

CPYU 3(D) REVIEW

Song/Video: "Here With Me" - The Killers

By Walt Mueller

Background/summary: This song is the third single release off The Killers fourth studio album, *Battle Born*. The video, which was released in December 2012, was directed by Tim Burton and features Winona Ryder in the role of a mannequin who occasionally comes to life. In typical Burton form, the video is dark, artsy and surreal. Burton's two-fold inspiration came after seeing a wax figure of Ryder in Madame Tussaud's Waxworks in the British seaside resort town of Blackpool (which serves as the video's locale) and the 1935 horror film *Mad Love*. The song's popularity was boosted by the band's live performance on the December 18th finale of *The Voice*, with lead singer Brandon Flowers singing the tune with eventual winner of the singing contest, Cassadee Pope.

Discover: What is the message/worldview?

- The oft-used pop music theme of lamenting romantic love lost is the subject of "Here With Me." The lyrically straightforward song begins as Flowers thinks back on what was, singing "Wheels are turning/I remember when you were mine/Now, just to reach you/Baby, I'd stand in line."
- With his former love interest existing as just a memory, the singer tells his ex that "there's another world we're living in tonight," a reality that's left him slowly dying emotionally and relationally: "And there's another heart that's fading in the light." He expresses his desire to have her back and in his life as more than just a memory: "Don't want your picture/On my cell phone/I want you here with me/Don't want your memory/In my head now/I want you here with me."
- The singer lists many of his fond memories of their now-broken relationship including time spent together at the beach, her long hair, her tan skin and her smiles. He confesses that when you are young and in love time moves slowly. But that time is gone and now he desperately wants her back: "Now I hold on to hope to have you back again/I'd bargain and I'd fight."
- His yearnings meet his timidity and fears when he encounters his lost love: "Well I saw you in a restaurant the other day/And instead of walking towards you I ran away." Still, he's holding out hope that what once was might someday be again: "And I'll keep waiting for you/Till you'll come around" to be "here with me."
- The song's video treatment follows the lyrics by depicting a dark and sad character's pursuit of the female played by Winona Ryder. In her absence from his life he settles for spending time with a life-sized look-alike mannequin (think *Lars And The Real Girl*).



Discern: How does it stand in light of the biblical message/worldview?

- We have been created to be in relationship with other human beings. The Genesis account tells us that when God made Adam, he said that it was not good for man to be alone. So, God created a woman. God made us to be relational beings who desire completeness and intimate fellowship with members of the opposite sex. Romance is divinely embedded in the fabric of our beings.

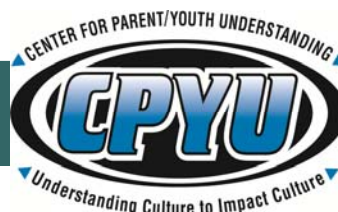
- Because God's "shalom" (the universal flourishing that existed in the Garden as all things were perfect and as they were supposed to be) has been broken and destroyed by sin (Genesis 3), brokenness and destruction now infiltrate every nook and cranny of life. . . including our relationships. Because this sense of brokenness is universal, Brandon Flower's lyrical laments and the song's video treatment resonate with broken listeners, especially those who are reeling from dashed romance and love recently lost.
- The singer's expression of desire for a real flesh-and-blood relationship ("Don't want your picture/ On my cell phone/I want you here with me/Don't want your memory/In my Head now/I want you here with me) reflects the way that God has made us for human/romantic relationships. Jesus repeated that fact when asked by the Pharisees about divorce: "At the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and will be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one." Of course, the breakdown of a marriage relationship is what Jesus is speaking against here. But so strong is the human desire for the intimacy of a marital relationship that even the simplest experiences of brokenness among young adolescent romantics can be deeply painful.
- Those who resonate with the message and tone of "Here With Me" might be locked into sharing the same erroneous assumption that have driven pop music fans (young and old alike) for decades. . . that romantic human love is ultimately redemptive. The fact of the matter is that while romantic human love is desirable and deeply rewarding, only God can fill the God-shaped vacuum.



Decide: What do I do with it?

- "Here With Me" affords us opportunities to both understand and challenge cultural conventions and realities regarding our attitudes and beliefs about relationships and love. Youth workers, parents, pastors, and educators can all employ the song as a starting point for discussions with kids about the true nature of love. Endeavor to lead kids into a balanced and realistic biblical understanding of human love, human love's limits, and how to best express human love. Sadly, the expectations of our kids regarding love have been shaped by media's sentimentality, half-truths, and lies.
- Because of the song's mainstream popularity, this is one that can and should be shown to all of our middle school and high school students. Chances are, most of them have already heard it and they are mindlessly singing along. We should take the time to discuss the song and its messages from a biblical perspective, affirming those things that can be affirmed, and challenging those messages that are misguided. The song is perfect for use in training media discernment skills.
- The song can be used as diagnostic tool to discover and spark discussion on the personal relational issues on kids' hearts. Simply ask them to give it a listen/look. . . then ask, "What does that mean to you?"

Dr. Walt Mueller is the president of the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding.



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