

The Pentecostalization of Christian Worship-Part 2

Saturday, May 06, 2023 0:800 AM CT • 54:00

Host: David Wheaton 00:08

The Christian Worldview is a nonprofit listener supported radio ministry. We are able to pursue that mission on the radio station, website or app on which you're listening today because of the support of listeners like you. So thank you for your prayer, your encouragement and support. You can connect with us by visiting our website, TheChristianWorldview.org, calling our toll free number 1-888-646-2233 or by writing to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Just another reminder, I want to announce a Christian Worldview speaker series event featuring Christian journalist, Alex Newman, that we have coming up on Saturday, May 20th here in the Twin Cities. The Christian Worldview speaker series are short listener events featuring a compelling speaker on a consequential topic, and the topic that day is going to be being informed of and prepared for the global great reset. Again, Christian journalist, Alex Newman, who was a recent guest on the program and also the CEO of Liberty Sentinel Media will be the featured speaker.

This event takes place on Saturday, May 20, 2023, from 8:00am to 10:30am at Fourth Baptist Church in Plymouth, Minnesota, which is just west of Minneapolis, starting at 8:00am. We're going to have a pre event breakfast in the foyer of the church with coffee, doughnuts, muffins and yogurt. The Christian Worldview Radio Program will be airing in the sanctuary at 9:00 am where Alex Newman will speak on The Great Reset and what Christians need to know and how we should respond to that. After he speaks for about 35 to 40 minutes, I'm going to interview him along with taking questions from the audience.

There's no registration for the event, there's no admission fee, you can come for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. If you do want to come to the pre-event breakfast, we do ask you to register for that so we know how much food to provide. You can go to our website to register at TheChristianWorldview.org or call us toll free at 1-888-646-2233. The sanctuary holds 800 people, so there should be plenty of room for everyone. The event will not be live streamed online. I'll tell you more about it at the end of the program today.

“The Pentecostalization of Christian Worship” — Today is part two of that topic right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host.

Before we get to the interview, just a couple summary points from last week. We mentioned a study that nearly all of music sung and played in evangelical churches today comes from four mega churches, and all of them are charismatic leaning.

1. Number one, Bethel in Redding, California with Bill Johnson, who considers himself to be part of the New Apostolic Reformation.
2. Hillsong Church with Brian and Bobbie Houston, the former pastors there.
3. Elevation Church with Steven Furtick in North Carolina.
4. Passion City Church led by Louie Giglio in Atlanta.

All of these churches hold to varying degrees of the following, claiming direct revelation from God. God spoke to me, God told me this. Some of them believe that they are modern day apostles as if they were in the first century apostolic period, or they believe in a subsequent filling of the Holy Spirit, you're saved at one point and at some point down the road, you actually receive the Holy Spirit, which is not biblical, you receive the Holy Spirit the moment of salvation. They believe in the word of faith. In other words, you speak words in faith, and that means it's going to happen if you have the faith. The health, wealth and prosperity gospel that when you're saved, and you're a believer, that God wants you to be healthy and wealthy and prosperous, and so forth. They believe in the, "little gods" belief, that we have the divine or heaven inside of us. They're continuationists, as they believe in the continuation of the miraculous sign gifts that some of the first century apostles had. The sign gifts being the gifts of doing miracles, supernatural events, healings, speaking in foreign languages that they don't know, or prophecy, not just teaching the word prophecy, but actually foretelling what is going to happen in the future.

Charismatic music is the entry point, but the format or methodology of the service itself, and even some of those beliefs that charismatics have, can find their way into evangelical churches as well. Why this is significant is that Pentecostals have a much different purpose and expectation of what worship should be than historic Biblical Christianity. In one of the columns he writes about Pentecostals. He says, "The pursuit of a Pentecostal worship service is the experience of intense intimacy. By contrast, Hebrew and Christian worship has always required the frequent, conscious response of the mind and will. The restraining of what could become sensual. Modesty in bodily expression, and a rational active response to God, not a sensual, passive one."

There are a few topics that always generate a lot of feedback, and one of them is God's sovereignty and salvation, versus man's responsibility. The doctrine of election. But this one is another one, the issue of spiritual gifts. The difference between what cessationists believe versus continuationists. Most all charismatics, just by definition, are continuationists. The most misunderstood response for a cessationist, as we are, (The Christian Worldview) is, "so you don't believe God does miracles or heals people anymore today?" The answer to that is absolutely God still does miracles. Salvation itself is a supernatural act of God to make someone who is spiritually dead to make them spiritually alive, or someone who has stage four cancer given no chance to survive all of a sudden the cancer is not even seen anymore. These are miracles of God.

But the distinction here is this. Cessationists believe that men today do not possess the same miraculous sign gifts that God gave men, the apostles, in the first century. But after the Church Age, some of those gifts will return. Think about the two witnesses in Revelation who can do signs and wonders. Those miraculous sign gifts in the Apostolic Era of the first century, were used as signs that what the apostles were saying about Christ, and about God was true. It substantiated their preaching before the New Testament was compiled. The signs showed that they were from God and speaking for God, just as the signs and wonders that Moses did before Pharaoh, communicated to Pharaoh, that Moses was speaking from God.

The belief that the miraculous sign gifts have ceased, or cessationism, that has been a position held in history for centuries. Got questions wrote that tongues are not mentioned at all by the post Apostolic Fathers after the apostolic age. Other writers such as Justin Martyr, Origin, and Augustine considered tongues something that happened only in the earliest days of the church. Fast forward to the Reformers, the Puritans, Charles Spurgeon, Jonathan Edwards, Martyn Lloyd Jones, they were all cessationists, not believing that the miraculous sign gifts of the first century continue to today. That has been the Orthodox position over the centuries.

Continuationism really started with the charismatic movement about 100 years ago. I looked at a website called, Grasping God, and I don't know anything about the ministry, they had a list of the miracles that Paul and Peter did, who had these sign gifts of the Holy Spirit. For instance, the apostles spoke in foreign languages they hadn't learned. Acts chapter two, Peter and John healed the lame man. Peter's shadow healed sick people. Peter raised Tabitha from the dead. In Acts 9. Paul cursed and blinded Elymas, the sorcerer. Paul and Barnabas healed the crippled man who had faith. People touched Paul with aprons and handkerchiefs and laid those clothes on the sick and demon possessed, who were then healed. In Acts chapter 19. Paul raised Eutychus from the dead after he'd fallen out of the window. Paul healed Publius's father of fever and dysentery in Acts 28. Paul healed all sick people on the island of Malta. Do you see what they're saying here? It's not God healing these people, as God can do at anytime, any place, it's that God had given gifts to these apostles at that time to do miraculous things that I have not seen any man be able to do today.

Yes, lots of people claim to be able to do these things. But it's never verifiable with evidence and eyewitnesses, like someone being raised from the dead, as these apostles were able to do in the first century. So the question is, why do this topic if it's so divisive? The answer is simple. The purity of the church and sound doctrine representing God accurately, and not giving people expectations they shouldn't have, so they don't become disillusioned when they're not healed, or granted some miracle that a man or ministry promises that he can provide for them. So a truthful representation of God and His Church and what we can expect as believers needs to be sought for and fought for by every true believer. Otherwise, heresy goes so many different directions.

Listen to what Jesus said about how God is to be worshipped when he spoke to the woman at the well in Samaria. This is from John Chapter 4. *An hour is coming and now is when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit* (that's a little s, not the Holy Spirit) *and truth. For such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit* (again, small s) *and truth.* So spirit here is not the Holy Spirit, but our own spirit, which is the immaterial part of us that goes from being dead in sin, to alive when God saves a person. Spirit doesn't mean emotion, but it means a Holy Spirit enlivened person who can then know and worship God, who has a redeemed mind will, and emotion.

Let me be clear, it is beautiful to have proper emotion in worship. Joy and tears and vocalizing praise and amen and lifting arms up in praise, but emotion should not be the primary goal of worship. Worshiping God, accurately and obediently, according to how God reveals Himself is the goal of worship, and the result of that should be awe or emotion.

So we spend all kinds of time and energy evaluating the preached word. Is the doctrine sound? Is it communicated with grace and truth? Is it honoring to God? But somehow questioning music forms and service methodologies is beyond the pale? I don't think it should be. Knowing what those four churches teach that are influencing most of evangelical music today, we should be concerned about the beliefs and practices of the Pentecostal churches who are influencing evangelical churches. So after this first break of the day for some ministry announcements, we'll get to part two of our interview with Pastor David de Bruyn on this topic of the Pentecostalization of Christian worship. I'm David Wheaton, and you're listening to The Christian Worldview Radio Program.

Okay, as we consider our topic today, "*The Pentecostalization of Christian Worship*," think back 50 years or more to how a Bible preaching Evangelical church service would have been depicted. There would be a father and mother standing with children at their side in a well lit sanctuary, wearing their, "Sunday best" clothes, holding hymn books and singing hymns of the faith before the pastor got up to preach. Fast forward to today and think about how professing Bible preaching Evangelical churches depict themselves today. The ubiquitous photo you'll see is one of silhouetted individuals with arms raised high in the air inside a dark room accented by stage lighting with a worship band performing in the background. The caption to the photo might as well read, Peak Worship Experience. Now setting aside for a moment which church service you prefer, let's ask a more basic question. Why has there been such a major change in the past 50 years when church services, in the west at least, had been relatively similar for hundreds of years?

Last week in part one in "*The Pentecostalization of Christian Worship*," David de Bruyn, pastor of New Covenant Baptist Church in Johannesburg South Africa explained how the Pentecostal or charismatic movement, the largest and fastest growing branch of Christianity worldwide by the way, has greatly influenced evangelical church services, not just with contemporary music styles, but also with the objective of the worship service itself. David de Bruyn writes in one of his articles in the seven part series we have linked at our website, The ChristianWorldview.org, Charismatic worship

writers speak of the importance of so called flow, a technique of uninterrupted continual music designed to emotionally transport the worshipers into the climactic experience of so called worship. So this week in part two, David de Bruyn will be with us again to explain how music has been the primary entry point for Pentecostalism's influence on evangelicalism, and what effect that has made upon Evangelical beliefs and practices as well.

Featured Resource: So Many Lions, So Few Daniels 14:15

Have faith in God. Don't be intimidated by lions. If the world says back down, don't do this. Fling open your windows, pray openly so to speak. That's what Daniel did. Don't be ashamed. Don't be intimidated. A blind anemic, weak kneed flea on crutches has more chance of defeating a herd of 1,000 wild stampeding elephants than this world has of stopping the will of God. There's nothing they can do to stop God's will and if you're a Christian, you have aligned yourself with God's will.

That was evangelist, Ray Comfort, exhorting believers to stand firm and speak boldly, just like Daniel. Ray's new book, *So Many Lions, So Few Daniels* is 192 pages, softcover and retails for \$16.99. You can order the book for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Host: David Wheaton 15:16

What is The Christian Worldview Radio Program really about? Fundamentally, it's about impacting people, families, churches, with the life and eternity changing truth of God's Word. We know the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only message that saves us from God's wrath by God's grace for God's glory. And we know the Bible is the inspired Word of God, providing the only way to think and live to the glory of God. We are a nonprofit listener supported ministry.

If you'd like to help us impact listeners with the biblical worldview and the Gospel, consider becoming a Christian Worldview Partner who regularly give a specified amount to the ministry. As a thank you, Christian Worldview Partners automatically receive many of the resources featured on the program throughout the year. To become a Christian Worldview Partner, call us toll free at 1-888-646-2233 or visit TheChristianWorldview.org.

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website , TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry. Our topic today is the Pentecostalization of Christian worship services. Our guest is David de Bruyn, the pastor of New Covenant Baptist Church in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Let's get more specific into the music. David, we've talked about the overall different approach to worship that Pentecostals have, how that's influenced the Evangelical church. In your articles you go into specifically, I think you emphasize mostly how this is transmitted in through the musical style. You say, when Christian worship is pentecostalized, it is not merely a "style" or "preference" that has

changed. You'll hear that so much when it comes to music. Music is just a preference. It's amoral. The rhythm, the form of music means nothing. It's all about the lyrics. You say, the point and goal of Christian worship has been altered and the very shape of active call and response has been substituted with a passive, stimulatory ecstatic model. You say, This is no small change. I will say you're absolutely correct, because what you write in these columns, if taken at face value, basically undermines the complete direction of Evangelical Christianity.

I can't speak for everyone in the world, but let's say in America that I've observed, that has given over to this particular style of music, this Christian contemporary music that had its roots in charismaticism and Pentecostalism has been completely accepted and welcomed, and become a prominent part of the church here, at least in this country. I know it's around the world, as well. So many conservative Evangelicals, David, will talk about, it is really just about the importance of lyrics in the music. How do you draw a line, though, between what is reverent in music, what you would describe as being honoring to God, and what crosses the line into what is, let's say worldly or fleshly?

Guest: David de Bruyn 18:43

This is one of those questions which is both simple and very complex. The complexity lies in understanding the language of music. The melody, harmony, rhythm, tone, color, and how their combinations communicate, and also how those combinations take on meaning in culture. That meaning is both associative, it's conventional. It's how we use the music. It's the situations in which we use the music,. It's the group's, the genres that contribute to our overall sense of meaning. There's also an intrinsic level of meaning that just has to do with how our bodies respond to tones and to rhythms, and that's the complex side of it that deserves a full treatment. It deserves pastors particularly and leaders becoming learned, at least competent in the area of understanding what and how music communicates.

The simple side of the question is something that in many ways we skip past and that is that music is really in many ways a kind of tone of voice. It's a tone of voice to accompany the very lyrics that we're singing. When it comes to something like that, we don't seem to have as much trouble. We understand when little Timmy at the table spoke to his father in an irreverent tone of voice. We understand when so and so spoke to their leader in an angry tone of voice. These forms of tonal communication are quite well recognizable to us.

It just seems that when it comes to music, Christians, and particularly Evangelical Christians, suddenly take on a kind of aesthetic agnosticism, as if we have no idea that this music sounds irreverent, or this music sounds flippant, or it sounds casual, or It even sounds sensual. We know very well the places in which this will be played. We know the contexts. We know the occasions. We know what the world uses that sound to sell and we know what they would not use to sell. So we understand this, but then again, when it comes to Christian debates about music, suddenly everyone becomes an agnostic, and suddenly everything's preference, everything's morally neutral.

So in answer to your question, Where do we draw the line? Well, that's a critical question. A question in which requires critical thought, using a number of criteria. How we detect meaning. How we understand musical meaning, contexts, cultural meaning, and musical meaning in the end is a compound form of meaning. Multiple strands contribute towards it. It's a question that is subjective in the sense that we as subjects must make the judgement, not in the sense that it is impossible to make. So drawing the line is a difficult, but not impossible task for those who are determined to do it.

Host: David Wheaton 21:50

David de Bruyn with us here on The Christian Worldview. Let me just read a little more from your column where you bring up these terms, Dionysian versus Apollonian. Let me read where you bring these up and I want you to describe what those mean. The fact that the intensity that is sought is felt so acutely in the body, this is with charismatic worship music, hence the intensity, the fact that it is often evoked without much understanding or meditation on revealed truth. The fact that the participant often feels passive and overwhelmed, would lead many observers, ancient and modern, to classify Pentecostal intensity as a passion as Dionysian or even as sensual. Furthermore, the addiction that many have to it. The addiction, a strong word, has all the signs of people who have found an emotional stimulant. You're really describing what Christian contemporary music has become.

By contrast, Christian worship has to first pass through the filter of a spirit filled understanding. It must respond submissively, which means humbly, soberly, and reverently. Next paragraph. Worship like that I just read is Apollonian. It creates some distance between mind and body, because the mind is reflecting on truth, not being manipulated by what the body or the ear is finding sensuous pleasure in. Certainly, you say, the response may be robust, triumphant and filled to the brim with zeal to Apollonian music. It's where there's not just primarily sensually stimulating, but it is always a response that the spirit is making to the Holy Spirit's illumination. It is never an irrational feeling of pleasure that sweeps upon one because of a combination of chords, rhythms, nostalgia, lighting, breathy and crooning vocals, or some other sensual trick. Those are Marionette strings, like a puppet, attempting to pull on the appetites directly. Very powerful thoughts you're writing down there.

Tell us more about this Dionysian and Apollonian division, and how you see it used not in the charismatic churches, because we know that. We see groups like Jesus Culture, Hillsong, they use this all the time. But how do you see that as being dominant, not just entering the door, but being very dominant in the evangelical church today?

Guest: David de Bruyn 24:22

The history of that terminology goes back a little bit. It's primarily associated with Friedrich Nietzsche, who meant it to describe two different approaches to art in particular. Of course, as Christians we're commanded to use art, we're commanded to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, which is both music and poetry. So this affects us. Nietzsche's idea was to connect them symbolically with two different Greek gods. So Dionysus is the god of wine, Apollo, god of music, god of reason, several

other things, and the distinction between them is the idea that Apollonian art first appeals to the understanding. The mind has to contemplate meaning. There is almost, if you could imagine a kind of a speed bump in the soul. As you slow down, you consider the components, the arrangement, how the artist has used his material, what's being communicated and why, and you almost get a moment to consider the truth of it.

Dionysian, as the name suggests, acts upon you the way alcohol acts upon you, to be controlled by wine is to be intoxicated, and to no longer be in control of your faculties. So this kind of art makes a direct hit upon your appetites through its manipulative use of its materials, whether it be music, or movies, or materials, or poetry, and so forth. What it is doing is going straight to the gut and pulling on the heartstrings and bypassing the filter of the mind.

Now, we could discuss how it does that at length, but for the purposes of our discussion, what we want to focus on, is there a kind of music that just goes straight to my feelings and gets my body and gets my nostalgia and gets my sentiment and gets my tears flowing? Is there kind of music that works like that? We all know the answer is yes. Is there a kind on the other hand that works through the mind, that works on me more slowly, that doesn't always necessarily appeal to me. In the same way? Yes, there is, and we usually recognize that that music has a more profound effect upon us.

To perhaps change the metaphor, you could view it almost like the difference between the kind of food that is nourishing but requires chewing, versus the kind of sort of lollipop that gives you this overpowering tongue experience, the taste overwhelming moment, but doesn't really have much effect on you in a nourishing way. So that's the difference between them. One is going through reason and the understanding, the other is going directly towards the body, towards feelings, towards manipulating passions. One is treating you as an active thinker. The other is treating you as a passive creature to be manipulated.

How is that coming into modern evangelicalism? Whenever leaders are working towards effect, in other words, whenever they are trying to produce an emotion in their people that they justify as connection or authenticity or realness, if they use manipulative techniques, certain kinds of mood music, certain kinds of lighting, certain kinds of movie clips, there's things that public speakers, that pastors can do, where we tell the hilarious joke, and then we hit them with a hard statement right after that, or we do the continual tear jerking story.

In its worst forms, it's when pastors become actors, dramatists who become professional tear jerkers is in the way they communicate, knowing full well what they're doing, that they are pulling upon the heartstrings and going for the gut, rather than an Apollonian approach to preaching, which appeals to the understanding through a careful exegesis of Scripture.

So we could probably enumerate many more examples, but the basic distinction is this, whether we are talking about preaching, music, technology, architecture, is it first going through the mind and

heart so as to understand and respond actively? Or is it appealing directly to my passions, my appetites, my feelings, my body, my whims, so as to almost act directly on me, and I'm just being passively moved by it. That's the distinction.

Host: David Wheaton 29:12

It seems to me that if you're really aiming at the emotions and the experience primarily, once you're out of that experience, once that experience is over, you're not going to have the same kind of hold of the truth that you would be if you're appealing to someone's mind, and then your will, and then with the emotions to follow. Just as you were giving that example about how alcohol takes over a person, I'm just wondering if the Apostle Paul when he wrote in Colossians 3 and Ephesians chapter 5, he says in Ephesians 5:18, *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.*

The Holy Spirit in other words. You can either be filled with alcoholic spirits, small s or you can be filled with the Holy Spirit, Big S, and it's a comma there. Continuing the thought, it gets right into music in verse 19-*speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.* So I wonder if there's something purposeful about the way the apostle Paul writes that? That music shouldn't be like a drug, like an addictive pursuit that we're looking to transport ourselves into some sort of ecstatic state, and that the triad he puts there, Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, should be under the umbrella of worshiping God in spirit and in truth, and that should be the primary purpose of it.

Guest: David de Bruyn 30:52

I agree wholeheartedly. It is a supreme irony then that in charismatic theology, they've actually used the metaphor of getting drunk with the Spirit. That there has now been this, almost a complete missing of what Paul meant. Paul meant to set up a contrast between being filled with the Spirit, which is exactly parallel to Colossians 3:16 which says, *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, or teaching one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.*

So being filled with the Spirit is exactly parallel to taking in the Word of God rationally, thoughtfully, with the understanding there isn't some contrast here that when the Holy Spirit fills you, you're in a passive experience of being numb to your intellect and you're just being swayed and moved passively by the work of the Spirit. That is to misconstrue the work of the Spirit all together. So I agree, Paul is actually encouraging us along this idea of a rational, full, thoughtful contemplation of God in His Word, and that is the filling of the Spirit. One of the ways we know that, is that all the effects of being filled with the Spirit further on in Ephesians five are not only the speaking in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, but they include husbands and wives loving each other, serving each other, in clearly rational, thoughtful, sacrificial, submissive ways. All of this is going to come about because of a people that are Word centered and Word saturated.

Host: David Wheaton 32:39

Pastor David de Bruyn is our guest today here on The Christian Worldview coming to you from South Africa. We are talking about the Pentecostalization of Christian worship. Today is part two of that topic. We'll take a brief break for some ministry announcements, but there's much more coming up. So stay tuned. You're listening to The Christian Worldview Radio Program. I'm David Wheaton.

Resource Offer: The Great Reset with Alex Newman 33:14

Here's Christian journalist Alex Newman, and why some of our fellow citizens are destroying our historic values to enact a great reset to globalism. You can order Alex Newman's 80 minute DVD presentation on how globalist are attempting a great reset for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

They have no loyalty to the United States. In fact, I think many of these people at the highest levels absolutely despise the United States. Partly because it has been a historically Christian nation. It has taken the gospel to every corner of this planet like no other nation in all of human history. As I mentioned earlier, it's founded on these biblical principles. Really, a lot of the principles that are at the core of our republic, these came directly out of Scripture and our Founding Fathers made that crystal clear in their writings.

Featured Resource: So Many Lions, So Few Daniels 34:06

Have faith in God. Don't be intimidated by lions. If the world says back down, don't do this. Fling open your windows, pray openly so to speak. That's what Daniel did. Don't be ashamed. Don't be intimidated. A blind anemic, weak kneed flea on crutches has more chance of defeating a herd of 1,000 wild stampeding elephants than this world has of stopping the will of God. There's nothing they can do to stop God's will and if you're a Christian, you have aligned yourself with God's will.

That was evangelist, Ray Comfort, exhorting believers to stand firm and speak boldly, just like Daniel. Ray's new book, *So Many Lions, So Few Daniels* is 192 pages, softcover and retails for \$16.99. You can order the book for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Host: David Wheaton 35:11

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry. Our topic today is the Pentecostalization of Christian worship services. Our guest is David de Bruyn, the pastor of New Covenant Baptist Church in Johannesburg, South Africa.

In one of your later columns of the seven part series that we have linked at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org, you can also find it elsewhere, I think it's on the G3 Ministries website as well. You say, the problem is not the contemporary nature of the songs that are sung in the church today as long as they're Biblically sound. It does not matter if a song was written in the year 221 or 1021 or 2021, as long as it is true, good and beautiful. The problem is not even the charismatic commitments or association of the songwriter.

You could have a charismatic person writing a Biblically sound song, that's not a problem. The problem is far more that on the spectrum of the Apollonian and Dionysian sentiment, they probably lean closer to the Dionysian side at least musically. In non charismatic church, skillful musicians can interpret some of these songs, let's say, written by charismatic writers, or presented with a charismatic form of music. So skilled musicians can interpret some of these songs and hymns in a fashion that communicates sobriety and modesty and can make these works practical and helpful for a church seeking reverent music.

This is something that Luther did with the secular tunes that he employed as hymns. Thoughtful pastors can thus use these alongside a healthy diet of excellent classical hymns that balance out the passionate Dionysian element both musically and lyrically. My own church, you write, has attempted to attain this balance, but in practice you say, this is not often what happens.

Now, I want to be specific here with a couple of very well known, very influential musicians that I would say are on the more conservative end of the Evangelical spectrum. I'm talking churches that have pastors we know are sound preachers on Christian radio programs. You have Keith and Kristyn Getty or Bob Coughlin of Sovereign Grace Music, and there are a few others, but I'd say maybe those two are the most influential and popular amongst more conservative, and I say conservative not politically, theologically Evangelicals. Yet, when you listen to quite a bit of the Gettys music, or the Coughlin music, the way it is musically accompanied, I think you'd have to conclude that that music would be in the form of contemporary Christian music of more of a Pentecostal sound to that music.

What are your thoughts on maybe those two sources of music that are so popular within conservative evangelicalism. It sounds like their music, they're very doctrinally sound, I think you might agree with that, can be presented in a way that's not primarily appealing to the passions or the senses?

Guest: David de Bruyn 38:38

I think most of us are familiar with the music of the Gettys and Bob Coughlin, and these are very, very talented musicians who sat in a class that Coughlin taught at a pastors conference. They're also not people who are thoughtless about the theology of music, so we're dealing here with people who are theologically astute and have reasons behind what they do. Coughlin's book, Worship Matters, explores his own theology of music in detail. Now, having said that, both the Gettys and Coughlin are quite clear on record that what they would call style, or what they would call genre is a fairly neutral malleable thing. So long as one has the lyrical content being Orthodox, that in turn as it were,

redeems the song or changes the direction or the meaning of the song because now it's being employed for theologically correct purposes, and it's on that point that I differ with them.

I believe that musical genre is not simply a kind of decoration, or even just a musical form of preference. That the particular combinations of musical form, communicate different affections, and they communicate affections differently. So to be more specific, for example, when the Gettys produce a song that is based on a ballad form, can there be songs we employ in the church that use a ballad? Well certainly. And we have done that historically. There's hymns that are based on their form, and so if you find a contemporary hymn that is now written in their ballad form, and it suits the mood of the music and the truth that we are looking at and contemplating, that can be entirely appropriate.

The problem is when as very often Christians do, they kind of take their theology and even their music in packages, and they want all of it in a one stop shop. Then if you find for the sake of argument that the Gettys are using a ballad repeatedly, for a whole bunch of songs, you might find that a whole group of those songs simply aren't appropriate for the ballad form. Now instead of being discerning one song at a time, we can then make the mistake of saying, Well, we really enjoyed that one hymn that the Gettys wrote, it must mean that everything they do is of equal quality, and therefore we should just accept it because they are now becoming a name that we trust.

My response to that would be to say, why don't we just go one song at a time? Why don't we just go one hymn at a time? And consider what are they communicating? What are the associations? How is this put together, and is this appropriate? Because yes, some of those leanings are going to have the gravitational pull of the charismatic movement. In Coughlin's case, probably stronger. The Gettys also have it. It's not the most pernicious form of charismaticism and Pentecostalism that you have, at least that I'm aware of, in Coughlin's case, but you're still going to have that magnetism, that kind of gravitational pull towards their Dionysian, passionate, sentimental approach, which is kind of a little bit of an idolization of the feelings, a direct attack upon the gut, upon the appetites.

With that being present, one would say, again, let's go one song at a time, one hymn at a time. Let's look at the form, let's look at the shape. Then let's look at the lyrics. Let's not simply say because they are Orthodox, in the propositional content of their lyrics, that this must necessarily mean that everything they do is appropriate for Christian worship. What we need to do then is as I've written in that column. If we find something where we think the form and the content is appropriate, we may still need to rework it in our own churches, so that the final product is sober and reverent and godly and essentially appropriate for corporate worship. And that also requires skilled musicians in our churches.

Host: David Wheaton 43:11

That's very well answered. David De Bruyn with us today on The Christian Worldview. Just a couple more questions for you. The common thread that you hear within the contemporary Christian music,

the pop Christian music today is the beat. I mean, there's just a strong correlation between it and regular secular rock and roll music or secular pop rock. What are we to think about that element? The use of drums, the way the drums are used. The beat of music in Christian music today, is that kind of the crux of the matter where there's the sensual appeal?

Guest: David de Bruyn 43:47

There's a lot of talk about the beat. I think that that can almost be a distraction from the bigger issues. Because percussion is a normal part of music. Percussion has been used by almost all folk cultures. We see percussion referenced in Psalm 150. So by itself, percussion is not the problem. A beat is not the problem. Noise, an instrument that provides the beat. The real question is, once again, in the whole compound meaning of the song, are we producing a mood, a tone and affection that is either irreverent, or perhaps even simply casual, sloppy? Are we producing a sound that tends to send us back into ourselves into a kind of a narcissistic contemplation of myself and my own enjoyment, rather than an outward focus onto the glories of God and enjoying him?

The question of the beat can distract us and make us think that by itself, this is the problem, the "demon drum" type of approach. I think our bigger problems are sentimentalism in music, narcissism in music, commercialism in music, consumerism in music. All of those problems are antithetical to a true experience of a reverential worship of God. Yes, there are certainly those elements of when percussion is overdone, it leads in the direction of sensuality. There is no question that when there's an overpowering rhythm, it certainly raises associations of worldliness for most people. But I would say let's keep those alongside questions of, Does this music simply produce an irreverent, flippant, casual, self centered consumerist mood, that frankly, is not capable of carrying the weight of God's glory upon itself?

Host: David Wheaton 45:58

Very interesting. David de Bruyn with us today here on The Christian Worldview. These columns we highly recommend everyone listening today, read, whether you agree or disagree with the conclusions David is making, it will deepen your understanding of what is taking place in Evangelicalism and how our worship services have been altered because of the influence of Pentecostalism with the influence of music and so forth.

Now, you've written these and I'm sure you know full well, David, that the water is over the dam in Evangelicalism on this whole take over, this colonization of Pentecostalism specifically with regards to worship and music and so forth. What do you hope to achieve by writing these columns? What should someone listening today, maybe an individual listening today who's listening very closely to what you've been saying is open to being persuaded as to what you're saying, because some people will not be. You go to YouTube, you watch these popular Christian music videos, this song changed my life, I became a Christian because of this contemporary song and a lot of people aren't going to be persuaded on this at all. I want the music that I want to listen to, I like it, it makes me feel good and makes me praise God. And so that's the end of the story. But what are you hoping to achieve by

writing these columns? What should someone listening today who's thought about this topic, what do you want them to take away?

Guest: David de Bruyn 47:18

I think I'm trying to sound a warning that there is a kind of worship that is being offered to you that will cheat you. You are going to be drawn in and you will feel an intensity, and if you do not continue the pursuit of God and His Word, you may stop there. It will be a cheap substitute, because you will simply be worshiping your own feelings. When the trials of life come and when there is pain and tragedy, and great suffering, you will find that that form of Christianity will run aground, it will make shipwreck, it will fail you.

What will sustain you through the great pains of life is a genuine worship of the truly glorious God. That kind of worship always takes you out of yourself, towards Him. As Augustine put it, It is the kind of worship that will make demands upon you, and having denied yourself and sought Him, you will find fullness of joy, but you will not find a kind of intensity of experience that is simply your own feelings. So I'm trying to sound a warning to say that there's a kind of a candy stick kind of worship that's out there that's very sweet and very overpowering, and I don't blame you for liking it. I don't fault you even for the fact that you find it compelling in the short term, but I'm lovingly issuing a challenge.

Will you not pursue God at all costs? Will you not be willing to seek Him as He is, no matter what that turns out to be? If you desire to worship Him in spirit and in truth, that you will seek Him and seek Him as He is. I can promise you, you won't be disappointed, because the God that is, is far more overwhelming and glorious than any substitute religion or worship of our own feelings that we can produce. So it is a loving call to my brothers and sisters to say, don't stop at a kind of substitute worship that has more in common with paganism, with orgiastic rights, with false religion than it does with the revealed religion of God shown to his people by grace in the person of Jesus Christ.

Host: David Wheaton 50:00

So well said. You give us so much to think about, pray about, and really contemplate what direction the music in the church, the worship of the Evangelical church has gone, but also for us personally as well to consider about what we listen to. Where is this music directing my heart to worship? Is it towards self and what makes me feel good? Or is it upwards, purely trying to seek what most glorifies God? So David, we just appreciate the hard work that it took and the thought, and the biblical study it took to think about and write these columns. We thank you for coming on The Christian Worldview Radio Program today. We wish all of God's best and Grace to you and your family, and New Covenant Baptist Church in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Guest: David de Bruyn 50:51

Thank you, David. It's been a pleasure to be with you.

Host: David Wheaton 50:54

All right, we are completely out of time. If you missed any part of this two part series, you can go to our website, [The ChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org) to hear all our archived programs. Whether you are for or against this Pentecostalization of Christian worship, this series should cause all of us to reflect on what is taking place in Evangelical churches, at least in the West, and whether this shift is something that honors God, because that needs to be our objective. Not what we want or what we prefer, but what honors and glorifies God who is the object of our worship.

Remember what Jesus said in John 4. True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. Spirit with a small s. For such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth. So let us worship God with a surrendered spirit, to the Holy Spirit, and according to the truth that God has revealed in his Word.

A final reminder today about our upcoming Christian worldview speaker series event on Saturday, May 20th at Fourth Baptist Church in Plymouth, Minnesota. Our speaker is going to be Christian journalist, Alex Newman, speaking on being informed and prepared for The Great Reset. The event is from 9:00 to 10:30am with a pre event breakfast at 8:00am. You don't need to register for the event, but you do need to register if you'd like to come to breakfast. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233.

Thank you for joining us on The Christian Worldview today. In just a moment, there'll be all kinds of information on this nonprofit radio ministry. Let's remember, Jesus Christ and His Word are the same yesterday, and today and forever. So until next time, Think biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm! The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program, order a transcript or find out, "What must I do to be saved?" Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener supported nonprofit radio ministry furnished by the Overcomer Foundation. To make a donation, become a Christian Worldview Partner, order resources, subscribe to our free newsletter or contact us, visit TheChristianWorldview.org, call 1-888-646- 2233, or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. That's Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. Thanks for listening to The Christian Worldview.