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# CHURCH HISTORY MONTHLY

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Timeline of Topics.

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## WHY DO CHRISTIANS DO THAT?

### Development of Contemporary Christian Music (CCM)

This music genre is the music of choice of millions of Christians today. CCM outsells classical, Jazz, Latin, and soundtrack music and includes hundreds of radio stations and internet stations. One of the most popular CCM programs, K-Love, claims to have almost 1,500,000 weekly listeners. This information will not be news to many people. But what is the origin of CCM? It is actually a recent development (in the 2000-year history of Christianity). From colonial times to the 1950s, most people in churches used hymnals as their singing guide. Then something happened to change that.

The “something” which happened occurred at that time in America when a lot of things changed, the late 1950s, the 1960s, and the early 1970s. Specifically to our topic, the invention, development, and growth in popularity of Rock and Roll music of the late 1950s and 1960s and the hippie and Jesus freak movements of the 1960s and early 1970s.

Rock and Roll music developed a huge following with the introduction of new music acts: Elvis and the Beatles are two prime examples. Many young people adopted this new form of music. But the music of choice in churches remained hymns. Young people listened to Rock and Roll outside the church and to hymns inside the church. That changed with the Jesus freaks.

Broadly defined, Jesus freaks were those hippies from the 1960s and early 1970s who became Christian. The hippies of that time lived a counterculture lifestyle. For the purpose of this article, understand that as “do my own thing” or rebel against authority (“do not trust anyone over 30”). So you had a bunch of Christians (Jesus freaks) who rebelled against authority--civil and religious--and wanted to live life on their own terms, free of the tradition and the culture they were raised in. These Christian hippies began to challenge and change all sorts of mainstream ideas within Christianity, including the music played in churches.

Dressing up in suit and tie or nice dress to go to work or church did not appeal to the Christian hippies, and so they did not follow that tradition. Similarly, when they worshipped, they chose the music which appealed to them, which was, well, nothing. See, contemporary Christian music had not been developed yet. So a new genre of music formed out of these Christian hippies wanting to sing their own style of songs. And what type of music was most popular in the 1960s and early 1970s and used as a pattern for the new Christian music? Actually two types were popular then: Rock and Roll and also Folk Music. This new genre would become known as CCM.

Ralph Carmichael is known as the Father of Contemporary Christian Music; he founded Light Records, a music publishing company, in 1966 to promote a new style of music. At first the music was in a folk music style, such as the musical “Tell It Like It Is” and which featured the song “Pass It On.” Eventually he signed artists who would become Contemporary Christian Music stars. One of the first albums of this new genre was Upon This Rock by Larry Norman; it came out in 1969 [not on the Light Records label]. Other pioneers of CCM music included Andrea Crouch and the Disciples (begun 1968), Love Song (1970), Petra (1972), and 2nd Chapter of Acts (1973).



*Egyptian desert father, c. 350:  
Abba (Father) Poemen used to  
say, "Teach your heart to keep  
that which your tongue teaches."*

## ***Yes, the Apostle Thomas went to India***

The Bible is silent on what happened to most of the original Apostles of Jesus later in their lives; the New Testament only gives details about Peter, Paul, James, and Judas. But some evidence suggests that the Apostle Thomas traveled to, evangelized, started churches in, and died in India.

First, let's examine the early history of Christianity in India. We know that Christianity existed in India before the Middle Ages. In the 300s, Theophilus the Indian recorded the presence of Christians in India. Cosmas the Indian Voyager wrote a book in the mid-500s called "Christian Topography" and stated, "In the country called Male, where the pepper grows, there is also a church, and at another place called Calliana, there is moreover a bishop, who is appointed from Persia." Both "Male" and "Calliana" are on the western coast of India. Now we turn to some references to Thomas' life and death. Gregory of Tours (540-594) was a bishop in Gaul, or present-day France. He reported that a traveler named Theodore claimed that the bones of Thomas had been in a monastery and church in India and then moved to Edessa (in Greece or Turkey). A Syrian calendar of unknown early date reads thus on July 3: "St. Thomas was pierced with a lance in India [and died]." Ephraem (306-373), a bible scholar who lived in Edessa wrote this: "It was his mission to expose India to the One-Begotten." And none other than Marco Polo himself visited the tomb of Thomas in India, stating that "Christians . . . greatly frequented it in pilgrimage."

Therefore, we know that Christianity was not only present in India early on but was probably introduced by Thomas. Today the descendants of this early Indian Christianity have the tradition that Thomas came to India in AD 52 and established seven Christian communities: the beginnings of Christianity in India.

## **What is the origin of the idea of "separation of church and state"?**

First of all, why a separation of Church and State? No doubt the Founding Fathers did not want to reproduce the European situation where different nations had different national religions, which led to wars. Plus, think of this, if the Founding Fathers did choose a national faith, which one would it be? So they chose none.

This did not come out forcefully enough in the Constitution in 1789, so two years later the First Amendment made it clearer: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." (Ratified Dec 15, 1791)

However, Baptists in the Danbury Baptist Association in Connecticut felt they continued to experience religious harassment. They wrote a letter in October of 1801 to inform the then-President Thomas Jefferson.

The President responded in 1802, and I quote a part of his letter:

"Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between church and state.

But what does this "wall of separation between church and state" mean and look like? He did not fully explain and so the debate goes on.

Questions, comments, or suggestions  
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Upcoming free online class:  
-8-week "New Testament Overview"  
starts on February 22.