



*Southern
Gospel*

MUSIC

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Issues Facing the Churches

David Cloud

Southern Gospel Music
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Introduction

Southern gospel is not a single style of music. It is a classification of a broad range of harmonizing, country-tinged Christian music that originated in the southeastern part of the United States.

Some Southern gospel is lovely and spiritual and seeks not to entertain the flesh but to edify the spirit. (There are also quartets that are not Southern gospel in style; an example is the Old Fashioned Revival Hour Quartet that was featured on Charles Fuller's radio program.) We praise the Lord for all Christian music, Southern or otherwise, which doesn't sound like the world, which has scriptural lyrics, which seeks solely to glorify Jesus Christ and edify the saints, and which is produced by faithful Christians. Sadly, though, much of the Southern gospel incorporates worldly pop, country, ragtime, jazz, boogie-woogie, and rock rhythms, and is oriented toward entertainment. It is the latter that is closely akin to Contemporary Christian Music. As a matter of fact, commercial Southern gospel today is one of the branches of the larger CCM world.

I grew up with Southern gospel. The Southern Baptist churches my mom and dad attended in Florida would have afternoon sings on some Sundays. Following the morning service, we would have a glorious "dinner on the ground," featuring tables piled high with the tastiest dishes the church ladies could concoct. The kids would romp around as the tables were prepared, then the pastor would pray and everyone would gorge himself on whichever foods suited their fancy. The variety was incredible. When the meal was finished and the tables cleared, everyone gathered back in the church auditorium for the sing. There would be some congregational singing and then the quartets would start up. Usually these were local groups, but sometimes a professional

group would be available. I always liked the congregational singing best.

History of Southern Gospel

As we will see, Southern gospel brought four significant changes to Christian music in North America in the 1920s, '30s, '40s and '50s. (1) They commercialized it. (2) They took it out of the churches and put it into hands of publishers and promoters. (3) They jazzed it up with worldly styles. (4) They turned it into entertainment. 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.” This sounds exactly like the Contemporary Christian Music approach. 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).

Professional Southern gospel quartets were born in the early part of this 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 a Nazarene, James Vaughan, who hired a quartet in 1910 to represent his music publishing company (which he had founded in 1902). 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 a Baptist, Virgil Stamps; and he, too, put quartets to work. In 1929 this company became the famous Stamps-Baxter

Music Company. These companies established influential music training schools and created the hugely popular all-day and all-night gospel music sings.

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).

The 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).

Though the seeds for these things were present in the 1920s and ‘30s, it was not until the 1940s that Southern gospel began to promote an entertainment-oriented, jazzed up approach to Christian music on a large scale. Before that the quartets were not very flashy. For example, 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). This attitude did not prevail, though, and even Walbert’s own son, James, began playing the piano backwards, playing with his elbows, and otherwise putting on a show to entertain the crowds.

Two of the most influential groups in this direction were the Blackwood Brothers and the Statesmen. Prior to this, professional gospel quartets commonly sang without musical accompaniment or with traditional strings. The Ranger Quartet, for example, often sang with a guitar. The Statesmen were one of the first professional quartets to feature the piano; and it was not just ANY piano, it was Hovie Lister's ragtime, honky-tonk piano. Sadly, this style has dominated popular Southern gospel ever since. (This does not mean, of course, that the Statesmen sang ONLY jazzy music. Some of their numbers were nice renditions of good Christian music. An example was the beautiful "What a Savior," featuring lyric tenor Rosie Rozell.)

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 '50s and early rock & roll.

"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. This is exactly the same New Evangelical philosophy that permeates the Contemporary Christian Music field today. Hovie Lister and the Statesmen were forerunners to 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. 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 homosexual entertainer who helped corrupt the morals of America. I believe it is a serious error to adopt his sensual, worldly ways to Gospel music. Where does God's Word encourage us to copy the world? To be holy, means to be set apart from and different from the world. 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 some sort of 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. The Apostle Paul plainly stated that he depended solely upon the power of the Holy Spirit. "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).

Now we continue with 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. They also had highly polished harmonies and arrangements. 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).

Bill Gaither, in his history of Southern gospel, admits that 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" (Bill Gaither, *Homecoming*, p. 133). In fact, some conservative Christian radio stations broke Statesmen records on the air to protest their jazzy music.

The Statesmen's bass singer, Jim "Big Chief" Wetherington, moved his legs in ways strangely reminiscent of how Elvis moved to rock & roll. Jake Hess, another member of the original Statesmen, noted: "He 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). Rock historian Peter Guralnick observes that "preachers frequently objected to the lewd movements."

Some of the Statesmen Quartet's music was brought over from the swinging black gospel. "So many of their early hits began to stray away some from the southern, singing convention style—the music that was coming out of Stamps-Baxter—and basically were coming out of the black tradition" (Taylor, *Happy Rhythms*, p. 32).

Describing the popular Southern gospel quartets of the 1940s and 1950s, Wally Varner of the Melody Masters testifies: "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). Another popular group, The Delmore Brothers, "mixed sacred lyrics, blues and boogie with spectacular commercial results" (David Seay, *Stairway to Heaven*, p. 49).

Southern gospel in the 1970s was still entertainment oriented and highly competitive. "All-night sings occasionally resembled singing contests, as groups often appeared more

interested in ‘putting it to’ one another onstage than entertaining and ministering to the audience” (Ibid., p. 111).

Worldliness

There have been two distinct sides or camps to Southern gospel. We would label them conservative and contemporary. The conservative Southern gospel people have used music solely to glorify Jesus Christ and edify the saints. They have refused to jazz up the music with worldly rhythms and sounds. 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. The singers and musicians in this category have tended to live spiritually careless, worldly lives.

This distinction has been evident from the inception of 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).

The two different camps within Southern gospel were already evident in the 1920s. James Vaughan did have a commercial goal with his music, but his chief 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). Vaughn 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 a heavy smoker and a glutton 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 show with their music. The Stamps Quartet even in the early years was described as “an entertaining fivesome” (*The Music Men*, p. 39). 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.”

Many of the popular Southern gospel groups of the 1950s and ‘60s were characterized by worldliness. Drinking, smoking, womanizing, and divorce has been a common feature 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 saw that gospel quartets were financially profitable. 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.” The Sunshine Boys were pure entertainment. They did not testify of Christ 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.”

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 and other Southern gospel groups performed with Elvis Presley in his sleazy rock concerts at Las Vegas and elsewhere. (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’ announcer for two years. It was Hill who concluded the Elvis concerts with: “Ladies and gentlemen, Elvis has left the building. Goodbye, and God bless you.” After Elvis’ death, J.D. Sumner and the Stamps performed rock concerts in tribute to Elvis Presley.

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

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

Laverne Tripp, who sang with the Sierra Quartet and the Blue Ridge Quartet, was well known for his carnality.

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 current girlfriend.

The September 2002 edition of *Singing News*, which covers Southern Gospel Music, contains a full page promoting Dolly Parton's Dollywood entertainment center in Tennessee. Dollywood hosts a 30-day Southern Gospel Jubilee each year. Dolly Parton, who dresses very immodestly and is comfortable in the midst of the moral filth of Hollywood, starred in the filthy R-rated movie "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas."

These sad facts could be multiplied. Someone might protest that I am blackening the entire Southern gospel music field with a relatively few worldly musicians, but that is not the case. First of all, I know and have testified that there are many godly people who sing Southern gospel. There is another point that needs to be made, though, and that is the fact that Southern gospel music as an institution does not rebuke the worldliness of musicians and, in fact, honors worldly people. In spite of J.D. Sumner's worldliness, for example, 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 exalted wicked Elvis Presley and performed rock music.

We believe the worldly living produced the worldly music. Carnality produces spiritual blindness and powerlessness (1 Pet. 2:11; 1 Cor. 3:1-2; Heb. 5:12-14; Rev. 3:16-17).

"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" (Dr. H.T. Spence, *Confronting Contemporary Christian Music*, 1997, p. 8).

Dr. H.T. Spence, vice president of Foundations Bible College & Seminary, is a fundamentalist historian and teacher who has taught music, history, and theology for 25 years. 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 notes 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 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" (Dr. H.T. Spence, *Confronting Contemporary Christian Music*, 1997, pp. x, xi).

This testimony opens a window into a large portion (though not all, by any means) 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 worldly facets, but the Bible loudly warns of the dangers of worldliness. "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,

praise the Lord, but it must not be ignored 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).

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

The worldliness of many of the Southern gospel groups is reflected in their close and uncritical association with secular rockers. This is not only true today but has characterized many of the most popular groups for decades. The Jordanares performed as background singers on Elvis Presley records and as session singers for many other raunchy rock and country recordings. Members of the Speer Family (Ben and Brock) also sang on Elvis recordings, including “I’ve Got a Woman” and “Heartbreak Hotel.” The Jordanares provided vocals for Elvis’ 1956 megahit “Hound Dog.” The Jordanares toured with Eddy Arnold as well as with Elvis. They also performed on some of Elvis’ indecent movies. As mentioned already, J.D. Sumner and the Stamps toured with Elvis from 1969 until his death in 1977, performing backup for the King of Rock & Roll in sin-holes such as Las Vegas night clubs. J.D. Sumner and the Stamps even performed concerts in honor of Elvis, singing Elvis Presley rock & roll hits! I have audio cassette recordings of one of these concerts. Ed Hill, one of the singers with the Stamps, was Elvis’ announcer for two years. It was Hill who concluded the Elvis concerts with, “Ladies and gentlemen, Elvis has left the building. Goodbye, and God bless you.” The Imperials and the Oak Ridge Boys also performed as backup singers for Hollywood shows and Nashville recordings.

One of Elvis’ favorite gospel singers was Hovie Lister, the leader of the Statesmen. This gospel group made large sums

of money from their appearances. The Blackwood Brothers and the Statesmen would receive \$1,000 to \$1,500 per night for their music shows. 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 like five million dollars per year in today's dollars. 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 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.

As already mentioned, the flamboyant Hovie Lister popularized an entertainment-oriented, jazzy gospel music presentation. He was characterized by 'flashy dress, oversized rings, and upbeat entertainment style' (*The Music Men*, p. 146). Lister and the Statesmen went so far beyond that which was traditionally acceptable in Christian music in the middle of this 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 which backed the Statesmen on the album included country guitarist Chet Atkins, Ernie Newton on the stand-up bass guitar, and Farris Coursey on drums. This was essentially a country-rock band. (The Statesmen pioneered the CCM practice of using unsaved musicians on their recordings.) Hovie Lister played the boogie-woogie piano. One preacher protested by calling it "stripping

music” (Taylor, p. 55). Some of the Statesmen Quartet’s music was brought over from the swinging black spirituals. “So many of their early hits began to stray away some from the southern, singing convention style--the music that was coming out of Stamps-Baxter--and basically were coming out of the black tradition” (Taylor, p. 32). 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). Their 1961 album contained the song “God Is God,” “featuring a rockabilly Chet Atkins guitar solo which was similar to early Elvis Presley releases” (Taylor, p. 86).

Southern Gospel in Recent Years

In the last three decades, Southern gospel in general has become increasingly worldly, rocky, and ecumenical. Lee Roy Abernathy, originally with the Ranger Quartet, wrote “The Gospel Boogie,” which became a million-selling national hit as performed by Pat Boone. The Oak Ridge Boys and many other Southern gospel groups experimented with rock beats and long hair. The extremely popular Gaithers exemplify the direction of Southern gospel in recent years. They have increasingly used rock styles. During a concert tour in New England in 1986, Bill Gaither admitted that he had changed his musical style due to the influence of the “world’s culture.” He said he believed there was a place for Christian rock, and he expressed 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). Gaither is promoting the devil’s lie that music is neutral and that any type of music can be used to glorify God.

During the disco craze in the late 1980s, the Gaither Trio recorded a disco album (*Calvary Contender*, August 15, 1989). They have a song titled “Singin’ with the Saints” which is a boogie-woogie version of “He Keeps Me Singing.” This is confusion.

Bill Gaither has mentored many of the popular CCM artists, including those who use very hard rock. Gaither mentees include Sandi Patty, Russ Taff, Michael English, Carman, and the members of Whiteheart (*CCM Magazine*, July 1998, p. 20).

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).

The Gaithers provided the music one evening at Indianapolis ‘90, a large ecumenical charismatic gathering I attended with press credentials. One-half of the 25,000 participants were Roman Catholics. A Catholic mass was held each morning during this conference, and Catholic priest Tom Forrest from Rome brought the closing message. Roughly 40 other denominations were present. The Gaithers were perfectly at home in this unscriptural gathering, entertaining the mixed multitude with their lively music while turning a blind eye to the heresy all around them. They did not say one word about the abominable Catholic mass that was conducted each morning of the conference. They did not say one word about the demonic spirit slaying and spirit drunkenness which was being practiced. They did not lift their voice to warn of the cursed false gospels which were represented. They did not reprove priest Tom Forrest for preaching at the Indianapolis conference that he praised the Lord for purgatory and for Mary the Queen of Heaven.

The Gaithers represent the very heart and soul of Southern gospel music today. In recent years they have held “homecoming” specials which have brought together most of the well-known Southern gospel groups. These include members of the Statesmen, the Blackwood Brothers, the Cathedrals, the Goodman’s, the Speer Family, the Florida Boys, the Gatlin Brothers, and many others. Those who have attended these gatherings have put their stamp of approval upon the ecumenical-charismatic-rock music 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.” **COMPLICITY WITH DOCTRINAL AND SPIRITUAL ERROR MAKES ME A PARTAKER WITH THAT ERROR.** 2 John warns that even to bid godspeed 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 ecumenical-crazed age, but this is what the Word of God says. I also realize that the Gaithers and the other groups we have mentioned have produced some lovely Christian music, such as “How Long Has It Been” (written by Mosie Lister, who wrote many songs for the Statesmen), “The Love of God” (Vep Ellis, recorded in the early 1950s by the Statesmen), “He Knows Just What I Need” (Mosie Lister), “Jesus” (Bill Gaither), “Great Is the Lord” (James Wetherington of the Statesmen), “What A Day that Will Be” (Jim Hill of the Statesmen), and many others, but this is no excuse for disobedience to God’s Word. When the Gaithers greet 12,000 Roman Catholics, including many priests and nuns, as brethren in Christ, as they did at Indianapolis ‘90, they are partakers of the evil deeds of Rome, and God’s people should protest. I don’t believe it is wrong to use some of the music which groups like these have produced which is Christ-honoring and Bible-based, but I do believe it is wrong to associate with them and to support them with record sales and to bring their jazzed up music with its ecumenical philosophy into our churches and homes.

The Florida Boys represent the contemporary-ecumenical side to Southern gospel. Les Beasley, who has been with the group since its inception, says they never get past the basic plan of salvation in their songs “because when you do that you’re getting past our basic reason for existence” which is entertainment (*The Music Men*, p. 286). He says, “When you start trying to sell them a particular religion, or your set of do’s and don’ts, then I think we are stretching what we are

trying to do.” That statement demonstrates their ecumenical, non-dogmatic, non-doctrinal, entertainment-oriented approach to Christian music, which is precisely the approach which has been adopted by Contemporary Christian Music at large. The preachers in the early churches certainly did not draw back from preaching “a particular religion” and a dogmatic set of “do’s and don’ts”!

The Imperials are another key example of the changes occurring within Southern gospel. They were formed in 1964 and during the past 35 years the group has undergone a metamorphosis in style, from southern gospel, to contemporary, to rock. *Lighthouse Magazine*, which is rock oriented, has taken note that the music of the Imperials has changed radically. Their 1987 album, *This Year’s Model*, “took a sharp turn to a youthful techno pop/rock sound that caused many long time Imperial fans to fall by the wayside” (Stephen Trickey, “The Imperials: Reaching the Church in the 90s with Music and Ministry,” *The Lighthouse Electronic Magazine*, December 1996). In reality, the Imperials had become extremely jazzy long before 1987. Many of the songs on albums in the 1970s and early 1980s had a heavy boogie-woogie/disco dance rhythm.

The Imperials are also very ecumenical. In 1992, for example, they conducted concerts at the First Assembly of God in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and at the Lancaster Bible College the same month. They frequently appear on the radically ecumenical Trinity Broadcasting Network. TBN promotes Catholic priests and nuns as born again Christians and disregards their false sacramental gospel. On August 21, 1998, they appeared at Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The Statesmen are another prime example of how Southern gospel has changed. As already noted, they were quite jazzy and entertainment-oriented from their inception. A Time magazine article about the Southern gospel quartets of the 1950s described their concerts as “swinging from rowdy

boogie to fervent waltzes, all in praise of the Lord.” Things got worse as time passed. In the 1970s the Statesmen, with many personnel changes but with Hovie Lister still at the helm, added more contemporary numbers to their already somewhat jazzed up traditional fare. For example, they recorded songs by Christian rockers Larry Norman (“Sweet Song of Salvation”) and Mylon LeFevre (“You’re on His Mind”). They even recorded Simon and Garfunkel’s “Bridge over Troubled Water,” Kris Kristoferson’s “Why Me, Lord,” and Gene MacLellan’s “Put Your Hand in the Hand,” even though none of these men are Christians. By 1973 two members of the Statesmen, Sherrill Nielsen and Tim Baty, sported shoulder length hair. The group had grown to six members with the addition of bass guitarist Baty. In the 1990s Hovie Lister has worked closely with ecumenist Bill Gaither. Gaither produced a “Bill Gaither Remembers the Statesmen” video in 1990. Three of the old Statesmen were present: Hovie Lister, Jake Hess, and Jim Hill. The show was telecast nationally on Pat Robertson’s ecumenical-charismatic 700 Club. Following this, Gaither organized a reunited Statesmen called the New Statesmen. In 1994 Gaither released a documentary entitled Bill and Gloria Gaither Present Hovie Lister and the Sensational Statesmen, An American Classic.

In 1997 Southern gospel legend Vestal Goodman joined Roman Catholic Kathy Troccoli and 40 other CCM artists 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. The song witnessed Catholics, Pentecostals, Baptists, etc., yoked together to call for Christian unity. A representative of the Southern gospel world was right in the midst of this unscriptural alliance.

Southern Gospel and CCM

In case someone still has the impression that Southern gospel is separate from Contemporary Christian Music and Christian rock, let me hasten to note that all of the popular commercial Southern gospel groups are yoked together with CCM and Christian rock in the Gospel Music Association. In fact, it was some of the more famous Southern gospel performers who helped establish the Gospel Music Association (GMA) in 1964. The formation 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. Don Butler, director of archives for the GMA, was the Statesmen's manager during the 1950s.

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

Thus we see that the well-known Southern gospel groups are yoked together with and are supportive of the rock-oriented, ecumenical-charismatic CCM crowd. For the most part 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 unscriptural pod.

When to Avoid Southern Gospel Music

Avoid Southern gospel when it uses the world's sensual pop/rock/ragtime/boogie-woogie rhythms.

Southern gospel has always been too quick to use boogie-woogie styles. The late Bruce Lackey, who was the Dean of Tennessee Temple Bible School in the 1970s, played the piano professionally in bars before he was saved. He often 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 1920s and 1930s Negro juke joint culture as rhythm & blues. It is sensual dance music and is not fitting for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Southern gospel today is being immersed in the larger CCM world and is adopting the pop and soft rock rhythms, the “Nashville sound,” of popular commercial music today. You cannot serve the Spirit with fleshly music. Sensual music is very enticing to the flesh; thus it is extremely attractive and desirable. 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 easy to know exactly where to draw the line with rhythms to 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 try to stay as close to the world as possible without becoming completely worldly, but to stay as separated from the world as possible. We are to avoid even the appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:21). If a piece of music would be comfortable in a bar, then we should not use it in the church.

Avoid Southern gospel when it is associated with the charismatic-ecumenical movement.

The charismatic-ecumenical movement is at the very heart of end-times apostasy that is working to create a one-world “church.” It is dangerous in the extreme and must be avoided in obedience to the Scriptures (Rom. 16:17). I don’t care how pleasant the Gaithers and the Imperials and many other popular groups might be; I must reject them because they are openly disobeying and 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 associated with the same. The National Quartet Convention 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. At the 1999 National Quartet Convention (NQC) 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 members of the Imperials stated that they aren’t concerned about doctrinal divisions. When asked if they are members of different denominations, they replied, “Yeah. 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. It’s all kind of(shakes his head)” (“More Than Just Showing up to Sing,” July 1, 2005, Christianmusic.about.com).

This is a biblically ignorant position. Paul instructed Timothy not to allow any other doctrine (1 Timothy 1:3).

Doctrine is very important and it is to be the basis for separation (Romans 16:17).

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. 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. 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 carnal appearance! Godly women do not want to draw attention to themselves with worldly hairstyles (notice how many of them whack their hair off in accordance with the world’s unisex fashions), 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 clothing. Godly women do not want men in the congregation to be enticed by their appearance. I praise the

Lord for humble, Spirit-filled gospel groups which dress modestly and which draw attention to Christ instead of themselves, but I intend to avoid worldly singing groups.

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 in the Word of God for it. I like to laugh and have a good time, but I don’t see any justification whatsoever in the Word of God for turning the church service into a dinner club. Where do we see the Apostles doing anything like that? The only thing even similar to this in the New Testament is when the carnal Corinthians turned the Lord’s Supper into a party time. 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 which want to turn the house of God into an entertainment platform today. Sure, lots of people like jazzed up gospel music. Sure, it can draw a big crowd. That does not mean it is right, though. Just the opposite. 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 not to give people what they want but to give them what God wants. Carnal Christians, even unsaved religionists, love worldly gospel music. Observe the Southern gospel sings which attract large numbers of people who are not faithful to the house of God and who do not live faithfully 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 love to honor and 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” (Matt. 6:24). Probably no other single man in this century has done more to destroy the moral and spiritual climate of this world than Elvis Presley. He lived to glorify himself and to serve the flesh and the devil, and the fact that he loved some of the Southern gospel music proves nothing except confusion.

We praise the Lord for every Southern gospel singer and music group which is not characterized by the above traits. Many humble 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 apostate religious crowds. They only minister in faithful Bible-based 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 methods. They strive to live holy lives separated from the wickedness of this hell-bound world. They pay the price for their faithfulness to God’s Word 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 do not appear on Trinity Broadcasting Network. The large contemporary “seeker” churches won’t invite them. 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 hearing “well done, thou good and faithful servant”!

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A PORTRAIT OF CHRIST: THE TABERNACLE, THE PRIESTHOOD, AND THE OFFERINGS. ISBN 978-1-58318-178-2. (New for 2014) 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). 405 pages, \$19.95.

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 BIBLE VERSION QUESTION ANSWER DATABASE, ISBN 1-58318-088-5. This book provides diligently-researched, in-depth answers to more than 80 of the most important questions on this topic. A vast number of myths are exposed, such as the myth that Erasmus promised to add 1 John 5:7 to his Greek New Testament if even one manuscript could be produced, the myth that the differences between the Greek texts and versions are slight and insignificant, the myth that there are no doctrines affected by the changes in the modern versions, and the myth that the King James translators said that all versions are equally the Word of God. It also includes reviews of several of the popular modern versions, including the Living Bible, New Living Bible, Today's English Version, New International Version, New American Standard Version, The Message, and the Holman Christian Standard Bible. 423 pages

THE FOREIGN SPIRIT OF CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP MUSIC. This hard-hitting multi-media video presentation, published in March 2012, documents the frightful spiritual compromise, heresy, and apostasy that permeates the field of contemporary worship music. By extensive documentation, it proves that contemporary worship music is impelled by "another spirit" (2 Cor. 11:4). It is the spirit of charismaticism, the spirit of the latter rain, the spirit of the one-world church, the spirit of the world, 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. Nearly 60 video clips and hundreds of photos are featured.

It is available on DVD and as an eDownload from the Way of Life web site.

FUNDAMENTAL LESSONS IN HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE.

This very practical course deals with requirements for effective Bible study, marking your Bible, and rules of Bible interpretation. 174 pages

THE FUTURE ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE. ISBN 978-1-58318-172-0. New for November 2012. 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.

INDEPENDENT BAPTIST MUSIC WARS. 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 is 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. \$12.95

ISRAEL: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE, ISBN 978-1-58318-116-4. This is a package consisting of a 234-page illustrated book, a DVD series, and a series of Powerpoint/Keynote presentations for teachers. The package covers all of the major facets pertaining to Israel in a professional, technologically cutting-edge way:

geography, culture, archaeology, history, current events, and prophecy. The series begins with an amazing aerial flyover over the land of Israel.

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 in "keeping the kids," effectual prayer, and fasting. 531 pages

MUSIC FOR GOOD OR EVIL (4 DVDs). This video series for July 2011 is a new replacement for previous presentations we have produced on this subject. The series, which is packed with graphics, video and audio clips, has seven segments. I. Biblical Principles of Good Christian Music: II. Why We Reject Contemporary Christian Music. III. The Sound of Contemporary Christian Music. IV. Transformational Power of CCM. V. Southern Gospel. VI. Marks of Good Song Leading. VII. Questions Answered on Contemporary Christian Music.

ONE YEAR DISCIPLESHIP COURSE, ISBN 978-1-58318-117-1. (new title for 2011) 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 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. 221 pages

THE PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS: THE HISTORY AND THE ERROR, ISBN 1-58318-099-0. This book begins with the author's own experience with the Pentecostal movement. The next section deals with the history of the Pentecostal movement, beginning with a survey of miraculous signs from the second to the 18th centuries. We deal with Charles Parham, Azusa Street Mission, major Pentecostal healing evangelists, the Sharon Schools and the New Order of the Latter Rain, the Word-Faith movement and its key leaders, the Charismatic Movement, the Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal, the Pentecostal Prophets, the Third Wave, the Laughing-Drunken Revival of Toronto, Pensacola, Lakeland, etc., and the recent Pentecostal scandals. The last section deals with the theological errors of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movements. 317 pages

REPENTANCE AND SOUL WINNING, ISBN 1-58318-062-1. This is an in-depth study on biblical repentance and a timely warning about unscriptural methods of presenting the gospel. The opening chapter, entitled "Fundamental Baptists and Quick Prayerism: A Faulty Method of Evangelism Has Produced a Change in the Doctrine of Repentance," traces the change in the doctrine of repentance among fundamental Baptists during the past 50 years. 2008 edition, 201 pages

SEEING THE NON-EXISTENT: EVOLUTION'S MYTHS AND HOAXES, ISBN 1-58318-002-8. (new title for 2011) 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 Apemen, Predictions, Questions for Evolutionists, Darwinian Gods, Darwin's Social Influence.

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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.

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AN UNSHAKEABLE FAITH: A CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS COURSE, ISBN 978-1-58318-119-5. (new title for 2011) 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 lovely hardcover Bible Encyclopedia contains 640 pages (8.5X11) of information, with more than 6,000 entries, and 7,000 cross-references. It is a complete dictionary of biblical terminology and features many other areas of research not often covered in Bible reference volumes. Subjects include Bible versions, Denominations, Cults, Christian Movements, Typology, the Church, Social Issues and Practical Christian Living, Bible Prophecy, and Old English Terminology. 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.'" 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*.

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