



## The numbing sameness of that we used to call music...

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That sucking sound you hear is the vapid, current state of Christian music inside and outside of the church. A stunning and shocking lack of originality in an art form meant to praise, worship, or introduce to the world the amazing, infinite, omniscient God of the Universe. Sad huh? It's been a recurring problem through the ages. Yes, at some point we got tired of chant, classical, hymn, and now that charming little cottage industry known as "worship".

And this took the least amount of years. Just 25 years ago we stood in pews singing "Holy, Holy, Holy" for the 5,000th time thinking, why isn't there something more?? We sing this every week, or something that sounds like it. Guess what? Here we are again. How many times does your worship leader say "We're going to learn a new one this week", and you could swear this sounds just like the ones you sang last week?

The funny thing is, this is an amazing time to be a music maker. Now more than any other time in history, it's incredibly easy to make original art yourself and share it with the world in minutes! Through cool tools like Garageband, Logic, Ableton, iMovie, and others, you can create and distribute in an hour with people on Facebook, Youtube, and Myspace. But in many churches (as well as many music artists), we've chosen the same, predictable, and easy songs that fill the "praise and worship" or "CCM" or "Gospel" prescription, week after week, album after album.

What about other styles besides the standard U2 and Coldplay grooves? What about Latin, Reggae, Classical, Jazz, Blues, R&B, Older Rock, Bluegrass, Jewish, Zydeco? All cool, colorful styles that started to see some light in the 90s church and airwaves as we switched formats in church. But soon were quashed by the mighty worship genre led by (but not the fault of) folks like Chris Tomlin and Casting Crowns.

And then there is the lyrics of Christian music, especially the worship genre. I call it pabulum which is defined in the dictionary as trite, naive, or simplistic ideas or writings; intellectual pap (as well as a brand of soft, bland cereal for infants, but it still fits doesn't it?)

Yes, I know that the words are vertical praise songs about worshiping the Lord and I don't mean to say that's not important. Of course it is. But if all we do is vertical worship, how do we fulfill the great commission? That requires horizontal singing to people who are probably unsaved or not entirely convinced we Christians aren't raving lunatics.

How do we reach them in an original way? We need songs that are authentic, based in the real world, that talk about difficult subjects that actual people deal with. And we need to say it in a way that will not sound like doctrine or religious fluff, or recite Bible verses, or anything else that may turn off the un-churched.

So how do we do this? How do we create a revolution in Christian music? Well it's tough,

because there's still a lot of older folks, especially church going folks, who will cling to the "Old Rugged Cross" and want to hear "Blessed be the Name" until their ears bleed. But I believe we have to preach from the mountain tops for songwriters and artists to be just who they are and sing a new song in a new way.

Classically trained? Sing classical or write a symphony. Jazzer? Build a jazz quartet and be a light inside the secular jazz world. Banjo or mandolin player? Start a "Nickel Creek" like Christian group. Hard core screamer? Get out there and show people the truth and the light in your own unique way. I have artists coming to me every day, thinking they have to write like Amy Grant or Steven Curtis Chapman, so they can be successful in Christian music. It's a good thing Amy and Steven didn't think this way. They just did their thing. Now it's an industry.

We need a new industry. This town is ripe for one. This world is ripe for one. See if any of this rings familiar...

Psalm 33:3

Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy.

Psalm 40:3

He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD.

Psalm 96:1

Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.

Psalm 98:1

Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

Psalm 144:9

I will sing a new song to you, O God; on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music to you,

Psalm 149:1

Praise the LORD. Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints.

Isaiah 42:10

Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you islands, and all who live in them.

I'm just sayin'...

Have a great week.

EC

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Eric Copeland is currently working on about 50 new songs for current clients, jazz records, and more. He lives to sing to the Lord a new song and sits many a morning by a window pondering just how to do that... Interested in doing more of this yourself or having him write for you?

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