

VI. HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN REACT TO THE APPEALS AND PRESSURES TO ADOPT A PROGRAM OF CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC

when we're pressured to adopt a program of CCM...

A. WE SHOULD FIRST OF ALL, RECOGNIZE WHAT A THREAT THIS KIND OF MUSIC POSES TO THE LOCAL CHURCH.

1. Someone has said, "contemporary Christian music is one of the most dangerous things facing fundamental Baptist and to Bible-believing Churches (Cloud, online article).
2. Just like the tongues movement was used of the devil to divide and destroy multitudes of churches, contemporary Christian music is now doing the very same thing. I personally know a number of Churches which have been completely destroyed by CCM.
3. The threat posed in CCM is very subtle but it is also very serious. It may use Christian lyrics but it conveys the message of rebellion and the recklessness of the rock and roll crowd. In this sense CCM has been referred to as "the New Trojan Horse of Modernism" that is destroying our churches. Slowly but surely the lyrics are becoming more questionable and no doubt more dishonoring to the Lord.

Kimberly Smith has addressed the issue of Christian lyrics in rock music in this way:

"Because of the carnal nature of music - like it or not - 'Christian' rock is a compromise... Our mistaken efforts to add good lyrics to a 'rock' does not make the rock music better. *It makes the Christian's song worse. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.* God warned the Hebrews many times in the Old Testament not to adopt the ways of the heathen. Jeremiah 10:2 says, "*thus saith the Lord, learn not the way of he heathen...*" (Smith, 14,76).

B. WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT EVERY KIND OF MUSIC CONVEYS A PARTICULAR MESSAGE.

1. Notice what Rick Warren, who holds to the seeker-sensitive philosophy of ministry has stated:

"The style of music you use in your service will be one of the most critical (and controversial) decisions you make in the life of your church. It may also be the most influential factor in determining who your church reaches for Christ and whether or not your church grows" (Warren, 279).

Warren, along with others involved in CCM, believes that music is amoral or cannot be judged as moral or immoral. Commenting on the music of his church services he said:

"We use the style of music the majority of people in our church listen to on the radio. They like bright, happy, cheerful music with a strong bass line and rhythm. For the first time in history, there exists a universal music style that can be heard in every country or the world. It's called contemporary pop/rock" (Warren, 285).

Don Lucarini, author of Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement, has aptly stated the fallacy of these arguments and philosophy. He stated:

"The belief that all music is amoral is a very popular argument and foundational to the contemporary music philosophy. Is the rock music style used in so much CCM associated with any particular moral dimension? I argue that it is clearly and unequivocally associated with immorality, especially promiscuous and adulterous sex, glorification of drugs, and rebellion against authority. But Dan you mean the secular godless lyrics, not music? No, I mean the music style itself. Decades of rock music in our culture have permanently stamped that music style with the dimension of immorality. Changing the lyrics and substituting Christian musicians cannot remove that stigma" (Lucarini, 90,91).

Lucarini goes on to say that CCM is "guilty by association" (Lucarini, 91).

2. It should be noted then that music is not amoral. Music styles have a moral dimension and are unavoidably associated with moral or immoral things. There is no doubt about the message which the rock and roll music conveys. It is a message of sexual license, rebellion against authority and immorality.
3. The question arises, "How can the rock and roll style of music with its immoral associations and message be used to honor the Lord?" The answer is - it can't. Alan Ives has said, "We can never speak of godliness with ungodly music, of heavenly things with earthly sensual and devilish music" (Ives, sermon excerpt).

C. WE SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE SUBTLE WAYS IN WHICH THE DEVIL USES THINGS.

1. One scheme the devil is employing today is a brand of evangelism and philosophy to provide a seeker-sensitive church. It says the church services ought to make the "unsaved" feel comfortable and not challenging them with the gospel to repent and to turn from their sins.

In this rush to make churches user-friendly and seeker-sensitive John MacArthur has warned that it:

"has become an excuse for importing worldly amusement into the church in an attempt to try to attract non-Christian seekers or unchurched Harrys by appealing to their fleshly interests" (MacArthur, 46)

2. Notice along with this concept more and more churches have adopted CCM to attract the unsaved to the services propagating that people of our day cannot be reached with outdated traditional music.

In rebuttal to this claim Kimberly Smith has brought out an important principle for believers to see:

"The church's purpose is not to please the world. Its purpose is to minister to the saints and to provide a sanctuary from the world. Not to undermine the value of beautiful and uplifting music in our worship services, let it be said that if people are serious about finding God, *they will come* to our churches and won't need weekly entertainment to draw them.

If the church feels a need to draw people with 'worldly' sounding music, it's because we, as individual Christians, have failed to share with other people how Christ has changed our lives. The early New Testament church grew because the people were excited about what God had done for them and went and told others. Today we've become complacent and rely on the church to provide programs and entertainment to draw people" (Smith, 74).

3. It has been said that , "CCM is the easiest way to draw a crowd." And as we drive by church signs today we read the words, "casual dress and contemporary music." So in order to increase attendance, church after church has fallen prey to this philosophy looking to get a larger crowd. Many churches have compromised in holding two services. An earlier service with CCM for the younger crowd and a later service for the older believers with traditional music.
4. We should note that we as a Bible-believing local church have not been called to be in the business of entertaining young people with the music they like, we are called to honor the Lord and serve Him, being faithful to maintain separation from the world with its ungodly practices (II Cor. 6:14-7:1) Dan Lucarini has stated:

"The church's mission is to bring glory to God in all they do (I Cor. 10:31). There is a desire to please God with everything done in the services. Contrast this to the seeker-sensitive church, where every detail of the service is judged by how well it pleases *people*" (Lucarini, 126).

5. Another similar threat facing churches today is the Southern Gospel music with its boogie woogie beat and entertainment - oriented quartets. Bruce Lackey, who played piano professionally in bars before he was saved, said that, "boogie woogie, regardless of the words

which accompany it, is sensual dance music, and it is not fitting for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Music which fits the bar scene is not fit to glorify a holy God."

6. Christians should note that the Gospel Music Association (GMA) espouses every kind of Southern Gospel and CCM musician including hard rock musicians. In November 2001 Elvis Presley was inducted into the GMA'S Hall of Fame.

Christians should note that Southern Gospel is yoked together with CCM and Christian rock under the GMA. The dove awards given by the GMA since 1969 have honored musicians of every kind including worldly hard rock musicians (Cloud, online article on Contemporary Christian music).

D. WE SHOULD DEVELOP SOME DISCERNMENT ABOUT WHAT CONSTITUTES WORSHIPFUL MUSIC AND WORLDLY MUSIC.

1. Advocates of CCM assert that music is a neutral force. They say the only thing that matters is the lyrics of a song.

Kimberly Smith argues that the "*beat*" of rock music is also carnal because it came out of a pagan or godless culture. She says:

"A pagan by definition, is one who is not spiritually minded but responds to the flesh. Romans 8:7 says, "because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." So in essence, the pagan has developed rhythms that will please his flesh" (Smith 14,15).

When it comes to exercising discernment Smith says:

"If the music causes your body to move in a way that could be construed as sensual or suggestive or, to be more precise, causes you to want to 'thrust out' your head, shoulders, or hips - or even tap your toes - 'in time' to an additional, identifiable 'beat', it is appealing to the flesh... the difference in our body's response is an indicator of whether the music is appealing to our flesh" or to our spirit" (Smith, 15).

2. We should note that worshipful music is unlike other kinds of music. It doesn't make a person feel like dancing. It is not sensual and appealing to fleshly desires. It is not associated with worldly types of music such as easy-listening or entertaining exhibitions. And it certainly does not use the beat of the "rock and roll" culture with its message of rebellion and moral laxity.

Dan Lucarini has said, "If it's got that swing, it ain't good to sing" (Lucarini, 134). He goes on to say:

"Contemporary songs are acceptable, as long as the emphasis is not on a *syncopated beat*, but on melody and harmony" (Lucarini, 135).

Lucarini also commented on the slippery slope of using blended services with traditional and contemporary music:

"When the drum set finally appeared on the platform, I believe the church reached the steepest and most dangerous part of the slope. More than any other instrument, a drum set is the key instrument of contemporary music styles. Drums are used to drive the beat, rock's true differentiation from other music styles. From that point on, the drums disproportionately influenced the music ministry. Music choices became more and more 'rocky' to satisfy the drummer (and those in the congregation attracted by this style). Services became louder and edgier" (Lucarini, 121).

3. It should also be noted that the publishing houses have one primary motive and that is to make a profit. Whatever sells is what they will produce.

E. WE OUGHT TO SET SOME SAFEGUARDS AND OPERATE ACCORDING TO SOME STRICT GUIDELINES.

1. In order to safeguard the ministry of a local church someone with some musical discernment and standards has to be in charge of approving background tapes if they are used. Rather than run the risk of hurting someone's feeling when his/her tapes are rejected, some pastors have chosen not to use any taped music at all.
2. To safeguard a church the choir leader, the congregational leader and singing groups should work closely with the pastor when it comes to deviating from traditional songs and introducing "specials" so-called.
3. We should realize the more CCM is published and permeates Christendom the more difficult it will become to find "special" music which honors the Lord.
4. Southern Gospel groups with their boogie woogie beat and entertainment-oriented so-called "ministries" should be viewed with caution. The Oak Ridge boys stand out as a glaring example of how gospel "music success" can lead to worldliness.

F. WE SHOULD HAVE SOME ANSWERS FOR THE ARGUMENTS THAT CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC PROPONENTS USE TO JUSTIFY AND PROMOTE THEIR PROGRAM..

1. The first argument is that music is amoral. To this we should answer that music styles not only have a moral dimension but they also convey a message of the things associated with them.
2. Some use the argument of using CCM to reach the unchurched. If people get saved in services using CCM isn't it then justifiable? Appealing as this may sound, this philosophy is the essence of Marxism. It states that "the end justifies the means". In other words anything goes to accomplish one's goal. The Bible does not support Marxism but rather gives us explicit instructions when it comes to evangelism and service.
3. Some argue that CCM draws the unsaved crowds and works so it must therefore be acceptable in God's service. But the Bible doesn't support pragmatism either. Just because something seems to work doesn't make it right and acceptable in God's sight . Note this fact in I Chron. 13.
4. Some argue that Martin Luther and the Wesleys used contemporary music in their services and this means we're being hypocritical if we judge rock music because it is contemporary.

In rebuttal, it should be noted that there is a vast difference between the use of a few contemporary songs, introduced by Luther and the Wesleys contrasted with the rock beat of today's contemporary Christian music and there's no argument against contemporary songs as such, the argument is against rock music with its beat and the stigma and message it carries.

5. Some argue that God is using CCM to save and to disciple the teens of our day. Lucarini answered this argument saying:

"Because of what our experience has demonstrated and the Bible's strong warnings about idol worship, we are now opposed to using CCM as a ministry tool for teens because it only feeds their natural desires and passions; it does not produce the fruit of the Spirit... We saw that godly disciplines of regular Bible study and prayer could not co-exist in their lives alongside the sensuality of CCM. Our conclusion was that the harm done to teens by CCM far outweighs any salvation or discipleship benefits" (Lucarini, 118).

G. WE SHOULD REFER THOSE WHO ARE PROMOTING A PROGRAM OF CCM TO SOME SOURCES WHICH POINT OUT THE ERRORS AND PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CCM MOVEMENT.

1. Why I left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement by Dan Lucarini is an excellent book written by a man with a rock music background who led numerous churches into the CCM movement as a musician and praise and worship leader.
2. **Oh, Be Careful Little Ears** by Kimberly Smith also deals with the problems of CCM. Note this author's background:

Kimberly Smith holds a master's degree in Biblical Studies from George Wythe, Coral Ridge Baptist University, and is an accomplished pianist with fourteen years of classical training.

3. David Cloud's website also provides several good articles dealing with the errors and problems of CCM. (fbns@wayoflife.org).

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