



OUR STANCE ON WORSHIP IN REGARD TO CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING BETHEL/HILLSONG/ELEVATION & OTHER ENTITIES

Prepared by Robert Weston Gilliard, Worship Leader

If you are reading this, it means that you are as passionate about worship—as am I. I firmly believe that it is my responsibility, as a leader of worship music, to teach theological Truth through songs that help believers sing, meditate and know God better.

PLEASE VISIT OUR WORSHIP PAGE, to understand more about our approach to worship: www.coastlinegulfbreeze.com/worship. *Here, you will find 2 handbooks written for our worship team, and several video devotionals specific to worship.*

BETHEL/HILLSONG CONTROVERSY

I am not naive to the controversial opinions regarding Bethel and Hillsong. I have monitored this for a few years. [There are people I love and respect on both sides of this debate.](#)

Unfortunately, I have also witnessed [graceless, arrogant, and rebellious attitudes on both sides of the debate.](#) After worshiping in many ministries and churches over the past 31 years, the Holy Spirit has turned my disdain for imperfections in the Church, to a greater love, grace and hope for the [sanctification of the Bride of Christ](#) and His people.

My approach to this subject (under the authority of our pastoral leaders) is to judge the validity of each song based on scripture alone and its helpfulness to the Church. I have (and will continue to) quietly and peacefully decline leading songs that I find are not in agreement with scripture, or could mislead someone into false doctrine if taken out of context. I am always willing to defend my stance on each song we do at Coastline.

In contrast, If we are focused on the perfection of people, leaders and songwriters, we are unable to truly worship because our focus is in the wrong place. David, Solomon, Korah (sons of Korah), Moses, all of these individuals come with many moral failures and controversies, yet the inspired/eternal truths they wrote are still the scriptural model we use in worshipping and continually creating new songs.

HERE IS MY COMMITMENT TO YOU AS A WORSHIP LEADER:

1. To always choose songs based on their scriptural content
2. To always lead under the authority of God and my pastors
3. To choose songs that celebrate eternal truths, not human emotions
4. To choose songs that are appropriate for corporate worship and praise
5. To choose songs that are accessible to the whole church—not just musicians
6. To exhort from scripture—not my opinion
7. To balance the direction of our worship, [to be focused God-ward](#).

THINGS WE BELIEVE ABOUT WORSHIP

1. We are commanded to sing [Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs](#)
2. We are commanded to sing [new songs](#)
3. We are [commanded to sing praises](#) over 40 times in scripture
4. Worship is an exercise in [Grace toward each other](#)
5. Worship is an exercise of [Grace in our own lives](#)
6. Worship is an act of surrender to God's command to [sing praises](#)
7. Worship is one way that we practice the [Greatest Commandment](#): to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.
8. Worship comes from a [heart of gratitude](#)
9. Worship is an attribute of being [filled with the Spirit](#).

[Only God knows the heart](#), but He gives us [scripture to guide us](#) to know what is TRUTH and what is not. I will never know each individual's heart involved in Bethel and Hillsong. My opinion and evidenced hope, is that within these large entities are some Godly people who long to honor Christ. Some other individuals have proven (through their songwriting) to be immature in their Faith. We do not sing those songs. But, I do follow their journey...looking and hoping to see growth in their walk.

In regards to copyrights and supporting affiliations:

1. Funds: Coastline is not responsible for how someone else uses their funds. They answer to God (not us) for any abuses or misuses. We long to be good, honest stewards of the revenue with which we are entrusted. We pay our copyright licenses as required. But the thought of controlling or withholding support becomes problematic or inconsistent when we don't use the same standards at the gas pump, the grocery store, or the entertainment subscriptions we consume, etc. We will never agree with everyone on everything. ([1 Corinthians 8](#)) My other hope is that the patronizing of theologically sound songs might encourage them to seek Truth and produce more of those types of songs for the Church.

2. Other Songs - the other argument is that if we do a "good" Bethel song, it might lead congregants to find a "bad" Bethel song. My responsibility is to foster an environment of

worship at Coastline and model a life of worship. I cannot keep people from searching youtube or listening to KLOVE. At Coastline, music isn't meant to be our whole spiritual diet. We also use [expositional teaching](#), [Daily in the Word](#), [Connect Groups](#), [opportunities to serve](#), and more. ([SEE OUR 10 VALUES](#))

Kingdom of God - [CLICK HERE](#) to review a personal study I did a couple years ago about the Kingdom of God. In this document, I put together all of Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom of God in an effort to give my worship team a complete picture of Jesus' definition of "the Kingdom of God/heaven."

WHY NOT AVOID THIS CONTROVERSY ALL TOGETHER?

THE CHURCH & THE GOSPEL are much bigger than Coastline, a denomination or worship music entity. [The unworthiness of all worshipers is an uncontested reality](#). Outside of JESUS CHRIST we all fall short. But I see a GREAT BENEFIT in incorporating these worship songs in our sets as well as Hymns and other standards.

1. It reminds us to love and be gracious to others
2. [It reminds us not to lift up a person, or organization - ONLY GOD](#)
3. It reminds us to be vigilant about aligning the songs we choose with THE BIBLE
4. It helps us sing a [new, relevant song which is missional!](#)
5. [It connects us with the Bride of Christ](#)
6. [It reminds us that we will worship together in heaven](#) - one sound - one unified song of praise to the LAMB OF GOD.
7. It can be a tool the Holy Spirit uses to [speak to His Church](#) on a universal platform.

I do not believe it a coincidence that the worship music industry was flooded with songs about overcoming fear – 2 years before COVID hit. If connected, the Church around the world was prophetically prepared to face these days—because of songs from both of these entities. I also don't find it a coincidence that in 2020, Pastor John Spencer felt led by the Holy Spirit to bring back the Aaronic Blessing song at Coastline. At this same time Kari Jobe, Cody Carnes, Chris Brown, and Steven Furtick felt led to re-write the THE BLESSING as a message to the Church today. I do not say this to put any of these people or organizations on a pedestal, but to remind us that God uses people: flawed, sinful humans. That gives me hope that He can use me.

In closing, I would never want to lead you against your conscience in this matter (1 Corinthians 8). If our vision at [Coastline Gulf Breeze](#) does not align with where you are, we commend your passion for worship and hope you find a place you can worship freely. Our stance in all things is to err on the side of grace, forgiveness and love; but ALWAYS STAND UNAPOLOGETICALLY ON THE WORD OF GOD as our standard for Truth in all things. If we don't get to worship with

you at Coastline, we look forward to the day we can worship our King together around the Throne in Heaven. WHAT A DAY THAT WILL BE!

In Him,
Robert Weston Gilliard
Communications Director / Worship Leader
850.393.6058
rob@coastlinelife.com