

## **Bible Study relative to Dan Lucarini's** *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement*

**Please note:**

- 1. Lucarini refers to Christians as "Traditionals" and "Contemporaries" based on whether they oppose or support CCM and "Praise & Worship." No disrespect is intended by these terms, and this Bible study follows the same terminology.**
- 2. Some chapters were purely based on opinion and did not even try to reference scripture. If such chapters also did not present meaningful arguments, I did not include them in this Bible study.**
- 3. Lucarini's comments are in regular text. My comments are in bold and are made only when I disagree with or need to clarify Lucarini's comments.**

### 1. The big lie

A. The philosophy of "Come as you are, stay as you are, and God accepts you just as you are" is a necessary backdrop to using CCM.

1) "Is there any biblical truth behind 'come as you are'? It certainly reflects the biblical principle that to God 'all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags' (Is 64: 6). There is nothing we can do to earn our salvation; we cannot make ourselves clean enough to be acceptable to God." (p. 38).

2) "When we become his disciples, he expects us to sin no more, to show a change in our affections from idols to him, and for us to turn from the lusts of the world and love him. ... Romans 8:29 implies that we do not remain as we are." (page. 39)

**3) I absolutely agree that the sinner should be encouraged to come as he is, but that we should expect God to work a miracle in that person resulting in a changed life. It may not all be evident immediately, but the person's life should begin to reflect biblical Christianity ... they will turn from sin to God and be loving to fellow Christians. But so far we have not seen biblical evidence that CCM is sinful. Nor does it follow that using CCM implies that the sinner can "stay as you are" once they are born again.**

### 2. The true heart of worship: what *is* acceptable worship to God?

A. "In his introduction to a commentary on Psalms, Matthew Henry said: 'It is absolutely necessary to the acceptance of our devotions that we be righteous before God (for it is only the prayer of the upright that is his delight), and therefore that we be right in our notions of blessedness and in our choice of the way that leads to it.'" (p.47)

**1) It is incorrect to suggest that we can produce a righteousness ourselves that is anything but filthy rags to God. In the same way, as born-again Christians, we are in fact righteous before God because of what Jesus has done. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor 5:21)**

B. “David’s definition of acceptable worship in Psalm 51:15-17 seems particularly apt: ‘O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.’” (p. 48)

**1) While I love this verse and have definitely had moments where I came to God with a broken and contrite heart, this description of sacrifice is completely superseded by Jesus sacrifice. No further sacrifice is needed for us to be reconciled with God. When we sing hymns at Mio Baptist, we have every reason for our hearts to burn with joy and gratefulness over what Jesus has done!**

C. “In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word translated as ‘worship’ is *shachah*, which *Strong’s Concordance* defines as ‘to depress, to prostrate (especially in homage to royalty or God); to bow oneself down, to crouch to fall down flat, to humbly beseech.’ In the New Testament, the Greek word translated most commonly as ‘worship’ is *proskuneo*, which means ‘to kiss like a dog licking his master’s hand; to fawn or to crouch; to prostrate oneself in homage.’” (p. 53)

**1) Obtaining Strong’s definition of a word does not constitute a close examination of what the Bible says on a topic. However, I looked up all 102 instances of the word “worship” in the KJV, and it is true that it often involves bowing the head or falling to the feet of the person being worshipped. But it seems to be an activity that you do when you are in that position – it’s not the act of prostrating itself.**

D. “What about the physical position described so vividly above? Should we literally prostrate ourselves whenever we worship to God...? ... But God sees our hearts; he is not fooled by the *form* of prostration, but he desires a broken and penitent heart that is committed to him.” (p. 54)

**1) Here Lucarini has completely rejected his own study of the word “worship.” The definitions above seem to be very specific about what the word means, yet he decides that this is an appropriate time to be figurative rather than literal.**

E. “We [New Testament believers] no longer worship according to prescribed rituals, but we must still worship God in ‘in spirit and in truth’ (John 4:24). ... Our worship must be based on truth as ‘it is written,’ not our experience, our feelings, the felt needs of the consumer, or our man-centered version of the truth. What about worshipping God in *spirit*? According to Barnes, ... ‘A pure, a holy, a spiritual worship, therefore, is such as he seeks – the offering of the soul rather than the formal offering of the body – the homage of the heart rather than that of the lips.’ How can we be sure to worship God in both spirit and truth at the same time? In his *Commentary* Adam Clarke said, ‘A man worships God in spirit, when under the influence of the Holy Ghost, he brings all his affections, appetites, and desires to the throne of God; and he worships him in truth, when every purpose and passion of his heart, and when

every act of his religious worship, is guided and regulated by the word of God.” (pp. 54-55)

**1) Let me first point out that Lucarini is looking toward dictionaries and commentaries more than he is looking at the Bible. I don't really care what Barnes and Clarke say about how I should worship; I care what God says.**

**2) Let me also point out that while sometimes my worship of God is as pure as Clarke describes, often it is imperfect due to distractions in my head. Does God only hear me when I have all “my ducks in a row”? That would be inconsistent with how the Bible describes the relationship of God with the born-again Christian.**

**3) Finally, there is no reason that CCM-based worship would not be worshipping “in spirit and in truth” just as much as hymn-based worship.**

F. “When we approach God, the attitude of our hearts must be one of complete submission.” (p. 55)

**1) Again, in worship we are adoring and thanking God. We should submit to him every minute of every day, because that's for our own good, but our submission does not serve as a sacrifice to him.**

2) “In my own experience, I noticed that we Contemporaries preferred to raise our faces and hands up to God, and called that worship. ... I was influenced by charismatics praying in one of our city-wide prayer meetings.” (p. 56)

**a) This has not been the typical practice at the churches I have attended. And even if it was, I do not see how raising up your face and hands is contrary to the Bible. “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” (1 Tim 2:8)**

3) “I am now convinced that God will not accept our worship when it is offered with music styles that are also used by pagans for their immoral practices. If I am wrong, why was he so harsh in judging Israel when they sacrificed to him using the pagan high places and rituals? He is a jealous God.”

**a) Yes, he is a jealous God – meaning that he does not want us serving other Gods, which is what Israel kept doing with the high places and rituals. “Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel ... thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes; But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back.” (1 Kings 14: 8-9)**

**b) I would suggest that all sacred music uses styles that at some time or another have also been used by non-**

**Christians. If a certain music style is now only used in worship, that is only because it is no longer in popular use as it was many years ago.**

**c) Lucarini's same faulty argument could be made for the musical instruments themselves ... since some pagans use a piano to make music, should we avoid using a piano in worship?**

4) "We can now see that true worship must produce a sense of fear in the worshipper towards the *worshipped*. ... the Greek word is *phobos*; it means to frighten, to be alarmed; to be in awe of; to revere; to be sore afraid; to fear exceedingly (*Strong's Concordance*)." (p. 57-58)

**a) It's true that we must fear God. However, while the worshipper fears God, it does not seem to follow that worship must produce a sense of fear toward God. At any rate, singing hymns and singing CCM seem no different in this regard.**

### 3. Reaching the unchurched

A. "John MacArthur warned us that the rush to make churches user-friendly '... has become an excuse for importing worldly amusements into the church in an attempt to try to attract non-Christian 'seekers' or 'unchurched Harrys' by appealing to their fleshly interests.'" (p 62)

**1) Of course, we don't want to attract the unsaved by appealing to their fleshly interests. We don't want to use food, alcohol, or scantily clad women to draw them to the church. It's not even that we want to use the music to draw them in ... the CCM music simply resonates with them and feels to them like a more honest worship of the Lord.**

**2) Yes, we should try to attract non-Christian seekers to hear the true Word of God ... not by watering things down, but by removing unnecessary obstacles and going out of our way to welcome them. "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor 9:22).**

B. Quoting the Cambridge Declaration of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals: "We deny that we can properly glorify God if our worship is confused with entertainment, if we neglect either Law or Gospel in our preaching, or if self-improvement, self-esteem or self-fulfillment are allowed to become alternatives to the gospel." (p. 65)

**1) I absolutely agree with this statement. Whether the worship uses traditional or CCM, it should be focusing on worshipping God and not entertaining the members. Similarly, the sermon should be preaching the Bible and teaching the gospel, not providing self-help ideas. Keeping the focus on God does not mean we should not use CCM ... nothing in the Bible indicates that God does not like this music style.**

### 4. Seducing the saints

A. “Rock and roll is a musical style that was created for immoral purposes by immoral men, and has always been used by the world to express its immoral attitudes in song. You have probably heard this before but it is worth repeating here. The name ‘rock and roll’ originated from a slang phrase for having sex. Rock music is the overwhelming preference of the sexually immoral, of wild partiers, of the strip joints, of drunks, and of drug users.” (p. 68)

**1) Guess what? Music itself probably was created for immoral purposes by immoral men. “And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ” (Gen 4:21). This descendant of Cain was not mentioned to be a God-fearing man, and since he was pre-flood, he was probably an immoral man.**

**2) Guess what else? Cushioned seats are the overwhelming preference of the sexually immoral, of wild partiers, of the strip joints, of drunks, and of drug users – but this doesn’t mean we shouldn’t have them in our churches.**

**3) This world is dominated by secular people, and they often are the drivers of new technologies and styles. Perhaps 99% of film and video has been used by immoral people for immoral purposes – does that mean we should never use it in church? All of our clothing styles are set in New York and other fashionable places by immoral people – should we dress like the Amish, or should we wear a robe and sandals as Jesus did? No, we should be “made all things to all men” to better evangelize them, but we should NOT conform in ways that would be contrary to God’s Word or otherwise discourage people from believing the gospel (Romans 12:2).**

B. CCM encourages immodest dress, sensual movement, and sexual relationships within the worship team. (pp. 68-72)

**1) This is no more true with CCM than with traditional music. Just as a traditional choir is expected to dress modestly, so should a CCM worship team. Just as a choir spends a lot of time together that could lead to too much familiarity between unmarried members, the worship team should held accountable. This is largely a matter of church leadership – the pastor requiring proper behaviors.**

C. CCM tries to use the music and lighting to create an atmosphere of personal intimacy with God. “This is *exactly* what the world does to create sexual intimacy. ... Just as the intimacy of a marriage relationship should be kept private, I also believe that demonstrating deep spiritual intimacy with the Lord is best kept private” (p. 72)

**1) This seems to be a matter of personal opinion. Lucarini does not offer any guidance from the Bible on this topic, nor can I think of any relevant biblical prohibition. In fact, David and Jesus were both very intimate in their prayers to God, and their words have been publicly shared with the whole world.**

D. “CCM is stuck with this stigma of immorality, because the music styles carry with them the baggage of the world’s immorality” (p. 73).

**1) This seems like an illogical, nonbiblical statement. First, CCM does not carry a stigma of immorality except to Traditionals. Second, rock music does not have any greater history of immorality than movies, and yet I am not aware of Christians objecting the use of film or video in church. Third, prostitutes and tax collectors had a stigma of immorality, and yet Jesus invited them to know Him.**

5. Splitting churches

A. “In a church that makes the change from traditional to contemporary music, there is usually a group of Traditionals who are offended by it.” (p. 75)

**1) Whether the Traditionals are right or not, I agree that this is a practical concern that a pastor should carefully consider. Practically speaking, most churches may need to stay with their current music style to avoid losing members or splitting. But this is a practical matter, not a moral matter.**

6. Isn’t this just a matter of personal preference and taste?

A. “Avoid *any* preference or style that could be associated with evil.

1) ‘Abstain from all appearance of evil.’ (1 Thess 5:22) (p. 81)

**a) What appears as evil depends on who is watching you – and the Bible is clear that we should only care about how our actions and behavior appear to 1) non-Christians that we want to evangelize (see the behavior examples of Rom 12) or 2) new Christians still weak in their faith (Rom 14). No one thinks CCM is evil except for Traditionals.**

2) “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11). “I believe our desires to have CCM styles in the church come directly from this sinful nature.” (p. 81)

**a) I agree with the scripture verse, but Lucarini’s statement about it is merely opinion.**

3) “The New International Version renders this verse [Eph 5:3]: ‘But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people.’” (p. 82)

**a) Lucarini is forced to turn to the NIV for the “hint of sexual immorality” part of his argument. First, his belief that CCM carries a hint of immorality is only his opinion. Second, the KJV translates the verse as: “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.” Thus, these sins are still very serious and should be fully avoided, but the verse does not support his claim that if Traditionals think it is immoral then it automatically has a “hint” of immorality.**

B. My freedom in Christ has limits (p. 83)

- 1) “‘Everything is permissible’—but not everything is beneficial. ‘Everything is permissible’—but not everything is constructive” (1 Cor 10:23) “If anything is *not* going to benefit all concerned, even though it is permissible for me, I should choose not to do it” (p. 83)
- 2) “I see a clear principle here that places boundaries around our selfish, worldly preferences, calling us to a much higher good. We should sacrifice our freedom willingly for the sake of our brother. When it comes to our music preferences for public worship, we should honour our brother’s needs above our own freedom in Christ.” (p. 84)
- 3) **Lucarini seems to be saying that the Contemporaries should give up their musical preference for the sake of the Traditionals. If so, then he apparently is adopting the principle of 1 Cor 8:9, where Christians are asked to give up a liberty to avoid tempting those Christians who are weak to do something that their conscience considers a sin (e.g., a former pagan eating meat offered to an idol). I do not believe most Traditionals would consider themselves to be weak.**

C. Don’t let your preferences put obstacles in your brother’s path (p. 84)

- 1) “Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak” (1 Cor 8:9)
- 2) “When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ” (1 Cor 8:12)
- 3) “Again, the context here is the controversy over some church members who were eating meat known publicly to have been from animals that were sacrificed to pagan idols. ... I would argue that a mature Christian is one who is closer to conformity with Christ, and it therefore follows that this person would be *less* involved questionable worldly practices like this [eating meat offered to idols or listening to CCM]. ... If the music we prefer is an offence to our weaker brother and causes him to stumble, we should never listen to that music in front of him again.” (p. 84-86)

**a) Paul’s purpose of this message is to avoid having former pagans to be tempted to return to their pagan ways by being with a fellow Christian who ate the meat in their presence. Clearly it is a matter of a weaker, less mature Christian, not a mature Christian closer to conformity with Christ. The modern parallel would be that if I am eating dinner with a Christian who was an alcoholic, I would not enjoy a bottle of wine with my dinner. This obviously does not apply to Traditionals – they generally are not at risk of losing their salvation due to CCM.**

D. Be a builder, *not* part of the demolition crew. (p. 86)

- 1) “Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble.” (Rom 14:19-20)

**2) I agree that introducing CCM into an existing church has in the past been cause for some people to leave the church or for the church to split. Therefore, a pastor would need to be extremely careful when considering making such a change.**

**3) However, while Romans 14 says it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble (a weak Christian to go back to their pagan ways), it also says “Let us not therefore judge one another any more” and “there is nothing unclean of itself” (12 and 14). Traditionals would be just as responsible for the division as Contemporaries.**

7. Isn't music amoral?

A. “Decades of rock music in our culture have permanently stamped that music style with the dimension of immorality. Changing the lyrics and substituting Christian musicians cannot remove that stigma. That is the very reason why so many Christians are offended when rock music or a close musical relative are used inside the church. ... They quickly associate the music with sensuality, depravity and rebellion.” (p. 91)

**B. Obviously, there is some rock music that matches the above definition, and some that does not. The music may have such a stigma for some church members, but not for those who do not associate it with sensuality, depravity and rebellion.**

8. But God made music – isn't all music inherently good?

A. “...I do not trust the argument that all music is or can be good, because of the biblical record” (p. 93)

**1) I agree that the Bible provides no support for the notion that all music is inherently good. Above, I mentioned the case of Jubal, to argue that music was likely invented for secular or even pagan purposes.**

**2) However, the Bible also does not indicate that any musical style might be unfit for use in worship.**

9. Show me where the Bible says that rock music is evil

A. “...ask the person to prove that your classical music has the same stigma of immorality as rock music. The burden is on them to explain logically how that music style causes offense in today's church. In fact, classical music today is so far removed from any of the supposed immorality of the original composers and performers, that no one can honestly claim it is generally and closely associated with evil.” (p. 97)

**1) This seems like an odd argument. Why would playing a certain style of music only be right or wrong based on whether it's been around long enough so that no Christians are “offended” by it? The measure of whether something is good or evil is what God's Word says – not what church members say.**

10. Doesn't the Bible teach we can use all things to reach people?

A. “For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I

might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” (1 Cor 9: 19-22)

B. “In other words, he respected the scruples of all groups, and *where no principle was trampled on*, conformed his behaviour to theirs for their benefit” (p. 100)

**1) I agree that this passage is NOT saying that immoral activity is justified if it helps save some people. For example, some television evangelists are simply trying to get rich, and their sin is not justified by the fact that some people really do get saved as a result of their “ministry.” However, I do not believe Lucarini has proven that CCM is immoral.**

11. Should praise music be treated differently?

A. “Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.” (Ps 150)

B. “I do not agree with that interpretation [that Psalm 150 supports the use of CCM and dancing] because it conveniently ignores the cultural and historical context of the Psalms in order to support CCM. Today we do not use the Hebrew instruments and worship styles to which these verses refer. We do not conform our services to the strict guidelines for reverence, purity and sanctification laid down by David in 1 Chronicles 16...” (p. 102)

**1) First, since we aren’t using the Hebrew instruments and worship styles, why do we feel our “traditional” worship style is acceptable?**

**2) Second, I do not see guidelines in 1 Chronicles 16 about reverence, purity and sanctification that are necessary for worship. There are certainly rules throughout the Mosaic law for offering sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins and granting us peace with God.**

**3) I looked up all 214 verses that contain “praise” in the KJV, and it consists of thanks, giving glory and honor, singing, using the whole heart, showing God’s marvelous works, rejoicing, playing instruments, joy, creating a new song, boasting of God, making a joyful noise, making a loud noise, triumphing, dancing, declaring his doings, sacrifices of praise, a loud voice, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. There is no emphasis on following strict guidelines of reverence and purity when praising God.**

12. Didn’t Martin Luther and the Wesleys use contemporary music in church?

A. “It is said that Martin Luther and Charles Wesley set some of their lyrics to popular folk tunes, including those sung in public bars. ...But consider what Makujina in his diligent historical research discovered about Luther. ‘Luther took the entire melody from only one secular song...’

**1) The question is not whether it’s acceptable to take tunes from secular songs and use them in worship. The question is whether it is OK to borrow from secular music *styles* for use in worship. While I have not studied much of the history of church music, the statement above makes it sound likely that the music of Luther and Wesley followed similar styles as folk music.**

B. “Both Luther and Wesley were also said to have encountered strong resistance from the church of their day for introducing vulgar (i.e., common or popular) music into the worship service. When they did, their music caused offence to some in the congregation.” (p. 108)

**1) Lucarini does not address whether it was right or wrong for Luther and Wesley to do this. Based on the rest of his book, I assume he thinks it was wrong. At any rate, it sounds exactly like what happens when CCM is introduced into a traditional church. I believe it was a good thing, and we have them to thank for the fact that we have hymns rather than Gregorian chants in church today.**

C. “Another Contemporary comeback may ask why music that was so offensive in their [Luther and Wesley] day is acceptable to us today? ... Music styles can and should be judged by their contemporary moral association. Wesley’s and Luther’s tunes, though controversial in their time, are no longer used in controversial cultural context. On the other hand, the popular songs of today are controversial and should not be used in church.” (p. 109)

**1) This is such a strange argument! He is saying that the hymns we sing today were immoral at one time, but enough time has gone by that now they are moral. And he’s saying that CCM is immoral simply because some Christians currently find it “controversial.”**

**2) The “controversial” argument uses the same faulty logic that Paul confronted in Romans 3: 3-4. The Jews were saying that since most of the Jews had rejected Jesus, he could not be the Messiah. But Paul says, “shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.” Just because certain people say something is true or false does not affect whether it is true or false.**

**3) If the “controversial” argument were a valid argument, it could have been used to enforce the Mosaic Law on gentile Christians (because the Jewish Christians found it controversial to not follow the Law), to discourage people from joining Luther’s Protestant movement (obviously controversial), and to preach against abortion and homosexuality from today’s pulpits (controversial topics). It is obviously an incorrect argument.**

D. “A clever Contemporary may remind you that the organ was considered an evil instrument of the devil when it was first introduced to the church. ... We have the unfair advantage of looking back on them from a time and culture where the organ is very acceptable in church. Any objections of the past are long forgotten.” (pp. 109-110)

**1) This is another odd argument that seems to be support CCM rather than argue against it. The organ is either moral or immoral. God’s laws are timeless. Nowhere in the Bible does it indicate that the passing of time changes a practice’s morality.**

2) “A Contemporary may use the above example to justify the acceptance of contemporary instruments like the drum set or electric guitar. ... It alleges that if the organ was accepted in the church over time, then so will the drum set. The problem with this defence is obvious: *the Contemporary is simply not willing to wait 100 years for the controversy to die down...*” (p. 110).

**a) Again, nowhere in the Bible does it indicate that the passing of time changes a practice’s morality. This argument indicates that the hindrances to CCM are manmade obstacles in the minds of Traditionalists.**

13. How do we choose acceptable music for services?

A. “Humanly speaking, how I wish that God had left us a chapter defining acceptable church music! Some think he left us a Bible full of such music instruction but I cannot find enough detail that applies specifically to today’s controversy. Our God, who spent so much time laying out the exact detail of the Tabernacle, could surely leave us a chapter (preferably in the New Testament) with verses that explicitly state: ‘Do not use any music that the pagans are using today’; or ‘These are the approved instruments – use no others’; or ‘Though shalt worship me only with music set to 6/8 time and no backbeat.’ But he chose *not* to.” (p. 133).

**1) Exactly! There was a strong pagan culture around the Israelites just as there is a strong secular culture around us. Likely, the Israelite’s worship music used styles already popular in the broader culture. God warned them and us against worshipping false gods and adopting various evil practices. If music style was as important as Traditionals maintain, the Bible would have discussed it. But the Bible does not lay out acceptable music styles, because it is OK for them to change over time.**