Music as Worship and Product: Christology in the Lyrics of Joel Houston and Charles Wesley

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The Christian Church has struggled with the influence of popular music in worship at least as far back as the Council of Trent in the early sixteenth century. Although contemporary Christian music, or CCM, breeds distrust from many parishioners because of its reliance on popular rock styles and loud music, the use of guitars and drums differs little musically from the bar tunes used in Charles Wesley's hymns. Nevertheless, an important difference lies in the fact that whereas Wesley aimed to create intellectual boundaries for the emotional revivals, CCM songwriter Joel Houston's uses emotional language in his lyrics to provoke an enthusiastic reaction.

This paper provides insight as to how lyrics in worship music shape or reflect theological positions of their time and create identity for a religious group by comparing two movement songwriters, Methodism's co-founder Charles Wesley and the Mega Church Hillsong's Joel Houston. Both men used the most accessible music of their time in order to reach as many as possible, while differing greatly in their goals. Wesley and Houston belong to different denominations within the
Christian church, but both are considered evangelical.¹ The works of Lester Ruth, Jeremy Begbie, and Andrew Goodliff provide a basis criterion for theological quality. After analyzing samples of the songwriters’ output, qualitative analysis from the names of Jesus and examining Christology in Hillsong United’s Joel Houston and Charles Wesley’s songs lyrics suggests evidence of a theological disparity. Through comparing Charles Wesley and Hillsong United’s Joel Houston, I argue that the quality of Christology has decreased in worship song lyrics over the past 300 years. Finally, I suggest ways pastors and worship leaders can provide a more holistic worship experience.

**Historical Perspective**

*The Wesleys*

In the eighteenth century, John Wesley and his brother Charles began a reform movement in the Church of England. The movement eventually spread to North America and became the Methodist Church. The Wesleyan movement grew out of a commitment to universal salvation and Trinitarianism rather than

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predestination. The brothers believed that worship should continually permeate every aspect of the human life.

The Wesley brothers’ rules for worship exemplify the tension between music’s potential for worldly, unspiritual influences and its use as a tool for bringing God glory. *The Directions for Singing* (1761) asks singers to “learn these tunes, sing them exactly, sing all of the song, sing lustily, sing modestly, sing in time and sing spiritually.” At one point, John Wesley directs against “singing as if you were half dead” then later reminds the congregation to “not bawl.” One rule emphatically denies parishioners from learning other songs until they learned all the songs published in the hymnal. The directions emphasize making worship time more about the act of worship than the act of making music. For the Wesley brothers, hymns declare faith and theological ideology. John Wesley’s conversion occurred while he was a priest, after his heart was “strangely warmed” by a religious service. The music reflects the movement’s emphasis on experience, which became indicative of the Methodist movement throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

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2 Kimbrough Jr., 52.
3 Kimbrough Jr., 53.
Brett C. McInelly argues that the hymns perpetuated and defined the emotional aspect of the movement. The music allowed people to transcend spoken words, engaging with revelations beyond the scriptures while simultaneously maintaining a confessional and Christ centered profession of faith. McInelly states that, “by controlling the discourse by which believers made sense of their experience, the Wesley brothers attempted to regulate the spiritual lives of their followers, protecting them from enthusiastic fits and charges of religious enthusiasm.” Music acted as a vehicle to express feelings while lyrics avoided weak theology and controlled the professions of parishioners.

The Wesleys believed that hymn singing acted as a “vehicle for conversion,” but were criticized for provoking outlandish behavior from those associated with their movement. In response, critics reduced Methodism to mere enthusiasm. One particularly contentious aspect of the experiential movement came from the tradition of hymn singing since it allows for congregants to become rowdy and emotional.

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6 Brett C. McInelly, “Raising the Roof: Hymn Singing, the Anti-Methodist Response and Early Methodist Religiosity,” *Eighteenth Century Life* 36, no.2 (Spring 2012): 89.

7 McInelly, “Raising the Roof,” 87.

8: McInelly, “Raising the Roof,” 83.
Since Wesley walked the line between experience and enthusiasm, his lyrics served an intentionally theological purpose. S. T. Kimbrough Jr. suggests that the emphasis on spiritual singing separated the Wesleyan movement—a movement that Kimbrough believes “engages the divine Spirit and human experience, discipline, and art to shape a life of service to God and others and to illuminate the path toward holiness”—from other movements, like Calvinism in the eighteenth century.⁹ The entire movement focused on connecting to God in order to achieve sanctification on earth and the music allowed congregants to connect to God. The lyrics prevented outsiders and the Anti-Methodist movement from complaining that the passionate reactions of worship resulted from the use of hymns, since the hymns centered on reason, theological truths, and biblical stories.

*Hillsong*

The Hillsong Church, founded by Bobbie and Brian Houston, began in 1983 in Sydney, Australia with a congregation of forty five people. The Church now has over 20,000 members and stretches over twenty one acres of land. International church-plants grew in major cities throughout the world including Moscow, London, New

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York City, and Stockholm. The Sydney Church expanded to feature a college, where Joel Houston attended before becoming part of Hillsong United, a youth-oriented worship band.

The Hillsong Church works to influence the nations for Christianity. In an interview with Christianity Today, Joel Houston explained his purpose with Hillsong United stating, “if the main thing is creating music that people can sing in church and that young people can connect to God through, I think it’s fine.” The vision statement claims they want a “church so large in size the city and nation cannot ignore it.” In regard to worship, the Church dreams of congregations who offer “heartfelt praise” that “changes earth,” through “powerful songs of faith and hope.”

The result of the concerted effort to influence is a popular and relevant church. The Hillsong Church encompasses the current Mega Church movement because it focuses on large crowds and popular affects. Houston serves as the Creative Director for Hillsong United. Recently, Hillsong Church began an “exclusive relationship” with EMI Christian Music Group. As of April 2010, EMI holds

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exclusive rights to market and produce Hillsong recordings, videos, live events, and leadership/church resources in the US and Latin American. EMI boasts this juncture because of Hillsong's 11 million records already sold.  

Hillsong United's album *Aftermath* reached number 4 on the iTunes album chart and number 17 on the Billboard 200 list in 2011.  

Hillsong United is arguably the most successful Christian worship band today.

**Worship and Entertainment**

In light of the vast influence that music can have over its listeners, many worship musicians believe they should produce theologically sound songs, but few have taken steps toward theological training. The worship debate evolves from a fear of worship as entertainment for the congregation and a way to popularize certain musicians and artists rather than serving as an offering to God.

Motivated by commercialism, Christian music has shifted from theological integrity to showmanship. Andrew Goodliff’s “‘It’s all about Jesus’: A Critical Analysis of the Ways in which the Songs for Four Contemporary Worship Christian Songwriters can Lead to an Impoverished Christology,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 81, no. 3 (2009): 254.

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17 Andrew Goodliff, “‘It’s all about Jesus’: A Critical Analysis of the Ways in which the Songs for Four Contemporary Worship Christian Songwriters can Lead to an Impoverished Christology,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 81, no. 3 (2009): 254.
of the Ways in which the Songs for Four Contemporary Worship Christian
Songwriters can Lead to an Impoverished Christology” comments on the effect of
commerce in worship music. Through studying Matt Redman, Tim Hughes, Martyn
Layzell, and Paul Oakley, Goodliff found that all of the artists fail to capture a
comprehensive narrative of Christ in their songs. The impoverished Christology that
he addresses comes, in part, from “the focus of songs not being Jesus”—the
incarnate, crucified, risen, and ascendant—but the needs and desires of the
worshiper.” 18 Christ becomes a tool to connect the listener to the artist and develop
revenue rather than a lyrical proclamation of Christ’s identity.

Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) data shows that none of
the top songs purchased by churches for the right to display song lyrics come from
modern hymnodists. Houston graces the CCLI top 25 with From the Inside Out,
number 24 and The Stand, number 12. 19 The number one song is Our God by Chris
Tomlin and Matt Redman. Redman also has the number 4 and 5 positions, and Tim
Hughes holds number 10. The CCLI website indicates which songs churches
purchase in order to lead their congregants into worship.

18 Goodliff, “‘It’s all about Jesus’,” 265.
On the other hand, the current Christian music scene allows access to worship music, artist blogs, and church resources at all times. The Wesleys desired for people to worship at all times and in all things. The use of social media and digital records has allowed Christians access to worship music in ways never before dreamed. The Christian music industry allows the dream of worshiping every hour to be more attainable in some ways.

As John D. Witvielt points out, both Wesleyan hymns and Contemporary Christian Music, CCM, reside in a vernacular style. The average person easily sings along to both without any musical training. The lyrics reflect the language of the time. Unlike sacred oratorios, the cacophony is not meant for an audience but for the singers themselves. Aside from the difference between hymns and CCM in regard to spectator worship, the congregations that use contemporary worship have a brand very different from churches that sing hymns. Clearly, hymns use language vernacular of eighteenth century English rather than the twenty-first century, but even the musical content, the chords, melody, instrumentation and rhythm separate the songs. Today, CCM is quantified in the industry as a separate genre of music, like any other musical entertainment.

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The modern transformation from music as worship to worship music resulted, in part, from the influence of the Mega Church in the Western Christian tradition. Terry W. York’s *America’s Worship Wars* describes the 1960’s as a pivotal time in laying the groundwork for the major changes in worship. During the era, Bob Dylan and Peter, Paul, and Mary led teenagers to protest Vietnam. The Church associated guitars and drums with rebellion. This simple association of guitars and rebellion would then resurface as distrust for the use of those instruments within small conservative towns towards Mega Church worship in the mid 1980’s.21

Worship created the identity for the Wesleyan movement in the eighteenth century in the same way the Mega Church movement’s use of CCM creates identity. York comments on the desire for recognition of Christian music along side secular music. In the 1970’s church growth became the central focus of a congregation, with the advent of Televangelism and Mega Churches. Eventually, worship music became a means of church growth. A “celebrative, energetic, or exciting worship style” became synonymous with successful, growing churches.22 No longer were Christian love songs a cleaner form of Christian entertainment; Christian songs became Christian worship. Worship became a consumable good rather than an offering to

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22 York, *America’s Worship Wars*, 43.
God. In 2004, a *New York Times* article looked into the rise of popular Christian music. The article describes the screaming crowds and chanting in the same way teenagers scream at a rock concert. The use of celebrative worship meant commercializing worship.²³

The Mega Church model, although successful, is not without critics. Even Mega Church leader David Platt wrote his book *Radical* in response to his fear of being a pastor of thousands of people with enormous income when Jesus led only a few disciples during His lifetime and quoted throughout scripture as turning away the rich and the powerful, a hallmark social standing of the average suburban Mega Church goer.

Not only did music transition from a theological tool to a means of entertainment, but the Church also underwent a similar change. In a society with a norm of church shopping, music began as a tool to attract rather than educate. The Jesus portrayed in today’s Church hardly challenges the singer to serve or sacrifice but instead the singer muses on the great love of a savior. The theological messages shift not because of the use of guitars and drums. Instead it occurs because of the societal shift of the Church from an accepted norm in which denominations fought

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for followers to a society that must fight to find participants and bring outsiders into their fold. A congregation’s identity comes from what kind of worship and physical space it provides. Witvielt argues that Mega Churches focus on “populist” worship in order to appeal to the masses in large worship spaces. The worship service becomes a rock concert and this creates an identity of relevance and experience. Churches like Hillsong feature coffee shops and bookstores making the Church a marketplace rather than merely a place of worship.

Although the trend of feeding the mind and the body in the same place is not necessarily harmful, it reflects the consumerism present in the Church in the Western tradition. The music also reflects consumerism. Instead of music as pedagogy, the CCM creates an identity and a brand. From 2010-2011, Christian music saw a two percent increase in revenue in digital sales, selling similar quantities as Jazz, and techno music.24

**Worship as Music: Quality Theology**

In some ways, the Wesleyan and Houston movements resemble one another. Charles Wesley and his brother had to seriously consider the popular aversion to enthusiasm in the same way the Houstons must attempt to respond to a

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contemporary culture that craves emotion and entertainment as part of their worship. But how does that affect the worship itself? Worship shifted from an action to a product during the time between Wesley and the Houstons. The question becomes what is the right approach to music as worship when the society begins consuming worship rather than participating in it as an action? Why would spectator worship matter?

As made clear by McInelly, the music of a movement provides congregants with an identity and structure while allowing people to express themselves emotionally. Socially, music provides an important sense of community. The debates arise from how music plays a role in worship, how much responsibility songwriters should have over the theology presented, and the kind of identity a church should convey.

S. T. Kimbrough Jr. believes theology in songs requires different analysis than that of literary theology. Kimbrough defines lyrical theology as “a theology couched in poetry, song, and liturgy, characterized by rhythm and expressive of emotion and sentiment.”25 One experiences Wesley and Houston’s lyrics rather than merely reading them, broadening the context. Kimbrough Jr. believes lyrical theology, unlike standard written theology, is “world making,” and “does not seek to impart

25 S. T. Kimbrough Jr., The Lyrical, 3.
information to be turned into articles of orthodox belief.” Kimbrough Jr. uses biblical lyrical theology in the Psalms as the ultimate example of good lyrical theology.

Music also contains an immense power to stir emotion. Jeremy Begbie describes music’s emotional power as “its single most controversial feature.” Emotionally charged sermons often strike listeners as too manipulative and irrational. But, according to Begbie, emotions depend on rational thought. Begbie explains it in the terms of fear. “My fear of falling off a two hundred foot cliff is dependent upon my belief that if I fall, I will die.” Since emotions require an evaluation of the events around a person through reason, the act of emotional worship depends greatly on the rhythm, melody, and harmony experienced in a worship song. Rhythm moves people, melody unites people, and harmony cues the listener into the mood, the tension, and the resolution of the sounds heard.

**The Methodology**

The methodology of this paper extends the work of Dr. Lester Ruth, a scholar in both eighteenth century and current Church music, and the work of Andrew

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26 Kimbrough Jr., *The Lyrical*, 3.
29 Begbie, “Faithful Feelings,” 347.
Goodliff, a Baptist minister. The bias inherent in evaluating good or bad theology is sidestepped by looking instead at the Christology of the works of Houston and Wesley. By looking at their picture of Christ, the data speaks to the kind of God unveiled through their writing. In order to do this, I list and tabulate the names the writers use for Jesus. In addition to the text of the writers, the work of Begbie and Kimbrough Jr. proves useful for understanding how the music itself enhances the experience of a listener. Those names that appear more than twice are placed on a graph.

Dr. Ruth compares the hymns of today’s popular Christian music with the work of Charles Wesley. He found that popular music today tends towards a self-centered, narrow view of Christ in context of the Trinity. While Ruth’s work has focused on the Trinitarian view in Wesley and various CCM songwriters, this project compares the lyrical theology of Wesley and Houston in regard to the names of Christ in order to better understand Jesus in the current Church and Jesus for the Wesleyan movement.

Christoph Swöbel says “the continued existence of Christianity and the identity of Christian theology depend on how Christians understand the identity of
Jesus.” Christology allows the Christian to create an identity for themselves by understanding the central figure of their religion. Since music already works to establish an identity, the definition of Jesus in worship music creates an important thread of unity for the Church. Goodliff analyzed the scriptural passages for the Christology presented in current contemporary artists and identified often-neglected passages. I believe Houston will also neglect these passages cited in Goodliff’s study, namely “1 Timothy 2:5 (Christ as mediator), Hebrews 8 (Christ as priest), 1 Peter 4:5 (Christ as judge), Luke 24:51 (Christ as ascended), Romans 8:34 (Christ as interceder), Mark 10:45 (Christ as servant), and of course many other gospel passages which speak of Christ as teacher.”

Both Kimbrough Jr. and Begbie agree that music enhances the theology of the lyrics. In order to compare Houston and Wesley, the rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and textual content requires analysis. I characterize the musical and poetic rhetoric for settings of Charles Wesley’s poems from the eighteenth century and songs from Joel Houston’s catalogue, since both writers have significant outputs of music; the sample derives from Houston’s songs written only by him since 2000 and a matching sample of twenty six songs by Wesley printed in S. T. Kimbrough’s A Heart

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30 Christoph Swöbel “Christology and Trinitarian Thought,” *Trinitarian Theology Today*, ed. Christoph Swöbel (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1995), 114, quoted in Goodliff, “It’s all about Jesus,” 261.
31 Goodliff, “It’s all about Jesus,” 264.
to Praise My God. By using twenty six songs from both men, I identified each name for Jesus used in each song and then tallied the total to provide evidence for the assumption that CCM music is less theologically comprehensive than the Wesleyan hymns.

**The Evidence of Differing Christology**

One of Houston’s most popular songs according to CCLI ratings, *From the Inside Out*, begins with the singers proclaiming their failures and seeking mercy. Jesus is referred to as a “light” that “will shine when all else fades.” Beyond calling Christ everlasting and never ending, merciful, and praise worthy, Houston gives no other allusion to the person of Christ.

The song uses the refrain “everlasting, your light will shine when all else fades/never ending, your glory goes beyond all fame” as the tag for the first two verses, then a pre-chorus, another verse and finally a full chorus with the tag as the first two lines. The song drives from drums and guitar and gains most of its excitement from the memorable interlude.

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32 These songs are listed in Appendix A and B.
33 One concern for the legitimacy of comparing Houston and Wesley is the difference of the test of time. Wesley’s most published works come from a canon of over 300 years whereas Houston’s works represent the most popular worship music today. The intrigue of comparison comes from the both writers’ prominence in history as family members of movement leaders.
Houston’s strongest Christological concept is Jesus as savior. Phrases like “carried the cross” and “wears scars” name Jesus as the one to suffer and be crucified followed by a profession of praise for Christ’s actions. Figure 1 shows the names of Christ that appear in Houston’s collection of works since 2000 more than twice.

In a similar narrative to that of Houston’s “From the Inside Out,” Wesley outlines a song of redemption in “Depth of Mercy.” Both songs begin with the singer confessing their failures before God. Wesley asks the question “Can there be/mercy still reserved for me?” The cry contrasts greatly from Houston’s proclamation “A thousand times I’ve failed/still your mercy remains.” Despite the obvious boldness in Houston’s attempt at humility, the Christology of the song also differs. For Wesley, Jesus is a master he has declined and a savior who stands and weeps, for Houston, Jesus “light will shine when all else fades” while he professes his overwhelming love for Christ.

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However, Christ seems hardly risen in many of his songs. Houston leaves Christ on the cross as an emotional emblem of repentance. This crucified man remains a central focus because of his suffering not his deity. Although one could argue Houston approaches Christ with adoration mirroring the psalmists of the Old Testament crying out in their despair, Houston’s Jesus becomes vaguely part of the trinity, and as Goodliff discovered in his research, is rarely acknowledged as a shepherd, teacher, priest, mediator, or healer. Jesus instead becomes a suffering wish granter.

Houston’s music successfully builds energy through the blaring and memorable guitar riffs. Many of the songs share verse and chorus tag lines and
create clever phrases. Amateur musicians find the simple chord progressions accessible, making the music perfect for the average teen guitar player. Few of the songs use chord progressions more sophisticated than I-IV-V-iii and often modulate to a relative key during the extensive repetition in the chorus.

One of the strongest examples of the emphasis on the musical experience appears in the song “Am I to Believe.” The song begins by questioning how God could send his son to die but the chorus is anticlimactic in verse. The bridge leads into the chorus stating:

I've heard the laughter...
As the children play
But above all
I just live to say that

Yeah, Oh Yeah
I believe in the God of love
Yeah, Oh Yeah
I believe in the risen son36

The song relies on the emotional appeal of the music rather than a strong profession of who God is, opting instead for the filler word yeah. The song instead relies on a guitar build up and an emotional release.

The romanticized Jesus also becomes prevalent in Houston’s songs. Often times, the song never mentions Jesus. Many of the songs offer praise to a general

higher power that does great things for mankind and might have suffered in some way. A clear example comes from the song “You.” Houston repeats the line “the worst of me succeeded by the best of You,” which outside of the Christian church translates as a love song. Christian-ese takes over eventually for the educated listener with phrases like “your Kingdom come” and “your light for all the world.” Eventually Houston mentions God as the one “who breaks the chains” but never uses any other name. In fact, the use of Name as a name occurred in six percent of the songs analyzed. Wesley too uses eroticism, but far less often. In “Jesus, Lover of my Soul” Wesley asks for protection by Jesus from the tempest and to seek refuge in him.38

The music of Wesley features strophic verses with flowing melodies and rarely a refrain or chorus. Written in homophonic four-part voicing, the songs develop little musical energy and almost always end in a plagal cadence. The music repeats constantly, in one song seventeen times, as the verses change.39

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39 With seventeen verses in “O, For a Thousand Tongues” one must ask how the Wesleys taught these hymns, which were meant to be learned before one could learn any others!
Figure 2. Names of Christ for Charley’s Wesley from a selection of his most published songs.

Wesley’s poetry uses a different set of names. In addition to the names on the chart, Wesley used conqueror, high priest, an incarnate deity appear in two or fewer of the songs I analyzed. The most common name was Lord, but that name only appeared in 50% of the songs rather than Houston’s use of savior in 65% of his songs. The number of names used in twenty-six song samples also differs drastically. Houston uses thirty-three names for Christ while Wesley uses fifty names. Although the number of names is not necessarily an indicator of strong Christology, the ambiguity of many of Houston’s names for Christ creates a very unclear Jesus. Thirteen of Wesley’s songs mention Jesus as Lord, which also
provides an ambiguous depiction, but his vast use of other names paints a stronger picture.

**Figure 3** Comparison of top names for Christ for Wesley and Houston.

Despite Hillsong’s popularity as Jesus-centered worshipers, Houston only used the name Jesus in four of the twenty-six songs analyzed, while Wesley used it nine. The emphasis remains on an ambiguous savior rather than on the person of Jesus acting within the Trinity. Wesley muses far more on Christ’s deity rather than his act of dying on the cross, perhaps to curtail the already emotionally charge parishioners whom caused such criticism of his enthusiastic movement.

Houston does many things well and does not represent the total outcome for Hillsong United’s music. As Begbie argues, emotions must be rooted in the rational
perception of experience. As a whole, Hillsong fails to use a Trinitarian view of Jesus and muses on the relational sense of God rather than the rational.\(^{40}\) Houston’s Jesus saves through death for others to experience grace and mercy. The narrative offers a cathartic release for those who feel weary or burdened. Houston’s songs summon Jesus often through chant-like repetitions of phrases like, “There is no one like Jesus”\(^{41}\) or “Open up the heavens”\(^{42}\) which ushers in a different atmosphere than that of an outdated hymn. But Jesus’ only purpose is not to produce feelings. The songs do little work in professing who Christ is and how a Christian should model that life.

**Creating Realistic Expectations**

The disparity between Wesley and Houston should not call the Church to forgo all that Houston’s songs offer. Many of them act as a means for adoration and praise, a way for people to come before God honestly. Certainly the Church needs those kinds of offerings in the body. The Church should also avoid retreating to hymns as the only means of worship, since their perceived superiority comes from


\(^{41}\) Joel Houston, “No One Like You,” *United We Stand*, Hillsong Music Australia.

nostalgia rather than musical significance, after all many of the tunes were just bar tunes. If Wesley took the drinking songs of the eighteenth century and created theological masterpieces, nothing should hinder today’s songwriters from crafting theologically comprehensive rock band worship.

I agree with York, Goodliff and a host of others who credit at least part of the problem to the commercialization of worship. Wesley did not have to worry about single sales, radio play, or concert tours. He had no merchandise tent at the latest Christian conference or website to worry about managing. The current climate of the Christian music scene may bring people to youth group, but it does little to sustain them as they mature. The positive effect of the Christian music scene, providing people with instant access to worship music, gives little retribution for the poor Christology developed in some of the most popular worship songs. Today, many songwriters either take an intentional stance against perceived theological depravity in modern music, like hymn writers Keith and Kristyn Getty, or continue the rondo-like love songs as a commercial outlet for their lyrically eroticized love of Jesus.43

Those who believe hymns should reign victorious through the worship wars must also reconsider. Rather than dismissing all contemporary worship, Christians as consumers must make more theologically minded decisions. Hymns fail to resonate musically with many congregants, who label churches that use them as boring and out of touch. The reason hymns worked to create an identity for the Wesleyan movement came largely from the vernacular approachability of the music itself. Contemporary Christian music lacks sophistication in its lyrics in part because the self-centered, feel good market encourages less comprehensive theology. Dr. Lester Ruth suggests to songwriters to “be taken up with the fundamental paradox of the Christian faith: the Incarnation,” an issue that Houston's lyrics never mention.\textsuperscript{44} In Houston's songs, Jesus appears as super-hero rather than God himself. Houston effectively creates a place of worship and focuses on adoration and praise. Chad Wiegand’s thesis “An Analysis of the Theological Comprehensiveness of Hillsong Australia’s Worship Music from 2000-2010,” identifies surrender to God, use of song as prayer, and relational lyrics as other strengths for Hillsong as a whole.\textsuperscript{45} However, Houston fails to create a strong picture of Christ. The Hillsong church could supplement the weak Christology through sermons, Sunday school, \begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{44} Lester Ruth, “”Wisdom from Charles Wesley for Contemporary Songwriters,” Dubuque Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IO, April 10-11, 2012. \\
\textsuperscript{45} Chad William Wiegand, “An Analysis,” 75.
\end{footnotes}
and Bible studies, but the music used as a means of worship in far less economically resourceful churches might result in entire congregations deprived of a strong picture of Christ. Hillsong United’s target audience of youth rarely research the Christological claims presented in the songs they sing in church.

Consumers also have a considerable amount of power over the kind of music popularized. Leaders that buy music, worship leaders and youth pastors, must responsibly invest in the market. Laypeople can also influence the market through prompting education on the importance of lyrical theology.

Christian songwriters must also take on the responsibility of producing theologically sound songs rather than focusing on creating excitement for an audience. They must walk the line between performer and worshiper in a consumer culture by using their lyrics as a tool for sharpening the Christological understanding of their listeners. Music enhances our ability to transcend our own perception of the world and invites us into the spiritual realm. Worship should unite individuals for a common purpose rather than divide them. Worship should express a dynamic array of experiences, providing a place for Wesley, Houston, and others. Songwriters, church leaders, and consumers must acquaint themselves with the rich resources available for people today to worship God then make decisions that
reflect wholly devoted lives to a Christ who is both Savior and Lord, God incarnate and mysterious.
Appendix A

Wesley’s Hymns

1. A Charge to Keep I Have
2. All Praise to Our Redeeming Lord
3. And Are We Yet Alive?
4. Can it be I Should Gain?
5. Behold the Savior of Mankind
6. All Thanks be to God who Scatters Abroad
7. Blow Ye the Trumpet, Blow
8. Christ From Whom All Blessings Flow
9. Christ is Risen Our Lord and King
10. Christ Whose Glory Fills the Skies
11. Come and Let Us Sweetly Join
12. Come Divine Interpreter
13. Depth of Mercy
14. Jesus, Love of My Soul
15. For a Thousand Tongues to Sing
16. Hark the Herald Angels Sing
17. Rejoice, The Lord is King
18. See How Great a Flame Aspires
19. Spirit of Faith, Come Down
20. Maker in Whom We Live
21. Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
22. Give Me the Faith Which Can Remove
23. Give to the Winds Thy Fears
24. Hail the Day that Sees Him Rise
25. I Want a Principle Within
26. If Death My Friend and Me Divide
Appendix B

Houston’s Songs

1. For This Cause
2. One Desire
3. All About You
4. All
5. Am I to Believe?
6. Open Up the Heavens
7. Where the Love Lasts Forever
8. Ever More
9. Yours is the Kingdom
10. Salvation is Here
11. The Time Has Come
12. All I Need
13. From the Inside Out
14. No One Like You
15. The Stand
16. Point of Difference
17. Never Let Me Go
18. In the Mystery
19. Run
20. You
21. Beautiful Exchange
22. Take Heart
23. Aftermath
24. Father
25. Rise
26. Children of the Light
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