there is no man without need of redemption. Of the wicked" is sin to God (Proverbs 21:4), and human endeavor, or the business of living. Overthrow Christ. He is involved with normal oppose to the business of living.

To illustrate this point, consider that there are many unsaved people with whom you interact on a daily basis (e.g., the check-out person at the grocery store, a traffic policeman, or a service repairman). When a repairman comes to your house to fix your refrigerator, though he may be unsaved, he is not carrying out the functions of an organized world system arranged in hostility to the cause of Christ. Yes, the "world" in this sense is comprised of unsaved people; however, we must also conclude that not all unsaved people are always acting in harmony with this goal.

As I travel and speak on music, and warn Christians about the danger of the world's music and the need for the believer to have the "new song" of Psalm 40:3, many people I speak to make a voiced (or often unvoiced) assumption that I am advocating avoiding all music written by unsaved men. This is not true. What I am advocating is that we avoid those creations of man which are designed and conceived in hostility to Christ.

As a direct result of exposure to this work in the lives of those who listen or perform it desires contrary to the plan of God for their lives? Consider a choir piece by Felix Mendelssohn. When a high school choir works on this choral piece, are they learning or experiencing content that is in opposition to God's order or morality? As a direct result of exposure to this work will they be led to things contrary to the plan of God for their lives? In both instances the answer is a resounding NO! In all the years I have travelled and spoken on the topic of music, I have not yet had a teenager come up to me and confess that as a result of exposure to classical music his life and morals were ruined and corrupted. The reason this has never (and will never) happen is because well-constructed music by itself cannot communicate ungodliness. Good music is, by its very nature,
related to those good things that God desires for us.

God's plan for acceptability is given to us in Phil. 4:8 and is characterized by truth, honesty, justice, purity, loveliness, praise, and good report. It is the content of things that gives benefit to our lives. When an unsaved cook prepares a good meal for us at a restaurant, it is not his character that we look forward to eating; it is the quality of the content of his work that we benefit from. When we listen to an excellent piece of music, it is not the morality of the composer (all composers are sinners) that will affect us; it is the content of the music as it relates to the plan of God for our lives. We need to ask ourselves whether this music is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, etc.

On the other side of the musical spectrum, let's consider rock music. Even though the writers and performers have for years stated their evil intentions about the purpose of their music, I don't think that is nearly as important as that we consider the quality of the music itself. A large percentage of rock music has been written by those who are clearly in hostility to the cause of Christ. While that merits our attention to some degree, I would maintain that the music itself stands in opposition to the cause of Christ and the plan of God for our lives (Phil. 4:8). Look at what the music itself communicates. What reactions and responses does rock music engender? Can we go to a rock concert and observe godly reactions by the listeners as a result of the music they are being exposed to? Is the music constructed according to an orderly plan of godly communication? No, rock music is constructed in a way that communicates sensuality and disorder (rebellion). This can be observed and chronicled many times over. These concepts can be described in every way as worldly and should therefore be avoided. So we must avoid any music patterned after rock (such as CCM, though the composer or performer may not have consciously attempted to discredit God or oppose His plans) for the same reason, i.e., because it is worldly.

Certainly a discussion this short can not adequately answer every question on every issue we are attempting to cover, but it is imperative that we more clearly identify what we as Christians call "the world" and avoid it as consistently as possible. Good music (regardless of the composer) can be in harmony with God's plan for our lives. While many composers went about composing as a general way of living, their actions were not consciously or subconsciously in opposition to God. Some musicians, however, have written bad music (whether it is called classical, rock, pop, country, etc.) which is of itself in opposition to God's plan for our lives. That music is clearly "worldly," and God commands us not to love it or identify with it.

Robert Berglund makes this astute observation in his book A Philosophy of Church Music: "If any style of music--in its embodied or designed meaning--creates feelings, ideas, emotions, values, or moods that are of, by, or for the unchanged way of life, such music is out of place in the changed life experience" (p. 12).

Tim Fisher is founder and president of Sacred Music Services in Greenville, SC.

http://www.smsrecordings.com

KNOW WHO THE ENEMY IS!
by Tim Fisher

We have said or heard it said (all too often without thought) that as Christians we are to have nothing to do with "the world." As a rule this is true--but upon further reflection it can be quite a misleading statement without Biblical enlightenment. As separationists we frequently quote I John 2:15 and warn those around us to absolutely avoid anything having to do with "the world." However, we will later witness to God's saving grace by quoting John 3:16 where we see that "God so loved the world." Are these two verses contradicting one another? Obviously not. The contradiction here consists of an incomplete picture of who or what constitutes "the world."

When speaking about wrong music, parents will often warn their children about listening to "worldly" music. Now, anyone who knows me understands that I believe that this is a worthwhile endeavor; but I want to emphasize in this study that we need to refine our definition of the "world" to better understand exactly who the enemy is. There is, without doubt, a "world" with "worldly things" that we are to avoid. However, in an attempt not to "throw the baby out with the bathwater," let's gain a fuller understanding of this important principle and how we can apply it to our lives in the area of music. We do have an enemy, and we can better fight the battle when we know exactly at whom we should be shooting.