# CHURCH MUSIC

## Past, Present, and Principles

*G. Michael Cocoris*

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# PREFACE

During my lifetime, the Sunday morning church service has changed—radically! In 1958, when I became a Christian, the Sunday morning service in virtually all Protestant churches had a standard format, which consisted of a call to worship, an invocation, a song leader leading the congregation in singing hymns from a hymnal accompanied by an organ and a piano, Scripture reading, a pastoral prayer, a choir, special music (a solo, duet, trio, or quartet), a sermon, an invitation, and a benediction.

How things have changed! Gone are the call to worship, the invocation, the song leader, the hymnal, the organ, the piano, and the choir. A worship leader has replaced the song leader. A worship team has replaced the choir. A guitar, keyboard, bass, and drums have replaced the organ and piano. Songs projected on a screen have replaced the printed hymnal.

I witnessed the change, the conflict, and the challenge as an evangelist and later as a pastor. The change began with the introduction of "praise songs." As the pressure mounted to have a more contemporary service, churches began to compromise by having a "blended service." Eventually, many capitulated to a thoroughly contemporary service. Some have tried to maintain a blended service and a few have hung on to the traditional Sunday morning service.

What happened? What caused the change? Looking back now, I realize that I did not understand what was going on as I transitioned from a traditional church service to a contemporary church service. It was not until I was writing a course on church history, which included a section on the history of church music, that I had some fascinating conversations about the change in church music with Ken Paris, a friend of mine, and read a book by Dan Radmacher that I understood exactly what happened.

Better understanding the change that I had seen provoked questions. What has church music been like throughout history? What brought about the changes I have seen in my lifetime? What is worship? What does the Bible say about music? What does the Scripture say about singing in the assembly of the saints? What should the Sunday meeting look like within the framework of what the Scripture teaches about worship and music?

What follows is designed to answer those questions. The first chapter is a brief summary of the history of church music. The second chapter will define, describe, and discuss the two types of Protestant church services today: traditional and contemporary. As will become obvious, I have leaned heavily on Dan Radmacher's book to explain these two very different types of church services. The following two chapters are the result of my personal study of "worship" and "music" in the Scripture.

May the Lord use this material to help you think through what should happen on Sunday morning.

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# A BRIEF HISTORY OF CHURCH MUSIC

Except for a few additions, the material in this chapter is taken from the course on Church History by G. Michael Cocoris.

## In the Old Testament

*David* The Old Testament has several references to vocal and instrumental music, including the Song of Moses (Ex. 15:1-18), the Song of Miriam (Ex. 15:20-21), and the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1-10). David's harp-playing caused an "evil spirit" to depart from Saul (1 Sam. 16:23). David is generally credited with introducing music to ancient Israel and assigning the responsibility for it to the Levites (1 Chron. 23:3).

*Scripture* There are numerous musical references in the superscriptions of the Psalms and even in the Psalms themselves (Ps. 33:2-3; 150). Moreover, since all the poetic books (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon) and much of the prophetic material are written in poetry, it has been suggested that perhaps these passages of Scripture were delivered with a chant. After all, the Psalms are poetry set to music.

*Instruments* "Israel used all the instruments known to Middle Eastern cultures of that period—lyres, pipes, harps, trumpets, and cymbals (Hustad. "The Psalms as Worship Expression: Personal and Congregational." *Review and Expositor*, vol. 81, 1984, p. 407).

*Synagogue* When the Temple was destroyed, Israelites in exile formed synagogues. "It is uncertain when music entered synagogue worship, and it may have always been present since both scripture and prayer were traditionally chanted. It is presumed that this cantillation was performed by Levitical singers who brought their art and performance practice directly from the temple; it is also generally agreed that the only alteration was the omission of instrumental accompaniment since that type of musical expression was associated only with the offering of sacrifices" (Hustad, p. 410).

*Second Temple* In the Second Temple, built after the return from exile, a Levitical chant at the beginning of the morning sacrifice was accompanied by three trumpet blasts and the sound of the symbols. At the end of each portion, the trumpets joined the singing to indicate that the congregation was to prostrate themselves (see Jer. 33:10b, 11a). It seems this liturgical singing was performed almost entirely by priests. The people in the congregation were "basically spectators, who may have been emotionally involved, but whose vocal activity was limited to such responses as 'Hallelujah,' 'Amen,' and 'for his steadfast love endures forever' (Ps. 136)" (Hustad, pp. 408-409).

"It is hard to determine the nature of the Hebrew scale or the sounds emitted by their instruments…. The Hebrews never invented a system of notation, so we have none of their melodies…. We can know nothing of their harmony. Perhaps their singing, as well as the accompaniment, was performed in unison" (Howard F. Vos, "The Music of Israel, Part 2," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 107, number 425, 1950, p. 68).

In short, David introduced music to Israel and all kinds of instruments were used, but *the people were spectators*. Nothing is known about the melodies.

## In the New Testament

*References* The New Testament contains only a few references to music (Mt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26; Acts 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Jas. 5:13). In Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3, Paul mentions psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Perhaps he does not intend to make a great distinction between these words, but he only emphasizes the wide variety of music. There is, however, at least a slight difference. The Greek word translated "psalms" means "a sacred song sung to a musical accompaniment." Trench says it refers to the Psalter of the Old Testament. Hymns are songs of praise addressed to God (Robinson; Hodge). Spiritual songs are songs that are spiritual, that is, either composed by spiritual men or having spiritual things as their subject, but either way, it is talking about a spiritual song because, in this context, a spiritual man would compose a spiritual song.

*Congregational* "In comparing the first Christian music with that of the tabernacle, the temple, and the synagogue, the one essential difference is the completely congregational nature of the performance. From all the references given above, it is clear that musical worship was no longer sacerdotal, the work of priests or cantors. It was an opportunity for vocal offering by every believer!" (Hustad, p. 411).

In short, in the New Testament, the *congregation* sang different types of music.

## In the Early Church to the Reformation

*The Early Church* There is very little information available about the music used by Christians in the early centuries. In 112, when Pliny the Younger (a secular ruler) described what happened when Christians met, he said they sang hymns to Christ as a God (Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, 3. 33. 1-4). Westin quotes Pliny as saying Christians recited "an antiphonal (responsive) hymn to Christ as God" (Westin, p. 6). About 150, Justin Martyr described the Sunday meeting of Christians but did not say anything about music (Justin, *1 Apol*. 66). At the beginning of the third century, Tertullian wrote, "The Scriptures are read, the Psalms are sung, sermons are delivered, and petitions are offered" (Hustad, p. 411).

From about the fifth century, most singing in the monasteries and in the church meetings was delegated to priests; laypeople rarely participated. Following the tradition of the practice in the Jewish Temple, the psalms were normally delivered responsively, either between a cantor and the choir or between two choral groups. The choir responded with the refrain, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen" (Hustad, p. 412).

Although there is an indication in the New Testament that the first-century church might have used instrumental music (remember the word "psalms" in Eph. 5:19 means to sing to the accompaniment of a musical instrument), evidently, the early church did not use musical instruments. "Both the Jews in their temple service and the Greeks in their idol worship were accustomed to singing with the accompaniment of instrumental music. The converts to Christianity accordingly must have been familiar with this mode of singing … (see 'psalms' in Eph. 5:19)…. But it is generally admitted that the primitive Christians employed no instrumental music in their religious worship. Neither Ambrose, nor Basil, nor Chrysostom, in the noble encomiums which they severally pronounce upon

music, make any mention of instrumental music. Basil (330-379) condemns it as ministering only to the depraved passions of men" (Coleman, pp. 370-371).

*Gregory* The chant emerged out of the monasteries. Gregory the Great (590–604) incorporated the chant into the liturgy, which became known as the Gregorian chant through his work to create a standardized liturgy. It is known for its monophonic sound. Believing that complexity tended to create a cacophony, which ruined the music, Gregory kept things simple with the chant.

"Musical accompaniments were gradually introduced, but they can hardly be assigned to a period earlier than the fifth and sixth centuries. Organs were unknown in the church until the eighth or ninth century. Previous to this, they had their place in the theatre rather than in the church. They were never regarded with favor in the Eastern Church and were vehemently opposed in many places in the West" (Coleman, pp. 376-377).

Musical notation began in the eleventh century and allowed vast new possibilities for arrangements with an emerging multiplicity of sounds called "polyphony." Ken Paris pointed out that people had to be taught a song in person before there was a consistent notation of music. When music notation was standardized, people in different locations could play the same music.

To sum up, little is known about church music from the early centuries. What is known is that about the fifth century, the priest (not the layman) in the monasteries sang the psalms responsively, that instruments were not used before the fifth or sixth centuries, that about 600, Gregory made the chant from the monasteries a part of the liturgy, and that organs were unknown in the church until the eighth or ninth century.

## The Reformers

*Martin Luther* Luther rejected the Gregorian chant. In *Table Talks*, he said he would rather listen to the donkey braying or the barking of dogs than to listen to such music (Paul Nettl, cited by Barber).

Luther loved music. He was accomplished at the lute and flute and had a powerful tenor voice. He was so committed to music in the church that men had to demonstrate competency in music before they could be accepted for ministerial training. In the Foreword to Georg Rhau's *Symphoniae*, a collection of chorale motets published in 1538, Luther wrote, "Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world. It controls our thoughts, minds, hearts, and spirits.... Our dear fathers and prophets did not desire without reason that music be always used in the churches. Hence, we have so many songs and psalms. This precious gift has been given to man alone that he might thereby remind himself that God has created man for the express purpose of praising and extolling God. … A person who gives this some thought and yet does not regard music as a marvelous creation of God must be a clodhopper indeed and does not deserve to be called a human being; he should be permitted to hear nothing but the braying of asses and the grunting of hogs." He also said, "Music is God's greatest gift. It has often so stimulated and stirred me that I felt the desire to preach" (Luther, cited by Barber).

Luther followed the main features of the Catholic liturgy with a few modifications. He replaced the chant with congregational hymns. In 1523, he composed hymns, thirty-six of which have survived. He also used the psalms and poems as the basis for many

other hymns. In 1524, he published his first congregational hymnbook. He insisted that hymns be sung in every service because he believed the vigorous singing of simple hymns "could open the hearts and minds of God's people to embrace the Word of God." He also included the use of instruments (Barber; see below Luther's impact on Bach, who used instruments; yet others say Luther did not have instrumental music in the church. He "called the organ an ensign of Baal" (Strong's Encyclopedia, vol. 6, p. 762).

In the preface of his first hymnbook, published in collaboration with his composer friend Johann Walther, Luther commends the singing of hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs heartily "so that God's Word and Christian teaching might be instilled and implanted in many ways." He added that the songs in this collection were arranged "to give the young who should, at any rate, be trained in music and other fine arts something to wean them away from love ballads and carnal songs and to teach them something of value in their place" (Luther, Wittenberg Hymnal of 1524, cited by Barber). This hymnal contained 32 hymns, 24 by Luther.

Scholars debate if Luther used a bar tune when he wrote "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," paraphrasing Psalm 46. His hymns did use secular folk melodies or new tunes (Hustard, p. 414). Barber remarks, "I have found that people's adverse reaction to the marriage of secular tunes with spiritual words comes from their personal dislike for such a practice rather than from historical research. The idea that people have confused Luther's use of bar tunes with the fact that he wrote hymns using the metrical bar AAB or bar-form structure forgets that a particularly important class of chorales were the contrafacta or 'parodies' of secular songs, in which the given melody was retained, but the text was either replaced by completely new words or else were altered so as to give it a properly spiritual meaning. The adaptation of secular songs and secular polyphonic compositions for church purposes was common in the sixteenth century." By the way, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" Luther had a great impact on Johann Sebastian Bach, one of the greatest musicians and composers who ever lived. Bach an orthodox Lutheran and a devout believer. "After his death, Bach's music was neglected. A century later, another devout believer, Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847), re-introduced Bach's music to the world with a performance of Bach's St. Matthew Passion in Berlin in 1829. Today, Bach's influence upon music is overwhelming. In his Well-Tempered Clavier, he established the major-minor system, which supplies the tonal basis for all Western music. Also, Bach is considered the father of music theory and practice method" (Barber).

Did Luther use musical instruments? He is often quoted as saying, "Organ in worship is the insignia of Baal.… The Roman Catholics borrowed it from the Jews," and the source that is often cited is ("Martin Luther," in *McClintock & Strong's Encyclopedia*, vol.VI, p. 762), but Lutheran scholars routinely credit Luther with allowing instrumental music. Luther said, "Nor am I at all of the opinion that all the arts are to be overthrown and cast aside by the Gospel, as some super-spiritual people protest, but I would gladly see all the arts, especially music, in the service of Him who has given and created them." One author declares, "Luther certainly approved of using instruments to enhance the music of the church's liturgy, including the organ" (Charles P. St-Onge, "Music, Worship and Martin Luther," 2003; see also Kurt J. Eggert, "Martin Luther, God's Music Man," 1983).

In a Blog, Jay Guin, a lawyer and a member of a Church of Christ (Churches of Christ usually do not believe in instrumental music), concludes, "I'm confused. The

popular quotation, attributed to Luther, treating the organ as an 'ensign of Baal' can't be easily reconciled with his views as interpreted by contemporary thinkers, many from within the Lutheran tradition. It's not possible to attribute the normative principle of worship to Luther while holding him up as an opponent of instrumental music. In fact, I can't find any references to Luther's calling the organ an 'ensign of Baal' other than in articles condemning instrumental music—mostly from within the Churches of Christ. But I have confirmed that the statement is found in the *McClintock & Strong's Encyclopedia—a cappella* Tradition" (http://oneinjesus.info/2011/02/instrumental-music-martin-luther-and-instrumental-music/).

At any rate, the Lutheran Church has a great choir and congregational singing tradition. Organ music has flourished (Eerdmans', p. 428).

*John Calvin* Like Zwingli, Calvin's predisposition was not to have music in church—at all! However, during his stay in Strasbourg (beginning in 1538), he was impressed with the German metrical psalms and, as a result, he made some metrical psalm versions of his own. Later, he commissioned the French court poet Clement Marot to set all 150 psalms to meter. Marot did that without adding and deleting anything from the biblical content of each psalm. Calvin felt "only God's Word was worthy to be sung in God's praise." Like Luther's hymns, the Calvinistic psalms used secular folk melodies or new tunes (Hustard, p. 414). Barber puts it like this: "Luther wanted the hymns of the Church to reflect the exact words of scripture as closely as possible. Calvin went a step further. He felt that the singing of the express words of only the psalms, though he did permit the singing of other select scripture texts, ensured that Divine revelation was being put to music. The only notable musical contribution of the early Calvinist churches was, therefore, the Psalters, metrical translations of the Book of Psalms" (Barber).

Calvin did not allow the use of musical instruments. Commenting on Psalm 33:2, he wrote, "It is evident that the psalmist here expresses the vehement and ardent affection which the faithful ought to have in praising God when he enjoins musical instruments to be employed for this purpose. He would have nothing omitted by believers, which tends to animate the minds and feelings of men in singing God's praises. The name of God, no doubt, can, properly speaking, be celebrated only by the articulate voice, but it is not without reason that David adds to this those aids by which believers were wont to stimulate themselves the more to this exercise, especially considering that he was speaking to God's ancient people.

"There is a distinction, however, to be observed here that we may not indiscriminately consider as applicable to ourselves everything which was formerly enjoined upon the Jews. I have no doubt that playing upon cymbals, touching the harp and the viol, and all that kind of music, which is so frequently mentioned in the Psalms, was a part of the education; that is to say, the puerile instruction of the law: I speak of the stated service of the temple. For even now, if believers choose to cheer themselves with musical instruments, they should, I think, make it their object not to dissever their cheerfulness from the praises of God. *But when they frequent their sacred assemblies, musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law.* The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews.

"Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise, but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostle is far more pleasing to him. Paul allows us to bless God in the public assembly of the saints only in a known tongue (1 Cor. 14:16). The voice of man, although not understood by the generality, assuredly excels all inanimate instruments of music, and yet we see what St Paul determines concerning speaking in an unknown tongue. What shall we then say of chanting, which fills the ears with nothing but an empty sound? Does anyone object that music is very useful for awakening the minds of men and moving their hearts? I own it; but *we should always take care that no corruption creeps in, which might both defile the pure worship of God and involve men in superstition*. Moreover, since the Holy Spirit expressly warns us of this danger by the mouth of Paul, to proceed beyond what we are there warranted by him is not only, I must say, unadvised zeal, but wicked and perverse obstinacy" (Calvin, italics added).

In other words, Calvin considered using musical instruments in the Old Testament a "shadow of the Law" that Christ fulfilled and is, therefore, of no use in New Testament church service. Yet, in his commentary on Colossians 3:16, he said, "Under these three terms (psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs), he (Paul) includes all kinds of songs. They are commonly distinguished in this way—that a *psalm* is that, in the singing of which some musical instrument besides the tongue is made use of: a *hymn* is properly a song of praise, whether it be sung simply with the voice or otherwise; while an *ode* contains not merely praises, but exhortations and other matters. He would have the songs of Christians, however, to be *spiritual*, not made up of frivolities and worthless trifles." Amazing! He rejects the use of musical instruments but acknowledges that the Greek word translated "psalms" means singing with the accompaniment of a musical instrument! Is that not a New Testament warrant for using musical instruments?

Unlike Luther, Calvin "did not require would-be-pastors to pass a musical test before they could be accepted for ministerial training. That Luther did, and because his young men went on to start and pastor churches all over Germany and then throughout much of Europe, partly explains the early and rapid proliferation of the Lutheran style of music when no such comparable development took place among the Calvinist churches" (Barber).

Hence, Calvinist churches sang the psalms unaccompanied and in unison, except in Holland, where the organ continued to be used (Eerdmans', pp. 427-428). On May 20, 1644, the commissioners from Scotland to the Westminster Assembly wrote to the General Assembly: "We cannot but admire the good hand of God in the great things done here already…. The great organs at Paul's and Peter's in Westminster (have been) taken down, images and many other monuments of idolatry defaced and abolished, the Chapel Royal at Whitehall purged and reformed, and all by authority, in a quiet manner, at noon-day, without tumult."

Barber concludes that the attitude of the reformers was that "they objected to the distractions of elaborate vocal and instrumental music, the dangers of overly theatrical performances, the unwarranted expense of elaborate ceremonies and enormous pipe organs, and the uselessness of text unintelligible to the common man."

To summarize, Luther replaced the chant with congregational hymns, used secular folk melodies, and probably used musical instruments. Calvin felt that only God's Word

was worthy of being sung, used secular folk melodies, and had the people sing in unison, but rejected all instruments in church.

## The Years after the Reformation

*The Puritans* As a result of English Protestants fleeing to Geneva because of the persecution under "Bloody Mary" (1554–1559), the exiled Puritans developed the Anglo-Genevan Psalter (1561). Thus, English-speaking congregations sang metrical psalms (not hymns) until the eighteenth century and in some instances, psalters reigned supreme until the middle of the nineteenth century. The first book printed in the colonies was the Bay Psalm Book (1640) (Hustad, p. 414).

*The Baptist* "The Baptists were the first to introduce the singing of hymns" (Houghton, p. 265). Benjamin Keach (1640-1704) pastored a church at Horslydown, probably the first church in England to sing hymns instead of psalms and paraphrases. Keach's hymnbook, published in 1691, provoked heated debate in 1692 at the Assembly of Particular Baptists. By the way, his congregation later became the New Park Street Church, which, during the ministry of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, became the Metropolitan Tabernacle. By the way, Spurgeon did not have musical instruments in the church (Kurfees, p. 196). Also, in the seventeenth century, the Baptists pioneered the use of freely written hymns rather than hymns written by poets (Eerdmans', p. 426).

Some denominations, such as some of the Exclusive Brethren, the Churches of Christ, the Primitive Baptists, and the Free Church of Scotland, prefer unaccompanied or *a cappella* singing. From the Protestant Reformation until the 18th century, the Reformed churches sang Psalms (Houghton, p. 185).

In short, the Puritans sang metrical psalms (and no hymns) until the eighteenth or even until the middle of the nineteenth century, but the Baptists were the first to introduce the singing of hymns rather than psalms and paraphrases.

## Isaac Watts

*His Life* Isaac Watts (1674-1748) is the founder of modern English hymnology (Kuiper, p. 288). He was a brilliant scholar and a gifted poet. He learned Latin by age 4, Greek at 9, French at 11, and Hebrew at 13. During his lifetime, especially later in life, he "wrote nearly 30 theological treatises; essays on psychology, astronomy, and philosophy; three volumes of sermons; the first children's hymnal; and a textbook on logic that served as a standard work on the subject for generations" (Mark Galli, "Isaac Watts, Father of English hymnody," http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/131christians/poets/watts.html). He was an English Congregational pastor (Houghton, p. 186).

*His Contribution* By Watts' time, German Lutherans had been singing hymns for 100 years, but the English Protestants followed Calvin in only singing the Psalms and they did not want to change even slightly. For example, in 1723, in New England, a book was printed that gave both notes and words *of the Psalms* that were to be sung in church. People complained, "If we begin to sing by rule, the next thing will be to pray" (Dodds, p. 133).

Watts complained to his father about his church's wretched state of psalm-singing. To which his father replied, "Give us something better, young man!" (Hustard, p. 416). He did. He radically changed English church music. He felt the Psalms "ought to be translated in such a manner as we have reason to believe David would have composed them if he had lived in our day" (Watts, cited by Galli). For example, from Psalm 72, he wrote: "Jesus Shall Reign where'er the Sun" (Galli). He also accelerated the use of "man-made" hymns—as distinct from inspired hymns in the Scripture (Eerdmans', p. 426). He argued that songs lacked New Testament content. He insisted that restricting songs of praise to the book of Psalms was to act as if Jesus was never born, had never died, had never been raised from the dead, or received up to glory (Houghton, p. 186).

In 1707, his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* appeared, followed in 1715 with *Divine Songs for Children*, and in 1719, with *the Psalms of David*. Watts composed over 600 hymns, many still being used (Eerdmans', p. 426; some say he wrote over 750 hymns). He wrote such hymns as "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "O God, Our Help in Ages Past "(a paraphrase of Ps. 90), "Alas! And did my Savior bleed," and "Joy to the world" (a barely-recognizable version of Ps. 98; it was arranged in the 19th century by Lowell Mason to an older melody of Handel).

Watts was criticized. People accused him of tossing out divinely inspired psalms for fantasy. Pastors were fired. Churches split, but Watts' paraphrases won out (Galli). It has been suggested that more than any other man, Watts is credited with the triumph of the hymn in Christian worship (Houghton, p. 186). Watts' introduction of extra-biblical poetry opened up a new era of Protestant hymnody. Other poets followed in his path, including Charles Wesley, Augustus Toplady, John Newton, William Cowper, and many others.

In short, although others sang hymns before him (Lutheran and Baptist), Isaac Watts is the founder of modern English hymnody; he radically changed English church music.

## The Methodists

*John Wesley* John Wesley's evaluation of the Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter was that it was a "miserable, scandalous doggerel" (Hustard, p. 417). He is quoted as saying: "I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen" (Adam Clarke's comment on Amos 6:5).

*Adam Clark* Adam Clarke, the famous Methodist commentator, said, "I believe that the Lord did not authorize David to introduce that multitude of musical instruments into the Divine worship of which we read, and I am satisfied that his conduct in this respect is most solemnly reprehended by this prophet; and I farther believe that the use of such instruments of music, in the Christian Church, is without the sanction and against the will of God; that they are subversive of the spirit of true devotion, and that they are sinful.… I am an old man and an old minister, and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God and have had reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music, as a science, I esteem and admire, but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music; and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity."

*Charles Wesley* Charles Wesley, the younger brother of John Wesley, wrote over 6000 hymns, including "And Can It Be That I Should Gain?," O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing," "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," and "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today."

The first successful hymnbook compiled for use in the Church of England was the collection of *Psalms and Hymns* (1737), compiled by John Wesley and published in Charleston, South Carolina. Later, Wesley edited collections for the Methodists, notably the definitive *Collection* published in 1780 (Eerdmans', p. 427). The Wesley's popularized congregational hymn-singing in England (Eerdmans', p. 429).

Hustard makes an interesting point: "No one will argue that the church did not need the new hymns of Watts and Wesley and all their successors. But is it possible that we have lost a significant form of expression that should be recaptured for the spiritual health of our worship?" (Hustard, p. 417).

In short, although John Wesley was opposed to using musical instruments in church, he and his brother popularized congregational hymn singing in England.

## Finney's Observations

In his book *Revivals of Religion* (1868), Finney writes about the difficulty of bringing change to a church because Christians "have felt as if God had established just the *mode which they were used to.*" He gets specific.

"*(a) Psalm Books* Formerly, it was customary to sing the Psalms. By and by, there was introduced a version of the Psalms in rhyme. This was 'very bad,' to be sure. When ministers tried to introduce them, the churches were distracted, the people displayed violent opposition, and great trouble was created by the innovation. But the new measure triumphed.

"Yet when another version was brought forward, in a better style of poetry, its introduction was opposed, with much contention, as yet a further new measure. Finally came Watts's version, which is still opposed in many Churches. No longer ago than 1828, when I was in Philadelphia, I was told that a minister there was preaching a *course of Lectures* on Psalmody, to his congregation, for the purpose of bringing them to use a better version of psalms and hymns than the one they were accustomed to. And even now, in a great many congregations, there are people who will rise and leave if a psalm or hymn is given out from a new book. If Watts's version of the Psalms should be adopted, they would secede and form a new congregation rather than tolerate such an innovation! The same sort of feeling has been excited by introducing the 'Village Hymns' in prayer meetings. In one Presbyterian congregation in New York, within a few years, the minister's wife wished to introduce the Village Hymns into the women's prayer meetings, not daring to go any further. She thought she was going to succeed. But some of the careful souls found out that it was 'made in New England' and refused to admit it.

"*(b) "Lining" the hymns* Formerly, when there were but few books, it was the custom to 'line' the hymns, as it was called. The deacon used to stand up before the pulpit and read the psalm or hymn, a line at a time or two lines at a time, when then the rest would join in. By and by, they began to introduce books and let everyone sing from his own book. And what an innovation! Alas, what confusion and disorder it made! How could the good people worship God in singing without having the deacon 'line' the hymn in a 'holy tone; for the holiness of it seemed to consist very much in the tone, which was such that you

could hardly tell whether he was reading or singing.

"*(c) Choirs* Afterwards, another innovation was brought in. It was thought best to have a select choir of singers sit by themselves so as to give an opportunity to improve the music. But this was bitterly opposed. How many congregations were torn and rent in sunder by the desire of ministers and some leading individuals to bring about an improvement in the cultivation of music by forming choirs? People talked about "innovations" and "new measures" and thought great evils were coming to the churches because the singers were seated by themselves, cultivated music, and learned new tunes that the old people could not sing. It used not to be so when they were young, and they would not tolerate such novelties in the church.

"*(d) Pitchpipes* When music was cultivated and choirs seated together, then the singers wanted a pitch pipe. Formerly, when the lines were given out by the deacon or clerk, he would strike off into the tune and the rest would follow as well as they could. But when the leaders of choirs began to use pitch pipes for the purpose of pitching all their voices on precisely the same key, what vast confusion it made! I heard a clergyman say that an elder in the town where he used to live would get up and leave the service whenever he heard the chorister blow his pipe. 'Away with your whistle,' said he; "'what, whistle in the house of God!' He thought it a profanation.

"*(e) Instrumental music* By and by, in some congregations, various instruments were introduced for the purpose of aiding the singers and improving the music. When the bass viol was first introduced, it made a great commotion. People insisted they might just as well have a *fiddle* in the house of God. 'Why, *it is* a fiddle, it is made just like a fiddle, only a little larger; and who can worship where there is a fiddle? By and by, you will want to dance in the meeting-house.' Who has not heard these things talked of as though they were matters of the most vital importance to the cause of religion and the purity of the Church? Ministers, in grave ecclesiastical assemblies, have spent days discussing them. In a synod in the Presbyterian Church, it was seriously talked of by some, as a matter worthy of discipline in a certain Church, that 'they had an organ in the house of God.' This was only a few years ago. And there are many churches now that would not tolerate an organ. They would not be half so much excited on being reminded that sinners are going to hell as on hearing that 'there is going to be an organ in the meeting-house.' In how many places is it easier to get the church to do anything else than work in a natural way to do what is needed, and wisest, and best, for promoting religion and saving souls? They act as if they had a 'Thus saith the Lord for every custom and practice that has been handed down to them, or that they have long followed themselves, even though it is absurd and injurious" (Finney, *Revivals of Religion*, pp. 285-288).

Finney also discusses people objecting to preaching without notes versus reading the sermon. He tells of a lady in Philadelphia who refused to hear a minister because he did not read his sermon. Then he adds that sermon notes and reading written sermons are "an innovation, and a modern one too. They were introduced in a time of political difficulty in England. The ministers feared they should be accused of preaching something against the government unless they could show what they had preached, by having it all written beforehand" (Finney, p. 289).

Even the praying was disputed! People complained about extemporaneous prayers instead of praying prayers from the Prayer Book (Finney, p. 288) and kneeling or not kneeling in prayer. He says, "The time has been in the Congregational churches in New

England, when a man or woman would be ashamed to be seen kneeling at a prayer-meeting, for fear of being taken for a Methodist" (Finney, p. 289).

In short, Finney describes in detail the controversy caused by changes in music.

## The Holiness Influence

*Phoebe Palmer* John Wesley was the first in history to teach that after salvation, there was a second experience of entire sanctification and perfection. He called it "Christian perfection." When the Methodist Church neglected Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification, its renewed interest eventually resulted in the Holiness movement (Mead, p. 236). Phoebe Palmer, who experienced "entire sanctification" in 1837, is considered one of the founders of the Holiness movement in America and the Higher Life movement in England.

After having three infant children die (not unusual in the early part of the 19th century), on July 27, 1837, Palmer wrote in her diary, "Last evening, between the hours of eight and nine, my heart was emptied of self, and cleansed of all idols, from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and I realized that I dwelt in God, and felt that he had become the portion of my soul, my ALL IN ALL." She wrote, "In coming to the decision, I will be holy NOW, I took a step beyond any I had ever before taken. God is light. As I drew nearer to Him than ever before, He drew nearer to me (*Phoebe Palmer*: *Selected Writings*, p. 118, cited in the internet article at www.teachushistory.org). Palmer and her husband became itinerant preachers.

Palmer's theology was a modification of Wesley's view of sanctification. She placed all the emphasis on an instantaneous experience (White, p. 202). Her "shorter way" to holiness was a three-step process: "(1) entire consecration, (2) faith, and (3) testimony. The first step to entire sanctification is entire consecration, 'a perfect and entire yielding up of all to Christ, an entire trust in Christ, and a continuous reliance on Christ, for all needed grace under every diversity of circumstance or experience.' It is a once-and-for-all surrender of 'body, soul, and spirit; time, talents, and influence; and also of the dearest ties of nature,' which must be reaffirmed daily. It is a determination that 'we give ourselves at once wholly and forever away to [God's] service. The second step to entire sanctification is to exercise faith. According to Mrs. Palmer, in 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1, God promises to receive the offering of those who separate themselves from all evil through entire consecration. If believers consecrate themselves to the Lord, they have God's word that sanctifies them. Whether or not one feels any different after devoting every area of one's life to the Lord, one must not question whether God has sanctified the heart. To doubt that one is entirely sanctified is to doubt God's word. One must not trust feelings; one must trust the written word of God" (White, p. 205). The third step is to tell others about your experience.

Phoebe Palmer's teaching is significant because of its influence beyond the Methodist Church. She pursued holiness in an ecstatic state. She was obsessed with achieving a mystical union with the Lord. "Religion was not simply a matter of creed or liturgy. It was something you *felt*." The moment of surrender was an overpowering experience. This was the "shorter way" to holiness (from the article at www.teachushistory.org, italics in the article).

Here is a sample of her experience after being entirely sanctified. In her July 2, 1838 diary, she wrote, "In the early part of the meeting, I *felt* an unusual shrinking when the duty of speaking was presented. I *felt* desirous to avail myself of the opportunity if assured of its being duty, but the enemy [Satan], *by repeated suggestions*, endeavored to darken my mind. I asked for the light of the Spirit, relative to the requirement, and then *abandoned myself*, soul and body, into the hands of the Lord…. I *felt conscious* assistance from on high while speaking of the riches of grace manifested toward me in the experience of the past week. I sat down, *feeling* that Jesus was the strength of my soul. As the meeting progressed, rather unusual backwardness was exhibited. I was *impressed* to tell them of the way in which *I had been led* into this wealthy place. Aware of the impropriety of always following impressions without examining prayerfully the principles leading to action, I looked confidently to my Heavenly Father *for guidance*, and determined, if another pause ensued, to improve it. I did so, and found it peculiarly blessed to be obedient to the *motions* of the Spirit. A plain path seems marked out before me—the path of obedience (*Phoebe Palmer*, p. 135, italics added).

Notice the repeated emphasis on feelings, the mention of the suggestions of Satan, the idea of being led, the notion of abandoning oneself, and the obedience of which she speaks as not being obedience to the Lord as revealed in Scripture, but obedience to the "motions of the Spirit." These concepts have influenced evangelicalism.

*Keswick* "In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the National Holiness Association was born to promote Wesleyan-holiness theology. Three names are prominent in the promulgation of holiness theology: Phoebe Palmer; William Boardman; and Hannah Whitehall Smith" (M. J. Sawyer. "Wesleyan and Keswick Models of Sanctification," an article online at https://bible.org/article/wesleyan-amp-keswick-models-sanctification). William Boardman and Hannah Whitehall Smith were forerunners of the Keswick movement. Andrew Murray (1828-1917): was Keswick's foremost devotional author, Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879) its Hymnist, and A. T. Pierson (1837-1911) its American Ambassador.

*Frances Ridley Havergal* "Before 1873 was over, Frances Ridley Havergal, already famous for her hymns and devotional verses, 'saw clearly the blessedness of true consecration. I saw it as a flash of electric light ... so I just utterly yielded myself to Him, and utterly trusted Him to keep me.' And thus was able before her early death to write those hymns indelibly identified with Keswick: "Like a River Glorious is God's Perfect Peace," and "Take My Life and Let It Be" (Pollock, p. 16).

*Fanny Crosby* Frances Jane van Alstyne Crosby (1820-1915), who was blind from shortly after birth, is the most prolific hymn writer in church history, writing over 8,000 hymns and gospel songs, many of which have not been set to music. She was a lifelong Methodist, but she considered herself a "primitive Presbyterian" who was "rooted in Puritanism, developed by Methodism, warmed by the Holiness movement, and nourished by Congregationalism" (Edith L. Blumhofer. *The Life and Hymns of Fanny J. Crosby*. Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2005, p. 279).

Although she had written many poems before, she wrote her first hymn in 1864. Some of Crosby's best-known songs include "Blessed Assurance," "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior," "Jesus Is Tenderly Calling You Home," "Praise Him, Praise Him," "Rescue the Perishing," and "To God Be the Glory" Because some publishers were

hesitant to have so many hymns by one person in their hymnals, Crosby used nearly 200 different pseudonyms.

Although she was a Methodist, Crosby was not personally involved with the Holiness movement, but she was friends with people in the movement and attended Holiness camp meetings. "Fanny was a friend of Phoebe and Walter Palmer, sometimes visiting Ocean Grove, New Jersey, as their guest. One of Crosby's best-loved hymns, 'Blessed Assurance,' was written for a melody written by Phoebe Palmer Knapp, the daughter of Phoebe and Walter Palmer" (Keith Schwanz, *Satisfied: Women Hymn Writers of the 19th Century Wesleyan/Holiness Movement*. Grantham, PA: Wesleyan/Holiness Clergy, 1998; available at http://www.whwomenclergy.org/booklets/satisfied.php). Some of Crosby's hymns reflect Wesleyan/holiness beliefs, including her call to consecrated Christian living in "I Am Thine, O Lord" (1875):

> Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord,
> By the power of grace divine.
> Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope,
> And my will be lost in Thine.

"Crosby's hymns were popular because they placed 'a heightened emphasis on religious experiences, emotions, and testimonies' and reflected 'a sentimental, romanticized relationship between the believer and Christ," rather than using the negative descriptions of earlier hymns that emphasized the sinfulness of people" (Edith Blumhofer, in Debra Lee Sonners Stewart, "Music in the Ministry of Evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson," a Master of Arts thesis presented to the California State University, Fullerton, CA, ProQuest, 2006:149, 262, cited in an article on Fanny Crosby at (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fanny_Crosby#cite_note-autogenerated5-36).

Ann Douglas argues that Crosby was one of the female authors who "emasculated American religion" and helped shift it from "a rigorous Calvinism" to "an anti-intellectual and sentimental mass culture (Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, cited by Blumhofer, p. xiv). Feminist scholars have suggested that "emphases in her hymns both revealed and accelerated the feminizing of American evangelicalism (Blumhofer, p. xiv).

"In early 1868, Crosby met millionaire Methodist Phoebe Palmer Knapp, who was married to Joseph Fairchild Knapp, co-founder of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. The Knapps published hymnals initially for use in the Sunday School of the St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church in Brooklyn, which was superintended by Joseph F. Knapp for 22 years, while Phoebe Knapp took responsibility for 200 children in the infants' department. They first collaborated on *Notes of Joy*, the first hymnal edited by Knapp, who also contributed 94 of the 172 tunes and published by her brother Walter C. Palmer, Jr. in 1869. Of the 21 hymns Crosby contributed to *Notes of Joy*, including eight as 'The Children's Friend,' Knapp provided the music for fourteen of them. Their best-known collaboration was 'Blessed Assurance,' for which Crosby wrote words in the Knapps' music room for a tune written by Knapp while Crosby was staying at the Knapp Mansion in 1873" (see the article, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fanny_Crosby#cite_note-autogenerated5-36).

Crosby is the "Queen of Gospel Song Writers" and the "Mother of modern congregational singing in America." In Fanny Crosby's day, minstrels who traveled to put on shows in local towns composed their songs in two parts, verses and a chorus, which was repeated. Crosby copied that format for most of her music. It became so popular that choruses were added to many of Isaac Watts' hymns because they did not have a chorus (Ken Paris).

*Ira Sankey* Ira Sankey (1840-1908) was converted to the Methodist Church when he was 16 years old. After serving in the Civil War, he worked for the IRS and the YMCA. In 1870, He met D. L. Moody at a YMCA convention and shortly thereafter, they began to work together. When Moody was asked by a local pastor what he felt was the primary contribution that a gospel singer and song leader such as Sankey brought to his meetings, he replied, "If we can only get people to have the words of the love of God coming from their mouths it's well on its way to residing in their hearts."

Fanny Crosby was close friends with Sankey and his wife, Frances, and often stayed at their home in Northfield, Massachusetts. Crosby worked with Sankey from 1871 to 1908. Crosby was the provider and Sankey was the premier promoter of gospel songs. Sankey helped make Crosby a household name to Protestants around the world. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fanny_Crosby#cite_note-autogenerated5-36).

Ira Sankey attributed the success of the Moody and Sankey evangelistic campaigns largely to Crosby's hymns (Anne Commire and Deborah Klezmer, *Women in World History: A Biographical Encyclopedia*. Waterford, CT: Yorkin Publications, 2000, p. 220, cited in an article at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fanny_Crosby).

Keep in mind that Palmer's theology is reflected in some of Crosby's most well-known songs and the Moody-Sankey team promoted Crosby's music to the point that it permeated American evangelicalism. In his *Nine Lectures on Preaching* delivered at Yale, R. W. Dale said, "Let me write the hymns and the music of the church, and I care very little who writes the theology" (Dale, cited by C. Randall Bradley, "Congregational Song as Shaper of Theology: A Contemporary Assessment," vol. 100: *Review and Expositor*. 2003, p. 352).

"Diligent preaching, incredible organizational energy, and learned theology have gone into the creation of modern evangelicalism. But nothing so profoundly defined the faith of evangelicalism as its hymnody; what evangelicals have been is what we have sung. Perhaps because it so obviously is a creature of the Bible's salvific themes, the hymnody of evangelicalism defined a religion that was clearer, purer, better balanced, and more sharply focused than much evangelical practice" (Mark. A. Noll, cited by Bradley, p. 352, adds, "Music, rather than theology, has been the common thread that helped to bind together a loosely knit movement that is modern evangelicalism").

To sum up, the Holiness movement had an enormous influence on evangelical church music, shifting the focus from the Lord and the sinfulness of man to an emphasis on experiences, emotions, and testimonies.

## The Charismatic Impact

*Pentecostalism* The Pentecostal movement began in Topeka, Kansas in 1901, but it exploded in Los Angeles in 1906 at the Azusa Street Mission. At first, there was no music at all in the Azusa Street meeting. One who was there wrote, "In the beginning in

'Azusa' (street), we had no musical instruments. In fact, we felt no need of them. There was no place for them in our worship. All was spontaneous. We did not even sing from hymn books. All the old, well-known hymns were sung from memory, quickened by the Spirit of God. 'The Comforter Has Come' was possibly the one most sung. We sang it from fresh, powerful heart experience" (Frank Bartleman's *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles*, 1925, p. 57).

Later, however, music was very much a part of Pentecostalism, but it was not traditional church music. "Pentecostal music is clearly in debt to African-American musical style. I think that our widespread use of drums, the rhythmic aspects of our worship, which were denied any role in many other denominations, are part of an African-American contribution to Pentecostalism ("Interview with Dr. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. [a Pentecostalist and historian] by D. Allen Tennison," *A G Heritage Winter* 2005-06, p. 18, http://ifphc.org/pdf/Heritage/2005_04.pdf). The music in Pentecostal churches did not affect other denominations.

*Cultural Impact* As a result, the ministries of Fanny Crosby and Ira Sankey, a choir accompanied by an organ, became standard in American churches deep into the twentieth century, but in the latter part of the twentieth century, the music of the culture began to impact music in the church, perhaps as never before in the history of the church. For example, after World War I, jazz was popular. Jazz influenced the African-American church, where it became known as gospel music. In the 1960s, folk music (ballads) was popular. By 1970, Christian folk music became popular in youth meetings but not in churches. When those young people became adults, they started churches and brought their music with them. The influence of baby boomers on church music was "unprecedented," for when they "attended or returned to the church," they "brought *their* music with them" (Bradley, p. 354, italics his).

The invention of electrical instruments and modern recording methods greatly influenced church music. As Paris explains, "Music could be recorded on multiple tracks and each instrument could be perfected to sound exactly perfect. The expectation in music and sound was raised for the ordinary person. Stereo also brought more interest in sound quality. So people born before the invention of 'Hi Fidelity' do not seem to be as picky about music and sound as those who grew up with high-quality sound." Paris adds that the new electrical instruments produced different sound options and variety in the sound of songs that were not possible before. Thus, people born before WWII prefer a piano, but younger people enjoy a wide range of sounds, including drums, guitar, violin, mandolin, electric bass, and so on.

*Charismatic Impact* The music introduced by the Charismatic movement revolutionized music in the American church. "'Praise and Worship' (music) finds its roots in the Jesus People movements in the 1960s and 1970s, the gospel choruses of the revivalists, celebration music of renewal movements, and African-American gospel music. Fostered by churches such as Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, California, and eventually by publishers such as Maranatha! Music, Vineyard Music, and Integrity, 'Praise and Worship' music has been the single most influential movement in the worship of the last 30 years" (Bradley, pp. 353-354; written in 2003). The charismatic movement in the 1970s changed the church from "musical routine" to "spontaneous praise" (Kenneth Laudermilch. "Musical Integrity in the Church," *Reformation and Revival*, vol. 7:1, winter, 1998, p. 79).

In 1969, Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California, became a hub of the Jesus Movement. Fifteen Jesus people's musical groups were at Calvary Chapel. The Jesus people began to write new worship songs with a folk-rock style. In 1971, Maranatha! Music was founded by Chuck Smith Sr., pastor of Calvary Chapel, "to promote the 'Jesus Music' his young hippie followers were writing and singing, up and down the California coast" (http://www.maranathamusic.com/about/; for example, "Seek Ye First," "Lord I Lift Your Name on High," "Father I Adore You," "Open Our Eyes, Lord"). At this point, in many churches, these new songs were added to hymns.

In 1977, John Wimber founded a Calvary Chapel church in Yorba Linda, California, which became the Anaheim Vineyard Christian Fellowship. In the 1980s, the Anaheim Vineyard began to write its own worship songs. So, in 1985, John Wimber founded Vineyard Music. Worship songs were sung in the first person, directed to God, personally and intimately (http://www.carltuttle.com/wimber-years/; for example, "Come, Now is the Time to Worship," "Your Love is Amazing"). The Vineyard music dropped the use of hymns and exclusively sang new songs directed to God (the Maranatha! Music website also says. "It is our conviction that worship music is sung a prayer to God" http://www.maranathamusic.com/about/).

The changes the charismatic movement brought about affected more than the songs sung. The song leader, the hymnal, the organ, the choir, and the soloist were replaced with a worship leader, keyboard, guitar, drums, projected lyrics on a screen, and raised hands. The congregation became the choir. Then, the electric guitar and louder music were introduced.

To sum up, Influenced by music from secular culture (Jazz, ballads), the Charismatic movement profoundly changed church music, replacing the song leader, the hymnal, the organ, the choir, and the soloist with a worship leader, keyboard, guitar, drums, projected lyrics on a screen, raised hands, and the introduction of new praise/worship songs, which had a folk-rock style.

## The Twenty-first Century

In the twenty-first century, a softer sound became popular. Worship teams with a lead guitarist, a keyboard, and drums became standard. Traditional hymns play a limited role, especially hymns sung to God, instead of hymns about God ("How Great Thou Art," "Great is Thou Faithfulness" and "Be Thou My Vision," "Come Thou Font," "More Love to Thee"). A few older hymns that are not sung to God made the cut ("Amazing Grace," "Blessed Assurance," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"). Some new hymns are written to sound older ("In Christ Alone," "Here is Love," "Vast as the Ocean," "Before the Throne of God Above," "How Deep the Father's Love"). Some county music began to be used ("I Saw the Light").

In the 19th century, the chorus was added. In the later part of the 20th century (after 1970), a second chorus, commonly called the bridge, became a part of songs that were written. Paris explains, "The most common format for a modern song is: verse 1, chorus, verse 2, chorus, bridge, chorus. This became the standard format for songs for twenty years. Now (the twenty-first century), younger people, not wanting to copy their parents' format, experiment with new formats such as verse 1, verse 2, chorus, verse 3, chorus,

bridge, chorus, bridge 2, chorus…. This variety of song format means that current songs are less predictable than songs twenty years ago."

Ken Paris points out that the Gregorian chants used full and half notes. Later, music was used in quarter and eighth notes. That sign notes were very standard until the coming of Hip Hop music. African American young people wanted to push the envelope and use 1/16 and 1/32 notes. This music has influenced how younger people hear music, and they prefer changes in notes faster than their parents, mainly because they are listening and singing those fast changes in their popular secular music. While to us, that fast string of notes feels unnatural, so did 1/8 notes to the generation of the early 19th century.

Within Evangelicalism, "musical styles have nearly replaced denominational distinctive as the demarcating lines among various groups" (Bradley, p. 351). "For many younger people, music has become an inseparable symbol of their personhood. They embody their music. It is ever with them, and its qualities form a significant part of their identity. Music has moved from a cherished experience (either as a performer or listener) to being a commodity designed for consumption. In *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987), Allan Bloom recognizes the importance of music in contemporary culture: 'Nothing is more singular about this generation than its addiction to music. Today, a large proportion of young people between the ages of ten and twenty live for music. It is their passion. Nothing else excites them as it does. They cannot take seriously anything alien to music. When they are in school and with their families, they are longing to plug themselves into their music'" (Bradley, p. 355).

Ken Paris puts it like this: "Music is much more a part of life today than it was two hundred years ago. Today, music is a part of every experience we have. We wake up to music playing on the clock radio. We listen to music while driving to work. We hear music as we ride the elevator to the office. We listen to music on headphones while we work. We stop for lunch and have music playing at the mall as we get food or hear music in the restaurant when we eat. After work, we head home to watch a movie, where music plays in the background. Almost every commercial we watch on television has music playing in it. Our exposure to music is so much more profound than that of people in 1900 when most people lived on a farm and did not even have a radio to listen to. Then, it was a once-a-week dance in a barn or singing in church on Sunday. (There was) no exposure to different musical styles, and no choice in what to sing or listen to. Society today has changed, and our exposure to and interest in music has grown along with it."

That is scary because music can "upstage the spoken word and become more important to worshipers than sound doctrine and intellectual content" (Bradley, p. 353). Songwriters are theologians. Worship seminars are now seminaries and worship leaders are influential ministers (Bradley, p. 356). Conclusion: choose church music carefully.

Ken Paris contends that saying worship music today is a threat to good preaching "is like saying that if you create a restaurant with themed decoration that attracts people, it will take away the importance of the food served. Worship is not the biggest threat to good preaching today. Bad preachers are the biggest threat to preaching."

In short, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, a softer sound using a worship leader as a lead guitarist, a keyboard, and drums became standard. Songs are sung directly to the Lord.

## Conclusion

To sum up, the history of church music: It has gone from no music at all to music containing only the biblical text to allowing music composed by humans. It has gone from Psalms to paraphrased Psalms to hymns, emotional songs of testimony, praise music, and music sung almost exclusively to the Lord.

# CHURCH SERVICES TODAY

Church services are classified as liturgical or non-liturgical. Liturgical services are conducted in Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Episcopal, and Lutheran churches. This type of service follows a standardized ritual (liturgy). Non-liturgical services are used in Protestant churches to follow an order of service that includes music, prayers, reading of Scripture, and a sermon. Although some Protestant services are formal and some are casual, the traditional Protestant service has remained basically the same for hundreds of years.

In the latter part of the 20th century, however, the purpose of and the practice in the service of Protestant churches, particularly in the area of music, changed. In many Protestant churches, the traditional service has been replaced by a contemporary worship service. What is the difference between the two?

## The Traditional Worship Service

*Cultural Influence* People are creatures of culture. Christians are no exception. Assuming that church services have been influenced by culture, Radmacher describes what he calls the modern paradigm and the neo-romantic paradigm of Protestant church services (Daniel Radmacher, *Experiencing Worship and Worshiping Experience: The Changing Face of Evangelical Worship in Postmodern Culture*, 2008). Those are his designations for what could be called traditional and contemporary worship services.

Radmacher claims that the Age of Reason is the cultural influence of the modern paradigm of church music. Before looking at his description of this paradigm, it is essential to understand the nature of the Age of Reason (also known as modernism, but not to be confused with theological modernism). Historians make a distinction between modern and postmodern periods of history. Before the modern period, tradition and religion were the basis of knowledge. The modern period began in late 17th-century Europe. During this time, tradition and religion were rejected as the basis of knowledge. Rational thought, logic, and the scientific method became the new ways of determining truth. Leaders of this movement included philosophers such as Francis Bacon (1562-1626), René Descartes (1596-1650), Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677), John Locke (1632–1704), and Isaac Newton (1643–1727). According to this philosophical perspective, absolute, universal truths are knowable through reason and logic.

*Explanation* Influenced by the culture of modernism, Radmacher says the Evangelical worship service was designed for the believer's edification, a concept of edification that has cognitive overtones and suggests spiritual growth is founded on rational processes. It "exalts reason and the intellect as the best and most reliable tool of character formation" (Radmacher, p. 83). Also inherent in this type of evangelical worship service is a sacrifice of praise.

Radmacher points out that according to this approach, spiritual growth happens by hearing, understanding, and practicing truth, a process that is basically rational and objective. Truth must be transmitted so that believers can comprehend and comply with it and the worship service becomes the flagship event in which this critical information is

authoritatively disseminated. He goes on to say, "Experience—meaning emotion, intuition, inner sensation, or any kind of non-rational perception—is not viewed as a reliable source of the knowledge of God…. The intellect always precedes inner experience in the acquisition of beliefs…. The major emphasis of the worship services placed upon informing the mind" (Radmacher, p. 84). This does not mean that experience has no place in the worship service. "Rather, experience is simply not endowed with the same authority as reason or the intellect" (Radmacher, p. 85).

In this kind of service, the music is evaluated first and foremost on its content and is programmed to teach or reinforce something about God or theology. In fact, music is typically chosen with the express purpose of highlighting the sermon. Hymns, which tend to specialize in content, are usually used (Radmacher, p. 85). Radmacher says that hymns "are able to convey content more effortlessly than other forms. Their lack of syncopation, simple strophic structure, and on-the-beat melody lines allow the lyrics to carry much more complex content, well serving the didactic approach" (Radmacher, p. 86). "Hymns are not sung so much to God as to one another" (Craig Allen, cited by Radmacher, p. 86).

*Evaluation* Radmacher criticizes this approach because it is based on the assumption that reason and the intellect are the only reliable pathways to knowledge (Radmacher, p. 87). He contends that "the path of spiritual growth is actually from the emotions through the intellect to the volition" (Radmacher, p. 88). He does concede, however, that Myers-Briggs has documented that some individuals lead with "feelings" and others with "thinking" (Radmacher, p. 88). At any rate, how spiritual growth happens is the bedrock issue.

Radmacher has other criticisms of this approach, including that the entire service is geared toward the sermon, meaning the message is the main reason for the service and music is a preliminary to the sermon (Radmacher, pp. 89-90), that the worshiper expects to bless God with a sacrifice of praise, but not necessarily anticipate a blessing from God in exchange (Radmacher, p. 92) and, thus, the service is sometimes not characterized by the same joy, excitement, expectation, and anticipation as in an experience-oriented service (Radmacher, p. 93), and that worship is conceived as more of a lifestyle than an activity (Radmacher, p. 94), that is, believers are more concerned with showing love for God through acts of obedience and are less preoccupied with the singing of their love for God (Radmacher, p. 95).

## The Contemporary Worship Service

*Cultural Influence* Toward the end of the 18th century, Romanticism originated in Europe in the arts, music, and literature. It flourished in the first half of the 19th century. It was a revolt against the Age of Reason and a reaction against scientific rationalization of nature. It prized intuition, emotion, and passion over rationalism. "The inner self became a more authoritative path to knowledge than reason" (Radmacher, p. 38). In English literature, the key figures were poets such as William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), John Keats (1795-1821), and Lord Byron (1788-1824). For example, Keats wrote, "I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the heart's affections and the truth of imagination. What the imagination seizes as beauty must be true" (Keats, cited by Radmacher, p. 41).

In the latter part of the 20th century, romanticism reappeared. In this period of history called postmodernism, postmodernists decided that no one explanation had a "complete and exclusive lock on reality" (Radmacher, p. 49). Furthermore, this collapse of objective truth resulted in the exaltation of experimental knowledge as the prime medium by which truth or meaning is assessed. The removal of the ability to know something objectively made the experience the only possible alternative to knowledge (Radmacher, p. 57). Postmodernism exalts experience as an equally authoritative way of knowing. This sounds like romanticism. In fact, it has been called neo-romanticism. "The postmodern, Evangelical experience of worship is essentially a return to a romantic sensibility" (Radmacher, p. 60).

Radmacher claims that the postmodern worshiper cannot be understood unless one grasps the philosophical currents of the 1960s and 70s, particularly as they were expressed in the Jesus movement. The cultural climate of those decades decidedly set the stage of change that has since been incorporated into evangelical worship.

It all began with the counterculture of the 1950s and early 60s, which adopted a new approach to truth and knowledge. Experience, especially of a mystical or "psychedelic" sort, was conceived to be the most profound approach to knowledge and truth (Radmacher, pp. 65-66). Hallucinogenic drugs, such as acid, were used to obtain the "peak experience," which was supposed to be a moment of supreme perception (Radmacher, p. 67).

By 1968, the psychedelic subculture began to burn out, but they still craved an experience of something real. According to Radmacher, the psychedelic experience predisposed its adherents to the Jesus movement. He cites an author who says, "When those in the counterculture talk about being turned on to Jesus, they are referring to an emotional experience that for them has striking similarities to an emotional experience induced by drugs" (Radmacher, pp. 68-69).

*Theological Attraction* "The basic anti-intellectualism of the Jesus people, which grew out of their psychedelic subculture, predisposed them toward Pentecostal denominations" (Radmacher, p. 72). The Jesus movement gravitated toward Pentecostalism, which emphasized experiencing the power of God through the Holy Spirit (Radmacher, p. 71).

John Wimber, one of the founders of the Vineyard churches, started out in a Quaker church. The Quakers emphasized the "Inner Light" of the Holy Spirit and made inner experience the most authoritative guide in the believer's life. They place this inner experience on a higher level than biblical revelation (Radmacher, pp. 71-72).

Music was an essential part of the counterculture movement. Thus, "the importance of rock and folk music of the psychedelic culture for its own adherents cannot be underestimated, and neither can the resulting music and worship styles of the Jesus movement. These musicians brought their music culture together with their Christian faith and wrote songs that reflected their own cultural experience" (Radmacher, p. 73). "A repertoire of praise and worship music began to be written that would radically infiltrate and alter the future of Christian hymnology and worship practice…. The context and content of these worship experiences were highly charged, intensely personal and deeply emotional, and many of the first praise songs were simply direct settings of the Psalms…. One of the fundamental characteristics of the Pentecostal worship time was that the worshiper encountered the real presence of God in a supremely immanent

manner as he or she engaged in praise and worship…. Worship, for those who formed the Jesus movement, was essentially an encounter with God and an experience of His presence. Evangelical worship in the new millennium is the heir of the Jesus movement legacy, particularly as it has been influenced by the Pentecostal approach to worship as an experience of the power and presence of God" (Radmacher, pp. 74-75).

*Explanation* Radmacher calls the postmodern worship paradigm a neo-romanticism or experience-oriented worship paradigm (Radmacher, p. 80). This contemporary concept of worship is that it is an "encounter" with God, an "experience of His presence." This is more than God's Word producing a cognitive revelation that induces an emotional response; it is far more "mystical, in which the rational receptors are augmented, and *perhaps even suspended*, by sensation" (Radmacher, pp. 19-20, italics added). Sensation includes emotions and intuition. "In other words, one *feels* God's presence in worship" (Radmacher, p. 20, italics his). Furthermore, experiencing God in worship means one's emotions are affected in response to the Spirit's activity and is "deeply transformational" (Radmacher, pp. 20-21). On top of all that, "The worshiper's experience of God, including his or her emotional response to Him, has often replaced theology as the central element in the worship song" (Radmacher, pp. 21-22).

In his book *Manifest Presence*, Jack Hayford says the worshiping awakening today is not about music or about becoming contemporary. It is about "the transformation of hearts in the presence of God … The transforming work of the Holy Spirit is achieved when pure worship occurs (Hayford, pp. 13- 14).

As in the traditional service, exalting God with praise is an explicit purpose, but the intended result of the praise in the contemporary service is an inner experience or "encounter" with God's presence, which is transformational. "Worship becomes a mystical interaction in which the worshiper lifts a sacrifice of praise to God, and is deeply ministered to on an internal level by an immanent experience of God's 'manifest presence'" (Radmacher, p. 97). "Intellect tends to follow experience or emotion on the path of spiritual growth. In essence, *the heart is transformed by delighting in God*" (Radmacher, p. 98, italics his). "Not only does the Spirit communicate with the worshiper through the revealed words of Scripture, He is often thought to communicate with worshipers through a variety of other means, including "non-audible" words, felt presence, visions, and direct address (Radmacher, p. 99).

Radmacher explains, "The idea of manifest presence is intended to suggest that somehow a special revelation of God's presence comes upon the worshiping assembly in a real metaphysical manner as they worship Him, bringing an abiding sense of consolation, transcendence, enlightenment, etc." (Radmacher, p. 99). "The point is that the worshiper's emotions and experience are treated as special receptors of the presence of the Lord, and thus, one ends up measuring the presence of God by the degree of consolation or emotional exaltation that he or she experiences" (Radmacher, p. 100). In the words of John Wimber, "the call to worship is a message to God inviting Him to visit us" (Radmacher, p. 100). On the back of many of the worship CDs produced by Integrity Music are the words: "Our commitment is to help people worldwide experience the manifest presence of God" (Radmacher, p. 101). The manifest presence of God is a mystical interaction with the person God in which the worshiper is allowed "a brief, mitigated or shielded glimpse into God's glory," such as Moses experienced on Mount Sinai and Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. "In corporate worship,

God desires to remove our blindfolds and give us an extraordinary, breath-taking glimpse of divine radiance" (Morgenthaler, cited by Radmacher, p. 101).

Radmacher concedes the concept of manifest presence is murky and highly subjective because it is not something the intellect can grasp. Nevertheless, he insists emotion and experience are connected with manifest presence in the neo-romanticism paradigm (Radmacher, p. 102). He explains, "Euphoria, the release of emotions and an experience of ecstasy, is certainly a desired result of the worship encounter in this paradigm. Consolation, which the Holy Spirit is thought to bring, is frequently used by the worshiper as a barometer to measure whether or not he or she has 'really worshiped,' including whether he or she has truly experienced the presence of God" (Radmacher, p. 103). "Music becomes critical to the worship experience, as the central medium by which God is praised in the worshiper experiences both as an emotional release and an inner awareness or communion with God. Whereas in the modern paradigm, music is more of a preliminary to the sermon, the musical presentation now joins the sermon at center stage in the worship activity, with a significantly increased portion of the service devoted to the pursuit. The reason that music received such an exalted place in this paradigm is that music resonates with the postmodern worshiper on a deeper and more intimate level than the reasoned sermon of yesteryear…. Music seems to touch the divine in a sort of mystical experience that is non-rational and incomprehensible…. It is clearly one road through which the Spirit draws people to a more intimate experience of God" (Radmacher, pp. 104-105).

In this paradigm, "songwriters are no longer as concerned with theology or doctrinal truth, but rather are more interested in the experience of the worshiper of his or her life and in the worship service…. Repetition and simplicity are endemic in the spiritual discipline of meditation because the Spirit is thereby given space and freedom to position one's heart, making it cogent with the heart of God" (Radmacher, p. 105).

In this paradigm, the worship leader has become more important. In many cases, the worship leader is is critical to the growth of the church as the pastor. In essence, the worship leader has become a shaman who is expected to deliver a worship experience (Radmacher, pp. 106-107).

In this paradigm, there is increased use of the first and second-person pronouns, speaking directly to God, and thus attempting to increase intimacy by adopting more familiar language. John Wimber and the Vineyard emphasize singing *to the Lord* (Radmacher, p. 109).

"In this paradigm, *the flow trumps content.* Whereas the modern service is often structured around a series of events, the neo-romantic paradigm focuses on creating a *worship flow*, using an 'unending melody' to weave a worship atmosphere. More than anything, the worship leader desires to create an environment that is conducive to a worship experience, no element of that will jar the worshiper out of his or her concentration. Worship leaders will seek to avoid awkward transitions at any cost, using music to seamlessly bridge from one song to another, in order to maintain that the continuity" (Radmacher, p. 106, italics his). Radmacher says a renowned worship lecturer compares the musical presentation to an airplane's engine. "Once the engine has been started and the plane takes off, the music had better not stall, or the worship will crash and burn" (Radmacher, p. 106).

In this paradigm, aesthetics are very important. Indeed, worshipers are not able to worship at all unless the aesthetics perfectly conform to their needs and expectations. "Any little disturbance might disrupt the worship experience and derail the worshiper from being able to worship. Some of these things might be a song that one does not know, too much direct address from the worship leader, or awkward musical breaks between songs (Radmacher, p. 115, adds that this relies too heavily upon external conditions).

In this paradigm, the individual's worship experience is "highlighted over the worship experience of the community" (Radmacher, p. 115).

*Clarification* The core concept of contemporary Christian music is experiencing the presence of God. Radmacher defends this concept by saying that it comes from the Old Testament, where God revealed His presence to His people through special visible manifestations, like a burning bush, a cloud, or a pillar of fire. God's glory dwelt in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple, allowing "the worshiper to physically approach or come into God's manifest presence." David describes the experience of God's presence (Psalm 63:5; 84:2; 100:2). This "suggests to those of an experience-oriented paradigm that there is an inherent distance between God and the worshiper that somehow can be bridged by an act of worship" (Radmacher, p. 122). In the New Testament, the sign gifts of the Spirit are "often understood as a barometer of God's presence" (Radmacher, p. 123).

Jack Hayford says, "Worship in a very real sense of the word, opens the door to the power of His presence, conforming dark powers and overthrowing sins destructive operations" (Hayford, p. 27). He says verses such as Hebrews 13:5 and Matthew 28:20 are invitations to worship God in a way that brings about a personal intimacy— a nearness and dearness like that expressed in the old hymn: "He walks with me and talks with me and tells me I am his own" (Hayford, p. 29).

After discussing God's manifest presence in the ancient Near East culture, the Old Testament, and in the person of Jesus Christ, Radmacher discusses the manifest presence of God through the Holy Spirit, in that He indwells the believer and manifests Himself through spiritual gifts (Radmacher, pp. 123-142). He concludes, "The manifest presence of God has moved from a glory cloud to the person of Christ, to His Spirit indwelling us and manifesting His presence in our gifts…. The presence of God could not draw any nearer than he already has through the indwelling of the Spirit, and no glory cloud Old Testament manifestation of God's presence can rival the presence of God that we experience in Christ…. Therefore, our worship experience should not be pictured as some kind of bridge that closes a perceived distance between the worshiper and God…. We should not call on His presence to visit us or be drawn near our assembly. We do not invite God into our presence. Rather, we open up our hearts to the presence of God…. As we open our hearts— the conjunction of our minds and emotions— to the truth about who God is and what He has done, we begin to experience His presence in our lives (Radmacher, pp. 142-144).

*Dangers* Radmacher lists some dangers in this approach including 1) experience becoming the purpose of worship (worshiping the experience), 2) misunderstanding the Spirit's work, 3) trying to generate a worship experience, 4) sidetracking spiritual growth "*spiritual experience does not necessarily create trust, nor does it create lasting spiritual growth or sanctification on its own*," italics his), 5) individualism ("corporate worship

must have the edification of the body and mind"), 6) losing worship is a lifestyle (reducing the concept of worship to an activity; worship is much bigger than music), 7) under balancing with truth ("mystical experience tends to trump rational thought"), 8) mistaking experiences of questionable origin with the genuine movement of the Spirit of God, and 9) losing critical thinking ability.

*The Radmacher Modification* Instead of the "experience-oriented" idea of the neo-romantic paradigm, Radmacher advocates "experience-open" worship. The person seeking God in worship "should be open to and desire *an experience of God*, but should not set parameters of what that must be" (Radmacher, p. 181, italics added). He lists the strength of experience-open worship.

1. It is wholistic. The modern paradigm tends to separate the intellect and the emotions. "Worship that is solely cerebral is an aberration" (Foster, *Celebration of Discipline,* p. 168, cited by Radmacher, p. 182). The neo-romantic paradigm tends to make experience the criteria of worship, evaluating worship in terms of effect. With the experience-open paradigm, the entire person, the intellect, emotions, cognition, and sensation, can be deeply moved by the Spirit of God, a response initiated by God. As we open our hearts to God's presence, which believers already have, God makes His presence known (see Ps. 16:11; Radmacher, pp. 180-182).

2. It delights in God. For Radmacher, delighting in God is the heart of worship. "*Delighting in God is a choice that draws upon our intellect, but is expressed in our emotions and our actions*" (Radmacher, p. 178, italics his). He goes on to say, "There is a genuine sense of abandonment in this approach…. We lay ourselves upon the altar with joy in a simple celebration of who He is, and the magnitude of His person overwhelms us" (Radmacher, p. 179). "Delighting in God brings one's life into the worship experience, creating a deeper desire to obey as He amazes us with His grace and glory. It is truly an integrated experience of God through one's intellect, emotions and will, as we are awed by His character and wooed by His incredible love" (Radmacher, pp. 184-185). "There is also an obedience/lifestyle aspect to delighting in God." "The experience of delight in the Psalms is overwhelmingly connected with the delight in God's Word, particularly in a desire and commitment to follow His commands" (Psalm 119:105; 147:10-11; 51:16-17; 37:4; Radmacher, pp. 182-185).

3. It changes us. "An 'experience-open' approach to worship, one that invigorates the whole of the human constitution (intellect, emotions, and volition), has significant advantages as a tool of spiritual formation" (Radmacher, p. 180). "As the worshiper bows before God, he or she is *changed by his or her decision to worship* as well as by the spiritual exchange with God. Worship possesses, through the indwelling Spirit, an incredible potential to change us, because God has determined that it should" (Radmacher, p. 185, italics added). Spiritual growth, which the Holy Spirit produces, begins in the heart with characterological change, and *so worship as an activity of that precedes worship as a lifestyle*" (Radmacher, p. 186, italics his).

"Foster notes, 'if worship does not propel us into greater obedience, it has not been worship. To stand before the Holy One of eternity is to change'" (Foster, cited by Radmacher, p. 187). The experience-open approach affirms that the spiritual disciplines, particularly worship, are significant windows of opportunity for the Spirit to catalyze spiritual growth in the believer's life. Worship is highlighted as the most important spiritual discipline in this pursuit, as the worshiper intentionally focuses his or her eyes

on Christ as the object of worship and is transformed into the same image through the work of the Holy Spirit" (Radmacher, p. 187; 2 Cor. 3:18).

"The neo-romantic paradigm understands this as a primary internal process that occurs on a personal level between the worshiper and God *during the public activity of worship*" (Radmacher, p. 187, italics his). "Worship becomes a time of private devotions for the neo-romantic worshiper; music and liturgy catalyze the dynamic. The transformation of the heart happens through meditative and celebrative reflection, an internal connection with the Spirit that is facilitated by the worship liturgy and/or repertoire. Indeed, the authentic exposure of the heart of the Spirit truly requires this kind of personal, intimate dynamic. Thus, the worshiper is changed by a profound exposure to the presence of God, both in the revealed truth of His Word and the inner reality of all indwelling presence. Morgenthaler writes, "very simply, to experience God's presence is to be transformed from the inside out" (Radmacher, p. 188). Radmacher remarks, "The neo-romantic approach tends to highlight transformation as a private process in the service, whereas the modern paradigm tends to highlight the aspect of edification that can be shared by all present (Radmacher, p. 188, fn.).

4. It is non-rational. "The experience-open approach affirms that aspects of God's presence are experienced through non-rational means, that is, through sensual perception which flies 'under the radar' of the national receptor; it does not require that the apprehension of God's presence conform itself to purely cognitive forms…. It is a mystical interaction with the presence of God in which the worshipers are allowed a brief, mitigated, or shield glimpse into God's glory. It is a metaphysical brush with His incomprehensible attributes, like holiness or transcendence, that produces a reaction outside the parameters of cognition. This perception is manifested in several typical emotional reactions, including fear, awe, or fascination, mystery, desire or longing, a sense of creatureliness and deep consolation " (Radmacher, p. 190).

Radmacher quotes Otto, who says, "The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the man with the tranquil mood of deepest worship…. It may burst in sudden eruption up from the depths of the soul with spasms and convulsions, or lead to the strangest excitements, to intoxicated frenzy, to transport, and to ecstasy…. May become hushed, trembling, and speechless humility of the creature in the presence of—whom or what? In the presence of that which is a mystery inexpressible and above all creatures" (Radmacher, pp. 190-191).

The experience of numinous or "schnsucht" (a German word for desire) is his "most often produced by reflection on other objects, particularly natural wonders or incredible, aesthetic works of art or music, and is experienced "as a spontaneous feeling of immense wonder, bottomless desire and unquenchable longing that overwhelms and transcends the natural experience. It is, by definition, an ecstatic, transcendental experience" (Radmacher, p. 191).

Radmacher argues that the neo-romantic approach to worship as an experience of God's presence is an ideal middle between the other two paradigms. It is a unique integration of faith and culture and is, therefore, "culturally relevant" (Radmacher, p. 194).

Radmacher closes with some interesting observations. "If worship is truly a conversation, then there must be moments when we speak and moments when we listen" (Radmacher, p. 202). "Thanksgiving is truly the door to experiencing the presence of

God" (Radmacher, p. 204). "The biblical concept of worship is one that involves the three components of heart/attitude, obedience/lifestyle, and activity/sacrifice" (Radmacher, p. 205). "For the act of worship to be considered biblical, it had to begin with the heart attitude of submission and be manifested in the lifestyle of obedience to God's commands" (Radmacher, p. 205). In John 4, Jesus says that "the worship experience alone unaccompanied by the truth of God is not legitimate worship" (Radmacher, p. 207). Some churches are "culturally relevant" (Radmacher, p. 207). "The church should be in the business of learning the language of culture so that it can translate the gospel into that language, cultural language, without compromising the values and message of the kingdom." We should not be "like a foreign missionary requiring the would-be convert to learn English to receive the gospel" (Radmacher, p. 210). "Worship can become a force that will actually redeem culture, just as it did for the Jesus movement" (Radmacher, p. 211).

## Conclusion

To sum up: According to the Traditional view, the purpose of the church meeting is to praise, pray, teach, encourage, and admonish. The music is chosen for its content to focus on praise to God and on truth to be taught. Worship is honoring God by offering the sacrifices of praise and giving. "Experiencing worship should arise out of revealed truth" (Radmacher, p. 172).

According to the Contemporary view, the purpose of the church meeting is to *worship*, which is an experience (a non-rational perception, an emotion, a subjective feeling), an *encounter with the presence of God*, which *transforms* the worshiper. So songs are sung that enable the worshiper to experience God at an emotional level. "One major problem with placing experience before rational thought is that reason actually provides the context in which experience is interpreted and given meaning by the individual. In order for experience to obtain meaning, it must be interpreted according to the pre-existing cognitive framework, which God has revealed for us through biblical writers (see Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, p. 142)…. Rationality must have the authority, or else experience is meaningless. Therefore, rationality and revealed truth precedes their experiences and maintain an epistemological authority over them, whether we are aware of it or not; otherwise, our experience would be absolutely meaningless" (Radmacher, p. 170). Unfortunately, as Andy Park says, "A lot of what people call the 'presence of the Lord' is actually adrenaline, endorphins, and the joy of music" (Park, cited by Radmacher, p. 153).

In the final analysis, Radmacher concludes, "neither paradigm is wholly right nor wrong" (Radmacher, p. 116). He attempts to modify the experience-oriented paradigm (his modification is called the experience-open paradigm), but while he makes some needed corrections, he ends up with the essence of the experience-oriented paradigm with its encounter with the presence of God that is non-rational and the means of growth and transformation!

# WHAT IS WORSHIP?

This chapter is the manuscript (not the transcript) of a sermon I preached on worship. The audio version is at www.lindleychurch.com under sermons/single.

What is worship? Some churches call their building a "worship center." Many, if not most, churches call their Sunday morning meeting a "worship service." Later in the twentieth century, the traditional "song leader" was replaced with a "worship leader." So, in the worship center, the worship leader leads the people in worship, which means worship is something people do while they are singing on Sunday morning. Yet people are aware that not all singing is worship. In that case, it is singing plus something else that is vaguely thought of as a mood or emotion.

Is worship a building, a church service, or singing? Is it a mood or an emotion?

## In the Old Testament

*The Hebrew Word* The Hebrew word for worship (שׁחה; shâchâh; Strong #7812) means "to bow down, prostrate oneself." It is often rendered "bow." It consists of falling upon the knees and touching the forehead to the ground (Gen. 19:1; 42:6; 48:12, 1 Sam 25:41, etc.). Simply put, worship is bowing. For example, Genesis says, "Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw *them,* he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground" (Gen. 19:1) and "Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you'" (Gen. 22:5). The Hebrew word is translated "bowed himself" in Genesis 19:1 is the same one rendered "worship" in Genesis 22:5.

Worship is bowing down, but at the same time, the act of prostrating is more than an activity of the body. It is an external act intended to convert an internal attitude. The attitude is honor or reverence. Unger says the Hebrew word means to "bow down, to prostrate oneself before another *in order to do him honor and reverence*" (*Unger's Bible Dictionary*, italics added). Thus, in the Old Testament, worship is an action (prostrating oneself) with an attitude (honor and/or reverence).

*The Usage* Worship is used of bowing down (prostrating oneself) before God (Gen. 22:5; Ex. 24:1; 33:10), idols (Ex. 34:14; Judges 2:19; Isa. 2:8), angels (Gen. 19:1), and a superior (Gen. 33:6). In the New King James Version of the Bible, the word "worship" appears 68 times. It is used for worshiping idols 27 times and worshiping the Lord 41 times. Of the 41 times where "worship" is used of worshiping the Lord, 14 just mention worshiping the Lord and 17 of them refer to the *place* of worship, such as Jerusalem (Isa. 27:13), the Temple (2 Kings 5:18), and at the Lord's footstool (Ps. 99:5). That leaves ten references of "worship" being used of worshiping the Lord. Those ten occurrences referred to something that accompanies (is connected with) worshiping the Lord; they are ways of honoring the Lord.

Worshiping (honoring) the Lord was often connected to **offering a sacrifice** (six times: Gen. 22:5; Deut. 26:10; 1 Sam. 1:3; 2 Kings 17:36; see worship and keep the feast of Tabernacles in Zech. 14:16 and worship and burn incense in 2 Chron. 32:12). "And

Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey, the lad and I will go yonder and worship and we will come back to you.' So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son and he took the fire in his hand and a knife and the two of them went together" (Gen. 22:5-6). The fact that Abraham said he was going to worship and took the material for a sacrifice suggests that what he meant by worship was to offer a sacrifice.

Gill says Abraham was going to "worship God by offering sacrifice to him." Keil says, "The servants were not to see what would take place there; for they could not understand this 'worship.'" Matthew Henry says, "It is a teaching question to us all, that, when we are going to worship God, we should seriously consider whether we have everything ready, especially the lamb for a burnt-offering." Honor the Lord by offering a sacrifice to Him.

Worshiping (honoring) the Lord was connected **with serving.** In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for worship and the Hebrew word for serve appear together (Ex. 20:5; Deut. 4:19, 8:19, 11:16, 30:17; 1 Kings 9:6; 2 Chron. 7:19; Jer. 13:10, 25:6; see serve *or* worship in Dan. 3:12, 14, 18, 28). Honor the Lord by serving Him. To honor the Lord by serving is to "worship (honor) by means of sacrifice and religious ceremonies" (Keil and Delitzsch on Ex. 20:5).

Commenting on the use of "worship" and "serve" in Exodus 20:5, Gill says to "bow down" was to "perform any worship to them, show any reverence of them by any gesture of the body; one being mentioned, bowing the body, and put for all others, as prostration of it to the earth, bending the knee, kissing the hand, lifting up of hands or eyes to them, or by any outward action expressing religious esteem of them, as if there was divinity in them." He says to serve them means to serve them "in a religious manner, internally or externally, by offering sacrifice and burning incense to them; by praying to, or praising of them; by expressing love to them, faith and trust in them, hope and expectation of good things from them, and the like."

Worshiping (honoring) the Lord was to be done **with holy living** (see worship the Lord in the beauty of Holiness, which appears three times: 1 Chron. 16:29; Ps. 29:2; 96:9). Honor the Lord by living a holy life. The expression "worship the Lord with the beauty of holiness" has been interpreted to mean "God's beauty (majesty) is His holiness" (*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*), the holy garments worn by the priest (see ASV; Luther; Lange; Clarke; K&D), the holiness of God's people (Alexander; *Bible Knowledge Commentary*). Barnes says it means "the state of the heart, the 'internal' ornament with which we should approach God … that beauty or appropriateness of the soul which consists in holiness or purity" (Barnes on Ps. 29:2).

Worshiping (honoring) the Lord could be connected **with singing** God's praises (Ps. 66:4; 138:2). This idea only appears a few times, namely in Psalms 66 and Psalm 138. Psalm 66 says, "All the earth shall worship You and sing praises to You; they shall sing praises *to* Your name" (Ps. 66:4). Notice, worship is not singing. Those are two different things (worship *and* sing; the same is true in Ps. 138). Concerning Psalm 66, one commentator says, "All the earth shall worship," which means all the inhabitants of the world will bow down before the Lord, or render Him homage and sing, that is, shall 'celebrate' God's praises" (Barnes). "Worship is sacrifice and "praise is the best of all sacrifices" (Calvin on Ps. 66:4). Honor the Lord by singing His praising.

Thus, in the Old Testament, worship was an attitude of honor and an activity of sacrifice, holy living, and singing. The emphasis is on sacrifices (see the 31 references to worship and the reference to service). The next greatest focus is on holy living and singing, probably God's praises, in connection with worship is mentioned once or twice. "Worship, for the Israelites, truly circumscribe a life relationship with God, and involved an *attitude* of fear, honor, respect, and adoration, an *activity* of sacrifice and praise, and a *lifestyle* of obedience and walking in God's way" (Radmacher, p. 163, italics his).

## In the New Testament

*The Greek Words* Several Greek words are translated "worship."

The Greek word translated "worship" (*proskuneo*; Strong #4352) comes from the word "to kiss" and means "to make obeisance, do reverence to, worship." This word conveys the same idea as the Hebrew word for worship: obeisance to honor or reverence the Lord. In the New Testament, this is the main Greek word for worship.

The Greek word translated "worship" (*latreia*; Strong #2999) means "hired service, service, divine service, worship.

The Greek word translated "worship" (*sebomai*; Strong #4576) means "to worship, devout" (A-S). It only occurs ten times in the New Testament and is the word used of Gentile proselytes to Judaism. It is used in Matthew 15:9 (Jesus said, "These people draw near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me and in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men," Mt. 15:8-9), Mark 7:11 (NKJV: people declared their money is "a gift to God;" NASB: "given to God," so they would not have to give it to their parents), Acts 16:14 (Lydia was a "worshiper of God"), Acts 13:43 ("God-fearing proselytes"), Acts 13:50 ("devout and prominent women," a reference to the Gentile proselytes), Acts 17:4 ("God-fearing Greeks"), Acts 17:17 ("God-fearing Gentiles"), Acts 18:7 (a worshiper of God), Acts 18:13 (Paul was accused of persuading men "to worship God contrary to the law"), Acts 19: 27 (all the world worships the idol Artemis).

The Greek word translated "worship" (*ethelothreskeia;* Strong #1479*)* means "self-imposed worship" and only appears once in the New Testament (Col. 2:23).

The Greek word translated "worship" (*therapeuo*; Strong #2323) comes from a noun that means "service, care, attention, household attendance, servants" and means "to do service, serve, to treat, cure, heal." The verb means to "do service." This is a medical term often used in the New Testament of medical treatment (for example, in Mt 12:19, it means "to heal"). In Acts 17:25, it refers to pagan worship. "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything since He gives to all life, breath, and all things" (Acts 17:24-25).

In the New King James Version, the word translated "worship" is used 44 times. It is used of worshiping idols (13 times, worshiping Satan twice), the Lord (16 times, including worshiping Christ three times), the place to worship (eight times), and worshiping in truth (seven times).

*Usage* Although there are five different Greek words translated worship, only two are particularly important to understand the New Testament concept of worship for believers.

The Greek word translated "worship" (*proskuneo*; Strong #4352) is the word that is used repeatedly in the most important passage on worship in the Bible. In John 4, the women at the well said to Jesus, "'Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither worship the Father on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth'" (Jn. 4:20-24).

The Jews insisted that the exclusive place of worship, that is, the place to perform the divine services commanded by God, was in the Temple in Jerusalem. The Samaritans had set up a rival place of worship on Mt. Gerizim. Jesus tells her that a time is coming when all limitations of worship will disappear. The place is not the issue! Furthermore, she is confused about salvation, which comes from the Jews (Jn. 4:22), and true worship, which must be in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:23-24). The Samaritans had a false worship. True worship must be according to the truth of God's Word and be in spirit. Spirit is the nature of God and the opposite of that which is material and earthly, such as this mountain. Jesus makes it all a matter of the heart (Tenney). It is not where but the how of worship that is important. Worship in spirit and in truth implies the prostration of the innermost soul before divine perfection (Plummer).

Thus, worship (honoring the Lord) in the New Testament is an attitude (spirit) of honor (the very meaning of the word "worship") done in according to the truth of God's Word.

The Greek noun translated "worship" (*latreia*; Strong #2999) only appears five times in the New Testament (Jn. 16:2, Rom. 9:4, Rom. 12:1, Heb. 9:1, Heb. 9:6). The verb means "to work for hire, to serve, worship." It appears (21 times) in Matthew 4:10, Luke 1:74, Luke 4:8, Luke 2:37, Acts 2:7, Acts 7:7, Acts 7:42, Acts 24:14, Acts 27:23, Romans 1:25, Philippians 3:3, 2 Timothy 1:3, Hebrews 8:5, Hebrews 9:9, Hebrews 9:14, Hebrews 10:2, Hebrews 12:28, Hebrews 13:10, Hebrews 1:9, Revelation 7:15, Revelation 22:2. It means "to render religious service or honor and in the strict sense to perform sacred services, to offer gifts, to worship God in the observance of the rites instituted for His worship (Heb. 10:2, 9:9)" (Unger).

In Romans 12:1, Paul writes, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." The Greek word translated "present" is the same one that was used in Romans 6:13, 16, 19. In Romans 6, this word is used to convey the connotation of using the body for sin or righteousness. Thus, Romans 12:1 does not call for an act of dedication but simply obedience to God through the body. In short, use your body to obey God.

Using the body to obey God is using the body as a sacrifice to Him. Such a sacrifice is living. The Old Testament animal sacrifices were dead. In contrast, the presentation of our bodies is a living sacrifice. Moreover, the sacrifice of the bodies (obedience) is holy; it is set apart to the Lord. Consequently, it is acceptable to God. He is well-pleased; He delights in such sacrifices.

Using the body to obey God is using the body as a sacrifice to Him is a reasonable service. The Greek word translated "reasonable" is the word from which we get the English word "logic." In light of God's great mercies, a life of obedience is rational and reasonable. It is a reasonable service. In other words, it is like the service the priest rendered to God in the Tabernacle.

An examination of the five appearances of the noun form of this word in the New Testament indicates its meaning.

In Romans 9:4, Paul, in describing Israel's relationship to God, says they had "the covenants, the giving of the law, the service *of God,* and the promises." The service here is the Levitical system of sacrifices.

In Hebrews 9:1, the author says, "First *covenant* had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary." The Moosic Covenant had a Tabernacle (Sanctuary) in which divine services were rendered. The writer goes on to describe the Tabernacle (Heb. 9:2-5) and the service rendered in it (Heb. 9:6-10).

In Hebrews 9:6, the author says, "The priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing *the services.*"

Thus, in three of the five occurrences of the noun "service," the meaning is the sacred services performed in the Tabernacle.

In John 16:2, Jesus said, "They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills, you will think that he offers God service." In other words, Jesus tells the disciples that the Jews will kill believers and think they are rendering to God the same kind of service that the priest performed in the Tabernacle.

Thus, worship (honoring the Lord; see "reasonable service" in Rom. 12:1) in the New Testament is offering the Lord the sacrifice of obedience. In short, it is honoring the Lord with obedience.

There are other *sacrifices* that are to be offered to the Lord. "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:15-16). There are three spiritual sacrifices mentioned in this passage.

The first sacrifice is the sacrifice of praise (Lev. 7:12). It should be offered continually, not just in the public meeting. It should be the fruit of our lips, a phrase taken from Hosea 14:2 that emphasizes that the praise of the lips is the fruit coming from the root of a grateful heart. It should be thanksgiving to His name.

The second sacrifice is the sacrifice of doing good. Paul says we are to do good to all, especially to those who were of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10). The writer to the Hebrews calls such a service a sacrifice to God.

The third sacrifice is the sacrifice of sharing, which at least includes giving money and maybe more (see Phil. 4:18). All three of these sacrifices were well-pleasing to God. They are acceptable services (Heb. 12:28). Peter put it like this, "You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:5).

Thus, in the New Testament, worship is an attitude of honor and the sacrifices of obedience, praise, good works, and giving. The emphasis is on sacrifices (see 31 references to worship and service. The next greatest focus is on holy living and singing, probably God's praises, in connection with worship is mentioned once or twice.

Barnhouse and his wife were on a trip in their car. She was driving. Barnhouse reports, "As we were going along, we came to a small town. She slowed down to 35 miles an hour and then to 25 miles when the sign so indicated. I believe that most drivers go 30 in a 25-mile zone, 40 in a 35-mile zone, and 55 in a 50-mile zone. This Christian woman was doing exactly 15 in a school zone and I commended her on the nature of her driving." She then told her husband, "Since I delight to worship God since he told us that we are to obey Him, and since He tells us to submit us to every ordinance of man *for His sake*, I would consider that I was worshiping the Lord with my accelerator foot."

**Summary:** Worship in the Bible is an attitude of honoring the Lord by offering sacrifices of an obedient (holy) life, praising, doing good works, and giving.

Worship is not a church service, nor is it a mood or an emotion. It is an attitude of honoring the Lord, which can be done in several ways.

"Throughout the Scripture, worship was first and foremost an attitude and a lifestyle that inspired an activity, not vice versa" (Radmacher, p. 163). "True biblical worship is an attitude that results in a lifestyle of obedience" (Radmacher, p. 165).

"A son honors *his* father, and a servant *his* master. If then I am the Father, where *is* My honor? And if I *am* a Master, where *is* My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts to you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?' 'You offer defiled food on My altar, but say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the LORD is contemptible.' And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, *is it* not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, *is it* not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably? says the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 1:6-8).

They have despised Him by offering defiled food on His altar and saying the table is contemptible, which is the same Hebrew word translated despised in verse 6. Using the food figure on a table, the Lord says they offered a defiled sacrifice and despised the altar. In short, the priest despised the Lord by presenting defiled sacrifices to Him, that is, ritually unclean sacrifices according to the Mosaic Law (Constable). Imagine inviting a guest to your home for dinner and serving stale bread and cold coffee. The guest could legitimately say that you were despising *him*.

Instead of offering a lamb without spot or blemish as a sacrifice (Lev. 22:19), the priest offered lambs that were blind, lame, and sick, which were unacceptable according to the Law (Lev. 22:20-24). The Lord says that sacrifices are evil and asks if they offered such a gift to the governor, would he be pleased with them and accept them favorably.

This was a deeply *personal* issue. God was not just unhappy with their sacrifice; he was displeased with them personally.

"Anything second-rate that we offer to God is inappropriate in view of who He is. This includes our worship, our ministries, our studies, physical objects, anything. The Lord is worthy of our very best offerings to Him, and we should give Him nothing less. To give Him less than our best is to despise Him. Shoddiness is an insult to God. Shoddy holy is still shoddy" (Constable).

Years ago, several homeless people began to attend our church. They sold cans so they could rent a room on Saturday night to take a bath before they came to church Sunday morning.

# BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

Church music causes church problems. It is reported that Donald Grey Barnhouse said, "When Satan was kicked out of heaven, he fell into the choir loft." Translation: music causes conflict in the church.

As has been pointed out, in the nineteenth century, Charles Finney wrote, "Formerly it was customary to sing the Psalms. By and by, there was introduced a version of the Psalms in rhyme…. When ministers tried to introduce them, the churches were distracted, the people displayed violent opposition, and great trouble was created by the innovation…. Even now, in a great many congregations, there are people who will rise and leave if a psalm or hymn is given out from a new book. If Watts's version of the Psalms should be adopted, they would secede and form a new congregation rather than tolerate such an innovation!"

Finney says that when the choir was introduced, "it was bitterly opposed. How many congregations were torn and rent in sunder by the desire of ministers and some leading individuals to bring about an improvement in the cultivation of music by forming choirs! People talked about 'innovations' and 'new measures' and thought great evils were coming to the churches because the singers were seated by themselves, cultivated music, and learned new tunes that the old people could not sing. It used not to be so when they were young, and they would not tolerate such novelties in the church."

Finney goes on to say, "By and by, in some congregations, various instruments were introduced for the purpose of aiding the singers and improving the music. When the bass viol (similar to but different than a violin) was first introduced, it made a great commotion. People insisted they might just as well have a *fiddle* in the house of God. 'Why, *it is* a fiddle; it is made just like a fiddle, only a little larger; and who can worship where there is a fiddle? By and by, you will want to dance in the meeting-house.' Who has not heard these things talked of as though they were matters of the most vital importance to the cause of religion and the purity of the Church? Ministers, in grave ecclesiastical assemblies, have spent days discussing them. In a synod in the Presbyterian Church, it was seriously talked of by some, as a matter worthy of discipline in a certain Church, that 'they had an organ in the house of God.' This was only a few years ago. And there are many churches now that would not tolerate an organ. They would not be half so much excited on being reminded that sinners are going to hell as on hearing that 'there is going to be an organ in the meeting-house" (Finney, *Revivals of Religion*, pp. 285-288).

What does the Bible say about church music? What are the biblical principles that can guide a church through the conflict concerning church music?

## Music in the Old Testament

*Before the Exile* The Old Testament has a number of references to vocal and instrumental music, including the Song of Moses (Ex. 15:1-18), the Song of Miriam (Ex. 15:20-21), and the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1-10). David played his harp for Saul (1 Sam. 16:23). David is generally credited with introducing music to ancient Israel and assigning the responsibility for it to the Levites (1 Chron. 23:3). There are numerous

musical instrument references in the superscriptions of the Psalms and even in the Psalms themselves (Ps. 33:2-3; 150). "At various times, Israel used all the instruments known to Middle Eastern cultures of that period—lyres, pipes, harps, trumpets, and cymbals" (Hustad, p. 407).

The Psalms speaks of singing *to the Lord* (Ps. 7:17; 9:2, 11; 13:6; 18:49; 27:6; 30:4, 12; 47:6; 57:9; 59:17; 61:8; 66:2, 4; 68:4, 32; 71:23; 79:9; 81:1; 92:1; 95:1; 96:2; 98:4; 98:5; 104:33; 105:2; 108:1, 3; 135:3; 138:1; 146:2; 147:1).

The psalmist declared that he would sing God's praises in the assembly of the saints (Ps. 149:1). More specifically, he said he would sing songs praising God's power (Ps. 21:13; 59: 16), righteousness (Ps. 51:14; 145:7), faithfulness (Ps. 71:22), mercies (Ps. 89:1), justice (Ps. 101:1), and His ways (Ps. 138:5).

The psalmist commands us to sing a new song (Ps. 33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 98:1, 144:9, 149:1). A "new song" is a song about His new blessings (Ps. 98:1; see Lam. 3:23).

The psalmist also says we are to sing God's praises with a harp (Ps. 147:7), with the timbrel and the harp (Ps. 149:3), and with the loud cymbals (Ps. 150:5). The playing of a musical instrument should be done "skillfully" (Ps. 33:3).

The psalmist commands that some songs be sung with a loud shout (Ps. 33:3; 98:4; 150:5).

*After the Exile* Apparently, in the Second Temple, the one built after the return from the exile, a Levitical chant at the beginning of the morning sacrifice was accompanied by three trumpet blasts and the sound of the symbols. At the end of each portion, the trumpets joined the singing to indicate that the congregation was to prostrate themselves (see Jer. 33:10b, 11a). It seems this liturgical singing was performed almost entirely by priests. The people in the congregation were "basically spectators, who may have been emotionally involved, but whose vocal activity was limited to such responses as 'Hallelujah,' 'Amen,' and 'for his steadfast love endures forever' (see Ps. 136)" (Hustad, pp. 408-409).

*The Sound* "It is hard to determine the nature of the Hebrew scale or the sounds emitted by their instruments…. The Hebrews never invented a system of notation, so we have none of their melodies…. We can know nothing of their harmony. Perhaps their singing, as well as the accompaniment, was performed in unison" (Vos, p. 68).

## Music in the New Testament

*Outside the Church* The New Testament contains only a few references to music (Mt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26; Acts 16:25; 1 Cor. 14:15, 26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Jas. 5:13). Half of these are references to music outside of a church meeting. Matthew 26:30 and Mark 14:26 are both refer to the same occasion in the Upper Room. In Acts 16:25, Paul and Silas are singing in jail. James 5:13 is a reference to an individual singing.

*Inside the Church* Only three passages in the New Testament directly refer to music in a church meeting (1 Cor. 14:15, 26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). In Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3, Paul mentions psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Perhaps he does not intend to make a great distinction between these words, but to emphasize the wide *variety* of music. There is, however, at least a slight difference. The Greek word translated "psalms" means "a sacred song sung to a musical accompaniment." Trench says it refers to the Psalter of the Old Testament. Hymns are songs of praise addressed to God

(Robinson; Hodge). Spiritual songs are songs that are spiritual, that is, either composed by spiritual men or having spiritual things as their subject, but either way, it is talking about a spiritual song because, in this context, a spiritual man would compose a spiritual song.

## Biblical Principles of Music

*Singing in church is congregational.* The three passages in the New Testament directly referring to music in a church meeting call for congregational singing (1 Cor. 14:15, 26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). There is nothing in the New Testament concerning a choir, a quartet, a trio, a duet, a solo, or a praise team. That does not mean that those forms of music cannot be used in the church. It is to say that whatever else goes on, the congregation should sing. "In comparing the first Christian music with that of the Tabernacle, the temple, and the synagogue, the one essential difference is the completely congregational nature of the performance. From all the references given above, it is clear that musical worship was no longer sacerdotal, the work of priests or cantors. It was an opportunity for vocal offering by every believer!" (Hustad, p. 411).

*Singing in church is from the heart (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)* In Ephesians 5, Paul says, "Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:18b-19). In Colossians 3, Paul states, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3: 16). Both passages mention that singing in the assembly of believers is *from the heart* (see "singing and making melody in your heart" in Ephesians 5: 18 and "singing with grace *in your heart*" in Col. 3:16).

The Greek word translated "heart" means "mind, thoughts, understanding, passions, and even will." In these passages, "heart" means mind, as is obvious from the fact that in Ephesians 5, the result of being filled with the Spirit is singing and in Colossians 3, the result of letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly is singing, which indicates that being filled with the Spirit and letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly are the same thing. In other words, as the Word of Christ dwells in the mind (heart), the result is singing. Paul states in 1 Corinthians: "I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding" (1 Cor. 14:15; see also Ps. 47:7). As believers understand spiritual truths, the result is singing.

Music speaks to understanding, but it also touches emotions. After all, it's music! By its very nature, music moves emotions. When David played his heart for Saul, "Saul would become refreshed and well and the distressing spirit would depart from him" (1 Sam. 16:23). The Hebrew word translated "depressing" means "bad, evil, disagreeable, sad, unhappy." In other words, when Saul was sad, David's music refreshed him and made him well. The Hebrew word rendered "well" means "joyful, glad, happy."

Josephus says that David played his harp and sang psalms and hymns (Josephus, cited by Gill). "The king's depression demanded an antidote, which was provided by music (Meyer). When David played his harp, Saul "became cheerful, his grief was removed, his black and gloomy apprehensions of things were dispersed, and he was cured of his melancholy disorder for the present" (Gill).

The point is that music speaks to the understanding and induces an emotional response. As the passages in the New Testament on music in a church meeting indicate, the primary focus should be on understanding, not emotion, but, at the same time, there should be an emotional response.

*Singing in church is to the Lord (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)* The psalmist repeatedly said that he would sing *to the Lord*. Moses and the children of Israel sang to the Lord (Ex. 15:1). Miriam said, "Sing to the Lord" (Ex. 15:21). Deborah and Barak said, "I will sing to the LORD; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel" (Judges 5:3). Jehoshaphat "appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness (1 Chron. 20:21). The psalmist said, "I will sing to the Lord because He has dealt bountifully with me" (Ps. 13:6; see also 18:49; 57:9; 71:23; 104:33; 105:2; 147:7; 149:1). The Old Testament repeatedly exhorts people to sing to the Lord (1 Chron. 16:9, 23; Ps. 33:3; 68:4, 32; 95:1; 96:1, 2; 98:1, 5; Isa. 12:5; 42:10; Jer. 20:13).). The new song sung to the Lord (Ps. 33:3; 96:1; 98:1; Isa. 42:10) was a song about His new blessings (Ps. 98:1; see Lam. 3:23), but does that not imply that a new song had to be written? In the New Testament, singing is to be to the Lord (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

When we are in church, our focus should be on the Lord and not others. Deeply immersed in meditation during a church service, the Italian poet Dante Alighieri failed to kneel at the appropriate moment. His enemies hurried to the bishop and demanded that Dante be punished for his sacrilege. Dante defended himself by saying, "If those who accuse me had had their eyes and minds on God, as I had, they too would have failed to notice events around them, and they most certainly would not have noticed what I was doing" (*Today in the Word*, April 1989, p. 22).

*Singing in the church is to teach one another (Col. 3:16)* Songs sung in a church meeting are to teach spiritual truth. They are not *preparation* for teaching (the sermon); *they are to teach*! (The fact is, know it or not, like it or not, songs teach.) When singing is biblical, it is to the Lord and, at the same time, it teaches people.

Since songs teach, they must, first and foremost, be biblical. They should be biblically rich (Col. 3:15). Church music cannot teach all biblical truth, but it must never teach less than biblical truth. Over time, it should express "the full range of Christian truth" (Bradley, p. 351). Some songs are simply not biblical. Some songs are biblically poverty-stricken; they are biblically correct but shallow. The best songs are sound biblically with a catchy sound musically.

Church music should teach biblical truth about God, His holiness, love, mercy, grace, power, greatness, etc. (see the note above concerning the singing of God's various attributes in the Psalms). These songs do that: "Holy, Holy, Holy" "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" "How Great Thou Art" "Be Thou My Vision" "Come Thou Font" "More Love to Thee" "Amazing Grace" "Majesty" "God Is So Good" "Here is Love," "Vast as the Ocean," "Before the Throne of God Above" "How Deep the Father's Love."

Church music should teach biblical truth about Christ, His person, birth (Christmas), death, resurrection (Easter), Second Coming, etc. ("All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" "Crown Him with Many Crowns," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross")

Church music should teach biblical truth about the Holy Spirit, His presence, power, etc.

Church music should teach biblical truth about salvation. ("Blessed Assurance," "Sweet, Sweet Spirit," "It is Well with My Soul," "Open My Eyes, Lord.")

Needless to say, unbiblical songs should not be sung. “All to Jesus I Surrender.” (Where does the Bible talk like that?)

One of the major purposes of church music is to teach. Using music to entertain rather than edify has been a problem in the church for centuries. Erasmus, a contemporary of Martin Luther, speaking about music in the Catholic Church, said, “Men run to church as to the theater, to have their ears tickled. And for end, organ-makers are hired with great salaries, and a company of boys, who waste their time and learning these whining tones” (Erasmus, commentary on 1 Cor. 14:19).

There’s nothing new under the sun. Similar complaints exist today. “Pretentious, showy, and sentimental “show-biz” styles and techniques have no place in worship. They represent the antithesis of truth, honesty, and integrity” (Laudermilch, p. 97). “Shallowness invites thoughtlessness. Songs or hymns of this nature may be well suited for painting the house or passing the offering plate but hardly for bringing us thoughtfully and reverently before the throne of grace of the omniscient God” (Laudermilch, p. 86).

Chuck Colson reacted like this. “When church music directors lead the congregation in singing some praise music, I often listen stoically with teeth clenched. But one Sunday morning, I cracked. We had been led through endless repetitions of a meaningless ditty called, “Draw Me Close to You.” The song has zero theological content and could be sung in a nightclub, for that matter. When I thought it was finally and mercifully over, the music leader beamed at us and said in a cheerful voice, “Let’s sing that again, shall we?” “No!” I shouted loudly. Heads all around me spun while my wife cringed. I admit I prefer more traditional hymns. But even given that, I am convinced that much of the music being written for the Church today reflects an unfortunate trend—slipping across the line from worship to entertainment. Evangelicals are in danger of amusing ourselves to death to borrow the title of the classic Neil Postman book.” (Colson, cited by Don Bryant in “When Satan Fell Out of Heaven, He Fell into the Choir loft, available at http://donbryant.wordpress.com/2006/02/10/when-satan-fell-out-of-heaven-he-fell-into-the-choirloft/).

*Singing in the churches is to admonish one another (Col. 3:16)* The Greek word translated “admonishing” means “to put in mind” and implies blame. The essence of admonition is warning and correction. “Great songs contain great thoughts and great thoughts inspire deeper living” (Bradley, p. 359). The ultimate test of church music is not just its text or its tune but its fruit. “Looking at the songs themselves is rather like looking at the bark of the tree and then pronouncing the tree good or bad. Better to look at the fruit itself—the lives of the people who are singing the songs” (Bradley, p. 366). It is one thing to have good music. It is another to have a godly life. Perhaps, the popular way to say this is “church music ought to move people.”

The only passage in the New Testament that describes what went on in the assembly of the saints is 1 Corinthians 14. One of the major points Paul makes in that chapter is that everything that is done in the church meeting is to be done for the education of the saints (1 Cor. 14:3, 4, 5, 6, 7-12, 17, 18-19, 26, 31). Note especially: “Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel” (1 Cor. 14:12) and “Let all things be done for edification” (1 Cor. 14:26).

To say the same thing another way, church music must minister to people. “The role of a church musician is always pastoral—the first priority is ministering to the body of

Christ in the local parish. When church music is not approached pastorally, it becomes music for art's sake and quickly loses its potential to glorify God" (Bradley, p. 369).

*Singing in the church should have variety (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)* Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are to be sung. Some commentators claim that there is not a great distinction between these words, but they go on to say these words emphasize a wide variety of music. As has been mentioned, the Greek word translated "psalms" means "a sacred song sung to a musical accompaniment." A variety of musical instruments should be used (see Ps. 150). "Just as God created wide varieties of plants, animals, and humans, God has created a wide variety of music. Failure to recognize different musical forms as worthy and to attempt to utilize them in worship is to fail to recognize the creativity of the Creator" (Robb Redman, *The Great Worship Awakening*, cited by Bradley, p. 359). "Understanding of God can be deepened through the classic hymn, the gospel song, and the contemporary chorus" (Bradley, p. 360).

That does not mean that every service should have all the varieties. In the words of Ken Paris, "I know of Rap, Hip-hop concerts, and Country concerts. I know of Classical concerts and Rock concerts. But no one has a Rap-Hip Hop, Country, Classical Rock concert." Variety is allowed. Each church has to decide which variety and how much variety, which brings up the next point.

*Singing in Church should suit the People* It is the variety of church music that can cause conflict. The reality is we are all creatures of culture. The elderly do not like Christian rock and young people don't dig hymns. To complicate matters, hymns lovers don't like all hymns. My wife has a friend in another state who wanted to go to a church that sang hymns, but she did not like "Holy, Holy, Holy!" "No matter how much a hymn, Gospel song, or praise song means to me, it will not mean the same thing to a person raised in another musical culture" (Sally Morgenthaler, cited by Radmacher, p. 114).

This is the greatest challenge of church music in an established church (It is easier to start a new church with a new style of music.) Not only should the members be considered, but the visitors should also be considered as well. First Corinthians 14 teaches that what goes on in a church meeting could greatly affect visitors, which means that the way visitors (your target audience) are affected by music is a consideration in the selection of a music style. No church today will reach the younger generation with an organ and piano as the musical instruments used in the church meeting. So the older people need to learn to be more contemporary. Today's "contemporary" is tomorrow's "traditional." At the same time, the young people and new believers need to learn some of the traditional hymns of the church. The challenge is to use music that teaches the members and reaches the visitors.

*Singing in Church should be done well* "Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy" (Ps. 33:3; see also 1 Chron. 15:22; 25:7). The Hebrew word translated "skillfully" in Psalm 33 means "to be good, be pleasing, be well, to make a thing good or right or beautiful." No music is better than bad music.

Young people today expect quality music because they have grown up with quality music. In the words of Ken Paris, "I remember when power windows were a luxury option. Today they are standard on even the cheapest cars. So are power brakes, automatic transmissions, and even air conditioning. At one time, people had to crank their cars to start them and an automatic starter was seen as a luxury. Today no one would expect that they have to get out of their car to crack it to start it. What am I saying?

Expectations of quality change, particularly from one generation to another. So today younger people EXPECT a service with stereo sound and a full band with music played to sound like a recording on the radio. Once a luxury, now a necessity."

**Summary:** Singing in the church should be from the heart to the Lord to teach and admonish one another with a variety of music suited to the people, both those present and those who are visiting.

These principles provide a broad framework for a church music ministry. They do not address all the issues, but perhaps that is the point. There is freedom within this biblical framework. Nevertheless, some questions can be addressed.

Is singing worship? As was pointed out in the chapter on worship, worship is an attitude of honoring the Lord by offering sacrifices of an obedient (holy) life, praising, doing good works, and giving. It is not a mood or an emotion. It is an attitude of honoring the Lord, *which can be done in a number of ways, including singing praise to the Lord*, but just singing God's praises on Sunday morning is not all there is to worship. "Throughout the Scripture, worship was first and foremost an attitude and a lifestyle that inspired an activity, not vice versa" (Dan Radmacher, p. 163). "True biblical worship is an attitude that results in a lifestyle of obedience" (Dan Radmacher, p. 165). Singing His praises is *one way* to honor the Lord. The psalmist says, "All the earth shall worship You And sing praises to You; They shall sing praises *to* Your name" (Ps. 66:4).

Many Christians today think that singing and worship are synonymous. They are not. Worship is much, much more than music. "For most worshipers, worship and music are inseparable; however, worship can exist without music—music does not equal worship! Once we begin to imagine worship without music and recognize that God created music but does not require music in order to worship, *we are able to put music into its functional role, that is, to serve the purposes of the community gathered for worship*" (Bradley, p. 358, italics added).

Barclay quotes William Temple, the renowned Archbishop of Canterbury, as defining worship as quickening the conscience by the holiness of God, feeding the mind with the truth of God, purging the imagination by the beauty of God, opening the heart to the love of God, and devoting the will to the purpose of God (Barclay, vol. 2, p. 117).

What is the place of emotion in a church service? There is nothing wrong with having or expressing emotion, but from a biblical point of view, the primary objective is for people to be edified by understanding truth. *Emotion results from an encounter with truth.* It is possible to target emotions instead of the mind to "work up" emotions for the sake of an emotional experience. There is a style of preaching and a style of leading music that aims at emotions. That is misguided. As Paul says, "Sing with understanding" (1 Cor. 14:15). When that is properly done emotion will follow.

Whatever the content of the songs or the style of the music, a meeting should be conducted decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40). Loud is one thing; too loud is another. When the volume of the musical instruments is so loud that it makes understanding the words being sung by the people on the platform or the people in the pew hard to understand, the volume is too loud. Also, everything should be done well. We should bring to the Lord first fruits, lambs without spot or blemish. In short, we should bring the Lord our best. That demands pastors who prepare and pray and musicians who practice, rehearse, and play to the glory of God.

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