"CHRISTIAN" SONGS

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Category: Christian Life

I keep promising myself that I won't write anything more about 'worship' music as some people take great exception to my musings on the subject. But, here I go again!

I've put the word "Christian" in inverted commas, because I'm not convinced that a lot of music used in Churches is actually Christian in an objective sense. What is it that sets Christianity apart from other religions? In the end, it is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (one could also add the Trinity). Other things which could be considered distinctively Christian, such as the atonement, are derived from the death and resurrection of Christ. Warm, fuzzy feelings derived from religious experience are not distinctively Christian - other religions get those too (listen again to George Harrison's My Sweet Lord, if you don't believe me).

So, to be distinctively Christian, a song should at some point mention the incarnation, the crucifixion or the ressurection - or at least alude to them in some form. The problem is that an increasing number of worship songs ignore the essentials of the Christian faith and instead concentrate on how a relationship with God makes us feel good. Sunday by Sunday I find myself singing songs which have meaning to a Christian, but which could equally be sung by a devout Hindu, Muslim or Zoroastrian!

Despite this, I decided that I wouldn't write anything more about worship music; until I read this article, that is! I've only recently discovered Jeremy Myers blog, but it is excellent; incredibly thought provoking and challenging.Â His comments on Christian song writing are powerful and trenchant, I just had to include a few lines from him. Here is one of the points he wants to make to songwriters:

> ***Third, more pain please.*** *I know, I know. Church songs are supposed to be uplifting and encouraging. But do you want to know what is really uplifting and encouraging? People who deal with reality.*
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> *Most of the people in the pews are facing intense amounts of pain, loneliness, despair, hurt, fear, depression, heartache, loss, anger, frustration, bitterness, resentment, and _____ (fill in the blank for the next two pages).*
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> *When we write songs about being â€œhappy, happy, happy all the timeâ€ it makes people just feel worse. They think, â€œAm I really supposed to be happy all the time? Iâ€™m not. What is wrong with me?â€ And then their pain, loneliness, despair, hurt, fear, depression, heartache, loss, anger, frustration, bitterness, resentment, etc., etc., only gets worse.*
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> *If you songwriters are not experiencing this kind of pain, then you should stop writing songs. Can there be happy, joyful songs? Yes, but only in the midst of the pain.*

Read the whole article and sign up to Jeremy's RSS feed.