

Measuring the Music (Part 6)

The History and Growth of CCM

Text: Ephesians 5:18-19

Introduction:

1. Having studied a brief history of secular rock and roll and the filthy lifestyle that goes hand and hand with it, we now turn our attention to CCM in particular to consider a brief snapshot of its history and how it has grown into perhaps the most dominant influence within “Christendom”.
2. What do we mean by CCM? Dan Lucarini provides a good definition in his book *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement*. “CCM: Contemporary Christian Music. Specifically, this includes music styles such as soft rock, pop/rock, easy listening or classic rock, but could also include other forms of heavily syncopated music with rock influences such as jazz, rap, blues, hip-hop, punk, ska or modern country & western.” (Pg. 17) The term “Contemporary Christian Music” was not invented by Fundamental Baptists. It is a mainstream term describing a particular genre of music.
3. In contrast to CCM, we believe in using conservative, sacred music for the church and home. By sacred music we mean Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual songs; music that is distinct from the world in both its sound and lyrics. Dan Lucarini defines it as “hymns, traditional songs and those contemporary music styles that do not use rock or other musical influences that emphasize sensuality.” (Pg. 17)

I. THE HISTORY OF CCM

A. The Influence of Early Pentecostalism

Consider the following quotes from David Cloud’s Book, *Rock and Roll’s War Against God*:

1. Jerry Lee Lewis’s biographer Nick Tosches observes that “if you took the words away, there were more than a few Pentecostal hymns that would not sound foreign coming from the nickel machine in the wildest juke joint” (*Hellfire*, p. 57).
2. “Shortly after it began to emerge in 1901, Pentecostalism sensed through some strange form of intuition that success would come through emotionally-charged music. The first pattern was jazz. Speaking of the years 1901 to 1914, Howard Goss said, ‘Without it (jazz) the Pentecostal Movement could never have made the rapid inroads into the hearts of men and women as it did. Neither could we have experienced a constant victorious revival over the fifty years’ (*The Winds of Change*, p. 212).
3. “Goss also noted: ‘It was generally not the conventional church-hymn singing of that era. Entirely unpretentious, there appeared to be neither poetry nor musicianship in the composition. But there was something far more effective than either. ... WE WERE THE FIRST, SO FAR AS I KNOW, TO INTRODUCE THIS ACCELERATED TEMPO INTO GOSPEL SINGING’ (Ibid. pp. 207,208).

B. The Influence of Swingy Southern Gospel Music

Contemporary Issues Series

C. The Influence of the Jesus People Movement of the 1970s

1. CCM as we know it today really rose to prominence with the Jesus People Movement of the 1970s. Note the following summary from Online article: "The genre became known as contemporary Christian music as a result of the Jesus movement revival in the latter 1960s and early 1970s,^{[4][5]} and was originally called Jesus music.^[6] "About that time, many young people from the sixties' counterculture professed to believe in Jesus. Convinced of the bareness of a lifestyle based on drugs, free sex, and radical politics, some of the Jesus 'hippies' became known as 'Jesus people'".^[7] However, there were people who felt that Jesus was another "trip".^[7] It was during the 1970s Jesus movement that Christian music started to become an industry within itself.^[8] "Jesus Music" started by playing instruments and singing songs about love and peace, which then translated into love of God."¹
2. Chuck Smith and Lonnie Frisbee of Calvary Chapel: "The Jesus People Movement began at Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, California, led by Chuck Smith. Smith was mesmerized by a charismatic Jesus hippie named Lonnie Frisbee. "With his long brown hair, long scraggily beard, dusty clothing, scent of Mary Jane (marijuana) and glint of his last LSD trip in his eyes, he showed up on Chuck Smith's doorstep" (Matt Coker, *OC Weekly*, March 2005). Chuck Smith's wife, Kay, had a "prophecy" that God was going to use Frisbee in a great revival. Frisbee led a Wednesday night Bible study at Calvary Chapel and the church exploded from 150 to thousands in attendance and eventually became an entire association of churches. Thousands of hippies were baptized – even in their bikinis. Calvary Chapel birthed the contemporary praise movement, such as Love Song and Children of the Day. By the early 1970s, Calvary Chapel was home to ten or more of these musical groups. Instead of renouncing their old music, they used rock and roll to create "Christian" rock."²
3. Allan Powell, author of the Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian music stated: "The thought that Christian music could sound like popular music was a radical innovation that would ultimately launch a revolution in liturgies unparalleled by anything since the Reformers introduced congregational singing in the 16th century."³
4. Maranatha Music and Vineyard Music were the first main publishers of contemporary praise music. Calvary Chapel started Maranatha Music and John Wimber, a breakaway pastor from Calvary Chapel, started Vineyard Music which has had a huge influence in the contemporary praise movement. David Cloud writes, "In 1980, Lonnie Frisbee joined John Wimber and the Vineyard movement. Wimber had been seeking "signs" but nothing happened until Frisbee came. The first night, people fell on the floor and shook and spoke in gibberish. Chuck Smith, Jr., called John Wimber and

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contemporary_Christian_music Viewed 1/8/21

² D Cloud, *The Satanic Attack on Sacred Music*, p. 111.

³ Ibid.

Contemporary Issues Series

Lonnie Frisbee “the dynamic duo.” Calvary Chapels and Vineyard churches grew to become associations of hundreds of churches. They have been at the forefront of contemporary Christian music. Calvary Chapel started Maranatha Music, the first publisher of contemporary praise music. John Wimber started Vineyard Music, which has been very influential in the contemporary praise movement. Lonnie Frisbee continued to use drugs and practice homosexuality. He would “party on Saturday night” and preach on Sunday. Frisbee died in 1993 at age 43 of AIDS. Frisbee’s funeral was held in the heretic Robert Schuller’s Crystal Cathedral. He is buried there. Today the Crystal Cathedral is a Roman Catholic church. The spirit of the Jesus Movement is a deceiving spirit that is building the one-world church.”⁴

5. Note: CCM could accurately be termed Charismatic Christian Music. It was birthed in the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement and has been the engine room driving the explosive growth and spread of Pentecostalism around the globe. From a doctrinal viewpoint, one should be able to see that it is spiritually dangerous to be using music from this kind of source. The experience oriented rather than truth-oriented worship of the charismatic movement is reflected in much of CCM. CCM is a dangerous bridge to that world.

D. Early, Influential CCM Artists

1. Larry Norman (1970s)

- a. Larry Norman is often remembered as the "father of Christian rock", because of his early contributions (before the Jesus movement) to the developing new genre that mixed rock rhythms with the Christian messages.^[10] Though his style was not initially well received by many in the Christian community of the time, he continued throughout his career to create controversial hard-rock songs such as "Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music?".^[10] He is remembered as the artist "who first combined rock 'n' roll with Christian lyrics" in the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. ***Upon This Rock*** by pioneering Larry Norman, released in 1969 is considered to be "the first full-blown Christian rock album"⁵
- b. Larry Norman embodied the same rebellious spirit of mainstream rock and roll. In 1975 he wrote a song entitled “Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music”. Some of the lyrics are as follows: “They say rock ‘n’ roll is wrong ... They say cut my hair/ They’re driving me insane. ... Just give me a song that has a beat/ Just give me a song that moves my feet/ I don’t like none of those funeral marches!” The devil doesn’t have any good music! Anything Satan has is evil, not good!
- c. This same mocking, rebellious spirit is expressed by other CCM artists. For example:⁶

⁴ Ibid, p. 115.

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contemporary_Christian_music Viewed 1/8/21.

⁶ D Cloud, p. 112.

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- i. Consider Steve Taylor's song, "I Want to Be a Clone."
"The church is an assembly line/ I want to be a clone/ I'm glad they shoved it down my throat/ I want to be a clone."
- ii. Rich Mullins warned about "those Bible-believing, Bible-thumping born-againers."
- iii. DC Talk of Liberty University mocked the "hyper fundi" who opposes rock music.

2. Amy Grant (1980s & 1990s)

- a. Amy Grant (born Nov. 25, 1960) has been called "The Queen of Christian Pop". She has sold more than 30 million albums worldwide, won six Grammy Awards, 22 Gospel Music Association Dove Awards and had the first Christian album to go Platinum. She was honoured with a star on Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2006 for her contributions to the entertainment industry.
- b. Grant made her debut as a teenager and gained fame in Christian music during the 1980s with such hits as "Father's Eyes," "El Shaddai," and "Angels." In the mid-1980s, she began broadening her audience and soon became one of the **first CCM artists to cross over into mainstream pop** on the heels of her successful albums *Unguarded* and *Lead Me On*. In 1986, she scored her first *Billboard* Hot 100 No. 1 song in a duet with Peter Cetera, "The Next Time I Fall." In 1991, she released the blockbuster album *Heart in Motion* which became her best-selling album to date, topping the *Billboard* Christian album chart for 32 weeks, selling five million copies in the U.S., and producing her second No. 1 pop single "Baby Baby."⁷

3. Michael W. Smith (1980s to the present)

- a. Michael W. Smith was a contemporary of Amy Grant. In fact, he performed with Amy Grant in his early career before pursuing his own solo music career. Grant and Smith have maintained a friendship to this day, performing together several times in concert tours. Smith has been the recipient of three Grammy Awards, 45 Dove Awards, an American Music Award and has sold more than 15 million albums.⁸ His influence on the world of CCM from the 1980s to the present has been huge.
- b. Recently in connection with the production of an album in 2017 Smith said, "I feel God moving through His Church and He is calling us *together* to be one voice and one heart. One bride. Every nation, every tribe and every tongue. Every social class, every denomination. "What if we bring Him the thing that pleases Him most— our unity, we may each have different stories, and skin, and songs, but we all share His same Spirit."⁹ CCM is definitely the soundtrack of the ecumenical movement and the formation of the one world church.

4. Other names such as **Sandi Patti, Pat Boone, and Keith Green** are intimately associated with the early promotion of the CCM style.

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amy_Grant Viewed 1/8/21

⁸ Michael W. Smith Website, <https://michaelwsmith.com/about/> Viewed 1/8/21

⁹ Ibid.

II. THE GROWTH OF CCM

A. The Growth of CCM's Influence

1. To begin with, CCM as a genre was very much in the minority. There was strong resistance to it from Bible believing, fundamental church in the 70s. In the 80s its influence expanded but there was still strong push back by certain sections of fundamentalism and old-fashioned evangelicalism. The 90s saw CCM make significant inroads into conservative churches. Dan Lucarini notes this in his book *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement*.
2. Today, the tables have turned and CCM is well established in the majority of churches and we are now in a very small minority. Sadly, this is increasingly the case even amongst Independent Baptists who did a good job holding the line on this issue longer than most of the mainstream evangelical groups.

B. The Growth of CCM as an Industry

1. Contemporary Christian Music is a recognized industry today with a multi-million-dollar annual turnover. An online article from 2017 states that the Christian/Gospel music is considered one of the fastest growing areas in recorded music history with Total music sales exceeding more than a half billion annually.¹⁰
2. The CCM industry is really all about money. Contrary to its claims, it does not strongly emphasize a biblical salvation message. Clear testimonies of salvation and clear presentations of the Gospel are largely absent from the websites of prominent CCM artists. It is really the world packaged with a thin wrapping of Christian terminology.
3. Take Hillsong, one of the biggest producers and sellers of CCM since the mid-90s. A recent article (Feb. 6, 2020) by Rolling Stone Magazine, a secular rock publication, discusses the phenomenal success of the Hillsong music brand. "According to the church's self-released **2017 annual report**, which was independently audited, its total revenue for 2017 was a little over \$109 million. About \$14 million of that came directly from music."¹¹ The same article notes that from 9/18 to 10/19 (1 year) there were 1.1 billion on demand streams of Hillsong music tracks in the U.S. (Nielsen). Since 1992 Hillsong has sold somewhere in the order of 55 million albums. Around 50 million people sing Hillsong songs in church each week.¹² Their influence in Christianity over the last couple of decades is hard to quantify except to say that it has been **colossal**. The Hillsong juggernaut has smashed down conservative principles of music in multitudes of churches, transforming them into centres of cool, sensual, rock and roll Christianity. Independent Baptists are not immune and are being influence dramatically in our day by Hillsong and other similar groups.

¹⁰ <https://brandongaille.com/11-christian-music-industry-statistics-and-trends/> Viewed 1/8/21

¹¹ <https://au.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/inside-hillsong-church-hit-making-music-machine-6661/> Viewed 1/8/21

¹² Ibid.

Conclusion:

1. Dan Lucarini, a former CCM musician wisely observed, “CCM is stuck with this stigma of immorality, because the music styles carry with them the baggage of the world’s immorality. It does not matter if you change the lyrics. It does not matter if you change the musicians. It does not matter if you change the record labels. It does not matter if you ask God to sanctify it. Rock music and all its children, and by association CCM, can and will corrupt the morals of everyone who practises it.”¹³
2. CCM is really all about syncretism¹⁴; an unholy mixing together of the world and Christian things which is strictly forbidden numerous times in God’s Word.
3. Testimony: B. Tweedie

¹³ D Lucarini, *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Movement*, p. 73.

¹⁴ Syncretism is “the attempted reconciliation or union of different or opposing principles, practices, or parties, as in philosophy or religion.” (Online Dictionary) It is “the amalgamation or attempted amalgamation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought.” (Oxford Dictionary)