

Gospel Artist Quits for Secular Music, Says Church Is Judgmental

Grammy-nominated gospel artist Shei Atkins announced Wednesday that she is leaving gospel music and instead embracing more secular R&B music. Her reason: The church is too “judgmental.”

With three gospel albums under her belt, her first releasing in 2004, Atkins says gospel music fans struggled to accept the “realness” of some of her song lyrics.

“I had fans who loved me on one side and people condemning me on the other side calling me worldly, pulling me to the side at some of my shows about my hair color, sending in mean letters, etc.,” she told the hip-hop, gospel music website .

Atkins received much radio airtime for songs like “He Can Fix It” and “Lord I Love You” but many radio stations wouldn’t play songs such as “Temptation,” which was an account of a woman struggling not to give into sexual sin. Atkins says she is called not only to help people become Christians, but to help them walk out their faith practically.

Now married for 14 years, Atkins says she and her husband almost divorced during their first year, and she feels a responsibility to sing songs that show how God can bring hope and healing to relationships with both God and with man.

“It’s evident that families are under major attack,” she says. “I make songs to help instill love, honesty, faithfulness and communication back into relationships.”

Now, three years since her last album debuted, Atkins is releasing a secular album—her fourth—titled *Emotional*. Her new album allows her to freely minister the way she feels God is

leading her, without limitations, she says.

“Although I love God’s people, I can’t waste years trying to break this mentality and use that as an excuse for not doing what God told me to do,” Atkins says.

“Every part of the body of Christ is unique and beneficial and if we all work together, we would be so much more powerful. God is more concerned about how you live than what genre you’re categorized in.”

Though Atkins has decided to move out of the gospel genre, popular hip-hop artist and one-time Haitian presidential candidate Wyclef Jean recently announced that he would be moving into the gospel industry with his newest album. This summer he released a Creole-language gospel single. Sources say that Jean had always wanted to return to his roots of Christian music. Finally, with this new album, he was afforded the opportunity.

Listen to one of Shei Atkin’s more controversial gospel songs below. Do you find it offensive?