

For the Love of the Family Ministries

Missionaries to America's Forgotten Mission Field, the Family

Southern Gospel Music

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Dear Friends of For The Love of the Family,

Rarely do I send out articles by other people for For the Love of The Family. However, I am compelled to send out this outstanding article by Dr. David Cloud concerning Southern Gospel music. What are my reasons for doing this? Here at For The Love Of The Family we counsel many people about the problems and needs they have in their life. We receive hundreds of e-mails from people asking for help. Most of the people who contact us are already in **destruction mode in their life**. All of these people come from Independent-Fundamental Baptist churches. "Whoso despiseth (does not give proper attention to) the word **shall be destroyed**: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded." This verse is very plain. Most of the destruction we see around us today is because of our failure to have **a real relationship with God** and to obey his word.

My counseling, (and I do counsel many pastors, missionaries, and Christian workers who have graduated from Bible college). A very disturbing trend has showed up. **Most of the people who are in destruction mode, have a worship entertainment philosophy in their life which they learned at their church**. Many of the children of today's families end up in destruction because they like their parents, and pastors, have failed to understand a very important principle.

Romans 6:11-13, 16 "Likewise reckon ye also to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God,** as those that are alive form the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. **Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey; his servants ye are to whom ye obey;** whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

If I allow myself to let the lusts of the flesh reign in my life, I am not and will not be yielded to God, therefore, I cannot have a real, intimate, personal, and passionate relationship with God. That folks includes the music I listen to. Southern Gospel music appeals to the lust of the flesh just as does Contemporary Christian music. Most of the Christians I counsel from Independent-Fundamental Baptist churches, are listening to this music and have allowed other lusts of the flesh to take away proper attention from the Word of God and their relationship with God. Many of our parents and children are learning to live for the lusts of the flesh right in the church. They do not understand what it means to have a real relationship with God.

Folks, this is a huge mistake and it is a grievous error to the Christian family in this apostate, sloppy,

entertainment, and feel good age. When I start counseling with a person, it does not take long to figure this out. They will fight you for this flesh loving music, (even though their life, marriage, and children, are in destruction). When we get them to see Biblical truth, and help them develop a real relationship with God, they then are amazed at why they had allowed these things in their life. **This type of music is just as addictive and destructive as alcohol, cocaine, pornography, and any other controlling desire of the mind, Ephesians 2:3.** This is not a difference of opinion issue, it is a sin issue.

Brother Cloud outlines the "heart and soul" of Southern Gospel music, The Gaithers. I understand the Gaithers influence because their recording studio is seven miles from my church, Elwood Bible Baptist Church. They have had a huge influence upon the Independent Baptist churches in central Indiana and in almost all other parts of the country to accept the music is neutral philosophy and it is nothing more than a feel good, lust of the flesh issue that is disobedience to God's Word and a huge destructive influence on the Christian family. Brother Cloud has visited the Gaither's store and studio because I took him there. Many people visit there and think it is a neat place. Some people even think it is a worshipful place. How sad and deceived people can be. I found it to be a worldly and uncomfortable place with giant screen televisions blaring the Gaither music.

Folks, I send out this article because somebody has to stand up and say something to help God's people understand the destructive, addictive, and lust of the flesh nature of this type of music. I see the destroyed lives every week because of it. I talk to the pastor's children who are destroyed. I talk to the pastors who have ruined their lives and ministry because of the lust of the flesh mentality. It breaks my heart weekly. It is time for folks to wake up and understand it is God's Word that will change our life. The goal of every Christian should be to "glorify God" in their life, I Corinthians 6:19-20. Galatians 6:7-8, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: **for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption;** but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Best regards in Him,
Dr. Terry L. Coomer
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BILL GAITHER'S DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD

By Dr. David Cloud

Updated and enlarged May 5, 2006 (first published July 30, 1998) (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org;

Bill and Gloria Gaither are graduates of Anderson College, a Church of God school, and attend a Nazarene church. They have written some very popular and well-known gospel music, such as "He Touched Me," "Thanks to Calvary," and "There's Something about That Name." Since the early 1990s, the Gaither's

Homecoming CD and video series has dramatically increased the popularity of Southern Gospel music in this generation.

Sadly, the Gaithers have used their vast influence to promote the lie that music is neutral and thus to encourage the deep inroads that the world has made into Southern Gospel. They have also promoted the unscriptural ecumenical movement with its bogus "judge not" philosophy and its lack of concern about doctrinal purity.

MUSIC IS NEUTRAL

In the 1980s Gaither bought into contemporary Christian music's foundational premise that "MUSIC IS NEUTRAL" and that any type of raunchy music can be used to glorify God.

During a concert tour in New England in 1986, Gaither admitted that he had changed his musical style due to the influence of the “world’s culture.” He said he believed there was a place for Christian rock, and he expressed his philosophy of music in these words: “God speaks through all different kinds of art forms and musical styles and musical forms” and the “format itself is not necessarily spiritual or non-spiritual” (FBF News Bulletin, March-April 1986, p. 3).

The following is an eyewitness description of the Gaither’s appearance at the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis in 1980: “The Bill Gaither Trio entertained 15,000 Southern Baptists on Sunday evening with a musical program worldly enough to make any true believer weep. The music was so loud that some people left and others put their hands to their ears to block the intense amplification of the music” (Robert S. Reynolds, “Southern Baptists on the Downgrade: Report on the 1980 SBC Convention in St. Louis,” Foundation, Volume VI, Issue 1, 1985, p. 9).

The Gaithers have increasingly used rock rhythms in their music. During the disco craze in the late 1980s, the Gaither Trio recorded a disco album (Calvary Contender, August 15, 1989). The Gaithers have a song titled “Singin’ with the Saints” which is a boogie-woogie version of “He Keeps Me Singing.” This is confusion.

Bill Gaither has mentored many of the popular CCM artists, including Sandi Patty, Russ Taff, Michael English, Carman, and the members of Whiteheart (CCM Magazine, July 1998, p. 20).

For more about the neutrality of music, see “DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN SACRED AND CONTEMPORARY STYLES OF CHRISTIAN MUSIC,” a DVD available from Way of Life Literature. This 90-minute presentation is professionally produced and a multiplicity of photographs and visuals are mixed into the presentation to illustrate the message. The message incorporates 55 clips of music to illustrate the points. The speaker is a musician who lived the rock & roll lifestyle before he was saved and who has studied this issue for more than three decades.

BILL GAITHER AND ROME: THE ECUMENICAL PHILOSOPHY

Bill Gaither has had an ecumenical philosophy from the beginning of his musical career. In his autobiography “It’s More Than the Music,” he states that one of the fringe benefits of playing their concerts in “neutral, nonchurch environments” was that people from “all church denominations” attended. “Before long, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, charismatics, Catholics, and Pentecostals were all praising the Lord together. Subtly, the walls between denominations began to crumble...” (p. 115).

Their hymnal “Hymns for the Family of God” was purposefully “nondenominational” and included devotional readings from a wide variety of Christians, including heretics such as Deitrich Bonhoeffer (one of the fathers of Neo-orthodoxy), Malcolm Muggeridge (a liberal Roman Catholic who did not believe in Christ’s Virgin Birth or bodily Resurrection), and Robert Schuller (who has wickedly redefined the gospel in terms of his humanistic self-esteem theology).

The Gaithers provided the music one evening at Indianapolis ‘90, a large ecumenical charismatic gathering I attended with press credentials. One-half of the 25,000 participants were Roman Catholics. A Catholic mass was held each morning during this conference, and Catholic priest Tom Forrest from Rome brought the closing message. Roughly 40 other denominations were present. The Gaithers were perfectly at home in this unscriptural gathering and entertained the mixed multitude with their jazzy music.

The Gaither Vocal Band performed at the Promise Keepers’ second major men’s conference in Boulder, Colorado, in 1994. Promise Keepers is radically ecumenical. In an interview with the Catholic publication *Our Sunday Visitor*, Promise Keepers founder Bill McCartney said that full Catholic participation was his intention from the start. “Back in 1992, at our first stadium event, we very clearly stated from the podium that we eagerly welcomed the participation of Roman Catholics, and we’ve had scores of Roman Catholics attend and go back to their churches excited” (*Our Sunday Visitor*, July 20, 1997, p. 10). Roman Catholic paper *The Tidings* (March 31, 1995) stated that Promise Keepers is “being expanded to include Catholic congregations.” Catholics were encouraged to participate in Promise Keepers because “there is no doctrinal issue which should cause concern to the Catholic Church” and “there is no attempt at proselytizing or drawing men away from their [Catholic] faith to another church.” Catholic priest John Salazar spoke at a Promise Keepers meeting in Plainview, Texas, in December 1995 (*Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, December 3, 1995). The Promise Keepers field representative for the upper Midwest at that time, Steve Jenkins, was a Roman Catholic. A Promise Keepers Wake Up Call brochure distributed in San Luis Obispo, California, urged pastors, churches and their

men to attend special rallies during March 1996, one of which was held at the St. Rose Catholic Church in Paso Robles. In 1997 Promise Keepers appointed a Roman Catholic, Mike Timmis, to its Board of Directors. One of the speakers at several of 1997 PK rallies was Roman Catholic “evangelist” Jim Berlucchi (“Making New Catholic Men?” Our Sunday Visitor, July 20, 1997, p. 10). In June 1997, Promise Keepers hosted a Catholic Summit at its headquarters in Denver, “sounding out Catholic volunteers and leaders from around the world” (Ibid.). In June 1997, Promise Keepers organized a Roman Catholic mass as part of its Rich Stadium conference in Buffalo, New York (The Humanist, Sept. 19, 1997). Following a luncheon with Bill McCartney in January 1998, Roman Catholic Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver gave a “thumbs-up” to Catholic men who want to participate in Promise Keepers (The Catholic Register, quoted in Religious News Service, Jan. 19, 1998).

In 1999, Bill Gaither joined forces with dc Talk founder Toby McKeehan to “create a new modern worship music label, 40 Records” (CCM magazine, July 1999, p. 11). The goal is “to stretch the boundary of worship music” and to “give a youthful spirit to worship music for ANY DENOMINATION...”

Speaking of the new music company, Gaither said: “I view building bridges of understanding of different cultures and PHILOSOPHICAL POINTS OF VIEW as part of my calling. UNITY DOES NOT DEPEND ON OUR CONSENSUS OF OPINION, but on our unity in Christ.”

This is a false and dangerous statement. Biblical unity does depend on a consensus of opinion about doctrine. Ephesians 4:1-6, which speaks of Christian unity, says there is only “one faith” (verse 5). This refers to the body of truth delivered by the Holy Spirit to the Apostles and recorded in the New Testament Scriptures. Philippians 1:27 also speaks of Christian unity, and it demands “one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.” That is not a description of modern ecumenism. Timothy was instructed to allow “no other doctrine” in the churches he was overseeing (1 Timothy 3:16). Paul taught the church at Rome that false doctrine is the basis for separation (Romans 16:17).

Like Gaither, McKeehan and dc Talk are unscripturally ecumenical and even accept Roman Catholics as brothers and sisters in Christ in spite of Rome’s false sacramental gospel, heresies pertaining to the papacy, Mary, the priesthood, etc. When Pope John Paul II visited the States in January 1999, dc Talk joined hands with hundreds of thousands of Catholics to welcome him. Featured at a Catholic youth rally connected with the Pope’s visit, were dc Talk, Audio Adrenaline, Rebecca St. James, Jennifer Knapp, The W’s, and the Supertones (CCM Magazine, April 1999, p. 12). dc Talk’s Kevin Max praised the Catholic youth for coming out to hear the Pope, describing John Paul II as “someone with something of substance to say” (Ibid.). Each attendee received a rosary with instructions about how to pray to Mary.

The Gaithers frequently perform and record songs which present an ecumenical philosophy. “SONGS THAT ANSWER QUESTIONS” from their Back Home in Indiana album has the following lyrics:

“Don’t want to spend my life a preachin’ sermons/ that give answers to the questions no one’s asking anywhere/ When there’s so much pain and hurting/ there’s no time to be searching/ for the needles in the haystacks that aren’t there/ I wanna spend my time a wearin’ myself out for Jesus/ with the news a cure’s been found to heal our land/ Stead of making lists, inventing creeds/ that aren’t concerned with people’s needs/ I’ll show ‘em how to touch the nail scarred hand/ Don’t wanna spend my time prayin’ prayers/ Bombarding heaven with requests to rain down fire on saints who care [unclear]/ In our methods we may differ, but if Christ the Lord we live for/ May we not forget the enemy is OUT THERE.”

This song contains half-truths and subtle errors, which are more dangerous than plain and obvious errors. While it is true that God’s people are to be concerned about suffering and are to be showing people how to “touch the nail scarred hand,” it is not true that preaching is to be limited merely to answering questions people have. The preacher is instructed to preach the whole counsel of God and the whole Word of God (Acts 20:27; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 4:1-2). The Bible warns that it is apostate people who will desire teachers who teach merely what they want to hear, what they feel a need for (2 Timothy 4:3-4). This sounds very much like what the Gaithers are singing about.

It is also not true that “a cure’s been found to heal our land.” The cure provided by the Gospel is the cure for personal salvation, not national salvation. The Apostles did not try to “heal the land,” they preached the Gospel and discipled believers.

It is also not true that it is wrong to “make lists” or “invent creeds” that aren’t concerned with people’s needs. The lists and creeds mentioned in this song refer to doctrinal studies and statements of faith. Doctrinal studies must, first of all, faithfully represent Bible truth, regardless of whether or not it meets “people’s needs.” Sound Bible doctrine does meet man’s deepest needs, of course, but that does not mean that Bible doctrine meets the felt needs of unsaved or carnal people. The unsaved or carnal man does not feel he has a need to be told he is a sinner or that he has no righteousness before God or that he is to repent or that he is to die to self or that he is to separate from the world or that there is an eternal hell, etc., but sound Bible doctrine tells him all of these things. The unsaved crowd does not believe it needs any of the Bible, really!

This song encourages the hearers to despise doctrinal studies and research and teaching and statements of faith, which is the attitude typically found in the ecumenical movement.

It is also not true that the divisions among Christians are merely about differing methods or that differing methods are not important. Take baptism, for example. Some denominations “baptize” infants. That is their “method.” Some baptize only those who have trusted Jesus Christ as their Savior. Some sprinkle; others immerse. These are differing methods, but they are not insignificant and cannot be ignored. It is also not true that the “enemy” is limited to things outside of the churches. The Bible warns of false teachers, false christs, false spirits, false gospels, deluding spirits, doctrines of devils--all of which will be found within churches and among professing Christians.

It is also not true that fundamentalists are praying for fire to fall on those with whom they disagree doctrinally. That is actually a vicious libel upon biblical fundamentalists who wish no harm upon anyone but who care deeply about the truth of God’s Word.

The unscriptural and very dangerous message of this song is put across by the effective means of a country-rock rhythm and repetition.

Another ecumenical song sung by the Gaithers is “JESUS BUILT THIS CHURCH ON LOVE” from their Back Home in Indiana album. The lead on the song is performed by Candy “Hemphill” Christmas, who travels with the Gaithers. The song is sung at many of the Gaither concerts. It is done in the style of a mid-tempo jazzy black spiritual with heavy drums and bass guitar.

“Do you ever just get to wonderin’/ ‘bout the way things are today?/ So many on board this gospel ship/ Trying to row in a different way/ If we’d all pull together/ Like a family me and you/ We’d come a lot closer to doin’/ what the Lord called us to do.

Chorus: “Jesus built this church on love/ and that’s what it’s all about/ Trying to get everybody saved/ not to keep anybody out...”

This song implies that the divisions within Christianity are largely if not entirely man-made and unnecessary, that if professing Christians would merely “pull together” and exercise love the divisions would be healed. It is a feel-good sentiment, a nice fairy tale which has wide appeal, but it is unreasonable and unscriptural. The Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles warned repeatedly that false teachers would lead many astray, that there would be false christs, false spirits, false gospels, false churches, doctrines of devils (Matt. 7:15-23; 24:3-5,11,24; Acts 20:28-30; 2 Cor. 1:1-4; Galatians 1; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:13; 4:3-4; 2 Pet. 2; 1 John 4:1; Jude; etc.). The book of Revelation predicts a one-world end-time harlot Christian religion (Rev. 17). Those who preach an ecumenical unity rarely even mention these Bible warnings and never focus on them. They do not tell us where these false christs, false gospels, false spirits, false teachers, and false churches are in Christianity today. They imply, rather, that the denominational divisions are largely unnecessary and petty which could be overcome by a little ecumenical love. There are many problems among Christians which can be healed through love, but it simply is not true that love will heal the major divisions within Christianity. The differences between denominations involve serious doctrinal issues which cannot be ignored and which cannot be solved through sentimental songs. This Gaither song also says the churches are “not to keep anybody out.” That is openly contrary to the Bible’s command to separate from error and to exercise church discipline (Rom. 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:16-21; 3:5; 2 John 8-11; Rev. 18:4).

Another ecumenical Gaither song is “LOVING GOD, LIVING EACH OTHER” from the album by that name.

“They pushed back from the table/ To listen to his words/ His secret plan before he had to go/ It’s not complicated/ Don’t need a lot of rules/ This is all you need to know/ We tend to make it harder/ Build steeples out of stone/ Fill books with explanations of the way/ But if we’d stop and listen/ And break a little bread/ We would hear the Master say/ It’s Loving God, loving each other/ Making music with my friends/ Loving God, loving each other/ And the story never ends.”

The song contains more half truths and subtle errors. Love is a very important part of the Christian life, but true Christian love is obeying God’s Word (John 14:23; 1 John 5:3). To say that we “don’t need a lot of rules” ignores the fact that the New Testament is literally filled with commandments! To say that we don’t need to “fill books with explanations of the way” ignores the fact that the Bible instructs us to “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). It ignores the fact that the Bible is given for “doctrine” (teaching) (2 Tim. 3:16) and that preachers are instructed to teach other men (2 Tim. 2:2), that older women are instructed to teach younger women (Titus 2:3-5), etc. Bible teaching certainly involves “filling books with explanations of the way.” That is precisely what the Apostles did in the Epistles. The Bible itself contains 66 books with explanations of the way! This Gaither song presents a sentimental, ecumenical approach to the Christian life and ministry which is simplistic and appealing to a modern crowd but which is patently contrary to the Scriptures. The unscriptural message of this song is put across by the very effective means of a driving country-rock rhythm and by means of repetition.

BILL GAITHER WARNS AGAINST JUDGING

In an interview with Kim Jones, a tattooed female rocker who writes a column for the Roman Catholic publication Holy Spirit Interactive, Bill Gaither said: “Finger pointing is never, I think, of God. Because I know that Scripture ‘judgment is mine, saith the Lord.’ When we get out of the judgment business and just get into the being business, the being what God wants us to be, it will take care of itself” (Holy Spirit Interactive, Dec. 6, 2004).

This level of biblical ignorance is frightening, especially when we consider the vast influence that Bill Gaither wields among churches in this generation.

First of all, the Bible nowhere says, “Judgment is mine, saith the Lord.” It says, “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Rom. 12:19). The believer is taught to give place unto wrath and to avoid avenging himself upon his enemies, because that is strictly God’s business.

On the other hand, though the believer is forbidden to judge hypocritically (Mat. 7:1-5) and forbidden to judge in matters in which the Bible is silent in this New Testament dispensation (Rom. 14:1-5; Col. 2:16), such as in diet and holy days, he is most definitely taught to judge many things by testing it with the Word of God and condemning it if it is in error. The believer is to judge sin in the church (1 Cor. 5:12). He is to judge preaching and teaching (1 Cor. 14:29; Acts 17:11). He is to reprove the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11). As a matter of fact the Bible says that “he that is spiritual judgeth all things” (1 Cor. 2:15). That is a very far-reaching statement. The spiritual man knows that he lives in a world of sin and spiritual darkness and error and he is warned repeatedly in the Bible about false teaching and apostasy and spiritual deception. Thus he carefully tests everything by the light of God’s Word. The spiritual man does not judge by his own thinking and opinion, but by the holy Word of God, which he has in the Scriptures.

CONCLUSION

The Gaithers represent the very heart and soul of Southern gospel music today. In recent years they have held “homecoming” specials which have brought together most of the well known Southern gospel groups. These include members of the Statesmen, the Blackwood Brothers, the Cathedrals, the Goodman’s, the Speer Family, the Florida Boys, the Gatlin Brothers, and many others. Those who have attended these gatherings have put their stamp of approval upon the ecumenical-charismatic-rock music side of Southern gospel by not separating from those who are guilty of these things and by not lifting their voices to reprove them.

The Bible instructs us to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). Revelation 18:4 warns God’s people to come out from among the apostasy of the last hours “that ye be not partakers of her sins.” **COMPLICITY WITH DOCTRINAL AND SPIRITUAL ERROR MAKES ME A PARTAKER**

WITH THAT ERROR. 2 John warns that even to bid God speed to a false teacher makes me “partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 11). I realize this is a very hard line and one that is completely foreign to the thinking of this ecumenical-crazed age, but this is what the Word of God says.

I also realize that the Gaithers have produced some lovely sacred music in the past, but this is no excuse for disobedience to God’s Word. When the Gaithers greet 12,000 Roman Catholics, including many priests and nuns, as brethren in Christ, as they did at Indianapolis ’90, they are partakers of the evil deeds of Rome and God’s people should protest.

It is wrong to associate with those who walk in open disobedience to God’s Word and to support them with record sales and to bring their jazzed up music with its ecumenical philosophy into our churches and homes.

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