
FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

PROMINENT BJU-ASSOCIATED PASTOR DEFENDS USE OF “CONTEMPORARY HYMNS”

Brian Fuller, Senior Pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Concord, New Hampshire, defended the use of contemporary worship hymns in a blog in 2012. This church has been called “the flagship of BJU-FBF (Bob Jones University-Fundamental Baptist Fellowship) in New England.” Its Christian Leadership Conference on March 31, 2012, featured Jim Berg of BJU and Matt and Christy Taylor of the Wilds. Fuller writes: “If I recall correctly, it was at our 2003 *New England Leadership Conference* that Dr. David Parker sang *How Deep the Father’s Love for Us* to a capacity crowd of New England fundamentalists. A chorus of hearty ‘amens’ followed this theologically robust text and appropriate tune by Stuart Townend. That was 2003. This is 2012. You see, 2003 was a somewhat blissful time when the ‘association’ or ‘source’ question of the original style of modern hymns wasn’t being necessarily fingerprinted. That benevolent spirit of heartily affirming the truths of these modern hymns has all but evaporated, unfortunately. Frankly, as a believer I feel a little ‘robbed’ that the spiritual gift I received in hearing that hymn back in 2003 has now been flagged as a potential stumbling block to other believers. Beyond the ‘offense’ objection, I have discovered that there seems to be a political element to this issue. In attending conferences and fellowships, I have noticed the ‘source and association’ issue of modern hymnody is raised with rapidity and frequency. If not stated explicitly, the attitudinal implications of some of the discussions are that there is little room at the table for a difference of opinion. A pastor’s ‘true-blue’ separatism might be



*Cover image of Stuart Townend CD which includes
“How Deep the Father’s Love for Us”*

questioned if he discerningly embraces these modern hymns. There is a definitive suspicion that is detected from others about your teetering on the ‘slippery slope’ if you view the source and association elements as mostly irrelevant, illogical or extra-biblical” (“Of Modern Hymnody at Trinity, Feb. 13, 2012). Fuller went on to defend the Getty/Townend “contemporary hymn movement” as being (allegedly) different in character than the Contemporary Christian Music field. In this he is *dead* wrong, as documented in the report on page two.

SUGGESTED STATEMENT ON CHURCH MUSIC

Some time back, we received the following request: “My father asked me to write to you and see if you have a statement about music standards that we could draw from in revising our church constitution. Music has become such a big topic in our day that he feels as

senior pastor that we should have a clear, somewhat timeless statement about it in our constitution.” I sent the following, which is an update of a statement that we use in our churches in South Asia: **1. The church music must teach sound doctrine** (Col. 3:16). The

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ARE THE CONTEMPORARY ? HYMN WRITERS “SAFE”



As we have documented in *The Directory of Christian Worship Musicians*, Stuart Townend is an out-and-out Christian rocker, a radical charismatic, and a rabid ecumenist who associates with Rome and promotes the Alpha program and is therefore building the one-world church. By their intimate

and non-critical association with Townend, the Gettys have demonstrated that they are one in spirit. The people who are writing the “contemporary hymns” are not separated from the wider field of CCM. They are ALL holding hands. They ALL have the same spirit. NONE of them are friends of a fundamentalist position. ALL of them are avowed enemies of biblical separation. ALL of them have an ecumenical, charismatic mystical agenda. This is not opinion. We have studied these things “from the horse’s mouth” for nearly 50 years and have carefully documented our warnings. God’s Word forbids us to associate with end-time apostasy. We are to touch not the unclean thing. To be careful about associations is the very heart and soul of biblical separatism. The use of CCM is definitely a “slippery slope” toward compromise and error, and those who are playing with it are playing with fire. “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33). This warning has nothing to do with “politics.” I can’t speak for others, but I know that my motive in warning against the slippery slope of CCM is a passion for the truth that I found in Christ. CCM is the sound-track of end-time apostasy. It is a bridge to the “broader church” with all of its ancient and end-time heresies. The aforementioned thinking is dangerous and ill-

informed, but it probably represents the majority position today. THE CORNER HAS BEEN TURNED IN REGARD TO FUNDAMENTAL BAPTISTS AND CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC. Twenty years ago, the vast majority of influential IFB preachers condemned it in no uncertain terms. The trumpet was giving a clear sound. Today, the majority of influential IFB preachers are justifying its use and questioning the motives of those who still reprove it. Since so many fundamental Baptist preachers are crowd-followers and man-respecters, it is not surprising that the philosophy of justifying the “adaptation” of contemporary worship music has spread so rapidly.

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— David Cloud

This is further evidence of the collapse of separatism. (See the free eBooks “The Collapse of Separatism among Fundamental Baptists,” “The Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians,” “The Treacherous Waters of the SBC and Evangelicalism,” and “Why Most Independent Baptist Will Be Emerging,” which are available at the Way of Life web site.)

IS IT CONSISTENT TO BE “PICKY” ABOUT CCM ASSOCIATIONS WHILE USING PROTESTANT HYMNS?

It is popularly argued that if we are to be “picky” about musical associations in regard to the contemporary musicians, then we would have to discard Luther’s or Wesley’s hymns, but that holds no water. The old Protestant hymns were exceedingly different in character from contemporary worship music. The old Protestants weren’t building the end-time one-world church, but the CCM crowd most definitely is. The old Protestants condemned Rome boldly and were separated from her. The world represented by Stuart Townend and his “contemporary hymns” is the world of rock & roll, charismatic mysticism, C.S. Lewis, *The Shack*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the emerging church, *The*

Message, Brennan Manning, Christian homosexuality, Leonard Sweet, Rick Warren, contemplative prayer, and unity with Rome. I don’t know of even one instance in which the use of a hymn by Luther has transformed a Baptist church into a Lutheran church, but I know of large numbers of cases in which fundamentalist churches have been converted to a contemporary philosophy through the use of CCM. I don’t know of one instance in which the old Protestant hymns acted as a bridge to the world, the flesh, and the devil, but I can point to many young people who have discovered contemporary worship music to be a bridge to these things. And it always started with the softer, less controversial stuff.

TECHNOLOGY AND MUSICAL ASSOCIATIONS

We live in a different world today because of technology, and the technology allows people to easily communicate with and associate with musicians. Even when Luther was alive or Charles Wesley or Fanny Crosby or whoever, if you sang their music in a church, the members had no way to develop an intimate association with the hymn writers so that they could sit at their feet and be influenced by everything they believed and represented. That is not true today. When a fundamentalist church uses contemporary worship music, the people have ready access to the writers of the music through the Internet. They can read their blogs, browse their Facebook pages, follow their Twitter accounts, listen to their music on YouTube. They can surf the links from these musicians to their friends and associates

and be influenced by the whole world of contemporary music. There is no doubt that this is happening in churches everywhere because of the carelessness and ignorance and lack of wisdom on the part of so many leaders. Contemporary worship music is a bridge to many dangerous things. It has transformation power. If the influence doesn’t come overnight, it will come eventually. If it doesn’t come to the older people, it will come to the younger ones. If the contemporary philosophy doesn’t permeate the church in this generation, it will in the next. For those of us who do still believe in biblical separation and therefore agree that lines must be drawn, why can’t we agree that the lines should be drawn at the safest place? Why not “approve things that are excellent” as opposed to borderline and questionable (Phil. 1:10)?

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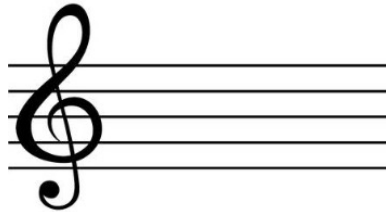


The “results” of technology: Screenshot of “Christian songwriters” that appeared at bottom of “Stuart Townend” search results.

SUGGESTED STATEMENT ON CHURCH MUSIC

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words of the songs must be right according to the teaching of the Bible. Most Contemporary Christian Music is unacceptable because it represents the ecumenical charismatic philosophy or it presents a vague message that lacks doctrinal clarity and strength. **2. The church music must be holy and separate from the world** (Eph. 5:19; Rom. 12:2; 1 John 2:15-16). This means that the church's music will not sound like the popular music played on the radio and the music that the world uses for dancing and drinking and partying. Our church music will not use the backbeat and other forms of dance syncopation, because this has always been associated with sensuality and has been characterized as "the sexy" part of pop music. We believe it is not wise to use drums (except in an orchestra) and electric guitars in church music, because they are so easily used in a pop music fashion. **3. The church music must not borrow from the world of contemporary Christian music**, since it is a major element of building the



apostate one-world church and represents a foreign spirit (1 Cor. 10:21; Eph. 5:11; 2 Tim. 3:5; Rev. 18:4). This is evident by examining the history of this music as well as the lives and beliefs of the contemporary musicians as we have done in *The Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians*. **4. The church music must not be designed to produce a charismatic style mystical experience** (1 Peter 5:8). The objective of charismatic music is to produce an experiential worship and toward this end contemporary worshipers use music with a strong dance rhythm, non-resolving chord sequences, repetition, and electronic modulation so that people will be carried away emotionally. The Bible tells us to be sober-minded and not to allow anything to capture our hearts other than God and His Word. We are not supposed to open ourselves up unquestioningly to any experience but are to continually test everything by the standard of God's absolute Truth (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

TECHNOLOGY AND MUSICAL ASSOCIATIONS

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Why try to find something good within the dangerous world of contemporary worship music? Is that wise? Is that godly? For the sake of the next generation, we need to keep *all* contemporary influences out of our churches and homes, and we

need to do the work of serious education that will protect the people. Instead of mocking and sidelining and blacklisting those who are warning about these things, we need to listen carefully and treat them as wise friends of truth rather than fools and enemies.

INFORMATION

The Friday Church News Notes is designed for use in churches and is published by Way of Life Literature's Fundamental Baptist Information Service. Unless otherwise stated, the Notes are written by David Cloud. Of necessity we quote from a wide variety of sources, but this obviously does not imply an endorsement. We trust that our readers will not be discouraged. It is God's will that we know the times (1 Ch. 12:32; Mat. 16:3) and that we be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. The News Notes remind us that the hour is very late, and we need to be ready for the Lord's coming. Are you sure that you are born again? Are you living for Christ? "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:11-14). This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the Fundamental Baptist Information Service mailing list. To SUBSCRIBE, go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/subscribe.html>. TO UNSUBSCRIBE OR CHANGE ADDRESSES, go to the very bottom of any email received from us and click "Manage My Subscription." Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.