

Our God Is A Great Big God: Nigel & Jo Hemming (2001)¹

Visualisation: Anthrodirectional about God

Analysis: With Nick Page,² I think current imagery should be encouraged in new songs. In my youth I enjoyed Fred Lehman's *Royal Telephone*, partly because the telephone metaphor communicated so well—and that song came out in 1919! The Hemmings' song even has a submarine & skyscraper. However, I cringe from line one. I haven't, or hope I haven't, a great big, indeed any sized, god. If I have, to that extent I haven't God, merely an idol. God is neither big nor great, but bigness acts in big ways, and greatness acts in great ways. It's a question of ontos (essence/being). The song says he is measurable;³ I say he is immeasurable, that what is measurable is not transcendent. Allowing anthropomorphism, metaphorically speaking it's wonderfully true that *he holds us in his hands*, but he has neither height, depth, nor wideness. He is transcendent, beyond the universe that exists within the divine mind. So I downgrade for polytheism.

Skyscraper, submarine, and space. That is creative shifting, and I like it: begin seemingly big but actually small, then zoom out to the whole show: micro to mega. He is *beyond my wildest dreams*, a snippet from Eph.3:21 (MSG), though I prefer to keep the our-ness for this line: *every skyscraper, every submarine, all of time & space, all our dreams*. Then individualise. That God loves us, indeed individually, *before the world began*, hints at the intrinsically eternal, and it is wonderful *to be a part of his amazing plan*. Aside from the cringe factor, this song's got some brilliant stuff, has a catchy tune, and can convey God's transcendence & his immanence. It also has a mix of *us*, and *me*: God loves us; God love me.

Suggestions: Replace *our god is a great big god*, **by** *God's love is eternal love, he's higher than a skyscraper*, **by** *it's above our every/biggest/tallest skyscraper, he's deeper than a submarine*,⁵ **by** *and below our submarines, he's wider than the universe*, **by** *it surrounds our great big universe, and beyond my wildest dreams*, **by** *it's beyond our wildest dreams*.

BAG	A	B	C	D	E	F	G ^{1,2}	H ^{1,2}	I	J ^{1,2,3}	K	L	M	Total	Grade
	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	92	A-

¹ www.vineyardrecords.co.uk/web/songs/great-big-god

² *And Now let's move To A Time Of Nonsense*, 2004:99.

³ Implied by comparisons on the scale of bigness: big, bigger, biggest. Beyond compare is bigness, and the sense of size coheres in God.

⁴ Simply to put God's love as *higher/deeper than*, would describe the love as a contrast, sizeable. Yet may we not say that as regards position, the everlasting arms are above & below creation, being omnipresence?

⁵ This replaces the original 8 beat version, but not the common 9 beat variation of AND he's deeper than a submarine.

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A = Mixed Themes (-4); B = Incompleteness (-4); C = Archaism (-8);

D = Blessing God (-4); E = Buddy or Boyfriend (-4); F = Polytheism (-8); G = Voxdeism: Soft (-24), Hard (-48);

H = Unitarianism: Soft (-60), Hard (-72); I = Misdirection (-12); J = Misvisualisation: Soft (-12), Mid (-24),

Hard (-36); K = Boasting (-8); L = Decontextualising (-8); M = Hermit Harakiri (-12)