumenical movement to turn around and use musicians who are tied in with it. The National Quartet Convention (NQC) exists in open disobedience to the Bible's commands to separate from error. It is ecumenical and refuses to take a stand for Bible doctrine. As noted earlier in this book, at the 1999 National Quartet Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, which I attended with press credentials, the statement was made that the "celebrities" of the NQC are men who bring Christians together from all denominations through music. That is the ecumenical movement.

In a 2005 interview, the Imperials described their ecumenical philosophy:

“Ian is Southern Baptist. [Shannon] is from an independent background that was very legalistic. Jason basically grew up Assembly of God, nondenominational, Word of Faith. Jeremy grew up Church of God. We don’t even look at denominations anymore. The waters can get so muddied up. There isn’t one good one or bad one” (“More Than Just Showing up to Sing,” July 1, 2005, [Christianmusic.about.com](http://Christianmusic.about.com)).

This is the mainstream Southern Gospel philosophy and it is a biblically ignorant position. Paul instructed Timothy not to allow any other doctrine (1 Timothy 1:3). Sound doctrine is very important and it is to be the basis for separation (Romans 16:17).

### **When the Performers Are Worldly**

We should avoid Southern Gospel when the performers are worldly.

If a Southern Gospel group is worldly, it is impossible for them to produce spiritual music. The Bible warns that like produces like.

“Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” (Gal. 6:7-8).

A pastor who does not want his people to be worldly will not bring in worldly singing groups and will not allow the music of worldly song writers to be brought into the church through specials.

The same is true for parents. If we want our homes to be spiritual we must fill them with that which is spiritual, not that which is carnal and worldly. Many of the Southern Gospel groups, even in fundamental Baptist circles, are worldly. They dress like the world. They love the world’s vile

movies. They are sports-crazy like the world. Their lives are not saturated with the Word of God. They don't walk cautiously and holily in the fear of God. They don't test everything by God's Word. Worldly singing groups present themselves like the world.

On many occasions I have been distracted by the manner in which a church singing group was dressed. My friends, I don't go to church to be distracted by the immodest appearance of some carnal woman pretending to be a gospel singer. What a wicked thing it is for women to pretend to be singing for the glory of a holy God even while drawing men's attention away from Christ to their sensual appearance!

Godly women do not want to draw attention to themselves with worldly hairstyles (notice how many of them wear their hair short in accordance with the world's unisex fashions and in discordance with God's Word, 1 Corinthians 11:15), gobs of makeup (we don't believe makeup is wrong in moderation but we also don't believe Christian women should look like painted hussies), and tight or revealing or unisex clothing. Godly women do not want men in the congregation to be enticed by their immodesty.

“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works” (1 Timothy 2:9-10).

I thank the Lord for humble, Spirit-filled singers that dress modestly and draw attention to Christ instead of themselves and that practice what they sing, but I intend to avoid worldly singing groups.

### **When It is Entertainment**

We should avoid Southern Gospel when it is entertainment instead of edification.

The Bible says everything in the church is to be done to edification.

“Let all things be done unto edifying” (1 Cor. 14:26).

The entertainers will ask, “What is wrong with entertaining the saints?” The answer is that there is no authority for it in the Word of God.

I like to laugh and have a good time, but I don’t see any justification in the Word of God for turning the church service into an entertainment club. Where do we see the apostles doing anything like that?

The only thing similar to this in the New Testament is when the carnal Corinthians turned the Lord’s Supper into a party. For this they were rebuked soundly by Paul (1 Cor. 11:20-22). He did not permit it, and I don’t believe we should permit singing groups to turn the house of God into an entertainment platform.

Lots of people like jazzed up gospel music, and it can draw a good crowd. That does not mean it is right. The opposite is true. The flesh loves entertainment, but that which is flesh is not spiritual.

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal. 6:17).

I have heard pastors argue that their people like the jazzy music, but it is the pastor’s job to give people what God wants them to have, not what they want.

Carnal Christians, even unsaved religionists, love worldly gospel music. Observe Southern Gospel sings which attract large numbers of people who are not faithful to the house of God and who do not live for God in their daily lives.

Even Elvis Presley, the king of rock & roll, loved jazzy Southern Gospel the likes of The Statesmen and the Blackwood Brothers, but he did not live to glorify Jesus Christ.

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mat. 6:24).

## Conclusion

We praise the Lord for every Southern Gospel singer and group that is *not* characterized by the above traits.

Some Southern Gospel singers refuse to participate in the ecumenical-charismatic movement. Not only do they separate from end-times apostasy, but they publicly warn God’s people of it. Their chief concern is faithfulness to the Word of God, and they do not make a god out of music. They do not want to please mere religious crowds. They minister only in faithful, scriptural churches. They refuse to use the world’s pop and rock rhythms. They don’t try to get the saints boogying in the aisles. They refuse to turn the music of a holy God into sensual dance music. They do not seek to entertain people; they sing and play strictly for the glory of Jesus Christ and the edification of the saints. They refuse to dress like the world or imitate the world’s vocal techniques. They strive to live holy lives separated from the wickedness of this hell-bound world and the error of modern Christianity.

They pay the price for their faithfulness by not being popular with the CCM crowd or even with the commercially successful Southern Gospel crowd. They do not sell millions of albums. They are not invited to perform at the National Quartet Convention. You will not hear their music coming through the loudspeakers at most Christian bookstores.

You will see them one day, though, before the judgment seat of Christ joyfully hearing the sweet words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant”!

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BIBLE TIMES AND ANCIENT KINGDOMS: TREASURES FROM ARCHAEOLOGY. ISBN 978-1-58318-121-8. This is a package consisting of a book and a series of PowerPoint and Keynote (Apple) presentations which are a graphical edition of the book. The PowerPoints are packed with high quality color photos, drawings, historic recreations, and video clips. Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms is a course on Bible geography, Bible culture, and Bible history and has a two-fold objective: to present apologetic evidence for the Bible and to give background material to help the student better understand the setting of Bible history. We cover this fascinating history from Genesis to the New Testament, dealing with the Table of the Nations in Genesis 10, the Tower of Babel, Ur of the Chaldees, Egypt, Baal worship, the Philistines, the Canaanites, David's palace, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, Ahab and Jezebel, the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel, the Assyrian Empire, Hezekiah and his times, Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylon, the Medo-Persian Empire, Herod the Great and his temple, the Roman rule over Israel, and the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. Many of the archaeological discoveries from the past 200 years, which we relate in the course, are so fascinating and improbable that they read like a novel. It is easy to see God's hand in this field, in spite of its prevailing skepticism. The course also deals with Bible culture, such as weights and measures, plant and animal life, Caesar's coin, the widow's mite, ancient scrolls and seals, phylacteries, cosmetics, tombs, and the operation of ancient lamps, millstones, pottery wheels, and olive presses. The course begins with an overview of Israel's geography and a timeline of Bible history to give the student a framework for better understanding the material. Each section includes maps to help the student place the events in their

proper location. The course is packed with important but little-known facts that illuminate Bible history and culture. The preparation for the book is extensive, the culmination of 40 years of Bible study, teaching, and research trips. In this context the author built a large personal library and collected information from major archaeological museums and locations in North America, England, Europe, Turkey, and Israel. We guarantee that the student who completes the course will read the Bible with new eyes and fresh enthusiasm. 500 pages book + DVD containing 19 PowerPoint presentations packed with more than 3,200 high quality color photos, drawings, historic recreations, and video clips.

THE FUTURE ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE. ISBN 978-1-58318-172-0. One of the many reasons why the Bible is the most amazing and exciting book on earth is its prophecies. The Bible unfolds the future in great detail, and *The Future According to the Bible* deals in depth with every major prophetic event, including the Rapture, the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Tribulation, the Antichrist, Gog and Magog, the Battle of Armageddon, the Two Witnesses, Christ's Return, Muslim nations in prophecy, the Judgment of the Nations, the resurrection body, the conversion of Israel, the highway of the redeemed, Christ's glorious kingdom, the Millennial Temple, the Great White Throne judgment, and the New Jerusalem. The first two chapters deal at length with the amazing prophecies that are being fulfilled today and with the church-age apostasy. Knowledge of these prophecies is essential for a proper understanding of the times and a proper Christian worldview today. The 130-page section on Christ's kingdom describes the coming world kingdom in more detail than any book we are familiar with. Every major Messianic prophecy is examined. Prophecy is a powerful witness to the Bible's divine inspiration, and it is a great motivator for holy Christian living. In this book we show that the Lord's churches are outposts of the coming kingdom. The believer's position in Christ's earthly kingdom will be determined by his service in this present world (Revelation 2:26-27; 3:21). The book is based on forty years of intense Bible study plus firsthand research in Israel, Turkey, and Europe.

BAPTIST MUSIC WARS. ISBN 978-1-58318-179-9. This book is a warning about the transformational power of Contemporary Christian Music to transport Bible-believing Baptists into the sphere of the end-time one-world “church.” The author is a musician, preacher, and writer who lived the rock & roll “hippy” lifestyle before conversion and has researched this issue for 40 years. We don’t believe that good Christian music stopped being written when Fanny Crosby died or that rhythm is wrong or that drums and guitars are inherently evil. We believe, rather, that Contemporary Christian Music is a powerful bridge to a very dangerous spiritual and doctrinal world. The book begins by documenting the radical change in thinking that has occurred among independent Baptists. Whereas just a few years ago the overwhelming consensus was that CCM was wrong and dangerous, the consensus now has formed around the position that CCM can be used in moderation, that it is OK to “adapt” it to a more traditional sacred sound and presentation technique. The more “conservative” contemporary worship artists such as the Gettys are considered safe and their music is sung widely in churches and included in new hymnals published by independent Baptists. As usual, the driving force behind this change is the example set by prominent leaders, churches, and schools, which we identify in this volume. The heart of the book is the section giving eight reasons for rejecting Contemporary Christian Music (it is built on the lie that music is neutral, it is worldly, it is ecumenical, it is charismatic, it is experienced-oriented, it is permeated with false christs, it is infiltrated with homosexuality, and it weakens the Biblicist stance of a church) and the section answering 39 major arguments that are used in defense of CCM. We deal with the popular argument that since we have selectively used hymns by Protestants we should also be able to selectively use those by contemporary hymn writers. There are also chapters on the history of CCM and the author’s experience of living the rock & roll lifestyle before conversion and how the Lord dealt with him about music in the early months of his Christian life. The book is accompanied by a DVD containing two video presentations: The Transformational Power of Contemporary Praise Music and The Foreign Spirit of Contemporary Worship Music. 285 pages.

**BELIEVER'S BIBLE DICTIONARY.** This volume, the product of forty years of study, is based upon the King James Bible and is written from a dispensational, Baptist perspective. The studies are thorough, practical, devotional, and designed to be used by preachers, teachers, and homeschoolers. The Believer's Bible Dictionary is designed to be more affordable and transportable than the Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity. We encourage every believer, young and old, to have his own Bible dictionary and to have it right beside his Bible as he studies, and we are convinced that this is one of the best Bible dictionaries available today. There are eight ways it can help you: (1) It can help you understand the Bible. The first requirement for understanding the Bible is to understand its words. (2) It can help you understand out-of-use words and phrases from the King James Bible, such as blood guiltiness, die the death, and superfluity of naughtiness. (3) It can help you to do topical studies. The student can study the full range of Bible doctrines by following the thousands of cross references from entry to entry. (4) It can help you to study issues relating to morality and practical Christian living, such as capital punishment, child training, cremation, and divorce. (5) It can help you to study Old Testament types of Christ, such as day of atonement, high priest, Melchizedek, passover, and tabernacle. (6) It can help you to find the meaning of Bible customs and ancient culture, such as agriculture, idolatry, military, money, music, and weights and measures. (7) It can help you to study Bible places and geography, such as Assyria, Babylon, Caesarea, Ephesus, and Jordan River. (8) It can help you in preaching and teaching. The doctrinal material in this dictionary is presented in a practical manner with outlines that can be used for teaching and preaching, in the pulpit, Sunday Schools, Bible Colleges and Institutes, home schools, family devotions, prisons and jails, nursing homes, etc. Missionary author Jack Moorman calls the dictionary "excellent" and says, "The entries show a 'distilled spirituality.'" Second edition May 2015. 385 pages.

**THE EFFECTUAL BIBLE STUDENT.** This is a 12-hour series of video presentations plus an accompanying textbook containing a detailed outline to the course. It is our goal and passion to help God's people, including teenagers, become effectual Bible students. The course, which is the product of 40 years of Bible

study and teaching, has life-changing potential. It has four major sections: (1) The spiritual requirements for effectual Bible study, (2) tips for daily Bible study, (3) principles of Bible interpretation, and (4) how to use Bible study tools. It also deals with using Bible study software on a computer, a tablet, or a smartphone. It is a package consisting of the videos of the course and the textbook with review questions for testing. The course notes can be used as a standalone tool by teachers to teach church classes and home schooling programs or can be used for self-study. The package can be purchased as a set of 6 DVDs and a textbook, or it can be downloaded for free from [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org).

KEEPING THE KIDS: HOW TO KEEP THE CHILDREN FROM FALLING PREY TO THE WORLD. ISBN 978-1-58318-115-7. This book aims to help parents and churches raise children to be disciples of Jesus Christ and to avoid the pitfalls of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The book is a collaborative effort. It contains testimonies from hundreds of individuals who provided feedback to our questionnaires on this subject, as well as powerful ideas gleaned from interviews with pastors, missionaries, and church people who have raised godly children. The book is packed with practical suggestions and deals with many issues: Conversion, the husband-wife relationship, the necessity of permeating the home with Christian love, mothers as keepers at home, the father's role as the spiritual head of the home, child discipline, separation from the pop culture, discipleship of youth, the grandparents' role, effectual prayer and fasting. Chapter titles include the following: "Conversion," "The Home: Consistent Christian Living and the Husband-Wife Relationship," "Child Discipline," "The Church," "Unplugging from the Pop Culture," "Discipleship," "The Grandparents," "Grace and the Power of Prayer." 531 pages.

THE MOBILE PHONE AND THE CHRISTIAN HOME AND CHURCH. ISBN 978-1-58318-198-0. Many Christian homes and churches are losing a frightful percentage of their young people to the world. This practical and far-reaching youth discipleship course deals with the parent's part, the church's part, and the youth's part in discipling young people. It covers salvation, child discipline, the Christian home environment that produces

disciples, reaching the child's heart, Bible study techniques, how to protect young people from dangers associated with the Internet and smartphones, how to use apologetics, and many other things. The section on building a wall of protection deals with such things as having a basic home phone that teens can use under parental oversight, using filters and accountability software, controlling passwords and apps, the power of pornography, the dangers of Facebook and video games, avoiding conversation with members of the opposite sex, and monitoring the young person's attitude. The course explains how the church and the home can work together in youth discipleship. It describes the characteristic of a church that produces youth disciples, such as having qualified leaders, officers, and teachers, maintaining biblical standards for workers, being careful about salvation, being uncompromising about separation from the world, building godly homes, discipline, prayer, and vision. It deals with how to train young people to be effective Bible students and how to involve them in the church's ministry. Finally, the course deals with eleven biblical principles of spiritual protection that young people must build into their own lives. These are living to please the Lord, living by the law of the Spirit, practicing humility, pursuing Christian growth, pursuing edification and ministry, pursuing honesty, practicing vigilance and separation, pursuing pure speech, redeeming the time, pursuing temperance, and obeying and honoring one's parents. 200 pages. The Mobile Phone youth discipleship course can be downloaded as a free eBook from [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org).

**MUSIC FOR GOOD OR EVIL.** This video series, which is packed with photos, video and audio clips, has eight segments. I. Biblical Principles of Good Christian Music. II. Why We Reject Contemporary Christian Music. It is worldly, addictive, ecumenical, charismatic, shallow and man-centered, opposed to preaching, experience-oriented, and it weakens the strong biblicist stance of a church. III. The Sound of Contemporary Christian Music. In this section we give the believer simple tools that he can use to discern the difference between sensual and sacred music. We deal with syncopated dance styles, sensual vocal styles, relativistic styles, and overly soft styles that do not fit the message. IV. The Transformational Power of Contemporary Worship Music. We show why CCM is able to transform a "traditional"

Bible-believing church into a New Evangelical contemporary one. Its transformational power resides in its enticing philosophy of “liberty” and in its sensual, addictive music. We use video and audio to illustrate the sound of contemporary worship.

V. Southern Gospel. We deal with the history of Southern Gospel, its character, its influence, and the role of the Gaithers in its renaissance. This section is packed with audio, video, and photos.

VI. Marks of Good Song Leading. There is a great need for proper training of song leaders today, and in this segment we deal with the following eight principles: Leadership, preparation, edification, spirituality, spiritual discernment, wisdom in song selection, diversity. One thing we emphasize is the need to sing worship songs that turn the people’s focus directly to God. We give dozens of examples of worship songs that are found in standard hymnals used by Bible-believing churches, but typically these are not sung properly as “unto God.”

VII. Questions Answered on Contemporary Christian Music. We answer 15 of the most common questions on this subject, such as the following: Is rhythm wrong? Isn’t this issue just a matter of different taste? Isn’t the sincerity of the musicians the important thing? Isn’t some CCM acceptable? Didn’t Luther and the Wesleys use tavern music? What is the difference between using contemporary worship hymns and using old Protestant hymns?

VIII. The Foreign Spirit of Contemporary Worship Music. This presentation documents the frightful spiritual compromise, heresy, and apostasy that permeate the field of contemporary praise. Through extensive documentation, it proves that contemporary worship music is controlled by “another spirit” (2 Cor. 11:4). It is the spirit of charismaticism, the spirit of the “latter rain,” the spirit of Roman Catholicism and the one-world “church,” the spirit of the world that is condemned by 1 John 2:16, the spirit of homosexuality, and the spirit of the false god of The Shack. The presentation looks carefully at the origin of contemporary worship in the Jesus Movement of the 1970s, examining the lives and testimonies of some of the most influential people. 5 DVDs.

ONE YEAR DISCIPLESHIP COURSE, ISBN 978-1-58318-117-1. This powerful course features 52 lessons in Christian living. It can be broken into sections and used as a new converts’ course, an advanced discipleship course, a Sunday School

series, a Home Schooling or Bible Institute course, or for preaching outlines. The lessons are thorough, meaty, and very practical. There is an extensive memory verse program built into the course, and each lesson features carefully designed review questions. Following are some of the lesson titles (some subjects feature multiple lessons): Repentance, Faith, The Gospel, Baptism, Eternal Security, Position and Practice, The Law and the New Testament Christian, Christian Growth and Victory, Prayer, The Armor of God, The Church, The Bible, The Bible's Proof, Daily Bible Study, Key Principles of Bible Interpretation, Foundational Bible Words, Knowing God's Will, Making Wise Decisions, Christ's Great Commission, Suffering in the Christian Life, The Judgment Seat of Christ, Separation - Moral, Separation - Doctrinal, Tests of Entertainment, Fasting, Miracles, A Testing Mindset, Tongues Speaking, The Rapture, How to Be Wise with Your Money, The Believer and Drinking, Abortion, Evolution, Dressing for the Lord. 8.5X11, coated cover, spiral-bound. 221 pages.

THE PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS: THE HISTORY AND THE ERROR. ISBN 1-58318-099-0. The 5th edition of this book, November 2014, is significantly enlarged and revised throughout. The Pentecostal-charismatic movement is one of the major building blocks of the end-time, one-world "church," and young people in particular need to be informed and forewarned. The author was led to Christ by a Pentecostal in 1973 and has researched the movement ever since. He has built a large library on the subject, interviewed influential Pentecostals and charismatics, and attended churches and conferences with media credentials in many parts of the world. The book deals with the history of Pentecostalism beginning at the turn of the 20th century, the Latter Rain Covenant, major Pentecostal healing evangelists, the Sharon Schools and the New Order of the Latter Rain, Manifest Sons of God, the charismatic movement, the Word-Faith movement, the Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal, the Pentecostal prophets, the Third Wave, and recent Pentecostal and charismatic scandals. The book deals extensively with the theological errors of the Pentecostal-charismatic movements (exalting experience over Scripture, emphasis on the miraculous, the continuation of Messianic and apostolic miracles and sign gifts, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of fire, tongues



speaking, physical healing guaranteed in the atonement, spirit slaying, spirit drunkenness, visions of Jesus, trips to heaven, women preachers, and ecumenism). The final section of the book answers the question: "Why are people deluded by Pentecostal-Charismatic error?" David and Tami Lee, former Pentecostals, after reviewing a section of the book said: "Very well done! We pray God will use it to open the eyes of many and to help keep many of His children out of such deception." A former charismatic said, "The book is excellent and I have no doubt whatever that the Lord is going to use it in a mighty way. Amen!!" 487 pages.

A PORTRAIT OF CHRIST: THE TABERNACLE, THE PRIESTHOOD, AND THE OFFERINGS. ISBN 978-1-58318-178-2. This book is an extensive study on the Old Testament tabernacle and its priestly system, which has been called "God's masterpiece of typology." Whereas the record of the creation of the universe takes up two chapters of the Bible and the fall of man takes up one chapter, the tabernacle, with its priesthood and offerings, takes up 50 chapters. It is obvious that God has many important lessons for us in this portion of His Word. Speaking personally, nothing has helped me better understand the Triune God and the salvation that He has purchased for man, and I believe that I can guarantee that the reader will be taken to new heights in his understanding of these things. Everything about the tabernacle points to Jesus Christ: the design, the materials, the colors, the court walls and pillars, the door into the court, the sacrificial altar, the laver, the tabernacle tent itself with its boards and curtains and silver sockets, the tabernacle gate, and veil before the holy of holies, the candlestick, the table of shewbread, the incense altar, the ark of the covenant, the high priest, and the offerings. All is Christ. The tabernacle system offers brilliant, unforgettable lessons on Christ's person, offices and work: His eternal Sonship, His sinless manhood, His anointing, His atonement, His resurrection glory, His work as the life and sustainer and light of creation, His eternal high priesthood and intercession, and His kingdom. In addition to the studies on every aspect of the tabernacle, A Portrait of Christ features studies on the high priest, the Levitical priests, the five offerings of Leviticus, the day of atonement, the ransom money, the red heifer, the cherubims, strange fire, the golden calf, leprosy, the Nazarite vow,

the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire, and the transportation of the tabernacle through the wilderness. The tabernacle is very practical in its teaching, as it also depicts believer priests carrying Christ through this world (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). Like the Israelites in the wilderness, believers today are on a pilgrimage through a foreign land on the way to our eternal home (1 Pet. 2:11). Don Jasmin, editor of the Fundamentalist Digest says, "This new book on the Tabernacle constitutes the 21st-century classic treatise of this rich theme." 420 pages.

SEEING THE NON-EXISTENT: EVOLUTION'S MYTHS AND HOAXES. ISBN 1-58318-002-8. This book is designed both as a stand alone title as well as a companion to the apologetics course AN UNSHAKEABLE FAITH. The contents are as follows: Canals on Mars, Charles Darwin and His Granddaddy, Thomas Huxley: Darwin's Bulldog, Ernst Haeckel: Darwin's German Apostle, Icons of Evolution, Icons of Creation, The Ape-men, Predictions, Questions for Evolutionists, Darwinian Gods, Darwin's Social Influence. The ICONS OF EVOLUTION that we refute include mutations, the fossil record, homology, the peppered moth, Darwin's finches, the fruit fly, vestigial organs, the horse series, the embryo chart, the Miller experiment, Archaeopteryx, bacterial resistance, the big bang, and billions of years. The ICONS OF CREATION that we examine include the monarch butterfly, the trilobite, the living cell, the human eye, the human brain, the human hand, blood clotting, the bird's flight feathers, bird migration, bird song, harmony and symbiosis, sexual reproduction, living technology, the dragonfly, the bee, and the bat. The section on APE-MEN deals with Cro-Magnon, Neanderthal, Java Man, Piltdown Man, Nebraska Man, Peking Man, Lucy, Ardi, Ida, among others. The section on PREDICTIONS considers 29 predictions made by Biblical creationism, such as the universe will behave according to established laws, the universe will be logical, and there will be a vast unbridgeable gulf between man and the animal kingdom. DARWINIAN GODS takes a look at inventions that evolutionists have devised to avoid divine Creation, such as panspermia and aliens, self-organization, and the multiverse. 608 pages.

**SOWING AND REAPING: A COURSE IN EVANGELISM.** ISBN 978-1-58318-169-0. This course is unique in several ways. It is unique in its approach. While it is practical and down-to-earth, it does not present a formulaic approach to soul winning, recognizing that individuals have to be dealt with as individuals. The course does not include any sort of psychological manipulation techniques. It does not neglect repentance in soul winning, carefully explaining the biblical definition of repentance and the place of repentance in personal evangelism. It explains how to use the law of God to plow the soil of the human heart so that the gospel can find good ground. The course is unique in its objective. The objective of biblical soul winning is not to get people to “pray a sinner’s prayer”; the objective is to see people soundly converted to Christ. This course trains the soul winner to pursue genuine conversions as opposed to mere “decisions.” The course is also unique in its breadth. It covers a wide variety of situations, including how to deal with Hindus and with skeptics and how to use apologetics or evidences in evangelism. There is a memory course consisting of 111 select verses and links to a large number of resources that can be used in evangelism, many of them free. The course is suitable for teens and adults and for use in Sunday School, Youth Ministries, Preaching, and private study. **OUTLINE:** The Message of Evangelism, Repentance and Evangelism, God’s Law and Evangelism, The Reason for Evangelism, The Authority for Evangelism, The Power for Evangelism, The Attitude in Evangelism, The Technique of Evangelism, Using Tracts in Evangelism, Dealing with Skeptics. 104 pages, 8x11, spiral bound.

**THINGS HARD TO BE UNDERSTOOD: A HANDBOOK OF BIBLICAL DIFFICULTIES.** ISBN 1-58318-002-8. This volume deals with a variety of biblical difficulties. Find the answer to the seeming contradictions in the Bible. Meet the challenge of false teachers who misuse biblical passages to prove their doctrine. Find out the meaning of difficult passages that are oftentimes overlooked in the Bible commentaries. Be confirmed in your confidence in the inerrancy and perfection of the Scriptures and be able to refute the skeptics. Learn the meaning of difficult expressions such as “the unpardonable sin.” A major objective of this volume is to protect God’s people from the false teachers that abound in these last days. For example, we examine verses misused

by Seventh-day Adventists, Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, and others to support their heresies. We deal with things such as the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, cremation, head coverings, did Jesus die on Friday, God's repentance, healing in the atonement, losing one's salvation, sinless perfectionism, soul sleep, and the Trinity. Jerry Huffman, editor of *Calvary Contender*, testified: "You don't have to agree with everything to greatly benefit from this helpful book." In researching and writing this book, the author consulted roughly 500 volumes, old and new, that deal with biblical difficulties and the various other subjects addressed in *Things Hard to Be Understood*. This one volume, therefore, represents the essence of a sizable library. Sixth edition Feb. 2014, enlarged and completely revised, 441 pages.

AN UNSHAKEABLE FAITH: A CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS COURSE. ISBN 978-1-58318-119-5. The course is built upon nearly 40 years of serious Bible study and 30 years of apologetics writing. Research was done in the author's personal 6,000-volume library plus in major museums and other locations in America, England, Europe, Australia, Asia, and the Middle East. The package consists of an apologetics course entitled AN UNSHAKEABLE FAITH (both print and eBook editions) plus an extensive series of Powerpoint/Keynote presentations. (Keynote is the Apple version of Powerpoint.) The 1,800 PowerPoint slides deal with archaeology, evolution/creation science, and the prophecies pertaining to Israel's history. The material in the 360-page course is extensive, and the teacher can decide whether to use all of it or to select only some portion of it for his particular class and situation. After each section there are review questions to help the students focus on the most important points. The course can be used for private study as well as for a classroom setting. Sections include *The Bible's Nature*, *The Bible's Proof*, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, *The Bible's Difficulties*, *Historical Evidence for Jesus*, *Evidence for Christ's Resurrection*, *Archaeological Treasures Confirming the Bible*, *A History of Evolution*, *Icons of Evolution*, *Icons of Creation*, *Noah's Ark and the Global Flood*.

WAY OF LIFE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE BIBLE & CHRISTIANITY. ISBN 1-58318-005-2. This hardcover Bible encyclopedia contains 640 pages (8.5x11) of information, over

6,000 entries, and over 7,000 cross-references. Twenty-five years of research went into this one-of-a-kind reference tool. It is a complete dictionary of biblical terminology and features many other areas of research not often covered in such volumes, including Bible Versions, Denominations, Cults, Christian Movements, Typology, the Church, Social issues and practical Christian living, Bible Prophecy, and Old English Terminology. It does not correct the Authorized Version of the Bible, nor does it undermine the fundamental Baptist's doctrines and practices as many study tools do. The 5th edition (October 2008) contains new entries, extensive additions to existing entries, and a complete rewriting of the major articles. Many preachers have told us that apart from Strong's Concordance, the Way of Life Bible Encyclopedia is their favorite study tool. A missionary told us that if he could save only one study book out of his library, it would be our Bible encyclopedia. An evangelist in South Dakota wrote: "If I were going to the mission field and could carry only three books, they would be the Strong's concordance, a hymnal, and the Way of Life Bible Encyclopedia." Missionary author Jack Moorman says: "The encyclopedia is excellent. The entries show a 'distilled spirituality.'" 5th edition, 640 pages. A computer edition of the encyclopedia is available as a standalone eBook for PDF, Kindle, and ePub. It is also available as a module for Swordseacher.

### **Way of Life Literature**

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