



Swift Seduction

A Look at the Spirit and Growth of Contemporary Christian Music

by Dean Taylor

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Col 3:16)

"Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God." (3 John 1:11)

I can still remember many of the youth group activities that my Baptist church took us to when I was young. Water slides, pizza parties, and movie night lock-ins were common. But probably the most influential activity we indulged in was loading the youth group into busses and heading off to mega-church auditoriums or conference halls to hear the new emerging phenomena known as Contemporary Christian Music.

It was the late 1970's and the more progressive youth

groups were really pushing this new fad. It seemed innocent. These early concerts usually ended with an altar call and many young people responded to the request and recited a sinner's prayer. With so many "decisions" reported back at church on Sunday morning it seemed no one could argue with it.

My pastor was relatively young, new and full of innovative ideas. I can remember some of the people laughing at how backward the former, older pastor was. One of the

common jokes on the way to Christian rock concerts was laughing at the fact that, only a few years prior, the church had experienced a revival that had resulted in people burning their rock and Christian rock albums in a burn barrel right out in the church's main parking lot. They said that the event even made the local newspapers. They were then all quick to agree, "it really put the church in a negative light." How quickly things were changing for the better...or so we thought.

The sad thing for me was that before this I had never even liked rock music. My brother played it a lot but I never had a taste for it. However, about once a month we either hosted one of these concerts ourselves or we headed off to another place to hear one. Eventually, I began to crave the sound and started to purchase as much of the music as I possibly could.

I can vividly remember those concerts. We would brag on how exciting and wild the music would get. It would seem to me that some bands like Petra, Rez Band and Mylon Lefever would see just how far they could push the Christian envelope. Anyone who dared the next “radical thing” would get all of us talking. Just like the secular concert-goers, we bought T-shirts, screamed for the musicians and some even waved lit cigarette lighters.

I can remember thankfully, that some protested, but we were quick to label them as “old fashioned,” “legalists,” and “out of touch” with our generation. Besides, people were getting saved...or at least that is what we thought.

One by one, I saw my friends going on to secular rock, sin and godless lives. Once they hit high school, all caution was thrown to the wind. Many still went to church, they would even respond at some of the revival meetings, but all of us were completely ignorant of a Holy God and His standards for our lives. Few, if any, had any conviction at all to search

out God’s Word and live a godly life.

Once the young people in the youth group reached dating age it seemed the only goal that the youth ministers had was to keep the young ladies from having children before they were married. Still faithfully, month - by - month, off we went to hear the newest and most progressive Christian rock band. There is no doubt in my mind that this influence in my life gave me a taste for rock music that led to my eventual acceptance of and even thirst for the secular rock culture later in my life. Rock music has a persuasive and even demonic power to it—it can become addictive just like drugs or alcohol. It may not appeal on the first try, but the more it is taken in, the more you seem to crave it.

In those days the warning signs were a little harder to recognize. I remember going to see an “unknown” young lady at the time—Amy Grant—sitting on a stool and playing nice songs like “Father’s Eyes” on her guitar. Sandi Patti sang at my wife’s (then girlfriend’s) church and it all seemed ok. Keith Green was trying to do a lot of evangelism, Petra said they wanted to reach the lost, and I can even remember the Imperials saying they should try not to dance on stage. But the insidious disease had already long-

affected all of us. Warning signs were everywhere but because we all loved the music so much we explained all of them away. Likewise, I believe



the musicians themselves were led from one compromise to another ignoring the warning signs as this industry grew.

That was over twenty years ago, and by the grace of God my wife and I have been saved from that seductive stronghold. Over these years I have been more and more removed from this culture. Today, when I think of these types of problems in the church, I tend to think of them as they were 15 years ago. However, since then, this Christian rock culture has only proceeded from bad to worse, with few Christians recognizing the heinous beast that it has become today.

Hardly any church is free from its influences. Since those early days, the Christian music companies have sold out to larger, secular music companies that are owned by completely secular management or stockholders. The sale of Contemporary Christian Music out-sells that of Jazz and Classical combined. The musicians have become rich

and the message has become adulterated.

In preparing John D. Martin's, "Sing the New Song," for this issue, I wanted to do some research to see just how the Christian music scene has progressed in the last 15 years. In doing this I was completely shocked. I knew it was bad, but just how bad—I had no idea.

Following is a sample of some interviews and direct quotes taken from some of the leading artists of our day. I apologize in advance that they are rather graphic and very disturbing. As I was gathering these quotes I had to discard most of them because they were simply too grievous to print. Scandals, divorces and unrepentant adulterous relationships were all too easy to find. It seemed that some of the biggest names had some of the worst family lives. As you read these quotes, please remember these are real people, with real lives, involved in real sin. Please pray for their repentance. I am mostly repeating only the quotes or incidents that were boldly stated or preformed by the musicians themselves, rather than what was said about them. Much, much more could have been said. Most of the research has been taken from two publications, "Christian Rock: Blessing or Blaspheme," by Terry Watkins, and "The Seduction of Our Youth," by Carol Guffey.

To the shame of the Christian church, she has received this invasion with hardly a word. Even the world

has taken notice of what they see as obvious mixed messages. People Magazine (July 15, 1991, p.71) says of Amy's video *Baby, Baby*, "There's saintly Amy cuddling some hunky guy, crooning "Baby, Baby" into his ear and looking pretty sleek and sinful..." When asked about similar inconsistencies from rolling Stone magazine, Amy confesses, "I'm trying to look sexy to sell a record..." (Rolling Stone, June 6, 1985, p. 10)

In a candid interview with Ladies Home Journal (December, 1985, p.100) Amy stated, "I have a healthy sense of right and wrong, but sometimes, for example, using foul, exclamation-point words among friends can be good for a laugh."

Speaking about what she considers a "no fun" stigma on the Christian, Amy says, "Why isolate yourself? Your life isolates you enough. I'm isolated when I walk into a room and somebody says, 'She's a Christian,' and nobody offers me a joint and all the coke (cocaine) disappears..." Amy also says, "I remember years ago—the first time I smelled anybody smoking a joint at a concert, I was thrilled...it meant to me that obviously this person is not affected by the church peer pressure." (Bob Millard, *Amy Grant*, [New York, 1986,] p. 169) Ex-Husband Gary Chapman even confessed in People Magazine (July 15, 1991, p. 72) of a six-year cocaine and marijuana addiction.

Moving quickly into music videos, the Contemporary

Christian market has wasted no time. Sadly, the pace to mix and flirt with witchcraft and the occult has also been a fast one. In Amy Grant's video, "That's What Love is For," copying the dress style of professed witch, Stevie Nicks, Amy is dressed in a hooded red robe, as is used in witchcraft rituals. Flashing strangely on the palms of each hand, she has fixed a six-pointed-star called a hexagram, which is a symbol heavily associated with occult practices. It is hard to believe that this is a coincidence or accident. These videos cost thousands of dollars to produce. They are researched and choreographed to the smallest detail.

Speaking of the youth in attendance at Michael W. Smith concerts, it was reported by the Tulsa Tribune, "Smith, with synthesizers blaring, drums blazing, and guitars screeching, sent a young crowd into a frenzy from beginning to end." Another source said, "With sweeping strobes lighting the stage and crowd areas, Smith took the stage with some twirling dance steps that sent the crowd into a rocking frenzy. The moment Smith's hands hit the air, the audience responded with over-the-head hand claps and stomping feet."

Inside Music Magazine, interviewing Michael W. Smith said, "There's also the influence of such groups as Alan Parsons in your music. It's especially noticeable on the first record, *The Michael W. Smith Project* (named after

Alan Parsons' album, *The Alan Parsons Project*.) Smith's reply: "Definitely!"

Terry Watkins, (author of the tract, *Christian Rock: Blessing or Blaspheme*) commenting on this interview remarks, "Alan Parsons is among the most occultic in rock! Alan Parsons has songs entitled: 'Lucifer,' and the blasphemous 'Genesis Ch. 1 V. 32.' (There is no Genesis chapter 1, verse 32!) Alan Parsons', album, *Eye In The Sky*, has on the cover (and back) the Eye of Horus (also called the Eye of Lucifer.) Not surprisingly, Smith also has an album titled, *I2(EYE.)* Of course, the name of Jesus is nowhere to be found. (Did you really think it would be?)"

Of the musician Carmen one magazine reported, "One of the first song routines Carman swings into is a jazzed-up 50's imitation of Elvis Presley called "Celebrating Jesus." Carman shakes, stutters and shimmies just like the "King" himself, as the crowd cheers and be-bops in the aisles."

Of the group Whitecross, a publication reported on their concerts stating, "a hot new six-piece band from Rhode Island, got the place rocking with a blend of pop metal melodies and straight-ahead power...The crowd was in a frenzy by the time Whitecross appeared, and the front of the auditorium was packed with screaming metalheads."

The popular Dove Award winning group DC Talk made the *Dallas Morning News*, (April 27, 1996) when they

reported on their concert series entitled "Freak Show:" "As teenagers' shrieks filled the Dallas Convention Center moments before DC Talk took the stage Friday night, one of the relatively few grown-ups in the sold-out crowd observed, 'This is just like the Beatles.'"

Keeping in line with the Roman Catholic push for One World Ecumenism (one world church), Contemporary Christian artists have begun joining together with people of other faiths as well. Carol Guffey, (author of the tract, *The Seduction of Our Youth*) reports: "Popular CCM musician Michael Card led the singing for the 'Evening of Friendship' in Salt Lake City, November, 2004. The crowd was composed of Mormons and Evangelical Christians. The *Desert Morning News* wrote that 'he doesn't see Mormonism and Evangelical Christianity as opposed to each other; they are more like the two ends of a long chord – part of the same thing.' Card said, 'The older I get, I guess the more I want to integrate everything.' Card now has the distinction of having the greatest ecumenical reach of any of the CCM artists."

Friendship Fest, "A historic gathering between Christians and Muslims," will take place in Morocco, May 6-8, 2005. NAE states "the goals of Friendship Fest are to make use of the universal language of music to bridge cultures and make friends, to set a good example of religious tolerance by engaging in respect-

ful dialogue." CCM Musicians from the U.S. and Morocco will be performing on the same stage in a collective celebration for peace and tolerance. Participating artists will be Newsboys, Stacie Orrico, Phil Keaggy, Delirious, Jeremy Camp, Out of Eden and Rock and Roll Worship Circus.

The Bible states plainly, "*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*" (2 Corinthians 6:14) During these "Christian" concerts, not only are ecumenical agendas propagated, but some of the most worldly and satanic music is mixed right in:

- **Jars of Clay** admits that they listen to Ozzy Osbourne (a self professed Satanist,) and even sing his song "Crazy Train" during their concerts.
- **Amy Grant** plays Joni Mitchell (professed New Age follower.)
- **Johnny Cash** plays Danzig, Beck and SoundGarden.
- **Petra** plays Argent, Ditto and KISS.
- **77's** plays Led Zeppelin. DC Talk plays Doobie Brothers, Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, Nirvana and REM.
- **Audio Adrenaline** plays Edgar Winter.
- **Point of Grace** plays Earth, Wind and Fire (professed New Age followers and Pantheists.)
- **Rez Band** plays The Who and Jefferson Airplane.

- **Holy Soldier** plays Rolling Stones.
- **Rachel**, Rachel plays Kansas.
- **Deliverance** plays Black Sabbath (very outspoken Satanists.)
- **MXPX** plays Buddy Holly.

Here are a few direct quotes taken from other leading Contemporary Christian musicians:

Rich Mullins

"I'm really sick of all this heavy-handed Christianity. Musicians take themselves too seriously. They should have more fun, and they should stop preaching unless that's what God has called them to. If I want to hear a sermon, I'll go to church, thank you." (CCM Magazine, April, 1987, p. 12)

Wayne Watson

"There's one way I won't write. I won't write a song that says, 'You better get right with God.' From my own experience, I find that way sometimes makes people defensive..." (Christian Activities Calendar, Spring/Summer, 1989, p. 111)

Creed

"We cannot say this enough. We are not a 'Christian' band. We have no agenda to lead others to believe in our specific beliefs. Drug use is allowed in the band, but nothing more than you

could grow in your own back yard. And I love women." (USA Weekend, 2002) "We've always just had a positive message. I grew up listening to Slayer, Celtic Frost and Metallica. The last thing I ever thought people would say was that I was in a Christian band. After a while of us going, "No, we're not... no, we're not... no, we're not," it got to a point there was not much more we could say or do aside from coming out with satanic T-shirts onstage." (Rolling Stone)

Michael English

In 1994, Michael English swept the Gospel Music Association's Dove awards, winning six awards, including the prestigious Artist of the Year. But a few days later, English confessed publicly to marital infidelity with a leading musician from another popular Contemporary Christian group, First Call.

Audio Adrenaline

"This is a call to save the church and reshape and reform ideas... to not be afraid to stand up and challenge fundamental thoughts." (Interview, CCM Planet, 2/25/03)

Jars of Clay

"We don't have a specific audience in mind...we're not writing songs that are intentionally geared for a Christian audience versus

a regular mainstream audience. There's an understanding that when people say 'Christian,' and some of it's just Western civilization, that there's an agenda that will come along with that and there's a guideline and a standard and people can expect to be served something that they are going to have to digest on some level." (CNN Entertainment)

Sixpence None the Richer

Front woman Leigh Nash says she's "really fed up with being pigeonholed as 'that Jesus band.' The Christian thing doesn't follow Creed or Lifehouse around, does it? It's so irritating—80% of the articles written about us, 'Christian' is in there somewhere. It's always a banner, and we just don't wanna carry that around anymore. People with all their religious claims and...just gets old. I don't wanna read their books and I don't wanna hear 'em talk. I just wanna know what I believe, and try and quietly nurture that, so I can be a little stronger when I go out and face the world again." (Tom Lanham, The Examiner, 6/23/03)

Point of Grace

Speaking about the musical group Point of Grace, Terry Watkins reports: "The album 'I AM' has a cross of Christ in the center with an embryo and an old

man in the center with a temple in the foreground. Their song 'Serpentine Fire' is based on the new age teachings found in Shah Kriza Yogi Meditation Cult. On Point of Grace's album, "Life, Love and Other Mysteries" is "Sing A Song," by Earth, Wind and Fire." The writer of "Sing A Song" is Maurice White—a life-long Buddhist!

There is so much more that I could have written. This is just a sample of the tip of the iceberg. However, I think it should be enough to demonstrate some serious problems in the Contemporary Christian industry. If you are still listening to this music please pray and ask God to show you the way of truth. This industry has deteriorated much in the 20 years that I have known about it. Old songs like "My Father's Eyes" and "Rise Again" are far removed from today's taste. However, in even those seemingly innocent songs of years-gone-by we should have seen the warring signs. But now... how could there be any excuse? Jesus warns us, "wisdom is justified of all her children." (Luke 7:35) I think it is past time for the Bride of Christ to take a sober, honest look at this insidious intruder.

It could obviously be argued that I have only portrayed the bad things and that there are some good, edifying exceptions in the world of CCM. This may be true, but I feel a strong urgency that someone needs to blow the

trumpet here. If we turn a blind eye then what is to be the final end of it all? Not to mention the fact that trying to find edifying exceptions is much like digging through the trash bin to find a decent meal. May the Lord open our eyes and grant us wisdom and discernment.


Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a

roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8)


Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. (1 Tit. 5:20)

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them. (Eph. 5:11)





Music



J.S. Bach said, "All music should have no other end and aim than the glory of God and the soul's refreshment; where this is not remembered there is no real music but only a devilish hub-bub." He headed his compositions: "J.J." "Jesus Juva" which means "Jesus help me." He ended them "S.D.G." "Soli Dei gratia" which means "To God alone the praise."

