

GETTY/TOWNEND AND CONTEMPORARY HYMNS

The following information is from *The Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians*, which is available as a free eBook from www.wayoflife.org.

The “contemporary hymns” of Keith and Kristyn Getty and Stuart Townend are widely used among “traditional, non-contemporary” churches, because they are considered relatively safe.

For example, at least eight of their songs are included in Majesty Music’s *Rejoice Hymns* and 29 of their songs are featured in *Hymns Modern and Ancient*, published by Heart Publications, a ministry of Steve Pettit Evangelistic Association and compiled by Fred Coleman who heads up Bob Jones University’s Department of Church Music.

KEITH AND KRISTYN GETTY

Their popular songs include “Don’t Let Me Lose My Wonder,” “In Christ Alone” (penned by Keith and Stuart Townend), “Speak, Oh Lord,” and “The Power of the Cross.”

Typically, the lyrics are Scriptural and the tunes are not blaring rock & roll (though the Gettys can rock hard in their concerts). But the Gettys represent the exceedingly dangerous world of contemporary worship music as definitely as Michael W. Smith or Graham Kendrick.

Their ecumenical, one-world-church goal is to “bring everyone together musically” (www.keithgetty.com). They want to “bridge the gap between the traditional and contemporary” (<http://www.gettymusic.com/about.aspx>), but Bible-believers should know that this is a “gap” that must not be bridged, as it is a gap between Christ and the world, between the Spirit and the flesh, between true churches and harlot ones.

The Gettys are “modern hymn writers” but their music is syncretistic. They “fuse the music of their Irish heritage with the sounds of Nashville, their newly adopted home.” The Gettys list the Beatles as a major musical influence.

Keith arranged some of the songs on Michael W. Smith’s charismatic *Healing Rain* album.

The Gettys have a close working relationship with Stuart Townend, who is radically charismatic and ecumenical. Not only do they write and publish songs with Townend, but they also tour together, joining hands, for example, in the Celtic Islands Tour 2012.

In July 2012, the Gettys joined Roman Catholic Matt Maher on NewsongCafe on WorshipTogether.com. They played and discussed “The Power of the Cross,” which was co-written by Getty-Townend. The 10-minute program promoted ecumenical unity, with Maher/Townend/Getty entirely one in the spirit through the music. Major doctrinal differences are so meaningless that they are not even mentioned. Spiritual abominations such as papal supremacy, the mass, infant baptism, baptismal regeneration, and Mariolatry were entirely

ignored. Jude 3 was despised and Romans 16:17 completely disobeyed for the sake of building the one-world church through contemporary Christian music.

In October 2012, the Gettys joined hands with emerging heretic Leonard Sweet at the National Worship Leader Conference in San Diego. Sweet calls his universalist-tinged doctrine New Light and “quantum spirituality” and “the Christ consciousness” and describes it in terms of “the union of the human with the divine” which is the “center feature of all the world’s religions” (*Quantum Spirituality*, p. 235). He defines the New Light as “a structure of human becoming, a channeling of Christ energies through mindbody experience” (*Quantum Spirituality*, p. 70). Sweet says that “New Light pastors” hold the doctrine of “embodiment of God in the very substance of creation” (p. 124). In *Carpe Mañana*, Sweet says that the earth is as much a part of the body of Christ as humans and that humanity and the earth constitutes “a cosmic body of Christ” (p. 124). Sweet lists some of the “New Light leaders” that have influenced his thinking as Matthew Fox, M. Scott Peck, Willis Harman, and Ken Wilber. These are prominent New Agers who believe in the divinity of man, as we have documented in the book *The New Age Tower of Babel*. Sweet has endorsed *The Shack* with its non-judgmental father-mother god, and he promotes Roman Catholic contemplative mysticism and dangerous mystics such as the Catholic-Buddhist Thomas Merton. (For documentation see the book *Contemplative Mysticism*, which is available in print and eBook editions from Way of Life Literature -- www.wayoflife.org.)

STUART TOWNEND

Stuart Townend is charismatic in theology and radically ecumenical in philosophy, supporting the Alpha program which bridges charismatic, Protestant, and Roman Catholic churches. He is a member of the charismatic Church of Christ the King in Brighton, U.K. and supports the “extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit,” which refers to the demonic/fleshly charismatic mysticism such as meaningless gibberish, spirit slaying, holy laughter, and shaking.

His testimony of salvation is extremely weak, as stated in the following biographical sketch from WorshipTogether.com:

“Stuart grew up as the youngest of four children in a Christian family in West Yorkshire where his father was a Church of England vicar. Stuart’s family always enjoyed music and one brother, Ian, went on to become a member of the group Heartbeat. Stuart himself began to play the piano at the age of 7. It was while living in West Yorkshire that at the age of 13 he made his Christian commitment. Then later at the age of 18, when helping to lead a children’s camp in Hand Cross, West Sussex, he had a profound experience of the Holy Spirit.”

Townend is at the forefront of producing TRANSITION SONGS and BRIDGE SONGS designed to move traditional churches along the contemporary path toward Christian rock. From the perspective of the CCM artists involved in this, they aren’t doing anything sinister. They are simply and sincerely trying to “feed” the “broader church.” But from a fundamentalist Bible-believing position, the effect is to draw “old-fashioned” Bible churches into the contemporary orb, and that is most sinister.

Bridge songs include Townend's "How Deep the Father's Love for Us" and "In Christ Alone" by Townend and Keith Getty.

These songs are doctrinally sound and more soft rock ballad in style as opposed to out-and-out rock & roll, so they are considered "safe" by traditional churches. But by using this music a staunch Bible church is brought into association with the contemporary world that Townsend represents and the contemporary hymns become a bridge to influences that are contrary to and very dangerous to the church's original stance.

Townend has a false concept of Christ. When asked, "What would Jesus sing?" he replied:

"I think he would be doing thrash metal or hip hop or something where we'd go, 'He can't do that!' Because I think he would be challenging our comfortable perceptions. I don't know what he would sing or whose songs he would sing, but I believe he would do it in a way that would surprise and probably shock us" ("What Would Jesus Sing?" from an interview with Stuart Townend, TV series *Principles of Praise*, 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCW0oAAAna7c>).

So, according to Townend, instead of singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, Jesus would be singing thrash metal and hip hop and trying to shock us with His musical choices. That is not the thrice holy Jesus described in Scripture. It is true that Jesus shocked the religious crowd of His day, but that was not because He was performing worldly musical numbers, gyrating to rap, and screaming out thrash! It was because the religious crowd had rejected God's Word and He was God's Word incarnate, so they did not recognize, understand, or appreciate Him. He came to fulfill every jot and tittle of the holy Law of God (Matthew 5:17-19). Jesus was a friend of sinners, but He did not sin with sinners and He was no sort of a party dude. He frequently preached on hell and demanded repentance, and that would put the brakes on any party!

Since the Christian rock crowd loves to shock people, they think Jesus is like them. Christian rockers lose no sleep at the fact that many of the saints are upset and discouraged with their music because they consider it worldly and inappropriate for the service of Christ. Christian rockers have taken over countless once-traditional churches even to the extreme of pushing aside and running over anyone who got in the way of their musical "choices." Instead of sympathizing with the saints who oppose their music, they slander them as Pharisees and legalists and mindless traditionalists.

This is not the spirit of Jesus. He solemnly warned about offending those who believe on Him (Matthew 18:2-10). Paul, too, issued this warning. "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. ... Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14:13, 19).

Townend is holding hands with the "broader church" in all of its facets and heresies and end-time apostasies, and his objective in writing the "hymn-like" contemporary songs is ecumenism. (For extensive documentation of the treacherous waters of evangelicalism see the report

“Biblical Separatism and Its Collapse among Fundamental Baptists,” which is available as a free eBook from Way of Life Literature.)

Consider the following statement:

“‘How Deep the Father’s Love’ was the first hymn-like song I had written; before that point I had only written modern worship songs in a more contemporary style. ... This melody just kinda popped out of my head one day. ... It had a kind of classic hymn-like element to it. I thought I should just tell the story of Christ on the cross, but tell it perhaps from the point of view of what it cost the Father to give the Son. ... There is lot of talk about the wrath of God and is that right to think that the Father’s wrath was poured out on Christ, and I think that is right to say that. But that is not to say that God is a vengeful God; actually it cost him to give up His son. ... It’s been interesting to see the response. It’s quite useful not only in the more modern contemporary churches, but in traditional churches as well because of the style. And I’m kind of exited about that; I am excited about the fact that you can write something that actually feeds the broader church rather than just particular musical pockets of the church. That’s something that motivates me and probably why I’ve thought more and more about writing hymns, is I would like to try and feed the whole church and not just part of it” (Stuart Townend, “Mission: Worship, The Story Behind the Song”).

The first comment we would make is that Townend openly states that his objective is to bridge “traditional” churches with contemporary ones. After “How Deep the Father’s Love” popped into his mind and he turned the “hymn-like” tune into a soft rock “modern hymn,” he realized that this type of music could be a powerful bridge. In his own blog he says “I don’t go home at the end of a busy day and put on a hymns album! So I don’t think of hymns as where I’m at musically at all!” (<http://blog.stuarttownend.co.uk/2010/05/how-deep-fathers-love.html>). Townend is a rock & roller, pure and simple. He wants to use the soft CCM to bring together the “broader church.”

It is largely the “traditional” churches that are interested in “soft” CCM, and by using it they are the ones that are in danger of being influenced and changed. When “traditional” churches borrow Townend’s “soft” CCM, the contemporary churches are in no danger of being “traditionalized,” but the traditional churches are most definitely in danger of being contemporarized.

The second observation is that Townend is committed to serious heresy. He states that God is not vengeful, whereas the Bible plainly, repeatedly, and forcefully states that God *is* vengeful. The Psalmist says that God will “execute vengeance upon the heathen” (Psa. 149:7). The prophets warn of the coming of the “day of the Lord’s vengeance” (Isa. 34:8; Jer. 46:10; Mic. 5:15; Nahum 1:2). It was God’s holy vengeance that fell upon Christ, and it is His vengeance that will fall upon every sinner outside of Christ. The apostle Paul said that Christ will exercise God’s vengeance on all who obey not the gospel (2 Thess. 1:8).

One concerned pastor wrote:

“Keith and Kristyn Getty advertise themselves as ‘Modern Hymn Writers’ and are deceiving many into the Rock Genre by this very innocent title and the more conservative Praise Soft Rock music. But the fact is, that they are not modern hymn writers because they are putting out Rock Music which is not spiritual at all but carnal and thereby fulfilling the desires of the flesh and not the spirit (spiritual part of us yielding to the Holy Spirit).”

The frightful thing is that the average Independent Baptist pastor and the people in charge of music in the typical church don’t have the foggiest idea that they are being manipulated and that they are walking on a BRIDGE that leads to a place they say they are against, which is full blown CCM and its enticing philosophy of “don’t be so strict and uptight; relax; enjoy life; live the grace.”

Townend says that God loves electric guitars and drums (“Stuart Townend: The Journey Gets Stronger,” ChristianityToday.com, April 7, 2011). He is referring to electric guitars and drums used to create rock music. This is a presumptuous statement that is not supported by the Bible.

In July 2012, Townend joined the Gettys and Roman Catholic Matt Maher on NewsongCafe on WorshipTogether.com, as previously mentioned.