



# Bethel, Hillsong, Elevation Worship Music

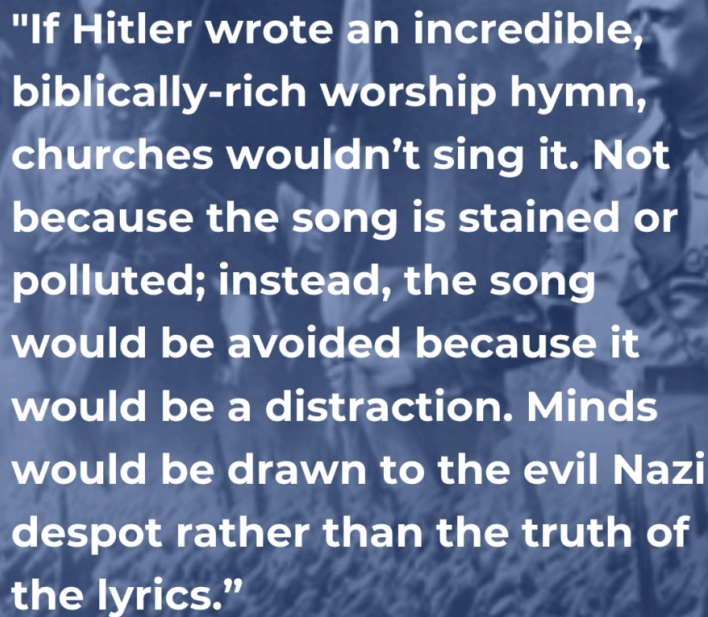
Should a church use worship music from sources that are proven to be part of the spirit of error and falsehood Jesus warns about? What if the song itself is biblical? Does the source matter? Shouldn't a song be judged on its own merits and not the source?

These are questions that many church leaders struggle with, along with their congregants. That's because most of the music licenses churches purchase for Sunday morning worship services originate from the "Big Three:" Bethel Church in Redding California, Hillsong United in Australia, and Elevation Church in Charlotte, North Carolina.

All three of these organizations and their leaders have proven over and over again to teach a completely different Gospel than the doctrine taught by Jesus and His Apostles. (More on that below.) Their music is emotionally manipulative to create manufactured religious experiences. And all three of these organizations take the focus off of Jesus and onto you.

When congregants recognize the source of this music, many are rightfully alarmed.

**But what if the lyrics are biblical?** Consider this: Plenty of songs that are biblically true were written by and for Mormons. Most Christians would agree that we should never use songs from sources which have false or even heretical teachings. No matter how sound the lyrics are, knowing that they come from heretical sources should cause leaders to eliminate those songs from their church services.



**"If Hitler wrote an incredible, biblically-rich worship hymn, churches wouldn't sing it. Not because the song is stained or polluted; instead, the song would be avoided because it would be a distraction. Minds would be drawn to the evil Nazi despot rather than the truth of the lyrics."**

~ Matthew Westerholm, associate professor of church music and worship at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

As simply as possible, I've attempted to compile and categorize five of the biggest reasons not to bring in songs from Bethel, Hillsong and Elevation to a church sanctuary. I hope churches will find this explanation helpful. Click on the titles below to expand each heading:

## **5 Reasons to stop singing Bethel, Hillsong and Elevation Music:**

### **Reason 1: Unholy, Dangerous, Apostate Teachings**

There are many research articles written over the last two decades by hundreds of trusted Christian scholars and pastors who warn about Bethel, Hillsong, and Elevation, the top three apostate organizations that make up the bulk of today's false "church."

These three multi-million dollar organizations are the most well-known teachers of the "signs and wonders" dominionist movement known as the New Apostolic Reformation, and the Word of Faith movement, also known as the "little gods," "name it and claim it" prosperity "gospel."

All three of these organizations believe and teach that their leaders are Big A Apostles, as well as Prophets, even though their "prophecies" are often wrong.

Bethel, Hillsong, and Elevation are proven to teach some of the most aberrant, unbiblical heresies in modern times. And while some of their music lyrics seem biblical, the source is anything but. The top leadership pastors and teachers are known wolves in sheep's clothings who must, according to God's Word, be marked and avoided.

Scroll to the bottom of this article for those links to research these for yourself.

### **Reason 2: The Influence on Your Flock**

The main objective of the worship music arm of Bethel, Hillsong, and Elevation is to intentionally attract and maintain their target audience of youth and young adults, and introduce new audiences of Christian consumers into their movement. All while making millions of dollars. Bill Johnson, founder and lead pastor of Bethel, has said that he sees Bethel Music including Bethel's Jesus Culture as a tool to export NAR teachings into non-NAR churches:

*"Music bypasses all of the intellectual barriers, and when the anointing of God is on a song, people will begin to believe things that they wouldn't believe through teaching." -Bill Johnson Source*

Many congregants in these churches innocently sing along, having no idea that these songs come from a leading church in an aberrant movement. And discerning folks who do know are often grieved by their leadership's lack of awareness or total disregard for their congregants' discomfort:

*I, myself, have sung along with songs in church or on the radio, only later to discover that those songs came from Bethel Music. Churchgoers who are aware of the songs' origins sometimes feel conflicted singing along. And worship leaders face a dilemma of whether to include anything from Bethel Music in their weekly song selection." - Holly Pivek, "Should our church sing Bethel Music worship songs?"*

### **Reason 3: Your Green Stamp of Approval**

Worshiping God through music on a Sunday morning is a beautiful and uniting act. Congregants trust their leaders to protect them from wolves in sheep's clothing. Singing even solid-sounding songs tells your trusting congregants that:

A. you've checked out these sources and approve

B. you haven't checked out these sources and are unaware you are bringing apostate sources into your church.

If your church is leading music from a group that has theologically compromised the Truth of the Word, your church is lending credibility to that source. Worshipers have your "green light" to sing and enjoy music from these sources, because they trust their leaders to protect them from harm and are comfortable to trust this source and even pursue this group through video downloads, music purchases, and perhaps following the musicians and their theology. Congregants often share the musicians' music videos on social media, thus spreading false teaching from apostate sources.

#### **Reason 4: Your Financial Support**

The music licensing fees paid by congregations to use this music financially supports these organizations, and by extension, all of their activities such as conferences, books, webinars and more. Every time your church performs one of these worship songs, there is a monetary benefit to the artist through licensing.

According to CCLI (Christian Copyright Licensing Institute), seven of the top 10 modern songs sung in churches today are affiliated with Bethel, Hillsong, and Elevation.

#### **Reason 5: Harming the Hurting**

Ex-NAR Christians say when they were first drawn into the NAR movement, it was because of the music they heard in church. They began researching the musicians and following Bethel, even joining conferences and enrolling in the Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry, a three-year full-time program where students learn to perform miracles and how to prophesy. Those who've come out of the program say that the music was a gateway into the NAR movement.

It takes a lot of time for people coming out of these apostate and manipulative NAR and Word of Faith movements to heal and to find a new church they can trust. Ex-NAR and Word of Faith followers have said that they are "triggered" or spiritually harmed by seeing/hearing this music performed in their new church.

Helpful source: **Breaking the "theological bricks" and unlearning lies**, which tells the testimony of Jesse Westwood, a 3 year alumni of Bethel Church in Redding California who attended Bill Johnson's mystical Bethel School of Super Natural Ministry, and has since walked away from the cult.

# False Teachings of Bethel, Hillsong and Elevation

Below is the research gathered from hundreds of sources, and I will continually update these titles and links. Click to expand and learn more:

## [Bethel Church, Redding CA](#)

**Bethel Music's** songs are among the most played contemporary worship music in American churches and their albums have reached the *Billboard* 200 multiple times. The global music label and publishing group has many songs with tens of millions of views on YouTube, and their songs and albums have been among the most streamed and downloaded Christian music. In 2023, the organization earned more than \$18 million dollars.

## Bethel's False Teachings

**1. Bethel Church is a "Super Apostle" church** and is known as leading players in the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) movement. Bethel's leader Bill Johnson prefers to call himself the General rather than the lead Apostle, and his second in command, Kris Valatoon, is its Prophet. NAR is a dominionist movement which asserts that God is restoring the lost offices of church governance, namely the offices of Prophet and Apostle.

## Facts about the NAR:

- Its founder was C. Peter Wagner who claims that the Church of the 21st Century will be ruled by Apostles and Prophets. Wagner has anointed himself NAR's "Presiding Apostle."
- Stemming from the Latter Rain movement, NAR is linked with the Kansas City Prophets who brought grandiose claims that a "new breed" of super prophets were beginning to arrive on planet earth who would change the world forever"; likewise Word Faith and Pentecostal movements.
- NAR is not governed by an official denomination, it is led by alleged apostles and prophets.
- NAR leaders teach that prophets and apostles alone have the power and authority to execute God's plans and purposes on earth. They believe they are laying the foundation for a global church, governed by them.
- They place a greater emphasis on dreams, visions and extra-biblical revelation than they do on the Bible, claiming that their revealed teachings and reported experiences (e.g. trips to heaven, face-to-face

conversations with Jesus, visits by angels) can not be proven by the 'old' Scripture. ([Source](#))

**2. Bethel Church focuses on miracles.** It teaches that all miracles described in the Bible can be performed by believers today and happen regularly, including faith healing of everything from curing cancer to regrowing limbs, raising the dead, speaking in tongues, casting out demons and prophecy. Its [Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry](#) is a three-year full-time program where students learn to perform miracles and how to prophesy.

**3. Bethel teaches the heretical Word of Faith doctrine**, also known as Positive Confession, and states that it is always God's will to heal.

**4. Bethel teaches and practices occult activities** such as [Destiny Cards](#) (a church version of Tarot cards), "[sucking](#)" the "[anointing](#)" from a dead person in "[grave soaking](#)" trips to cemeteries.

**5. Bethel church attendees have witnessed mysterious manifestations** of "[gold dust](#)," "[angel feathers](#)," and "[glory clouds](#)" during worship services.

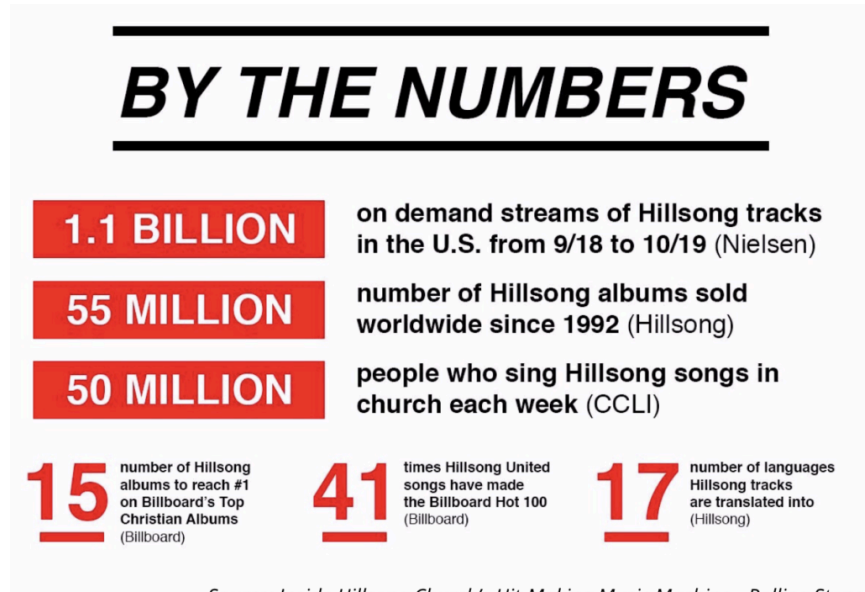
Bethel uses [The Passion Translation](#), a man-made counterfeit "Bible" publication and not scholarly or Holy Spirit inspired. TPT has been enthusiastically endorsed by NAR advocates such as Bill Johnson, Che Ahn, Bobbie Houston, Lou Engle, John & Lisa Bevere, Patricia King, Heidi Baker, Wesley & Stacey Campbell, and more.

(More links specific to Bethel at the bottom)

### **[Hillsong United, Australia](#)**

**Hillsong United's music empire** was founded in 1991, stemming from the first [Hillsong Conference](#) in 1986. Its music is produced by [Hillsong Church](#) in Sydney, Australia as well as offshoot churches, [Hillsong London](#), and [Hillsong Kiev](#). Hillsong albums are released and distributed by **Hillsong Music**. The main groups are [Hillsong Worship](#), [Hillsong United](#), [Hillsong Young & Free](#), and Hillsong Kids. As with Bethel Music, the youth is Hillsong's primary target.

As of 2018, Hillsong Music has sold over 18 million albums globally. This chart shows just how big its scope has become:



## Hillsong's Teachings

Hillsong Church in Australia, until recently, was led by co-founders and senior pastors Brian and Bobbie Houston. Houston stepped down in 2021. The Australia-based organization has been plagued by scandals and its false teachings over the years, including the heretical **Word of Faith** and **NAR (New Apostolic Reformation/Dominioinism)** teachings. From the Hillsong website: "We believe that God wants to heal and transform us so that we can live healthy and blessed lives in order to help others more effectively." In Pastor Brian Houston's 1999 book *You Need More Money*, he promotes the prosperity gospel: "Poverty is definitely not God's will for His people. In fact, all His promises talk of blessing and prosperity" (page 8). At its conferences, Hillsong regularly features the major prosperity preachers of the Word Faith movement such as Joyce Meyer, Joel and Victoria Osteen, and Oneness Pentecostal Word Faith mogul T.D. Jakes.

Brian Houston has often stated that Christians and Muslims worship the same God.

Hillsong's ordination of women as pastors is in contradiction of Scripture's teaching that men are to be the spiritual leaders of the church (1 Timothy 2:11-12).

Hillsong New York City also had a homosexual music leader.

Hillsong's music is a mixed bag of somewhat biblical lyrics as well as downright heretical lyrics. ([Heresy Hiding in Plain Sight – Examining the Theology in Hillsong Lyrics](#))

Like Bethel, Hillsong uses [The Passion Translation](#), a man-made counterfeit "Bible" publication and not scholarly or Holy Spirit inspired. TPT has been enthusiastically endorsed by NAR advocates such as Bill Johnson, Che Ahn, Bobbie Houston, Lou Engle, John & Lisa Bevere, Patricia King, Heidi Baker, Wesley & Stacey Campbell, and more.

(More links specific to Hillsong at the bottom)

### **[Elevation Church](#)**

**Elevation Worship** is a contemporary worship music collective from [Elevation Church](#) in Charlotte, North Carolina. The label was founded by lead Pastor Steven Furtick. Elevation has grown into a global phenomenon drawing a weekly attendance of more than 25,000 with locations from Toronto to Orlando; in addition to their worldwide online audience. [Elevation Worship](#) reaches more than 3 million monthly listeners on Spotify, more than 760 million views on YouTube, and 1.5 million+ U.S. album sales.

By any worldly measure, Steven Furtick is quite successful. According to Money Inc., as of January 2021, his estimated [net worth is \\$55 million](#). He lives in a 16,000-square-foot mansion situated on nineteen acres of wooded land, valued at approximately \$1.7 million in 2013.

### **Elevation's False Teachings**

Steven Furtick teaches Modalism, which is a heresy from the first century. Modalists deny the Trinity as defined in Scripture. (Modalism denies the Trinity and instead states that God is a single person who, throughout biblical history, has revealed Himself in three modes or forms. Find more about this heresy [here](#).)

He is known to teach the Word of Faith [Little Gods heresy](#) as well as claiming that Jesus is [limited by our lack of faith](#):

"Even Jesus cannot override your unbelief. I see y'all looking at me like, 'Is that true? I thought He could do anything.' It said, 'He could not.' He wanted to. He was prepared to. He was able to. The power of God was in Nazareth, but it was trapped in their perspective."



His church has long been involved with the New Apostolic Reformation movement, when Furtick traveled to Australia for the Presence 2012 Conference with John Bevere, for "a golden fire of anointing, vision and miracles," and continuing to host NAR prophets, seers, and miracle workers.

Steven Furtick teaches that God Breaks the Law. He also teaches that his vision is authoritative: "We Are United Under One Vision. Elevation is built on the vision God gave Pastor Steven. We will aggressively defend our unity and that vision."

He promotes female pastors and has invited several to speak at Elevation, calling Joyce Meyer the "greatest Bible teacher alive today."

He has come under fire for writing a Spontaneous Baptisms How-To Guide, emotionally manipulating church attendees by fake baptisms.

Elevation church is also using and promoting the New Age non-Christian enneagram.

Furtick was recently quoted as saying, "I am God almighty." Many say he was taken out of context, and the video addresses that.

(More links specific to Elevation at the bottom)

## The Final Say

### What God's Word Says:

Here are some biblical reasons that the source of worship music matters:

Matthew 17:18 tells us that a bad tree cannot produce good fruit, and the Bethel, Hillsong and Elevation music empires are rotten to the core. Exodus 22:20 and many other verses say that God is not pleased when we invite a false spirit into our worship, and we cannot go to the altar of God and sit at the table of demons at the same time. (1 Corinthians 10:21)

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." (2 Peter 2:1)

"For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect." ([Matthew 24:24](#))

"Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them." ([Acts 20:28-30](#))

"For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths." ([2 Timothy 4:3-4](#))

"But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping." ([2 Peter 2:1-3](#))

## Resources

**NEW:** [Why Music Matters: A \(Former\) Worship Leader's Testimony](#)

[Stop Singing Hillsong, Bethel, Jesus Culture, and Elevation](#) – Scott Aniol, G3 Ministries

[Open Letter to "Worship" Leaders](#) – The Watchman's Bagpipes

[Why Your Church Should Stop Playing Bethel, Hillsong, Elevation, and Jesus Culture](#) –Michelle Lesley

[Why We Shouldn't Sing Hillsong, Elevation, Gateway & Bethel music](#) – Grace River

[This Is NOT Worship](#) – Voddie Baucham

[Why Churches Must Avoid Music from Bethel, Hillsong, and Elevation](#) – Onward in the Faith

[It matters where our worship music comes from. Let's think twice before singing Hillsong and Bethel](#) – Premier Christianity – UK

[Why We Don't Sing Bethel, Hillsong and Elevation Songs](#) – Doctrine Matters Podcast

## **More Articles Specific to Bethel Church**

[Bethel's No Good, Very Bad Vibrations](#) – Lovesick Scribe

[The Dangers of Bethel and the NAR Movement with Holly Pivek](#) -video

["Christian" Tarot Cards 2024 Exposed](#) – Doreen Virtue

[The Deceptive Cult of Bill Johnson and Bethel Church](#) – Video

[The 'Christian' Tarot card controversy at Bethel Redding](#) – Holly Pivek

[Breaking the "theological bricks" and unlearning lies: Student of Bethel School of Super Natural Ministry walks away](#)– Berean Research

[Victims of Bill Johnson's SOZO Ministry speak out](#)– Berean Research

[Bethel's Medical Healing Conference to bring army; activate impartation](#) – Berean Research

[Kris Vallotton "You are gods"](#)Berean Research

[Bethel pastor claims to have received an apology from Jesus in a vision \(clip\)](#)

[Dangers of Bethel \(Kenotic Heresy\) at Christ Is the Cure](#)

[The Bill Johnson and Bethel Cornucopia of False Doctrine](#) – Messed Up Church

[Wonder If Bethel Is A False Church? Wonder No More](#) by Justin Peters

[Errors of Bethel & Jesus Culture](#) by Anthony Wood

[At What Price Awakening? Examining the Theology and Practice of the Bethel Movement](#) by Stephen Tan

[Bethel Church Believes a Different Gospel](#) by Gabriel Hughes

[Bill Johnson's Different Gospel?](#) at WW/UTT

[10 \(BIG!\) Reasons Why You Should RUN AWAY From Bethel Redding](#)

[What Are Bill Johnson's Heresies?](#) by Brandon Hines

[A Critique of Bill Johnson's "The Way of Life"](#)

[Seduced by Bethel](#)

[At What Price Awakening? Examining the Theology and Practice of the Bethel Movement](#) by Stephen Tan

[An Invasion of Error-Book Review of "When Heaven Invades Earth"](#) by Bob DeWaay

[Hey Bill Johnson & Bethel Church, God Put Himself in a Box Called "Bible"](#) by Defining Deception (with links to more articles)

[Book Review: When Heaven Invades Earth, by Bill Johnson](#) reviewed by David Schrock

[The Bethel Church Upgrade](#) by Herescope

[The Fruits of Bethel Church-Ashamed of the Gospel, Flirting with the Occult](#)

[Off The Map: Bill Johnson and the Pursuit of Extrabiblical Revelation](#) by The Christian Research Institute

## **More Articles Specific to Hillsong**

[Inside Hillsong Church's Hit-Making Music Machine](#) – Rolling Stone

[Houston, We Have a Problem: Hillsong United, Lyrics, and Evolution](#) -Answers in Genesis

[Hillsong/Brian & Bobbie Houston](#) – Michelle Lesley

[Hillsong's Theology of Music and Worship](#)

[Should we Listen to Hillsong Music? by Justin Peters](#)

[The Brian Houston & Hillsong Cornucopia of False Doctrine, Abuse, Obfuscation & Money Generation at Messed Up Church](#)

[Hillsong and its homosexual leader issue](#)

[Hillsong articles](#) at Grace to You (enter "Hillsong" in the search bar)

[Hillsong posts/episodes](#) at Fighting for the Faith

[Brian Houston posts/episodes](#) at Fighting for the Faith

[Hillsong Updates](#) – Churchwatch Central, Australia

[Hillsong articles](#) at Berean Research

[The Hillsong Day of Infamy](#)

[Always on: new Hillsong Heresy Channel](#)

[Hillsong: Heresy Goes Hollywood](#)

[Heaven, Hillsong, and Heresy](#)

[Hillsong: Houston IS The Problem](#)

## **More articles Specific to Elevation Church**

[Furtick, Elevation Church Activate NAR Apostles](#) – Berean Research

[The Steven Furtick Cornucopia of False Doctrine](#) – Messed Up Church

[The False Teaching of Steven Furtick](#) – GodWords

[Who is Steven Furtick, and are his teachings biblical?](#) – Got Questions

Steven Furtick/Elevation/Elevation Music – Michelle Lesley

Video compilation of several false teachings being taught by Furtick

Steven Furtick/Elevation: false teacher? 9 concerns – Voddie Baucham

A Biblical critique of Steven Furtick's Preaching Fighting for the Faith

Steven Furtick "Following Jesus DOES NOT CHANGE YOU" The Gospel of Christ

What did Steven Furtick say about faith? -WWUTT

Did Steven Furtick call himself "God Almighty?"-WWUTT

Teacher to Avoid – Steven Furtick, Elevation church, and Elevation Music – The Wandering Pilgrims

Steven Furtick: A Biblical Evaluation – Growing 4 Life