

The background of the cover features a photograph of a white church with a tall steeple, set against a dark, cloudy night sky. The church has a red door and several windows. On the roof of the church, the silhouettes of four musicians are visible, performing with instruments like guitars and a drum set. The title text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

**THE  
TRANSFORMATIONAL  
POWER OF  
CONTEMPORARY  
PRAISE  
MUSIC**

**eBook Series:**

*Issues Facing the Churches*

**David Cloud**

*The Transformational Power of Contemporary Praise  
Music*

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# Preface

The following report is available in audio visual format as one of the titles in the video series *MUSIC FOR GOOD OR EVIL*.

This was published in July 2011 as a replacement for previous presentations we have produced on this subject. The series is packed with graphics, video and audio clips. It has seven segments.

**I. Biblical Principles of Good Christian Music.** We cover the following eight principles: Good Christian Music is for Christians and for the Lord. It is holy. It emphasizes melody. It is Christ-centered. It flows from a submissive attitude. It is separate from the world. It creates vigilance and sobriety. It is doctrinally pure and theologically precise.

**II. Why We Reject Contemporary Christian Music.** In this section we give eight reasons for rejecting CCM: It is worldly, addictive, ecumenical, charismatic, shallow and man-centered, opposed to preaching, experience-oriented, and weakens the strong biblicist stance of a church.

**III. The Sound of Contemporary Christian Music.** The goal of this section is to give the believer some simple tools that he can use to discern the difference between sensual and sacred music. We deal with the following four musical styles that are not fitting for good Christian music: 1. Syncopated dance styles, including the back beat, the off beat, the break beat, and the anticipated beat. 2. Sensual vocal styles (the whispery/breathy style and scooping/

sliding). 3. Relativistic styles (deceptive chord cadence). 4. Overly soft styles that do not fit the message.

**IV. Transformational Power of CCM.** This presentation answers the question why CCM is able to transform a “traditional” Bible-believing church to a New Evangelical one. It’s transformational power resides in its enticing philosophy of “liberty” and in its sensual, addictive music.

**V. Southern Gospel.** Here we deal with the history of Southern Gospel, going back to the turn of the 20th century, to show how that Southern Gospel became an entertainment business. We also deal with the current status of Southern Gospel, the powerful influence of Bill Gaither, and the close association between Southern Gospel today and Contemporary Christian Music.

**VI. Marks of Good Song Leading.** In this presentation we cover eight principles of good song leading: Leadership, preparation, edification, spirituality, truth and spiritual discernment, enthusiasm and a positive attitude, wisdom, and liberty and diversity.

**VII. Questions Answered on Contemporary Christian Music.** Here we deal with 15 of the most common questions on this subject: 1. Do you mean that Christians should only use old music? 2. Is rhythm wrong? 3. Isn’t this issue just a matter of different taste? 4. Isn’t the sincerity of the musicians the important thing? 5. Isn’t some CCM acceptable? 6. Why does traditional church music seem dull? 7. Didn’t Luther use tavern music? 8. Didn’t the Wesleys use tavern music? 9. What is the difference between using CCW and using old interdenominational hymns? 10. Doesn’t the Bible encourage us to use cymbals and loud sounding

instruments? 11. Why are you opposed to drums? 12. What is wrong with “soft rock”? 13. Didn’t God create all music? 14. Since God looks on the heart, why are you concerned about appearance? 15. Since kids today aren’t listening to traditional Christian music, shouldn’t we use rock to reach them? 4 DVDs or video downloads available from the Way of Life web site -- [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org)

# Introduction

This report on the transformational power of contemporary praise music could be titled “The Road from Fundamental Baptist to Emerging” or “The Path from Fundamental Baptist to the Broader Church.”

This is an hour of great change. Over the past 15-20 years, many formerly fundamental Baptist churches have rejected separatism and have converted to New Evangelical rock & roll entertainment centers. We have documented this in the book *Biblical Separatism and Its Collapse among Fundamental Baptists*, which is available in print or eBook formats from Way of Life. It is available as a free eBook at the Way of Life web site.

In this book we have given the examples of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC); Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI); Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE); Thomas Road Baptist Church of Lynchburg, Virginia; Landmark Baptist Church of Cincinnati, Ohio; Akron Baptist Temple of Akron, Ohio; New Testament Baptist Church of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida; Temple Baptist Church of Detroit, Michigan; Southside Baptist Church of Greenville, SC; Highland Park Baptist Church of Chattanooga, Tennessee; Southwide Baptist Fellowship; Cedarville University; *Joyful Woman* magazine, and others.

Consider **Akron Baptist Church**, which was founded in 1935 by Dallas Billington. From the 1940s to the 1960s it had one of the largest Sunday morning crowds in the nation. In those days it was a typical Independent Baptist church, very conservative in music and dress, committed to

the King James Bible, and aggressive in evangelism and world missions. Upon the death of Dallas in 1972, his son Charles assumed the pastorate. In 1996, Dallas' grandson Dallas R. Billington became pastor, and took the church in a contemporary direction. Today, Akron Baptist Temple is an emerging church with a "traditional service" called The Temple and a raunchy contemporary service called The Bridge. The church offers a smorgasbord of worship "experiences." It's all about *my* tastes and *my* choices. In The Bridge a loud rock & roll band plays 7/11 (seven words sung 11 times) contemporary worship music in a darkened auditorium. The service is advertised as "creating an environment where people who are seeking God, can do so in a non-threatening, comfortable way." It is oriented toward "experiencing God," which is the charismatic mystical approach to worship.

This type of transformation is happening widely. Everywhere I travel I hear of another example.

The adaptation of contemporary worship music is certainly not the only factor in these dramatic transformations, but it is at the very heart and soul of the changes. I am convinced that it is spiritual lukewarmness and carnality and a love for the world that allows the CCM to enter; but the CCM acts within that atmosphere as a powerful transformational agent to carry the congregation far from its original principles.

CCM movers and shakers know that their music is transformative.

Don Moen, formerly the leader of Integrity Music, one of the biggest distributors of contemporary worship music, says:



“I’ve discovered that worship music is transdenominational, transcultural. IT BRIDGES ANY DENOMINATION. Twenty years ago there were many huge divisions between denominations. Today the walls are coming down.”

In fact, they are actively targeting “old-fashioned” churches to move them into the “broader church.”

There are TRANSITION SONGS and BRIDGE SONGS designed to move “traditional” churches along the contemporary path toward Christian rock. From the perspective of the CCM artists involved in this, they aren’t doing anything sinister. They are simply trying to “feed” the “broader church.” But from a fundamentalist Bible-believing position, the effect is to draw “old-fashioned” Bible churches into the contemporary orb, and that is most sinister.

Bridge songs include “How Deep the Father’s Love for Us” by Stuart Townend and “In Christ Alone” by Townend and Keith Getty.

These songs tend to be doctrinally sound and hymn-like (soft rock ballad style as opposed to out-and-out rock & roll), so they are considered “safe” by undiscerning churches.

But by using this music a church is brought into association with the contemporary world that Townend represents and this has the great potential to carry Independent Baptist church members into treacherous waters. (See the free eBook *Biblical Separatism and Its Collapse among Fundamental Baptists* for documentation of the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism -- [wayoflife.org](http://wayoflife.org).)

For video clips of how one Independent Baptist church is pursuing this technique see “Analyzing ‘Adapted’ CCM Songs” -- <http://www.wayoflife.org/adaptingccm/index.html>.

Townend is an out-and-out Christian rocker. He is charismatic in theology and radically ecumenical in philosophy, supporting the Alpha program which bridges charismatic, Protestant, and Roman Catholic churches. He is a member of Church of Christ the King in Brighton, U.K. and supports the “extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit,” which refers to the demonic/fleshly charismatic mysticism such as nonsensical ecstatic tongues, spirit slaying, holy laughter, and shaking.

Townend is holding hands with the “broader church” in all of its facets and heresies and end-time apostasies, and Townend’s objective in writing “hymn-like” contemporary songs is ecumenism. He is doubtless sincere in this, but he is sincerely and decidedly and dangerously *wrong*. Townend is a rock & roller, pure and simple. In his blog he says that he doesn’t go home and put on a hymns album, because this is not “where I’m at musically at all.” He wants to use the soft CCM to bring “traditional churches” into association with the “broader church.”

When “traditional” churches borrow Townend’s “soft” CCM “hymns,” the contemporary churches are in no danger of being “traditionalized,” but the traditional churches are most definitely in danger of being contemporized and led into the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism.

Contemporary Southern Gospel is probably as dangerous as Contemporary Worship Music, and its popularity is

growing by leaps and bounds among fundamental Baptists. My warnings about Bill Gaither and his crowd have, for the most part, either fallen on deaf ears or stirred up anger toward me and bitter rejection of my ministry.

(See “Bill Gaither’s Disobedience” and “Southern Gospel Music” at the Way of Life web site. There is also a segment on Southern Gospel in the video series “Music for Good or Evil,” which is available on DVD or eVideo downloads from the Way of Life web site -- [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org).)

Contemporary Southern Gospel tends to bring the same type of broadminded tolerance and ecumenical thinking and rejection of “strict separatism” as Contemporary Worship Music brings to a church.

A church will not long maintain a biblical separatist stance if it embraces either contemporary Southern Gospel or contemporary worship music.

Within a decade or two such churches will have adopted a different stance, a New Evangelical-contemporary-emerging one.

# **The Transformative Power of Contemporary Praise Music**

Wherein lies the transformative power of contemporary Christian music? Why is it capable of changing the very character of a church, of turning it in an entirely new direction?

The transformative power of CCM lies both in its philosophy and in its music.

## **The Transformative Power of the Contemporary Music Philosophy**

CCM is not just a different type of Christian music. It is the soundtrack of an entire philosophy of Christian faith and life. It is the piper's tune for a worldview, and it is very enticing because it preaches a doctrine of license under the guise of a more relaxed, grace-based approach to Christian living (and usually this relaxed attitude affect's one's approach to doctrine as well).

It brazenly renounces the "old" way of separatism as "legalistic" and "Pharisaical." It is a brash rejection of "your grandmother's Christianity," referring to a time before the 1970s before Christian rock fought its way into the churches.

In the popular book *Blue Like Jazz*, Donald Miller tells how that he refused to be restricted by the teaching of traditional-type churches. He wanted to drink beer and watch raunchy movies and talk trashy and run around with atheists and other rebels. Now, with his emerging CCM stance, he can do that.

At a book signing for *Blue Like Jazz*, a young woman who had purchased multiple copies said, “I’m a Jesus girl, but I also like to go out and do tequila shots with my friends. This is a book I can give to them.”

This is the Christianity of Contemporary Christian Music.

In *A Renegade’s Guide to God*, David Foster mocks “Bible thumpers” and calls for a “renegade” type of Christianity that “resists being named, revolts at being shamed, and rebels against being tamed” (p. 8). He says, “We won’t be ‘told’ what to do or ‘commanded’ how to behave” (p. 10).

In *If Grace Is So Amazing, Why Don’t We Like It*, Donald McCullough says that he doesn’t like the type of preaching that says, “... don’t do that, curb your appetites, reign in desire, discipline and sacrifice yourself” (p. 104).

Charles Swindoll, who has promoted the CCM philosophy for decades and who once entered a Promise Keepers rally on a Harley motorcycle to the strains of the rebel rock anthem “Born to Be Wild,” says: “There was a time ... when I had a position that life was so rigid I would fight for every jot and tittle. ... The older I get, the shorter that lists gets, frankly. ... More than ever we need grace-awakened ministers who free rather than bind” (*The Grace Awakening*).

A battle is raging between those who believe that the grace of God is license to drink deeply of the sensual pop culture and those who still hold to biblical separatism. When I was saved in 1973 from a rock & roll lifestyle, God taught me to separate from the sensuality of rock and the cheap, garbage pop culture which is both immersed in and was largely created by this music. Rock & roll has been at the

forefront of the drug culture, free sex, feminism, unisex fashions, no-fault divorce, the mainstreaming of homosexuality, the legalization of abortion, and the misguided peace movement. The vast majority of mainstream rockers promote these things. Rock has had a large role in bringing Eastern paganism to the West.

Rock & roll is the soundtrack of end-time apostasy as described in the amazing prophecy of 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.”

The apostle Paul defined the true grace of Christian living as follows:

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:11-14).

This is a very strict, very careful, very holy, very separated way of living. Paul is most definitely NOT describing the philosophy that permeates Contemporary Christian Music today. According to Scripture we are saved by the grace of God without works, because salvation is a free gift that was purchased by Christ; but we are saved “unto good works” (Eph. 2:8-10), and those good works are laid out in the canon of New Testament Scripture.

It is not “legalism” or “Phariseeism” for a saved-by-grace, blood-washed saint to have a zeal to obey every commandment of the New Testament faith.

James said that “pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is to “keep himself UNSPOTTED from the world” (James 1:27) and he solemnly warned that those who befriend the world are the enemies of God (James 4:4).

That apparently was the condition of *many* professing believers in James’ day, but it has become the condition of MOST today.

Paul said we are to have “NO fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11).

This is a very, very strict standard of separation. It means that the believer is to constantly measure things by God’s Word to see if it is an unfruitful work of darkness, and he is to have no fellowship with such works. In fact, not only is he not to have fellowship with them; he is to reprove them. It was commandments such as this that led me to reject rock & roll as young Christian and also to reprove rock in my preaching and books. If anything is an unfruitful work of darkness in this world today, it has to be rock & roll and the rock/pop culture.

Paul taught Timothy to keep the New Testament commandments “without SPOT, unrebukeable” (1 Timothy 6:14).

It is instructive that Paul used the word “commandment” in this passage, because the CCM crowd typically rails

against “rules” and “regulations.” Paul issued commandments to the brethren (2 Thess. 3:4, 6, 12). By my count, the epistle of Ephesians contains 88 commandments for New Testament believers that we to keep by God’s grace and through the indwelling Spirit.

The Psalmist said, “I esteem all thy precepts concerning ALL things to be right and I hate EVERY false way” (Psalm 119:128).

This is the mindset and worldview of a true Biblicist, and it is contrary to the mindset one typically finds in the CCM movement.

The so-called grace preached by the CCM movement is that 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.”

Though this was written 2,000 years ago, a more accurate description of Contemporary Christian Music has never been penned. CCM is an end-time movement of apostasy. It is characterized by the desire on the part of professing Christians for new (contemporary) things and the intention to live according to their own lusts rather than obey the path of Biblical separation, and it features heaps of teachers who are willing to tickle itching ears with a new type of Christianity that is not solidly Bible based.

The Bible exhorts us to exercise our “senses to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14). This is the way of Christian growth and spiritual protection. The child of God is to take the Bible as his sole authority for faith and practice, as the



infallibly inspired Book of his life, and test everything by it. We are to continually judge whether things are right or wrong, true or false, good or evil. This is contrary to the CCM philosophy and the churches that live by this standard will reject CCM, because they know that there is a right and wrong biblical standard for everything, including music and dress and entertainment.

Yes, the CCM philosophy is diametrically opposed to an “old-fashioned” Biblicist church, and those who associate with CCM pick up its philosophy. There is a rebel inside of every born again child of God that wants to follow its own lusts. The child of God can walk in the flesh or in the Spirit, and the flesh lusteth against the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-17). The CCM philosophy is attractive to those who want more “liberty.”

It is magnet for those who have rejected the “old-fashioned” New Testament faith and who despise traditional Bible-believing churches, dogmatic biblical preaching, and biblical “judgmentalism” in regard to lifestyle choices.

In a video-recorded interview in 2009, Zach Lind, drummer for the secular rock band Jimmy Eat World, told us that he grew up in a “very conservative” Baptist church and made a profession of faith when he was young, but he did so only because he didn’t want to be left out of the communion service. He said he wanted to “eat the cracker with his buddies.” He secretly loved rock & roll and didn’t like to hear preaching against that sort of thing, so he left church and did not return to Christianity until he discovered the emerging church. Now he has the freedom

to be a Christian and also a drummer in a secular rock band. Following is an excerpt from the interview:

“The belief system that they emphasized did not necessarily resonate with me. For instance, when I was in junior high they played a video to the junior high group called ‘Hells Bells: The Dangers of Rock & Roll.’ And I was sort of secretly in the closet a big rock & roll music fan, listening to all different kinds of bands that typically the church wouldn’t approve. ... Ultimately in high school I started a band with some friends; that was 15 or 16 years ago, and we still are a band today; we’re a secular rock band. I’ve lived in the world, and I’ve realized that a lot of the religious goods and services that I was provided as a kid just sort of fell flat when I entered into the real world. As I was trying to reconcile those kinds of things, I was free falling. The framework of Christianity wasn’t viable to me. It was nice to come into contact with some writers like Brian McLaren and Rob Bell and Dallas Willard that gave me a different framework, a different perspective, in order to construct a life of faith that really resonated with me. Because of my experience with the band and whatever notoriety I’ve gained with that, I’ve been able to make some friendships with people that I really respect and that have really shaped me. It’s been life-giving. ... The gospel that I believe now is totally different than the gospel I grew up with. The gospel I grew up with was a transactional gospel, this idea that if I have the right belief now I will be somehow saved from some kind of punishment later. ... Dallas Willard reminded me that the kingdom of God is not some future destination, that the kingdom of God is now.”

This theme runs throughout the world of Contemporary Christian Music, and it is very tempting to many people today and herein lies its transformative power.

By the way, Zach never gave us a biblical testimony of being born again. He simply accepted “a different framework” provided by emergents such as Brian McLaren, Rob Bell, and Dallas Willard.

When this music begins to gain a bridgehead in an individual life, home, or church it brings its philosophy, and if the individual believer is not filled with the Spirit and grounded in Scripture and if he is not carefully testing everything by God's Word he will be influenced by the promise of "the new liberty."

## **The Transformative Power of the Contemporary Music**

It is not only the philosophy of CCM that is transformative; it is the music itself.

Every element of contemporary praise music is designed to create a sensual emotional experience which is very sensual and addictive and even hypnotic.

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 and Integrity Worship Ministries is "helping people worldwide EXPERIENCE THE MANIFEST PRESENCE OF GOD" ([integritymusic.com](http://integritymusic.com)).

The objective of Worship Central is "to encounter God."

Secret Place Ministries exemplifies the contemporary worship philosophy in that they "long for AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE PRESENCE OF GOD" and

their worship music is said to “BRING DOWN THE PRESENCE OF GOD” (SecretPlaceMinistries.org).

Michael W. Smith says, “Music helps you ENTER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD.”

Joel Purdy of Hearts of Saints says, “Contemporary worship music gives the listener a deeper WORSHIP EXPERIENCE.”

In pursuit of this tangible worship experience, the CCM crowd gives itself over to the music, which is designed to create the sensual experience that they are seeking.

### **Major Elements of the Contemporary Worship Experience**

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

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

### **Syncopated Dance Rhythm Is a Major Element of the Contemporary Worship Experience**

Irwin Silber, a communist who desired to see social degeneration that would overthrow the “old order,” observed that rock music has this power and it lies in its

backbeat rhythm. He wrote: “The great strength of rock & roll LIES IN ITS BEAT. It is a music that is BASICALLY SEXUAL, unpuritan” (*Sing Out*, May 1965).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fifties rocker Bill Haley said: “I felt that if I could take a ... tune and drop the first and third beats and accentuate the second and fourth, and add a beat the listeners could clap to as well as dance this would be what they were after.”

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

The backbeat emphasizes the offbeat, such as

one-TWO-three-FOUR

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

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

or

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

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

Da Da Da Da, Da Da Da Da

vs.

Da Da -- Da, Da Da -- Da

In the staccato beat the notes are clipped.

Da Da Da Da, Da Da Da Da

vs.

Dop Dop Dop Dop, Dop Dop Dop Dop

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

The backbeat, the silent beat, the staccato beat, and beat anticipation are some of the many kinds of off beat dance syncopation that go into the creation of rock. *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.”

(We give examples of the previous types of dance syncopation in the video series “Music for Good or Evil,” which is available from Way of Life Literature.)

The 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 or a piano. It moves the body and makes you want to dance.

The heavy syncopation is why pop music is so physical.

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

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

Describing how she felt when attending her first big rock concert, Janis Joplin said: “I couldn’t believe it, all that rhythm and power. I got stoned just feeling it, like IT WAS THE BEST DOPE IN THE WORLD. It was SO SENSUAL, so vibrant, loud, crazy” (Joel Dreyfuss, “Janis



Joplin Followed the Script,” *Wichita Eagle*, Oct. 6, 1970, p. 7A).

The sensual dance rhythm of rock music has addictive, transformative power.

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

“The rock was softer, but it still contained the rock rhythm that undeniably appeals to our flesh. The listener soon develops a craving for it. JUST LIKE AN ADDICT, THERE IS NO TURNING BACK. What happens over time is a steady slide down the slippery slope away from all traditional music into the latest, edgiest contemporary styles.”

Graham West, formerly associated with the pop music industry, issues the same warning:

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

“There is a GRAY AREA OF IGNORANCE ABOUT THE POWER OF POP SYNCOPATION. And the devil, taking advantage of this, being not only the master musician but also the master of subtlety, comes along

to a strong fundamental church or a Bible college and he offers his wares of CCM rock ballads. It sounds great. There's no drums, no wild electric guitars, no obvious back beat, just the piano or guitar and the singer. And it's almost the same as the songs that they used to sing, except the rhythm kind of trips a little bit. But that's O.K. because it's exciting, and the young people love it. The problem is that when the rhythm does that little trip it means that the music contains a basic, distinctive rhythmic feature of all rock & roll since its inception in the 1950s. In this way, before you've even known it, you've been deceived by the subtle strategy of Satan. This is the blind spot that Satan is using to his advantage. He knows that once a church accepts rock ballads, complete capitulation is almost inevitable.

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

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

Lancaster Baptist Church in Lancaster, California, has been doing this for a long time. In the report "Analyzing Adapted CCM Songs" we consider three examples that were performed by Lancaster in 2011. We provide actual video clips comparing the Independent Baptist "adapted" editions of CCM intercut with the "real stuff" performed by the original CCM groups. These clips change back and forth between the CCM artists and the music recorded in the fundamental Baptist church, though in some instances, they are so close in sound and feel it is hard to tell which is which.

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

## **Unresolving Chord Cadence Is a Major Element of the Contemporary Worship Experience**

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

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

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

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

“The emphasis is on the IV chord. The V chord is always called the dominant chord in music, but in CCM it is avoided as often as possible. It doesn’t resolve. Music works like this: You have a question (phrase) and then an answer (phrase). There is tension and then release (resolve). Contemporary praise music seems to present questions with no answers, no absolutes. It is wispy and draws on the emotions, with no intellectual purpose or guide. This is the philosophy of the Devil.”

## **Sensual Vocal Styles Are a Major Element of the Contemporary Worship Experience**

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

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

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

But it has been adapted by contemporary Christian musicians and Southern Gospel performers.

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

## **Electronic Modulation Is a Major Element of the Contemporary Worship Experience**

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

## **The Rise and Fall of the Intensity of the Music Is a Major Element of the Contemporary Worship Experience**

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

## **Repetition Is a Major Element of the Contemporary Worship Experience**

Repetition is another major element of the contemporary worship experience. Because of the repetition, CCM has been called 7/11 music -- seven words sung 11 times.

Actually, the repetition can be much more extensive than that. In Kevin Prosch's song "Signs and Wonders," the words "signs and wonders, healings, deliverance" are repeated at least 20 times and the words "the kingdom of God is here" are repeated at least 25 times. At the 1996

Heart of David conference, they sang Prosch's "Praise the Lord, Oh My Soul" for 20 minutes, and they sang another song for over three hours! That must be the epitome of contemporary repetition!

This music is indeed transformational. By yielding to it, the CCM crowd is carried along into a "tangible experience." When combined with the syncopated, body-jerking rhythms, the electronic modulation, the unresolving chord progression, the rise and fall of the intensity, and the sensual vocal styles, the repetition can have a hypnotic effect on those who yield themselves unreservedly to the experience.

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

## Conclusion

By “adapting” CCM, churches are creating a bridge to the ecumenical-charismatic world. And the influence will gradually permeate the entire congregation and change its fundamental character.

Every Independent Baptist church that doesn’t take this matter seriously and doesn’t educate itself continually and doesn’t take a strict stand will be well down the emerging road within a decade or two. Contemporary music is *that* powerful and it is *that* much at the heart of end-time apostasy.

Walls are being broken down and borders are being erased!

The Bible warns, “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33).

The sad fact is that in the typical Bible-believing church today many of the people are ripe for picking by the CCM philosophy. Many aren’t even born again, having merely prayed a sinner’s prayer without genuine repentance and heart-felt faith. Many are carnal, walking with one foot in the world. Many are not sold out to Christ, and the reality of Romans 12:1-2 is entirely foreign to their daily experience. This is true for large numbers of young people who grow up in the churches, but it is also true of large numbers of adults.

Unless we get serious about our Christianity and bring our churches back to the absolute standard of God’s Word and put Christ at the center of everything, we are going to be swept along by the floodwaters of end-time apostasy.

Pastors must face this issue and make the effort to educate both themselves and the people. To use the excuse of ignorance is no excuse at all, because education is available.

We must 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 CCM while you use 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.

We need to narrow our associations today so that we aren’t dragged down with the compromise of others. When I see that a preacher is careless about music and associated things and isn’t interested in being properly informed and makes flimsy excuses for using the wrong music, I am not going to have anything to do with him as far as joint-ministry goes. I am not going to attend his church; I’m not going to preach for him, and I’m not going to preach *with* him in some meeting.

This issue is not a matter of personal opinion and taste. The music issue is not “peripheral.” It is a doctrinal issue and getting it right is absolutely necessary for spiritual victory and protection today.

“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3).



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***CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC: SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED AND SOME WARNINGS***

**GIVEN**, ISBN 1-58318-094-x. This book expounds on five reasons why we are opposed to CCM: It is worldly; it is ecumenical; it is charismatic; it is experience-oriented; and it weakens the fundamentalist stance of churches. We give examples of how changes are occurring in formerly fundamentalist churches through the instrumentality of contemporary music. The rest of the book deals with questions that are commonly asked on this subject, such as the following: What is the difference between using contemporary worship music and using old hymns that were interdenominational? Didn't Luther and the Wesleys use tavern music? Isn't the issue of music just a matter of taste? Doesn't the Bible encourage us to use cymbals and stringed and loud sounding instruments? What is wrong with soft rock? Didn't God create all music? Love is more important than doctrine and standards of living, isn't it? Since God looks on the heart, why are you concerned about appearance? Isn't Christianity all about grace? What about all of the young people who are being saved through CCM?

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*The Transformational Power of Contemporary Praise  
Music*

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