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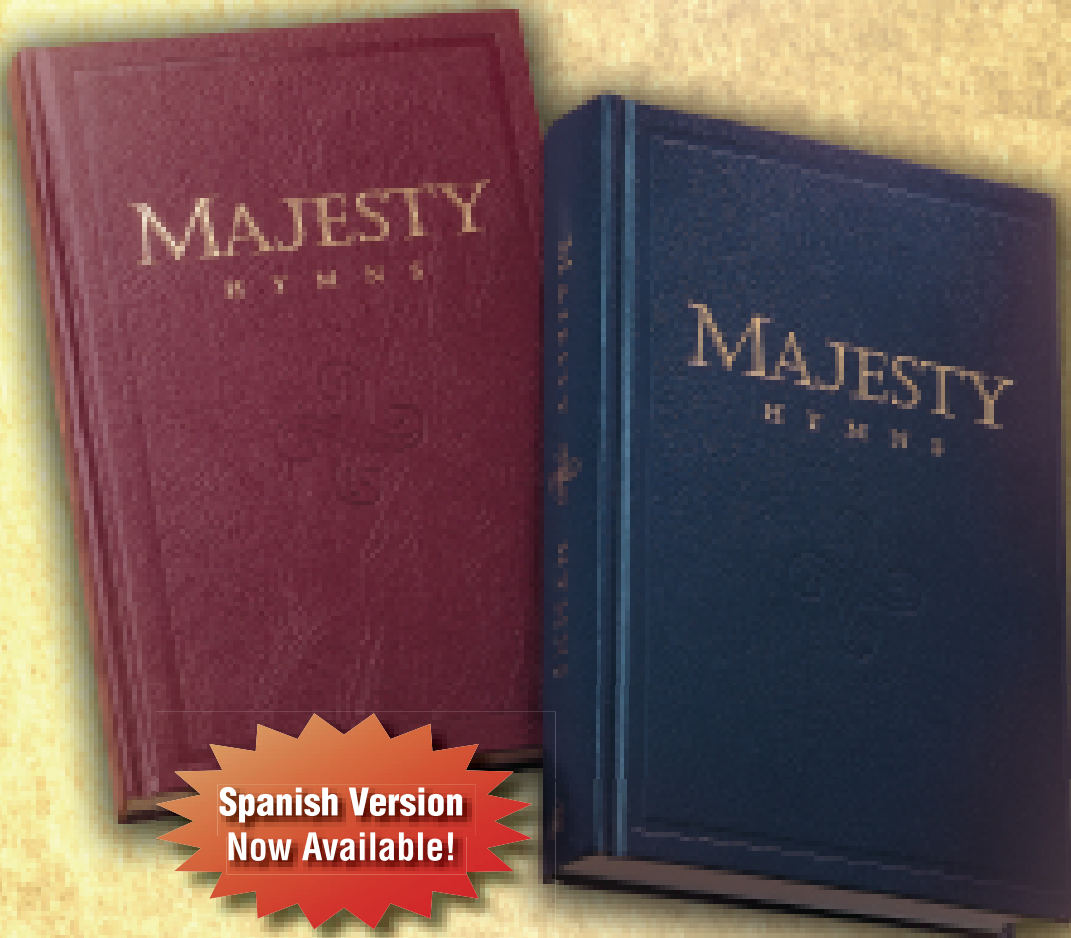
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Contents

MARCH/APRIL 2004

FRONTLINE MAGAZINE

VOLUME 14 • NUMBER 2

6 A Biblical Foundation for Music

Doug Bachorik Jr.
Many churches have seen fit to change the foundation upon which musical decisions are made.

10 Down the Slippery Slope of Blended Services

Dan Lucarini
Oh, do we really have to sing that old song? Give us the new stuff so we can worship!

12 The Goal of a Minister of Music

Kurt Stephens
It is in the heat of ministry that each of us is forced to answer the questions of purpose, goal, and meaning.

14 What a Pastor Wants from the Music Ministry

Danny Sweatt
I want music to give a voice to our corporate praise.

15 Growing the Music Program

John Tracy
What kind of growth should we be interested in for the church music program?

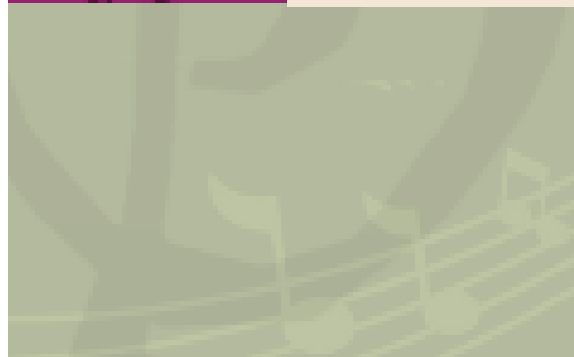
22 Is CCM a Cultural Thing?

Frank Garlock
Absolutely! But I believe it is promoting the wrong culture.



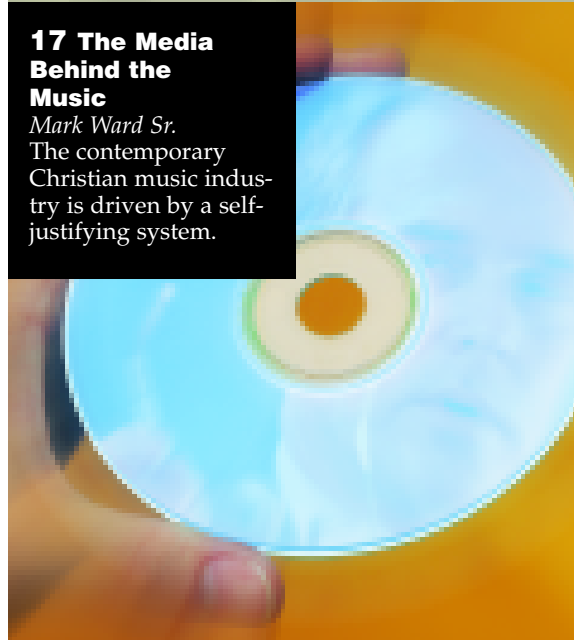
8 What's Next, Christian Crunk?

Tim Fisher
"Crunk" is a new form of alternative urban rock/rap, and it will undoubtedly be represented soon in Billboard's Top 40.



17 The Media Behind the Music

Mark Ward Sr.
The contemporary Christian music industry is driven by a self-justifying system.



27 New Evangelical Worship Services

Jerry Howarth
Did God institute the local church to be a place of entertainment?

Departments

4 Mail Bag

5 On the Front Line
Why You Should Come to Schaumburg
John C. Vaughn

20 On the Home Front

25 Wit & Wisdom

26 Ladies' Circle
You Can't Be Too Kind
Sharon Thomas

29 The Evangelist's Corner

Treasuring Our Time (Part 2)
Jerry Sionksty

30 At a Glance

The Threefold Office of Christ (Part 2)
Layton Talbert

33 Newsworthy

35 Global Focus

Focus on India
Pearson Johnson

38 Behind the Lines

Music and Morality
Gordon Dickson

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You may also fax your comments to (864) 322-0838 or send them by e-mail to info@fbfi.org.



You may request that your letter not be published or that your name be withheld, but anonymous letters will not be accepted.

I am most thankful for your strong Biblical position. I will continue with you as long as you maintain this stance.

*Don Lowe
Newark Valley, NY*

I just wanted to drop a quick note to say that Biblically Dr. Rod Bell has done the right thing to resolve the issue. I respect him enormously for seeing what he did was wrong and then taking proper action. Dr. Bell, thank you for the years of being a Christlike example to the "preacher boys."

*Pastor David Neal
Oakdale, CT*

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the quality publication that you pro-

duce with each issue of *FrontLine*. We appreciate all that goes into making it pleasurable, insightful, and thought-provoking reading.

*Bob and Jane Keller
FREEDOM Flyer
Ministries*

I was saddened to read of the departure of Rod Bell from the ministry of the FBFI. . . . The president-elect stated, "It will be sad but not surprising, if the few who have made it their cause to attack him and the FBFI take advantage of this moment of vulnerability." A person that would choose to attack in a situation such as this should ask himself, how do I compare with the Apostle Paul, let alone our Lord?

*Charlie Atkins
Hollister, CA*

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Why You Should Come to Schaumburg

New Horizons is the theme for the 84th National Meeting of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International. This year we will meet on June 15–17 in the beautiful facilities of the Bethel Baptist Church in Schaumburg, Illinois. Pastor Bradley Smith is our host, and we are grateful for the wonderful hospitality his congregation has always provided for us.

“New Horizons” will take a strategic look at what is ahead in our developing, yet dangerous, world. There will be peaks and valleys, and we must be prepared. Fundamental Baptists must rise to the challenge before us.

Chuck Phelps will show us “The Danger of Drift.” Craig Hartman will open our eyes to one of the most neglected groups right here in America. Gordon Dickson will take us “From Our Heritage to the Horizon.” Tim Jordan and Tony Fox will help us to look beyond the horizon by looking at “The Unexplored Regions of God’s Word” and “The Next Great Horizon of the Great Commission: China.” Bob Jones III will guide us through an examination of the empirical evidence of “Christ’s Resurrection” and its profound effects upon us. And Kevin Schaal will help us answer the question: “Is There Unity on the Horizon for Separatists?”

The lineup of workshop speakers includes Mike Harding, Stephen Jones, Fred Moritz, David Pennington, Mike Shrock, and Bud Steadman. They will deal with timely issues for the days ahead by answering provocative questions: What is the *purpose* of the Preservation of Scripture? What is the purpose of the upcoming Conference on Biblical Belief and

Balance (scheduled for July 26–28 in Indianapolis)? How does “pluralism” threaten the belief that “Salvation Is Only in Christ”? You will discover new horizons in your own preaching with workshops on “Vibrant Expository Preaching” and “Illustrating Your Sermon with Style.”

This will be a watershed meeting during this pivotal point in the history of the FBFI and Fundamentalism. Don’t miss it! Join us to help seize the opportunities on the horizon.

Dr. Chuck Phelps Elected as Vice President of FBFI

In the Winter Board Meeting the Executive Board of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship International elected Dr. Chuck Phelps to serve as Vice President. Dr. Phelps is a seasoned, balanced pastor. He is a well-respected leader, not only in his own area in New England, but throughout Baptist Fundamentalism. His steady leadership is a great asset to the FBFI.

Timely Tract Now Available

You also need to know about a resource that has been prepared by our research secretary, Gordon Dickson. By the time you receive this issue of *FrontLine*, many will already be using a timely tract titled “Shocked?” designed to provide a clear presentation of the Gospel in the context of the crucifixion. It asks the question, “When you consider what happened to Him, are you shocked by the horrible death of Jesus Christ?” Using the story of the thief on the cross who could not do good works or gain the favor of the church, the

tract proves from Scripture that salvation is instant. You may be aware that the Roman Catholic Church has prepared a booklet to distribute outside theaters where *The Passion of the Christ* is being shown. If you want a resource that presents the simple truth of the gospel, check “On the Home Front” for information on ordering this tract.

FrontLine Magazine

FrontLine is a long way from having a production staff and schedule to engage in the kind of discussion that takes place on the Internet. It is, however, undergoing a metamorphosis that we hope will bring it out of its cocoon. Efforts are underway to make this magazine genuinely “cutting edge.” It is making demands on our authors and editors, but our goal is to put into your hands the information you know you need. We also want to help many others who do not know they need it, or doubt that they would find help in these pages.

You will continue to see practical, timeless truth that will appeal to a wide audience. Pastors and their people will continue to see articles of interest to their corporate and personal concerns. You will, however, if we are successful, find not only timeless truth, but also more timely application of it. We are planning future issues on topics that Fundamentalists are working their way through—on concerns of young Fundamentalists, especially. We hope to provide resources that are thoroughly Biblical, well balanced, and yes, from a Baptist point of view.



DR. JOHN VAUGHN

A Biblical Foundation for Music

Throughout the history of God's people there have come times when a person, a church, or a group of churches must throw off some practice established by previous generations. Many reasons justify such a step, the primary one being a lack of Scriptural authority for said practice. The church is always bettered—indeed, revived—when its people continually weigh their actions and philosophies in the balances of the Bible.

Performed in a spirit of love and devotion to our Lord, this process of evaluation ought to touch every area of our lives and of our churches' ministries. That includes the important but volatile realm of music. It seems that some people have reexamined this aspect of our worship services and private devotions with the goal of bringing about a change. Many churches that are sound in the Scripture, in doctrine, in theology, and practice have seen fit to change the foundation upon which musical decisions are made.

Those who seek to justify a shift in musical philosophy sometimes make statements such as "The Bible has nothing to say about musical styles" or "There is no abominable praise." These are bold, sweeping remarks that stretch beyond music and encompass deeper, more fundamental issues. To either accept or reject such declarations requires an examination of God's Word.

Digging into the Scriptures

Some basic questions immediately arise: "Does the Bible speak about styles of music?" or "Is God concerned with how we link notes and rhythms?" If by these questions, we mean, "Does the Bible mention rock music? How about Baroque styles, or folk songs?" then the answer is no. The Scriptures do not refer to these styles by name. The same can be said of literature (books, magazines, newspapers, the World Wide Web) and drama (theater, television, movies, videos). Although music, literature, and drama all appear in the Bible, no statement in God's Word refers to a current trend or style in any of these media.

However, if by the original questions a person is asking, "Does the Bible provide any guidance for principles or precepts about music?" then the answer is an unqualified yes. Psalm 119 and 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 underscore that God gave His Word to instruct us concerning how to live

and glorify Him. Clearly, then, it is folly to claim that any portion of our existence lies outside the scope and authority of the Scriptures.

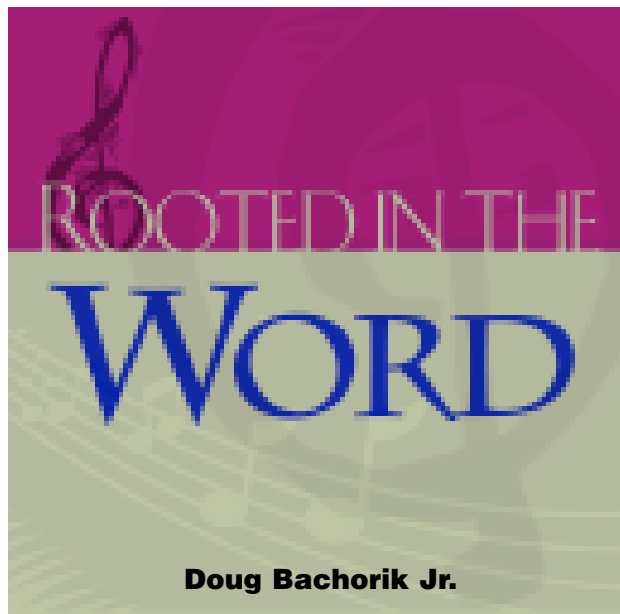
What standard, then, has God established for music and everything else for His people? Perhaps the answer could be summarized by the words "different" and "better." Clear evidence for these distinctions exists in both the Old and New Testaments. For instance, in Leviticus 10, after God had established the methods of acceptable worship, Nadab and Abihu saw fit to disregard God's ordained order in their effort to make an offering. Judgment followed swiftly and severely.

Psalms 96 and 98 open with the command "O sing unto the Lord a new song!" The children of Israel, living in the Promised Land and surrounded by Gentile nations, were expected to sing a new song, a different song. The reason for the song also provides the reason that it should be different. The verses following the initial call to praise in both Psalms lists the causes for the call: The Lord is great; other gods are but idols; the Lord created the heavens; He is coming in judgment; He has done marvelous things; He has made known His salvation and righteousness; and He has remembered His mercy and truth toward His people and all the world has seen it. The

true child of God can hardly refrain from saying, "Praise the Lord!" after reading such a list. In contrast, the heathen people surrounding Israel could not comprehend such glorious truths. Their religions and philosophies were riddled with hopelessness, and their music doubtless reflected that. However, the psalmist cries out, "O sing unto the Lord a new song"—that is, a song from the hearts and minds of a people chosen by the one true God to be His own. After all, what similarity could the songs of the heathen have with those of Israel?

Similarly, the New Testament maintains these distinctions and heightens them. It is as if a hazy, overcast morning has yielded to the burning brilliance of noon. The life and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ exemplify the uniqueness and sanctified nature of the Christian walk. One need only ponder the Sermon on the Mount to glimpse the sharp contrast of the regenerate life compared to the unregenerate.

Later, the apostle Paul continues the theme in Ephesians 4 and 5, where commands for a separated life



It seems that two main factors have created the problem. First, music has been severed from Biblical and theological underpinnings. Second, the world has been permitted a voice in how God's people worship Him.

abound. Those commands include the following: "walk not as other Gentiles walk" (4:17); "put off concerning the former conversation the old man" (4:22); "be renewed in the spirit of your mind . . . put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (4:23, 24); "be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children" (5:1); you are "light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (5:8). This emphasis on the holiness and higher calling of the Christian life seems to culminate in verse 18, where we see the stark contrast of drunkenness (the indwelling of the world) and the Spirit (the indwelling of God). It is in this context that we next read, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (5:19).

Can we really claim that all the previous references to the new life end before we reach verse 19? In other words, was the work of Christ on the cross not sufficient to radically alter and conform our worship and our lives to the standards of God? Shall God's people continually cry out for the leeks and onions of the old life, when He commands that milk and honey be served?

Called Out of Darkness

Christ and the Christian life are stumbling blocks to the world, but to the believer they are precious, and it is with joy and dedication that we should affirm 1 Peter 2:9: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." That being true, any music that turns the hearer toward the desires of the world merits no place in the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Other privileges and responsibilities of the Christian life—such as liberty and evangelism—are valid and important, but they do not negate the foundational truths of the previous passages. There is no limitation on the glorious change summarized in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Addressing the Problem

If it is true that the Bible has something to say about the music of God's people, then one may well wonder how solid, Biblical churches can experience such turmoil over music. Equally important, what can be done about that turmoil? It seems that two main factors have created the problem. First, music has been severed from Biblical and theological underpinnings. Second, the world has been permitted a voice in how God's people worship Him.

Music, as with anything in our lives, is like a ship

whose anchor should be lodged on the rock of the Scriptures, not left to be tossed upon the ever-shifting waves of this world. The question remains, how can music to be returned to (or maintain) a Biblical mooring? Although the answers seem myriad and complex, this author would suggest the following as a starting place: treat music as a ministry and re-engage pastors.

Music, according to Colossians 3:16, is a ministry. Perhaps those responsible for decisions about special music, choir numbers, special services, and congregational singing should be selected on the basis of 1 Timothy 3, not just on musical abilities. Mature spiritual discernment is the primary criterion. A "young" Christian—no matter how talented, trained, or enthusiastic—is not ready to make judgments about which music to use in the corporate worship of the church.

Because music is a ministry and a vital aspect of worship, pastors must end the trend toward less involvement and influence. Sadly, the men with the greatest amount of Scriptural knowledge and wisdom have, for the most part, abdicated their role of shepherd in this area to musicians, many of whom lack serious theological training or spiritual discernment. It is once again time for pastors to take up the pen to write texts and music, and to guide their churches into a Biblical philosophy of music.

Simultaneous with the retreat of pastors, the world's influence on the musical choices of the church has increased. Rather than allowing publishers and recording companies (secular and sacred) to dictate the standards, the church and individual believers must exercise their right and responsibility to examine everything in light of the Scriptures (Acts 17:10, 11).

Likewise, the church must also be careful not to substitute musical entertainment for the preaching of the Word as a way to evangelize. Although music can be used to aid in spreading the gospel, its primary roles are worship and teaching. But even if evangelism were a primary function of music, that would not justify the abrogation of the principles found in Ephesians 4 and 5. God never contradicts Himself.

In the final analysis, music, like every other practice or tradition, must be weighed in the balances of the Bible and not in the world's false balances. Our music and our lives must be characterized by our spiritual rebirth, not by the old man. Every facet of our lives should be true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. "Think on these things."

Doug Bachorik Jr., former head of the music department at Fergus Falls Community College in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, is now a missionary appointee with GFA to the Philippines. This article originally appeared in the *North Star Baptist*, Jan/Mar 1998.

What's Next, Christian Crunk?

New South Simplicity Skewers Lit Hop—by Martin Turenne
genres are never simply abandoned, rather new musical styles sprout from existing ones almost imperceptibly. Such is the case with crunk music, a new ish offshoot born in the swamps and boardrooms of the New South. With their shout-along choruses and synthetic bass and drum backing, crunk artists revel in their own artlessness, crafting coarse call-and-response anthems with one goal in mind: to get bodies moving.

The newest craze to hit music charts is called “Crunk.” It’s a new form of alternative urban rock/rap, and it will undoubtedly be represented soon in Billboard’s Top 40. Most likely the average reader will not be intensely interested in the details of this new music, but one thing is beyond doubt: in eight months we will be seeing “Christian Crunk” advertised in *CCM Magazine* and spreading across the nation in Christian bookstores, hailed as the newest form of “anointed” music.

Does this prediction sound outlandish? Or is it right on track? If the CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) movement is anything, it is predictable. Secular music styles arrive on the pop-culture scene, and in a short period of time they are mimicked by “cutting edge” Christian groups, until the “new” music is recognized as marketable to the Christian subculture and therefore justified with the claim, “God must be in it.” I have witnessed more than thirty years of these cycles, and no apparent end is in sight.

While CCM has made great claims about bringing the church fresh, new, exciting music styles for worship (or for entertainment), the truth remains that CCM has *never* imported anything new into the church. I challenge any CCM supporter to name one example of a new musical style that CCM has brought us! More accurately, we are

treated to outdated, half-baked, and, in many cases, inferior copies of popular music. And what is the result? The church smugly smiles with pleasure at its “progress.”

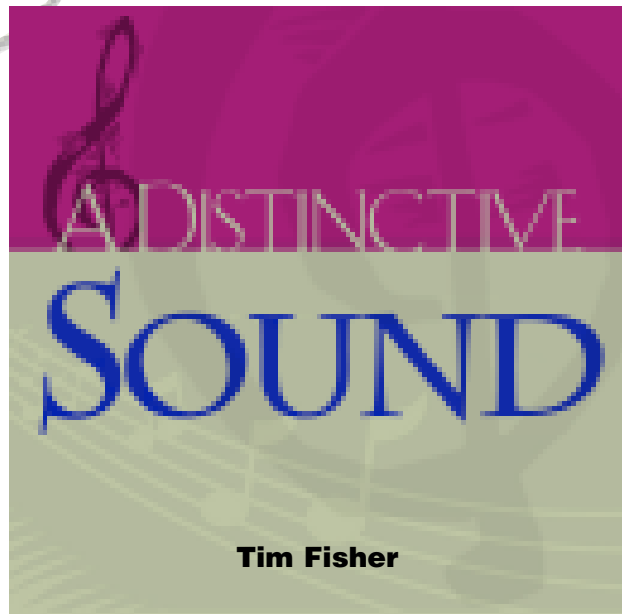
In the Scriptures, however, the church was never given the task of taking the lead in pop culture, and neither has it received the prerogative of following the same. Scripture says believers are “in the world,” but we are not to be “of the world” (John 17). However, many Christian teenagers (and parents) in Fundamental churches seem to hold an attitude that they must find a rationale for listening to this type of music. They need to feel that it is accepted. Simultaneously, they question the authenticity and sincerity of anyone who opposes such music. Why? The answer may surprise you.

My own twenty-five years of ministry with the Fundamental church culture has yielded some interesting insights. One thing I hear consistently from young people in the Christian high schools and Fundamental Christian colleges is that few of them actually listen to CCM! Instead, they admit that they argue for the acceptability of CCM to justify listening to secular music. That’s right. No one really cares much about CCM music—what our young Christians really want to hear is the secular stuff. Fundamentalists have spent a great deal of time and bother over CCM artists and con-

certs. Some of us have even amassed file drawers full of the latest dirt on the big names of CCM; yet we have failed to identify the real culprit—good ol’ rock-and-roll music!

This revelation comes as no surprise to anyone who interacts with church teenagers regularly. And those who deal with adults on a regular basis also realize that a real problem among adults in Fundamental churches is country and western music. However, we believers still seem to focus on CCM as our main problem. It’s time for us to wake up. By the time we realize that “Christian Crunk” is available in the local Christian bookstore, our young people will have already been listening to it from secular groups.

For us Christians to confront this situation seriously, we must recognize the problem for what it is. We, as a generation of worldly adults, have reared a generation of worldly teenagers. The sensual music that fills our homes and is now beginning to fill our churches is only a byproduct of our sensual lives. To be sure, this is not a pretty picture—and the cure is equally painful. We must



engage in an all-out battle to win the hearts of our people. Note that we are not winning them over to a mere conservative style of music—the issue is much bigger than that. We must see a return to a Christianity that is governed by heart-felt convictions rather than sterile conformity.

How did we get to the pitiful state of labeling any Christian's strongly held standard as "legalistic"? In many cases, a mere suggestion for godly living, or drawing a line, or living circumspectly in this evil day will elicit catcalls of "Pharisee" or "legalist" or, even more insidiously, "killjoy." We believers got ourselves into this mess, and it will only be through the grace of God that we will get out of it.

First, through the grace of God, parents must take the initial step to identify their own brands of hedonism. It may not be rock and roll, but it is just as insidious. Culture provides us with a variety of indulgent, sensual pleasures, and children know when parents are overstepping the boundaries just as clearly as parents condemn the children for doing the same. Perhaps the most painful comment I hear in my ministry with teenagers is the statement "Why should I have to give up rock music when I know what my parents are listening to?" There is no good answer to that question. But it is the most frequent question that I receive from teenagers in Fundamental churches. Our homes will never be sanctuaries for godliness until parents take the first steps of dedication.

Second, through the grace of God, parents must take an additional step to ensure that their children are nurtured in a solid church and/or Christian school that supports the standards they are promoting in their home. We must start pressuring our "Christian" schools to be Christian again. It's no wonder that the home-school movement is gaining such momentum. In many cases parents resort to that option simply because no Christian school in their area is worth attending. If you are home schooling for that reason, and have also taken the first step (given above) seriously, then you are to be commended. Too many churches are giving in on music standards for any number of unscriptural reasons. Parents must lovingly confront such decline in their church leadership, and, if necessary, find another church that supports their standards. Even a change in location and job may be necessary to facilitate this desire, but isn't your family worth it?

Third, it will only be by God's grace that our church leaders begin to understand the problem. To those of you who are in leadership positions in your churches and schools, and who are musically abandoning those who faithfully built those institutions, shame on you for ignoring or impugning their convictions! In many churches the weakness of the pastor is to blame for the lowering of musical standards. Some believers have somehow concluded that a people-friendly church must ditch all convention and tradition in order to be relevant. However, this thinking not only abandons reason but also shows a lack of Scriptural knowledge and implementation. Of course, I

realize that this stance contradicts the advice of today's church-growth gurus, but I am willing to wait for the judgment of the next generation of godly leaders on where this "user-friendly" movement has ultimately taken us.

Finally, if we are going to see meaningful progress in this battle we fight against encroaching worldly culture, we are going to have to provide alternatives to our teenagers. I am specifically referring to providing those things which are in harmony with the Scriptural mandate of Philippians 4:8. It is not enough to condemn bad books and bad music and bad videos. Rather, we must replace them with the good. We must proactively give our children the necessary tools to help them develop aesthetic consciences governed by Scriptural principle. As vital as this step is, it is the one that I most doubt will happen. The cause for my doubts is not a lack of trust in our teenagers, but a lack of character in Christian parents. I am not convinced we have the fortitude to make this happen. There are many reasons that this last step could be the greatest stumbling block, but it won't be due to a lack of material. We have the resources to teach good standards. We have the recordings and videos and books to place in the hands of our children. We just don't think it is important. That is the reason for this article. We need to be awakened from our worldliness. We need to be stirred again to recognize the struggles our teenagers face, along with the lack of character that we as parents have displayed in this culture in which we live.

Yes, "Christian Crunk" is on the horizon. That, however, should not disturb us greatly. We need to focus on the real problem—that we Christians are increasingly losing our distinctiveness in the world today.

Dr. Tim Fisher is the Minister of Music at Faith Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina, and the president of Sacred Music Services (www.smsrecordings.com).



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Down the Slippery Slope of Blended Services

Many churches are struggling to accommodate the musical desires of everyone in their congregations. Pastors and music ministers in conservative churches have come under tremendous pressure to compromise and allow CCM into services. Out of this compromise the “blended” worship service often rises. Such a service mingles musical elements of the old and the new into one worship service.

Theoretically this arrangement should please everyone. Traditionalists are initially assured that the two styles can coexist peacefully. In reality, what happens over time is a steady slide down the slippery slope away from traditional and conservative music into the latest, “edgiest” contemporary styles.

How does a church move onto that slippery slope, and where does it lead? Before addressing that, let’s consider how differently the Contemporary and the Traditional view the purpose of the worship service, and then compare what they expect to get out of it.

Similarities and Differences

Both viewpoints start on common ground. That is, both sides sincerely want to honor and glorify God, and both are concerned that everyone derives some benefit from it. However, as the following table illustrates, these groups’ other objectives dramatically diverge.

	The Traditional	The Contemporary
What is the primary purpose of the worship service?	To prepare hearts for the preaching	To usher people into the presence of God
What tends to be emphasized?	The preaching	The music experience
What is the primary motive in selecting music?	Will God like it?	Do the people like it?
What is the primary indicator of a successful service?	I was really convicted by the Word of God today! (truth-based)	I really worshiped God today! (experience-based)

One Church’s Saga

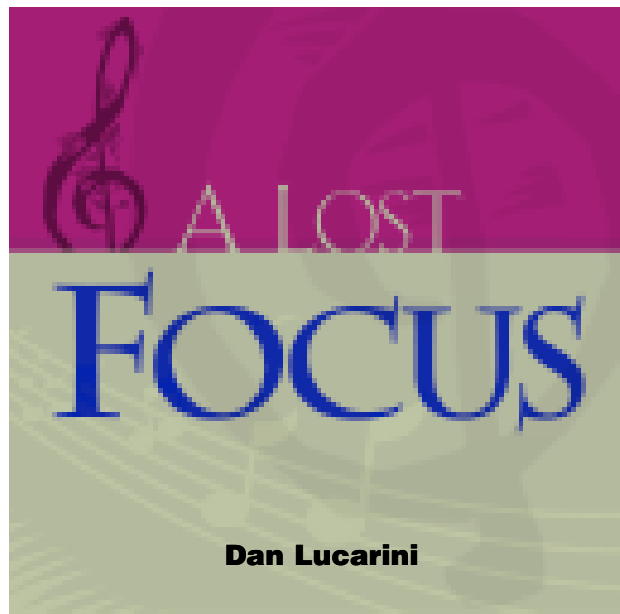
Now let’s consider the progression of a typical blended service in one church. It began with one or two Maranatha-Music-style choruses in a Sunday evening service, such as “Seek Ye First,” “Unto Thee, O Lord,”

“Glorify Thy Name,” or “I Love You, Lord.” Sometimes the organist or pianist would play the accompaniment, even though the songs were written for a cappella or acoustic guitar. In the process of time, soloists began using accompaniment tapes, most of which would include a muted drum and bass track. (I found it incredible that a pastor who was dead-set against rock music—and declared that he would never allow a drum set in his church—would allow taped musicians to sneak the drums and rock music in through the back door.)

Before long, however, some people insisted on musical authenticity in the contemporary choruses. After all, they argued, these choruses were not written for our “traditional” organ or piano. Most were written for guitars. So we brought in one acoustic guitar for the choruses. After we grew accustomed to that, people suggested that two guitars sound better than one and that we may as well add the bass guitar too, along with its amplifier. The logic was that this would involve young Christian guitarists in ministry, or even attract an unsaved guitarist to attend church. Here was the humble beginning of the praise band in churches. At this point, Traditionals began to complain about “worldliness” in the church service.

When the drum set finally appeared on the platform, the church reached the steepest and most dangerous part of the slope. More than any other instrument, a set of drums is the key instrument of contemporary music styles. Drums are used to drive the beat, rock’s true differentiation from other music styles. From that point on, the drums disproportionately influenced the music ministry. Musical choices became increasingly “rocky” to satisfy the drummer (and those in the congregation attracted by this style). Services became louder and wilder. In some cases, I have seen worship leaders try in vain to control the drum volume by encasing the drum set in a Plexiglas sound barrier. But all that accomplishes is to bring more attention to the drums and make them look like a special object of worship.

At this point, let’s stop and recall that we were initially trying to conduct a blended service to please the Traditionals too, so we still wanted some hymns using the



organ and piano. Also, we still wanted to have a choir number. But by that point we “balanced” the service by giving equal time to CCM.

Incompatible

Unwittingly, we created an unnatural clash of incompatible musical styles unlike anything you would hear elsewhere in the world. With blended services, we created two sets of musicians with different skills. Thus began a competition for the hearts of the congregation: the battle of the bands, so to speak. It was predictable which style would win the battle: CCM always prevailed over conservative music, because it’s fun and new and appeals to the flesh. Add to that the veneer of respectability given to CCM by the leadership, and many believers gladly traded the old music for the new.

In my church I tried in vain to be a bridge between the two styles, but there is no middle ground. As a musician, I discovered that any attempt to synthesize the two styles led to musical mediocrity and compromise. If I tried to tone down a contemporary song, the Contemporaries criticized me. If I arranged a hymn in a contemporary style, the Traditionalists complained. Playing a contemporary chorus on the organ became as objectionable as playing hymns with the band.

Eventually I concluded that the two musical styles must remain separate. But could they be equal in the same service? No. The objectives and motives of each “side” are incompatible; they cannot be blended. Eventually one will win out over the other. In our church’s experience, the contemporary music gradually took over, and the conservative music became an occasional visitor, if it appeared at all. In contemporary services I’ve attended since, when the leader introduces a hymn in the middle of the set, I often sense a palpable disdain emanating from Contemporaries in the congregation.

Oh, do we really have to sing that old song? Give us the new stuff so we can worship! I fear that the classic hymns may disappear completely from our services within fifty years because younger generations have been raised on a steady diet of CCM. They are also told that any new style is acceptable and are fed a steady diet of subtle reasons they do not need hymns.

The Trojan Horse

I now believe that the blended service is not a long-term solution, even though CCM promoters present it as such to the congregation. Instead, it is a Trojan horse. Some have tried to solve this dilemma by holding separate traditional and contemporary services. At least that approach addresses the problem of mixing incompatible music styles. However, separate services can also create a breeding ground for division

in the local church, and they accommodate the use of inappropriate music styles without confronting the issue. Several churches in my area are experimenting with separate services. I am curious to see the fruits produced over a period of time. But even this separation of services will not remain sharp for long. Soon it will blur, and the blurring is almost always towards contemporary shades.

I would like to conclude by sharing a sad story. At one Baptist church where I led worship, we had almost completed the slide into total contemporary music in every service and had not used a hymnal in months. One weekend I was preparing for a Sunday that included the Lord’s Supper. Very little contemporary music is appropriate for this occasion, and even at that time in my musical journey I understood the need to be particularly selective with music for a communion service.

So I went back to the hymnal that I kept on our piano. The Lord prompted me to select “Near the Cross.” I was going to display the words on the overhead projector as usual, but as I practiced the song I heard the loveliest harmonies in my mind. I decided we would sing it out of the hymnal, giving people a chance to harmonize for a change.

On Sunday morning, when it was time to prepare for communion, I asked the congregation to open a hymnal and turn to the correct page number. Next followed a moment of confusion. I heard murmuring and shuffling. Then I said to the congregation,

“You know, the blue book stuck under the pew in front of you.” But the auditorium lights were always dimmed during our worship time so people could read the screen. As a result, some people could not find either the hymnal or the page. I asked the crew to turn up the lights.

What happened next was both sweet and sad. Light replaced the darkness, and we sang out of the hymnals with beautiful harmonies that brought tears of joy, not only to my eyes, but also to many other eyes in the congregation. The only accompaniment was a quiet piano. No drums or guitars or synthesizers smothered the singing of the saints. Countless times I have led hundreds in praise and worship, using both traditional and contemporary styles. But never before had I experienced such a sweet participation by everyone in the congregation. Every age group, no matter what their taste or preference, had been united in a common song of repentance and praise to Jesus. Barriers came crashing down in that brief moment.

Then we put away the hymnals and dimmed the lights again.

Dan Lucarini is author of the popular book *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement*. © Evangelical Press 2002. All rights reserved. Used by permission of the publisher.

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The Goal of a Minister of Music

Any minister of music who could master the question “What are you trying to accomplish?” would truly be successful. Having spent the past eleven years serving as Minister of Music, I can attest that the elements I contribute to my church’s services have been shaped and motivated by many factors. The first of those factors is that I am motivated by the study of God’s Word. The second motivating factor for any music minister is the senior pastor under whom he serves. Woe unto any second man who cannot work alongside his pastor to accomplish the desired goals. While these factors play an integral role in what any music minister seeks to accomplish, my intention is to challenge our thinking on an entirely different level.

Much musical training on the college level is theoretical, and it emphasizes the development of tools. Philosophy of ministry is emphasized but never fully realized until you find yourself outside the textbook and actually serving in the confines of a local church. It is in the heart of ministry that each of us is forced to answer the questions of purpose, goal, and meaning: “What is it that I do, and why?” “What are the *real* motivating factors, and what motivating factors are self-imposed?” Of course, no textbook—except the Bible—prepares you to answer those questions.

What is the primary role for us ministers of music? Naturally, we all have a built-in answer: we lead in worship. But if I am to lead the congregation effectively in worship, I had better know more about the subject than a mere definition. One key word summarizes my goal for music ministry, and that word is *opportunity*. I want to give the members of my church every possible opportunity to worship the Lord in “spirit and in truth” and “the beauty of holiness.”

We live in a day when increasing numbers of churches are altering the flavor of their services to broaden the appeal for worship. I, too, am constantly seeking creative ideas to improve services. So what makes my church’s approach different from the “seeker-friendly” methods? The difference lies in how we view our *opportunity* to worship. Do we structure the service so that worship takes place on our terms, or on God’s terms? Is our worship built around the outward (form) or the inward (heart)? The Bible has much to say concerning these probing questions.

Hundreds of passages in Scripture deal specifically

with the topic of worship. The Biblical model presupposes that the worshiper is coming to give of himself and not get for himself. Yet the contemporary-service movement is concerned primarily with providing an answer to the frustrations of the worshiper. Frankly, we Christians find it easy to analyze other movements, but have we ever considered our own? Have you ever found yourself discouraged in a worship service because a spirit of apathy seemed to prevail over your spirit of zeal and devotion? Perhaps you can’t even get through the first verse of the first hymn without being distracted. If you find yourself battling your flesh on a regular basis, you are not alone. The apostle Paul echoed those sentiments: “For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that

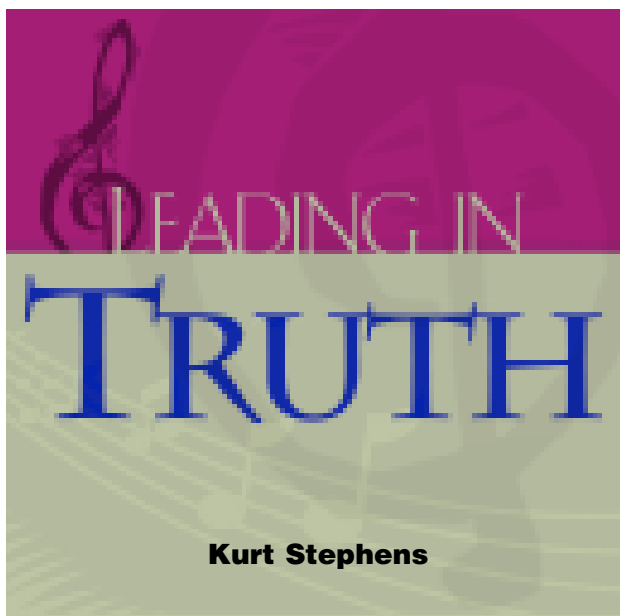
I do” (Rom. 7:19). What stands between you and a focused heart of worship is your own flesh. So what’s the solution?

God has provided the opportunity in His divine plan to energize the heart through worship. In fact, He has spelled out specific ways to accomplish this. Contemporary religion is always experimenting with new ways to “do worship.” However, Hebrews 10:19, 20 teaches us about the literal “new and living way” to approach a thrice-holy God in worship. That passage admonishes us as Christians to come confidently through the blood of Jesus Christ

into the very presence of God and to dwell there. What an awesome prospect to consider. Following this exhortation, verses 22–24 give us a threefold invitation: “Let us draw near,” “Let us hold fast,” and “Let us consider one another.”

Drawing Near

The first invitation is “Let us draw near.” God’s Word encourages us to draw near with a sincere heart, without hypocrisy. Acceptable worship does not happen spontaneously. It requires preparation. The choir prepares, the pastor prepares, and other teachers prepare. The New Testament believer is instructed to approach God with a pure heart and a clean conscience. We cannot rush into the presence of God with a double-minded heart and a preoccupation with self. Fellowship with God demands purity; therefore, true worship cannot occur when unconfessed sin reigns in the heart of the believer. If we are really interested in drawing near to God, we will be less concerned with whether the service pleases self and more



interested with whether our heart pleases God.

Having said that, let's be perfectly honest: how many times do we find ourselves emphasizing the form of our worship instead of the substance? Yes, music and liturgy do provide the *opportunity* to express a worshiping heart, but we must be careful in leading others to believe that artificial methods produce true worship. The crucial point for any music minister is not the form of his service, but what elements are provided to challenge and prepare the believer's heart.

Holding Firm

The second invitation is, "Let us hold fast." In other words, hold fast the profession (or confession) of our faith, that confidence that we have in our Savior and Lord. It is as Paul reminds us in Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ." When we have our hope fixed solely on God and His faithfulness, we are less likely to be distracted in worship. Our own desires become subservient to the worship of His person. Does your worship service provide the *opportunity* for average believers to "hold fast the profession" of their faith? A public service is a place for every believer to confess openly his or her confidence in a faithful and sovereign God. The Lord in His infinite wisdom knew that testifying of our confidence in Him would provide help and encouragement for the weary soul. Somehow our frail flesh needs that reassurance from other believers as well.

Considering Fellow Believers

The final invitation is this: "Let us consider one another." We must encourage each other "unto love and to good works." A believer who bears fruit and walks worthy of the Lord not only glorifies God, but encourages others as well. God's Word teaches us that loving the brethren exhibits the evidence of one's salvation. For

instance, 1 John 3:14 says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

If your primary goal in formulating the worship service is to please the pastor, appease the critic, or pacify the music police, then your values are sadly misplaced. On the other hand, if your ultimate purpose is to edify the body of Christ and to stimulate the congregation to worship God, you will hit a home run every time. The writer of Hebrews makes it crystal clear: the heart of worship is not what we receive from assembling together; it is what we contribute. When we draw near to God in sincerity, and with a fixed confidence, elevating the needs of others above ourselves, the lens of worship sharpens its focus, and we see God in the beauty of His holiness.

In summary, the Bible tells us that the Christian has been given a new song and that the hymns and spiritual songs we sing serve a threefold purpose. Hymns provide the avenue for us to draw near. They supply an endless resource of psalms and spiritual songs that aid in heartfelt expression. And lastly, they encourage us in the public service when we need it the most. God designed worship first and foremost to bring praise to Himself. If we look at the three New Testament sacrifices that remain—praise, doing good, and communicating (sharing with others)—we will discover that the worship service provides a wonderful medium for giving of ourselves in every area.

So, returning to the opening question, what am I trying to accomplish as a minister of music? I want to see that the believer is afforded every *opportunity* to come with a sincere heart into the very presence of God and worship without distraction, to profess openly his confidence in a faithful God, and lastly, to stimulate the body to love one another and bear fruit for the glory of God. May God teach us how to worship Him in sincerity and in "the beauty of holiness."

Kurt Stephens is the assistant pastor of music at Berean Baptist Church in Lilburn, Georgia.

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What a Pastor Wants from the Music Ministry

Music in the church is often seen as either an end in itself or as merely a means to an end. Some people, particularly musicians, consider music the most important component of a church service. The modern, contemporary movement certainly seems to encourage that viewpoint, in practice if not in creed. It is the music that stirs the emotions, that evokes the physical response that leaves the participant, in their view, with that warm worshipful feeling. Indeed, music is the cornerstone around which many churches are built.

Others, though, see music in a much more utilitarian way. In their view, it has little value unless it accomplishes some predetermined, nonmusical purpose. They seldom, if ever, speak of music as an offering to God. For them, music is more like a necessary activity to fill up time until the preaching begins. As is true in many ministry philosophies, there is truth and error in both positions.

As a person who became a senior pastor in midlife, I have a somewhat unique perspective. For years the music was my message. Before I occupied the pulpit, I led the music for 26 years. The songs that I sang or directed were my offering to God. During that delightful time of my life, I am sure that the music accomplished many nonmusical things, but always first, before any other consideration, we were fulfilling the Biblical mandate to “[sing] and [make] melody in your heart to the Lord.”

So what do I want from our church music now that I am in a different role, now that I am the preacher who “follows” the music? I want music to give a voice to our corporate praise. It is good to be thankful. It is important to express that thankfulness before others. Singing public praise to God honors Him, encourages others who may not feel like praising, and is a wonderful testimony to the lost that are doubtless among us. Psalm 96 admonishes, “Declare his glory among the heathen.” In agreement with that verse, the testimony of a thankful, praising church is a powerful witness to a heart burdened by sin.

Another purpose for music in a church service is to shift the attention of both pastor and people away from the cares of this world and toward the things of God. Many people enter the church spiritually battered and bruised. Some have failed in their Christian walk. Others come seeking help and guidance. To surround these people with songs that focus attention on man and

his talents or on man and his experiences is to lead them to wells without water. Our dear people are fully aware of man and his views. They need to glimpse God, to hear from Him.

As a pastor, I want the music to teach great truths of Scripture in a way that my people and I can remember them. In the midst of the battle, a song can cheer the heart. Many times this middle-aged preacher has encouraged his heart with the words from a song my children used to sing: “God is bigger than giants are.” Sometimes in the darkness of sorrow or testing my heart begins to sing, “Joy will come in the morning. Hope is sorrow’s adorning. Tears will vanish at dawning, for joy will come in the morning.” Both of these songs divert attention away from

the difficulty and toward a wonderful God who both cares and can do something. Attaching these truths to my memory by using a song is a worthy endeavor.

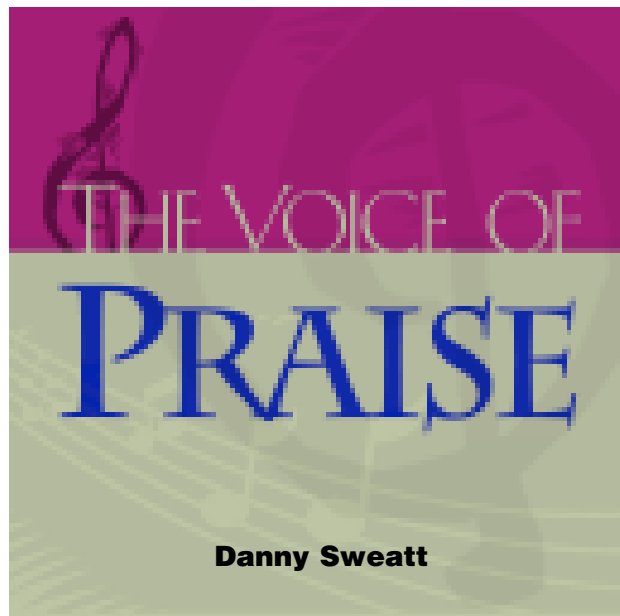
The music ministry is also a wonderful training ground for Christian living. Second fiddle is a difficult instrument to play. Since not everyone can sing the solo, many must learn contentment with lesser roles. Commitment and sacrifice—so necessary in music ministry—are virtually unknown in popular culture. These spiritual virtues can be readily taught within the church. In addition, public music ministry often exposes attitudes of pride and selfish-

ness, but a wise music leader can deal with them firmly.

Last of all, I desire the music in church services to aid in preparing my heart to preach. Preaching is a strange exercise. There are few things to which it can be compared. Preparation, for sure. Prayer, of course. The “Fire of God,” sometimes. Week in and week out, before I stand in the pulpit with what I hope to be the message from God, I need my soul stirred. I need to see the cross. I must hear again the proclamation of grace. I want to hear someone remind me of the love of God. A last-minute reminder of God’s person and His purpose gives me great boldness for the task ahead.

Sing me an old song, Christ’s praise as its theme
On the cross dying the lost to redeem.
Saving and cleansing the vilest of men
Song of salvation, oh, sing it again.

Danny Sweatt is Senior Pastor of Berean Baptist Church in Lilburn, Georgia, and is a popular conference speaker on the topic of music.



GROWING THE MUSIC PROGRAM

John Tracy

How do I grow this music program? What do I need to do in order to take this music program to the next level? How do I motivate these local church musicians to be more committed and consecrated to their responsibilities? Undoubtedly, these and similar questions have plagued even the most dedicated minister of music as he goes about his weekly tasks.

Regardless of a church's size, the talent of the local church musicians, or the quality of the program, there will always be more to accomplish in this vital ministry—one more cantata, one more brass quintet, one more special patriotic Sunday. And each time the pressure is to make the program just a bit better than the last one. So, what kind of growth should we be interested in for the church music program? Should the focus be on a bigger and better performance, drawing larger crowds and impressing more people? If this is the primary focus, our attempts to "grow" the church music program will end in frustration.

The First Priority

A church music pastor's first duty is to direct the congregation to Christ by lifting Him up in godly praise and song—in the congregational singing and special music. The measure of success for any local church—and especially any local church's music program—must be measured by God's standards, not ours. So the questions to ask are not, "How can I grow this church's music program?" or "How can I have a bigger and better performance this year?" Rather, they should be, "Lord, how can I guide the people in praising and worshiping You?" and "How can I give more people an opportunity to serve You musically in our church?" We tend to think of a successful music program as one with a church orchestra of 150, a choir of 100, plus multiple small groups and talented soloists.

However, this is not the measuring rod found in Scripture. The simple instruction from the Bible is this: "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2).

That requirement seems so simple, but are you truly faithful in your heart of hearts to the God who has called you to your current ministry position? You expect your choir to be faithful, and you even get upset and frustrated when they are not. You desire for your pastor to be faithful in preaching a well-crafted, Spirit-filled sermon each Sunday, but are you faithful to prepare for every opportunity God has given you (e.g., children's choir)? When discouragement comes knocking, what is your response? Are you quick to consider leaving your place of ministry, or do you simply go back to God and request the grace and strength to stick it out?

Facets of Faithfulness

Faithfulness is not easily attained, yet it is the key to building a God-honoring music ministry, regardless of that ministry's size. Faithfulness is not focused on the man who leads, but on the God who is adored. Here are several ways to build into the music ministry faithfulness that showcases a holy God:

Be faithful in your *relationships*. We should guard certain relationships at all costs. First and foremost is our relationship with our Heavenly Father. Be faithful to read your Bible every day and spend time in prayer. Sometimes we're tempted to say, "I just don't have time today for my devotions." However, without daily time with the Lord, true success in the ministry is not possible. Remember Christ's words in John 15:5: "without me ye can do nothing." That is one of His promises. It is as valid as the promise that He is coming again. This fact is also a promise to the believer: "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37). It has been such a blessing and faith-builder to

me to read my Bible from cover to cover each year. I need God's Word—and so do you.

The second relationship you must guard is the one with your family. Remember, your wife cannot take a backseat to "your ministry." She *is* your ministry, and so are your children. There will certainly be times when your family will have to sacrifice because of a pressing situation at church, but this should not be the norm. Your wife and kids need to know that they are your most important earthly possessions. Show them; don't merely tell them. Show them with your time and attention, by prayerfully leading them, and giving them security with your spiritual well-being. A pastor's marriage relationship is a visible witness of faithfulness to God. This example affects the congregation more than his words about faithfulness.

Finally, guard your relationship with your pastor. You may not agree with everything he does or says, but do not allow a wall to rise between you. Communicate often with him so that you understand his heart and direction. You are in the church to be his assistant. Your job is to extend and expand his ministry. Ultimately, he is the music pastor, the youth pastor, and the singles' pastor. He has the vision and sets the direction for each program and will answer to God for his shepherding of the flock. You are simply a facilitator of what God is leading him to do. Inevitably, someone will complain about decisions that the pastor has made. Do not entertain those conversations. Be faithful and supportive to God's shepherd. After all, he is an ordained authority in your life.

Be faithful with your *time*. Do not step into the trap of laziness. Work harder than you are expected to work. It is easy to slack off and slide through the daily routine, and we must actively guard against this temptation. If you are supposed to be in the office at 8:30 A.M., then make it a point to be there. If you are supposed to start choir rehearsal at 4:30 P.M. and end at 5:45 P.M., then observe that schedule strictly. You may think, "If I start choir on time, then I will be the only one there. No one shows up until fifteen minutes late." However, their tardiness could be the result of knowing that you never start when you say you will. Time is valuable, and no one wants to waste fifteen minutes of his day just because you do not have the discipline to begin on time. My good friend Jim Roschi taught me a motto that I strive to live by: "Five minutes early is on time. On time is late. Late is unacceptable!"

Be faithful to your *word*. If you tell your pastor that you will visit someone in the hospital, do it. If you promise to get a piece of music for someone, make sure you follow through. If you aren't able to do a task, don't give others the impression you are. Even if your motives are right and you do intend to attempt the job, when you fail to follow through you are dishonest. Be transparent in what you're able to do and in your need for others to help you. Learn to delegate and enlist a team to get the work of the ministry done. Then all the team members share in the blessing of God's work—but do not make promises that you cannot keep.

Be faithful in your *commitment to God's call on your life*. Ask yourself these questions: "Did God call me into this current ministry position? When I came, was I confident the Lord was calling me here?" If your answers are yes, then be faithful to that calling. Do not undo in the shadows a decision made in the light. God has you in your ministry for a reason, to accomplish a purpose—in your life as well as the church's. If it was His will two years ago, it is still His will today. We need pastors and music ministers who will say, "I'm going to put down my roots here. I'm not going to leave this ministry until God forces me out." With the kind of commitment that says, "Lord, I am here for as long as You desire," you will see your ministry grow. Your people can sense whether you want to be there. Part of the reason we struggle to cultivate faithfulness to their ministries in our members may well be a result of our own tendency to look for "greener pastures."

Be faithful to your *congregation*. The old saying is so true: "People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care." You must learn to love your people—because God does. If you do not love them, ask God to give you His love for them. Granted, sometimes they may be inconsiderate, uncaring, critical, or downright mean. No doubt Moses had many of the same thoughts about the people God had entrusted to his care. But Moses loved the people and even offered his life on their behalf.

When your congregation knows that you love them and that there is nowhere else you would rather be than serving the church where you are, they will get involved and excited about the music program. I have seen it happen, and so will you. You will see the choir grow. You will see the congregation attend the special services that you so diligently work to prepare—and they will bring their friends and neighbors with them. Ultimately, you will see God's hand of blessing on your ministry because Christ is lifted up and drawing men to Himself. Pray much for the people you need—a pianist, a soprano who can hit the high notes, or a music secretary. God will send the people you need when your focus is His worship and honor.

God has and still is patiently teaching me how to build a church music program for His honor and glory. The counsel shared in this brief article is not new revelation—but it deals with the struggles we hold in common. We ministers of music wish for our ministries to grow in numbers and quality. These are not wrong desires, for anywhere that God is working, growth will be observed. However, the reality is that often we do not accomplish these goals simply because of the unfaithfulness of our own hearts. May God empower us to be faithful servants who labor for our Lord until He comes.

John Tracy is the music pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Midland, Michigan. His family consists of his wife, Kim, and son, Luke. The Tracys also have an itinerant music ministry to local churches called Witness Music. Their newest release is entitled *To Know Thee More*. It features vocal duets (John and Kim) and saxophone solos (John). For more information about the Tracys and Witness Music, visit their website at www.WitnessMusic.vze.com.

. . . build
into the music
ministry faith-
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showcases a
holy God.

The Media Behind the Music

The contemporary Christian music industry has long dismissed its Fundamentalist critics as “rock-music-is-of-the-Devil” reactionaries. And from their standpoint, why not? They hear us pass judgment, but they also know that few of us could answer even such a simple question as how a hit song is determined. In the eyes of CCM advocates, our criticisms lack any genuine knowledge of the Christian music industry.

Many Fundamentalists have written critiques about CCM from the standpoint of its music and message. But to grasp the motivating force behind the Contemporary Christian Music industry and gain a fuller comprehension of the debate requires an understanding of the media and marketing behind the music.

So, what does make a hit song? Who decides what is played on the radio? Who decides what is sold in the bookstores? How are performers and concerts promoted? And can the answers to these questions teach us anything about our own music ministries?

The Band Plays On

A short course in CCM 101 might begin with a garage band that, after a year or two, starts to play at local churches and youth events. In a few years the group self-finances and records its first CD. Now the group's appearances include a sales table in the church lobby. In time, the band records more albums and begins to travel away from home on weekends. At last comes the big break: an invitation to be the opening act when a touring professional comes to town.

Having sung together for several years, the group goes on to the next step. With its church-appearance fees and sales-table traffic, the band earns enough income to take a calculated risk. Selecting its best song, the group pays an independent promoter to release the track to radio. The promoter has credibility and contacts with radio station music directors and, if the song is good, perhaps he can get the group some airplay.

Nevertheless, the band can go only so far by self-financing its own promotion purely on its weekend concert income. Yet the effort is not wasted. The group has made valuable contacts and gained credible experience. Some of the smaller, independent CCM record labels are interested in signing the band to a contract. When a contract is forthcoming, the label now takes on the financing

for the group's albums and promotions, paying the group a royalty on albums sold.

Slowly, requests for concerts increase to the point where the band can book enough dates to go full-time. Each member of the group makes the difficult decision to quit his job and hit the road. Out of the hundreds of “weekend warriors” who sing part-time, this band has risen to the status of full-time professionals. Most bands never make it this far; few go further. But this band beats the odds and is signed by a major label. Now it enters the elite world of music charts, concert tours, and retail sales.

The Way Things Work

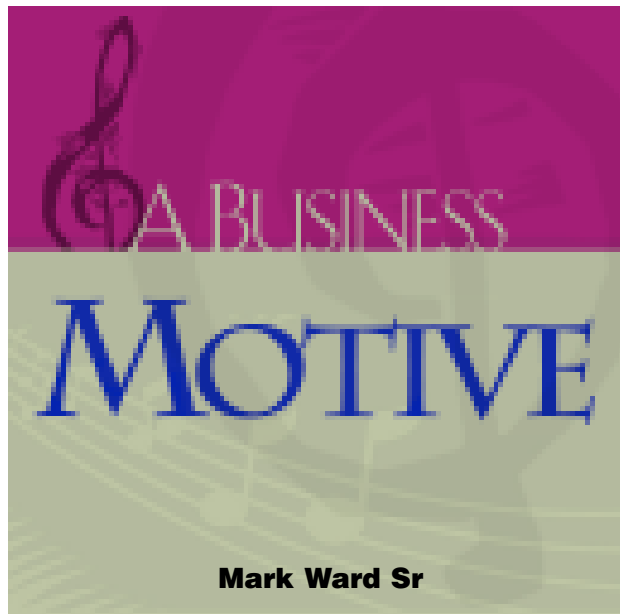
Once the band records its first album (or “project”) for a major label, one song is selected for release as a single to Christian radio. But gaining significant airplay for the song involves many factors.

First, stations do not classify themselves simply as CCM outlets. Recognized Christian music radio formats include “Contemporary Hit Radio” (or CHR; targeted to ages 12–24), “Adult Contemporary” (or AC; 25–34), and contemporary “Inspirational” (35–54). Still other stations air praise and worship music, black gospel, and southern gospel. In releasing a radio single, the record company must determine the category of radio stations to which the song will be promoted.

When a single arrives at the radio station, the staff music director decides whether to air the song and how frequently it will be played. Based upon the volume of requests and responses from listeners, the song is placed in heavy, medium, or light rotation. Gone are the days when deejays picked the songs they played. Today, when songs go into rotation, they are loaded into a computer program that generates a “playlist” that deejays must follow.

Second, all Christian radio stations are not equal. Record labels strive to obtain airplay for their artists on “reporting” stations, the outlets that send their playlists to the industry music charts. Here is how it works:

CCM fan magazines and industry publications want readers, and printing monthly or weekly charts of hit songs is a great way to gain subscribers. So these journals recruit radio stations to submit their playlists. From these lists the Christian CHR, AC, and Inspirational charts are compiled. Songs are ranked all the way up to number one. Black gospel and southern gospel charts



Fundamental churches would also need to do their part in providing increased exposure for trustworthy music.

are also compiled by their respective fan magazines.

The relationship is a win-win situation for everyone involved. The magazines get charts that attract subscribers. The broadcasters gain the prestige of being reporting stations, which means they are first in line to receive the latest singles from the most popular artists, which in turn boosts listenership. The record companies and artists get certification of their "hit" songs, which propels retail sales and concert ticket traffic. And Christian wholesale distributors and retail bookstores get to offer these hit songs and albums for sale.

Once a CCM group releases a song that makes the charts, its career takes a whole new trajectory. No more weekend travel to sing at local churches for a love offering. Instead the group signs with a booking agent and concert promoter. Tours are set up to visit multiple cities and perform ticketed concerts in civic centers and auditoriums.

What results is a self-reinforcing system that all parties—artists, labels, booking agents, concert promoters, radio stations, wholesale distributors, and bookstores—have a vested interest in maintaining and increasing. CCM has opted not only to emulate the idioms (rock and pop styles) of the world, but its institutions (the music industry) as well.

Lessons to Learn

If contemporary genres are motivated not only by considerations of music and message, but also media and marketing, what can Fundamentalists learn? The first lesson is to guard against the danger—whether in a church or other ministries—of creating methods that in time serve as their own justification.

Second, however, is the question of whether Fundamentalists can be extreme in the opposite direction. There is a desperate need for trustworthy Christian music in the church today. Yet Fundamentalists are doing comparatively little to familiarize their own churchgoers, much less a wider audience, with what is available.

The problem is not a lack of new

sacred music. Fundamental and conservative Christianity is blessed with a wealth of gifted sacred artists. Yet few of these artists and music ministries give thought to servicing Christian radio with their newest releases. Many broadcasters, though faithfully trying to hold the line on music standards, are airing LPs from the seventies and eighties because they are unaware of new sacred music being produced. Meanwhile, contemporary Christian stations in the same city are constantly being serviced with the latest releases from the CCM labels.

Nevertheless, conservative broadcasters can also be at fault. Stations that air sacred music typically rotate tens of thousands of songs and often do not identify the artists. By contrast, CCM and gospel stations limit their rotations to only a few hundred songs and make a conscious effort to educate listeners about current artists and new releases.

This contrast explains why sacred music is not sold in Christian bookstores, since wholesalers and retailers can see that sacred artists and albums receive no radio exposure. They recognize there might be a potential market among Christian consumers who prefer more traditional genres. And there are enough conservative stations and networks that air sacred music to conceivably compile a sacred music chart. But sacred artists would need to start servicing radio, while conservative broadcasters would need to change their music rotation practices.

Fundamental churches would also need to do their part in providing increased exposure for trustworthy music. One significant factor that holds back such exposure is the fact that few sacred music artists can sustain traveling ministries. Why? Few Fundamental pastors are accustomed to bringing guest artists into their churches and setting aside honoraria for this purpose, or to holding special music services on any other day than Sunday.

The contemporary Christian music industry is driven by a self-justifying

system that is closed to arguments for Biblical separation. Yet Fundamentalists can also be driven by man-made methods of their own that, on issues unrelated to Biblical mandates, keep us from considering new avenues for effective outreach. Though opportunities abound, few Fundamentalists are writing books, using radio, or making music to reach a wider audience. Yet the need of our nation to hear Biblical truth is more important today than ever.

Mark Ward Sr. is a professor of radio and television broadcasting at Bob Jones University. He is author of seven books including the newly released *The Music in the Air: The Golden Age of Gospel Radio* (Ambassador-Emerald International). Mark also sings with the Calvary Quartet (www.calvaryquartet.com), which travels to churches throughout the eastern U. S. Pastors may request a Calvary Quartet demo CD by calling 1-877-MUSIC-53 or e-mailing info@calvaryquartet.com.

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New Tract Available

The FBFI has just completed production on a tract entitled *Shocked* written by Research Secretary Gordon Dickson. This tract presents a clear and precise gospel message during this period of increased awareness following the release of the movie *The Passion of the Christ*. Tracts are sold in packets of 100 for \$9 and can be ordered online at www.fbfitract.org or by emailing info@harveststudios.com.

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Regional Meeting Report

On November 3-7, 2003, Iglesia Bautista Cristiana hosted the Caribbean Regional Conference. Keynote speakers included Dr. John Vaughn, Dr. Sam Horn, Dr. Les Ollila, Pastor Paul Hawkins, Pastor Don Richards, and Pastor Brian Green. The conference had a high attendance of 1900 with people coming from the Dominican Republic and West Indies.

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FrontLine Magazine
500 W. Lee Road
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(864) 292-3010
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2004 Meetings

April 19-21, 2004

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Rev. Jeff Davis
Tabernacle Baptist Church
910 Tarboro Street West
Wilson, NC 27893-4757
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June 15-17, 2004

National Meeting
Rev. Bradley Smith
Bethel Baptist Church
200 N. Roselle Road
Schaumburg, IL 60194
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July 12-15, 2004

Mexican Regional Meeting
Dr. David Cortez Pena
Iglesia Bautista Puerta Abierta
Ave Quintana Roo Y Calle 12 #2111
Tijuana, Baja California Norte
011-52-664-684-7045

July 25-29, 2004

Pacific Rim Regional Meeting
Rev. Peter I. Maruyama
Narashino Baptist Church
4-17-10, Moto-Ohkubo
Narashino, Chiba, JAPAN 275-0012
011-047-477-8910

August 2-4, 2004

Alaska Regional Meeting
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SOUND WORDS

HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS—2 TIMOTHY 1:13

First Partaker

Insight into Substantive Preaching

We're continuing an analysis of a three-hundred-year-old sermon. Its preacher was Benjamin Keach, an influential 17th-century London Baptist. The message is from his volume *A Golden Mine Opened: Or, The Glory of God's Rich Grace Displayed in the Mediator to Believers* (1694).

I apologize to any first-time readers of *FrontLine* who find yourselves introduced to this column by having to begin in the middle of a project begun last issue. But the issue at hand is an alarm being sounded, not by Fundamentalists only but by Evangelicals as well, about the downhill slide in contemporary preaching away from doctrinal substance toward an experience-centered, pragmatic pulpit. To repeat one quotation from the last column:

Much of what emanates from contemporary pulpits would not have been recognized [in the past] as being anywhere close to the kind of expository preaching that is Bible-based, Christ-focused, and life-changing—the kind of preaching that is marked by doctrinal clarity, a sense of gravity, and convincing argument. (Alistair Begg)

What then was the Bible-based, Christ-focused, life-changing preaching of the past? Keach's example is from Hebrews 2:3, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" His central proposition is "Gospel Salvation is a Great and Glorious Salvation." His proofs survey the "glory and greatness of the persons" who sat in counsel to work out this salvation. Last issue included his consideration

of the greatness and glory of both the Father's and the Son's contribution. We pick up our reading now with the Spirit's part in our salvation.

"The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits"
(2 Tim. 2:6)

We're noting the amount of doctrinal content, especially what is Christological. We're also observing the elevated tone of the expressions, the Scriptures employed, and the judicious use of systematic theology to weave the sermon's doctrinal fabric with the stout threads of those Bible texts.

In addition, in this part of the sermon Keach is going to make his applications (left to the end in typical Puritan fashion). Let's see how compelling they are, how heart-moving. If compelling, what makes them so?

Here then is the continuation of *Gospel Salvation Is a Great and Glorious Salvation*.

The Spirit's Part in This Great and Glorious Salvation

The third Person that is concerned in this salvation is the Holy Ghost. The Father chooses, the Son purchases, and the Spirit applies the blessings purchased. Salvation is called a garment. *He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness* (Is. 61:10).

The Father may be said to prepare the matter which this robe is made of. The Son wrought it, He made the garment. The Holy Spirit puts it on the soul. The garment of salvation is Christ's righteousness. Again, the Father sought out or chose the Bride, the Son espouses and marries her, but it is the Holy Ghost that inclines her heart and stirs up, nay that causes the soul to like and to love this blessed Lover, and brings it to yield and consent to accept heartily and willingly

Inside

Bring . . . the Books—Key books for the pastor's study5
 Straight Cuts—An exegetical study6
 Windows—Themed sermon illustrations7

of Jesus Christ.

We were sick of a fearful and incurable disease. The Father found out the medicine. The blood of Christ is the medicine, and the Holy Spirit applies it to the soul.

We were in debt, in prison, and bound in fetters and cruel chains, and the Father procured a Friend to pay all our debts. The Son was this our Friend, who laid down the infinite sum. The Holy Spirit knocks off our irons, our fetters and chains, and brings us out of the prison house. The Father loved us and sent His Son to merit grace for us. The Son loved us and died and thereby purchased that grace to be imparted to us. The Holy Spirit works that grace in us.

O what is the nature of this salvation! How great, how glorious! That the whole Trinity, both the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are thus employed in and about it, that we might have it made sure to us forever.

he acts in all sincerity and faithfulness to him, as to hear his prayers, so as to reveal himself to him in Christ as he did to Cornelius. But was Cornelius a believer, and justified before he heard of Jesus Christ, and had faith wrought in his soul? See how Peter preached Christ for life and salvation to this man. Notwithstanding all his own righteousness, Peter was commanded of God to tell him what he should do that he might be saved, plainly intimating he did not know the way, or how to be saved before Peter preached Christ to him: *He* (saith the Lord) *shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do*. And in verse 43, Peter said, *To him* (that is, to Jesus Christ) *gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, should receive remission of sins*.

Will any say Cornelius had remission of sins before he heard this sermon and believed in Jesus Christ? Was not Peter sent to him (and to those other Gentiles with him) that they might be converted? O take heed you stumble not at this stone, lest if fall on you and grind you to powder.

2. Dare any of you think that this salvation is but a small matter and that you need not trouble yourselves about it? O tremble, you who never had one serious thought about it to this day. You have other things to mind, are full of business—but, O sirs, what is of such moment as this salvation? Yet nevertheless some will not spare time to hear it, or to attend upon the word of this salvation. Others will not part with the love of this world, to have a part in it. They value their earthly riches, pleasures, and honours above it. Nay, too many esteem their filthy lusts more than an interest in this great salvation. But what contempt do such persons cast upon the great God, who hath manifested such depths of divine wisdom, grace and goodness in bringing of it in, and working of it out for our precious souls. Did they know what God is, Christ is, salvation is, certainly they would change their opinion and not a little blame themselves for their great folly.

Brethren, a true and spiritual knowledge of the great salvation of the Gospel makes all the things of the world seem little, nay nothing, in comparison thereof. All things that carnal men have their hearts set upon are poor, thin and beggarly things when compared to grace here and glory hereafter. No sooner had Paul a true sight of this great salvation but immediately he *consulted not with flesh and blood*. When the sweetness of Christ and salvation is tasted, and a soul knows how good and satisfying it is, everything that hath a tincture of flesh and blood, all carnal interests and fleshly counsels expire. A full sight of this salvation seems to make life uneasy and death desirable. *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*. Nothing in this world could be worthy a thought of

Brethren, a true and spiritual knowledge of the great salvation of the Gospel makes all the things of the world seem little, nay nothing, in comparison thereof. All things that carnal men have their hearts set upon are poor, thin and beggarly things when compared to grace here and glory hereafter.

Application

1. Woe to such that esteem their own filthy rags above this garment of salvation, or that seem to set light by it: Hath God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost held a council before the world began about the salvation of our soul—and hath each person of the blessed Trinity such a part in order to the making of it to be effectual to us—and shall any dare to say there is no need of this garment? We may work a robe out of our own bowels by the operations of the Spirit that will serve to hide our nakedness—trouble not us with your old divinity. We are for rational religion.

He that is righteous, and obeys Christ, and leads a godly life need not doubt of his salvation. *For in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him* (Acts 10:35). O how ready are men to abuse the Scripture! Can any man think that his own personal inherent righteousness can either justify or save him? Or that the Apostle Peter means any such thing? God may so far accept of a man in his obedience, in which

his heart since his eyes had seen God's salvation. What did he see? It was Jesus Christ the Author of salvation, in whom he knew was salvation and in no other. He that lives so long as to see Christ by an eye of faith to be his Saviour and his salvation will be willing to leave this world, be willing to die, because he shall then die in peace. . . .

3. This reproves such who delay seeking after the knowledge of this salvation. If it be so great, it must and ought first of all be regarded: *Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*. Maybe ere long you will wish you had sought after Christ and salvation by him before all things when you come to lie upon a sick bed. O sirs, you will need it at last and maybe seek it when too late. . . .

4. Here is comfort and encouragement for the worst of sinners. Are you such who are and have been great sinners? Well, let it be so, yet be not cast down into utter despair, for here is a great Saviour. You have heard of his mighty power and ability to save. And he saith, *All that the Father hath given to me, shall come unto me* (John 6:37). Ay but you perhaps may say, You know not who they be that the Father hath given to Christ. Well, what of that? Pray mind his next words, *And he that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*. [And] *Whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life* (John 3:16). Receive this Saviour. Believe in Him and you shall be saved whosoever you are. It is not the greatness of your sins that can hinder or obstruct him from saving your souls. Though your sins be as *red as scarlet* or as *red as crimson* he will wash them all away and make you as white as wool, as white as snow.

5. Also, here is good news for poor sin-sick sinners, to wounded and lost sinners. Though your sins be as *red as scarlet* or as *red as crimson* he will wash them all away and make you as white as wool. *The whole need not a physician, but such that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance* (Mt. 9:12–13). Such indeed who are conceited of their own righteousness or swelled with a good opinion of their own good works, good needs, and good duties will not come to Christ. Such think they have need no such physician as Christ is. But you that see you have no righteousness of your own, but that all your righteousness is as dung, O look to Christ, hear what he says to such that are lost, that are under the burden of their sins, and wounded ones—*Come to me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest* (Mt. 11:28).

6. . . . O know you, sinners, this day, that Jesus Christ, this glorious King and Prince of the kings of the earth, this mighty Saviour is come to your

doors. *Behold I stand at the door and knock* (Rev. 3:20). Will you not open the door, nor cry to him to help you to open to him, to enable you to believe in him? What do you say, shall the Son of God stand at your doors and you not so much as ask, *Who is there?* Who is at my door?

Shall Christ be kept out of your hearts and stand at your doors whilst sin commands the chiefest room and has absolute power over you and rules in you? How will you be able to look this blessed Saviour in the face another day? Is he come through a sea of blood to offer his love to you and to espouse you unto himself forever, and will not you be persuaded to break your league with your old lovers who will at last stab you at the very heart and betray your souls into the hands of Divine wrath? Nay, they have done it already. What are your lovers but your lusts, your pride, your earthly-mindedness, your sinful pleasures, profits and honours? O resolve to desert them. They otherwise will damn your souls forever and expose you to the torments of Hell-fire.

To deliver you from them and from that wrath which is due to you for them (I mean, for your sins) is Christ come. And this great Saviour is offered to you. The Lord help every one of you to consider of this and to lay it to heart.

A Partial Analysis of Substance

Our question when we began this exercise concerned substance. What makes a substantive sermon? A *meaty* message?

It's apparent that Keach's example isn't lacking for solid matter. Nothing about it strikes you as light, shallow, or trivial. It's weighty but not oppressive. Deep but not difficult. Conveying great importance without pretentiousness.

Shall Christ be kept out of your hearts and stand at your doors whilst sin commands the chiefest room and has absolute power over you and rules in you? How will you be able to look this blessed Saviour in the face another day?

What gives it these qualities? Let's begin with what may come as a surprise: it's not expository. That is, it doesn't expound one text of Scripture. Instead, it's a topical sermon. It takes its theme from a text and then develops that theme from a combination of other passages.

One of the things giving this particular message weight is the *number* of such passages it employs. By

my count, Keach quotes from 36 different chapters. Some (Isa. 63; John 3; John 6; Acts 10; Phil. 2; 1 Tim. 1; and Heb. 1) he refers to more than once (though not always the same verse), for a total of 41 explicit quotations. This, apart from any other consideration, gives the message Scriptural substance. The very words of God comprise a significant percentage of its content.

A second contributor to the Scriptural substance of the sermon is the *breadth* of Scripture revelation from which its passages are taken. There are 17 different books quoted (2 Samuel, Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Zechariah, Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Galatians, 1 Timothy, Hebrews, 1 Peter, and Revelation). Note that Keach employs both the Old and the New Testaments, spanning a breadth from 2 Samuel to Revelation, but making most use of New Testament passages, especially the Gospels (most frequently John—8 times) and Paul's epistles. The Old Testament book used most often is Isaiah (chapters 7, 9, 19, 42, 61, and 63 twice).

These two factors alone, the *number* and the *breadth* of the Scriptures used, are remarkable by contemporary standards for topical preaching. It's expected that an expository message would be full of Scripture, since by definition it is the studied exposition of a passage. But topical preaching is often conceived of as spring-boarding off of a single verse out into practical application/illustration with only a modicum of further references to the Bible. This is precisely its shallowness. It simply doesn't make much use of the Bible. It's not a preaching of *the Word*. But substantive topical preaching is.

Now we need to analyze the *way* in which Keach uses these many verses. Substantive preaching doesn't merely use a generous quantity of Scripture, but uses it in a certain way. To illustrate, both modern and classical artists make use of many colors. But the old masters combined those colors in realistic patterns, just as they're found objectively in real life. Modern artists, on the other hand, often pride themselves on the subjectivity of their creations. There's nothing in real life that their work portrays literally. You can turn their paintings in any direction, even upside down, and it makes no difference. The picture is whatever you want to see in it.

There's a kind of preaching that combines Bible passages into patterns that aren't truly representative of either Scripture or God's mind. I'm not even talking here about misinterpreting, though this too is often a characteristic of the faulty preaching I'm thinking about. But I'm primarily speaking about a

preaching that may even interpret individual verses correctly but which *combines* them in unscriptural or at least Scripturally imbalanced ways. To again use an illustration, there's a difference between scattering Scripture verses through a sermon like so many points of light or synthesizing them in theological constellations.

For instance, Keach takes up each person of the Godhead in order—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and employs his many Scripture texts to unveil the great and glorious contribution to our salvation made by each Divine person. I.e., Keach presents the Father as the One who was (1) the Contriver of salvation, (2) the injured Member by our sin, (3) the Appointer of salvation's terms, (4) the One who substituted the Son, (5) the Father of all our subsequent mercies, (6) the Chooser of us in Christ, and (7) the Raiser of Christ from the dead for our justification.

This is accurate, Biblical, theological synthesis. It weaves the many verses into a Scriptural fabric.

This knowing of constellations is the result of an expert use of systematic theology. It comes, as George Herbert wrote, from knowing "not only how each verse doth shine, but all the constellations of the story." It's what gives, not just Scriptural, but theological substance to a sermon. It's using verses to turn on doctrinal lights in Scriptural patterns. The result is that the listener sees a realistic Scriptural picture not an imaginative abstraction. He's compelled to think God's thoughts in God's sequences.

And what's the picture supposed to be? There can be only one right answer to that question, no matter what the original text or topic. Scripturally substantive preaching presents something of Christ and of what it means to be a man or woman "in Him." It is Christocentric. There's a great gulf between this and mere moralizing from Bible passages. David Larsen is right when he warns in his outstanding history of preaching,

If the Christian were to preach a sermon from an Old Testament text that a Jewish rabbi could preach, then that sermon is not Christian proclamation. The theme of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is ever our Lord, and the theme of Christian preaching under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ (*The Company of the Preachers*, 51).

This has been an admittedly limited beginning to addressing a truly critical question. But it seems to me that, at a minimum, we've learned from Keach that substantive preaching makes a generous use of God's very words synthesized theologically in order to portray accurately Scripture's central revelation—the Lord Jesus Christ. ☞



Dr. Mark Minnick is pastor of Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina.

Bring . . . the Books

Howell Harris:
God's Itinerant Evangelist in Wales

This column has been focusing on John Armstrong's little volume *Five Great Evangelists* (Christian Focus Publications). A powerful summary of one of the five, Howell Harris, is condensed in the form of an epitaph on his tombstone in the cemetery of the church where Harris had been converted thirty-nine years earlier:

Near the communion Table lie the Remains of HOWELL HARRIS, ESQUIRE; Born at Trefecca, January 23, 1714. Here, where his body lies, he was convinced of sin, Had his pardon sealed, Felt the power of Christ's precious Blood at the Holy Communion. Having tasted grace himself, he resolved to declare to others what God had done for his soul. He was the first itinerant Preacher of Redemption in this period of Revival in England and Wales. He preached the Gospel for the space of thirty-nine years till he was taken to his final Rest. He received those who sought Salvation into his house. Then sprang up the Family at Trefecca, to whom he faithfully ministered unto his end; As an indefatigable servant of God and a faithful member of the Church of England. His end was more blessed than his beginning: Looking to Jesus crucified, He rejoiced to the last, that death had lost its sting. He fell asleep in Jesus at Trefecca, July 21st, 1773, and now rests blessedly from all his Labours.

Armstrong's chapter on Harris fills out the details, including the successes and failures, of Harris's brief but full life and ministry. Harris was an unordained evangelist converted as a member of the Church of England and, like Wesley, remained in the membership of that Church all of his life even though he opposed much of what he saw happening theologically and morally in that body. Also like Wesley, Harris was genuinely converted when, after attempting to follow a highly structured legalistic approach to dealing with his flaws and sins, he finally came to understand (at the age of 21) the fullness of what Christ had done for him.

Along with Daniel Rowland and William Williams, Harris was part of what later became known as the Welsh Awakening. God used this trio to awaken Wales as He used Whitefield and the Wesleys in England. Harris's particular (and somewhat controversial) contribution was in the founding of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists.

Immediately he was, in his own words, moved by a holy compulsion to serve God with all his strength: "Now the fire of God did so burn in my soul, that I could not rest day nor night, without doing something for my God and Saviour; nor could I go with satisfaction to sleep, if I had not done something for His glory that day."

A difficult year followed. After a short stay at Oxford, Harris began an equally short attempt at teaching. Such acceptance by the people attended his preaching that he


found himself neglecting both his studies and his teaching responsibilities to follow his inner compulsion to speak for God. Before long Harris was out of work, out of school, and physically exhausted. Furthermore, his message was at odds with the Church of England. At twenty-two years of age, this young zealous convert found himself alone, penniless, and an outcast from the very church in which he continued to maintain his membership.

*" . . . when
thou comest,
bring with thee
. . . the books"
(2 Tim. 4:13)*

The ministers preached against me as a false prophet, the people despised me, pointing at me as I passed by, and young wastrels threatened to murder me, speaking all kinds of falsehoods against me. I was persecuted at home, too, and continually expected to be turned out of doors. I was threatened with imprisonment many times. In order to keep me humble the Lord made me a laughing stock and a subject of lampoons to all.

The Church had forsaken him, but God had not. By 1741 he was preaching to crowds of over 5,000, and scores were being converted. Earlier in his ministry he came into contact with George Whitefield, who convinced him that the "doctrines of grace" much better reflected the truth of Scripture than his own Arminian views. This doctrinal development eventually created a rift between Harris and the Wesleys. Harris became convinced that the structure and doctrinal emphasis of Methodism would provide a much more healthful spiritual environment for his converts than the Church of England. But his rejection of Arminianism resulted in a unique form of Methodism with a Calvinistic flavor. By 1740 there were over 64 different societies scattered throughout Wales that, years later, broke away from Methodism to become the Presbyterian Church of Wales.

The final period of Harris's ministry saw a tragic rift with Rowland and Williams. Doctrinal differences were exacerbated by Harris's rash temper and strong personality. He went on to found a separate community of believers, known as "The Family," who lived in a large common house and eventually grew to over a hundred families living on a large estate purchased and expanded by Harris himself.

A man of great contradictions in personal character, Harris was nevertheless used greatly by God despite his flaws. No one loved him more than the object of his own wrath, Charles Wesley, who described him as "proud, self-willed, and wrathful" yet used by God "to shake the earth, to tear the prey out of the lion's teeth, and spoil the trembling realms of Hell and death." 

Dr. Sam Horn is Executive Vice President of Northland Baptist Bible College in Dunbar, Wisconsin.

“Be filled with the Spirit.” Ephesians 5:18

The command to be Spirit-filled is one of the most vital imperatives for the Christian life, yet one of the most misunderstood and neglected. The meaning of the command to be filled with the Spirit further unfolds as we look at other usages of the word “filled.” In John 12:3, the word “fill” is used to describe a permeating fragrance when Mary anointed the feet of the Lord: the house was “filled with the fragrance of the oil.” Being filled means to allow the Spirit to pervade every area of our lives. He must have the whole. Anyone who has the mentality that he can be filled with the Spirit yet keep some areas of his life closed to Him will never experience this. This word “filled” is often associated with human emotions. The New Testament speaks of being filled with sorrow (John 16:6), fear (Luke 5:26), or anger (Luke 6:11). Just as an immaterial emotion can dominate (“fill”) a material human body, the immaterial Spirit of God can govern a physical human being.

What does this Spirit-filling look like? Scripture gives us examples of people who were filled with the Spirit. When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, the ensuing preaching is attributed to being filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:4). Peter, who denied Christ before a servant girl only weeks earlier, is now bold as a lion before the Sanhedrin because he was filled with the Spirit (Acts 4:8). Stephen’s fidelity to Jesus Christ and his disregard for his own life are attributed to being filled with the Spirit (Acts 7:55). That supernatural quality that characterized the early church is explained as being filled with the Spirit. The reason the early church’s courage, dedication, and love seem supernatural is because they were.

The helpful parallel passage in Colossians 3:16 replaces the phrase “Be filled with the Spirit” with “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” When you let the Word of God have its home (dwell) in your heart, you are letting the Spirit of God control you. The will of the Word and the will of the Spirit are not two distinct things but one, since the Spirit wrote the Word.

Finally, it is important to distinguish the filling of the Spirit from spiritual maturity. Spiritual growth is part of the Christian life (Eph. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:2), but it must not be confused with Spirit-filling. Spirit-

filling is immediate. Spiritual growth is a long process. This distinction explains the wide variety of spiritual levels that exist among Christians.

There are times when a newborn Christian may seem more spiritual than one who has been a Christian for a long time. This does not mean that he is more mature, but just that at the present time he is Spirit-filled. There is great danger in confusing Spirit-filling with spiritual maturity. A church might be tempted to put a Spirit-filled novice, who lacks spiritual maturity, into a position of leadership to help energize a lethargic congregation. Paul warns that this could be disastrous (1 Tim. 3:6).

On the other hand, you may you may have a mature believer who at the present is not Spirit-filled. His life may be spiritually dry, his motivation for service gone, and his loving obedience waning. He needs to be filled with the Spirit. Perhaps it is a common mistake for the mature to think they can live the Christian life because of their maturity level rather than accepting the constant, immediate need for the Holy Spirit. Paul begins listing areas that both demonstrate and necessitate Spirit-filling. The areas of music (5:19), gratitude (5:20), and relationships between believers (5:21), between husbands and wives (5:22–33), between parents and children (6:1–3), and between employers and employees (6:5–9) are all connected to Spirit-filling. Those who depend on their past growth alone will fail.

Just as physical health is no substitute for physical growth, spiritual maturity is no substitute for Spirit-filling. A child may be healthy but not yet mature physically—just as a newborn Christian can be Spirit-filled but not yet mature. On the other hand, a grown adult can be ill at the moment, as a mature believer may not be filled with the Spirit. We must be careful, though, not to think of these as mutually exclusive. A child will grow best if he is healthy, and a Christian will grow best if he is Spirit-filled. Surely the best route to spiritual growth is to focus on the more immediate spiritual health of being filled with the Spirit.

Being filled with the Spirit is, in essence, all about conscious submission to Him. Perhaps the best explanation for being filled with the Spirit is, in the words of Cyrus Nubaum’s hymn, to “let Him have His way with thee.” ☞☞

**“Rightly
dividing
the Word
of Truth”
(2 Tim. 2:15)**

Philip Henry, the Nonconformist Puritan preacher and father of the esteemed English commentator Matthew Henry, often described the timely application or illustration of Bible truth to a pressing situation as “a word upon the wheels.” Henry’s language rose from Proverbs 25:11, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” The literal marginal reading included by the translators of a generation earlier reads “A word spoken upon his wheels.” Henry understood that words could be “rightly ordered, placed, and circumstanced” in such a way as to set God’s truth in an appropriately splendid frame and enable it to move with speed and ease into the heart of the hearer (Matthew Henry, *Life of Mr. Philip Henry*, 29).

Few situations confront us with the shallowness of our own words more than heartache or suffering, especially in the lives of others. Often we struggle to offer words of comfort or encouragement without sounding trite or matter-of-fact. Below are some suggestive illustrations of how some of God’s people have applied the Scripture’s words to their own hearts at seasonable moments of spiritual struggle and found them truly to be “words on wheels.”

Suffering Is Divinely Ordained

Samuel Rutherford (1600–61), a preacher in the town of Anwoth, Scotland, was known for his tireless pastoral ministry. Because his ministry led him into conflict with the increasingly Episcopalian government, the government deprived Rutherford of his church and exiled him for two years in the Episcopalian stronghold of Aberdeen. Though the unsympathetic citizens taunted Rutherford as “the banished minister,” he came to view the city of his banishment as “Christ’s palace” because it was the place of God’s appointment for him. From that crucible of persecution he launched a series of pastoral letters to his parishioners and friends, many of whom were facing similar or other forms of suffering. The letters are full of comforting Scriptural counsel and encouragement. Reminding one of his parishioners that God was active in the suffering, he penned that God’s “most loved are often His most tried: ‘The lintel-stone and pillars of His New Jerusalem suffer more knocks of God’s hammer and tools than the common side wall stones’” (Andrew Bonar, ed., *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, 28).

Suffering Has a Divine Precedent

Nearly two centuries later in England, Charles Simeon (1759–1836) labored as an evangelical Anglican preacher in Cambridge. When he was appointed to Holy Trinity Church in 1782 at the age of 23, Simeon’s congregation did not receive him gladly. In fact, for thirty years Simeon faced resistance both within his congregation and at Cambridge University where he held several posts. For twelve years the people forced Simeon to share his Sunday pulpit with lecturers of their own choosing. The lecturers preached on Sunday afternoons while Simeon was to take his turn in the morning service. However, “on

Sunday mornings the church for a long while was made as inaccessible as possible to him and his hearers. The pew doors were almost all locked, and the should-be occupants were absent, leaving only the aisles for any congregation that might assemble.” Consequently, when a small crowd began to want to hear Simeon’s preaching, they had no seats. When Simeon “set forms in the aisles, and even put up open seats in nooks and corners at his own expense,” the churchwardens “pulled [them] down and threw them into the churchyard” (H.C.G. Moule, *Charles Simeon*, 39). Simeon persevered through these and other forms of persecution and served that congregation with great distinction for fifty-four years. In the maturity of his ministry, when a student asked him how he handled the years of suffering, he responded wisely.

My dear brother, we must not mind a little suffering. When I am getting through a hedge, if my head and shoulders are safely through, I can bear the pricking of my legs. Let us rejoice in the remembrance that our holy Head has surmounted all His sufferings and triumphed over death. Let us follow Him patiently; we shall soon be partakers of His victory (Moule, 155–56).

When Amy Carmichael (1867–1951) left Belfast, Northern Ireland, to become a missionary in 1893, she little knew the way the Lord would use her to minister to the orphans of India and to thousands of others through her books. In 1941 Amy published *His Thoughts Said, His Father Said*, one of her more than 35 books. The little book recounts more than 150 lessons learned in the work of the ministry. Amy experienced what we experience—often her own heart supplied questions challenging God and what He was doing. However, Amy learned to let the words spoken by the Father replace her own thoughts. For example, Lesson 39 reads,

His thoughts said, Is there no other way of learning how to help another but by the way of suffering? His Father said, Had there been another way, would I not have found it for the Son of My love, whom no thorn of pain had ever pierced, who was tender as a child to the touch? If it became Me in bringing many sons unto glory, to lead the Captain of their salvation by that way, wouldest thou win souls without a pang? Settle it once for all; there is no other way.

Suffering Requires a Trusting Response

Matthew Henry (1662–1714) saw his father Philip imprisoned three separate times (1663, 1665, 1685) and watched the English government deprive his father of a

“To every preacher of righteousness as well as to Noah, wisdom gives the command, ‘A window shalt thou make in the ark.’”

Charles Spurgeon

church for twenty-seven years. Instead of allowing the rough treatment of his father to embitter him toward God and the work of the ministry, Matthew himself became a faithful preacher. Often it was his lot to counsel those who struggled with discouragement over difficult circumstances. “Far from encouraging Christians, when perplexed or afflicted in a gloomy apprehension of things, he studiously pointed out the evil of such a course, and allured their attention upwards.”

Let not one affliction drown the sense of a thousand mercies. Our great duty is to trust in God, to commit our way to him: and when our fears take us off from that, so that we cannot find in our hearts to let him dispose of us, they are sinful. Prevailing fears are briars and thorns which choke many a good duty (J. B. Williams, *Memoirs of the Life, Character and Writings of the Rev. Matthew Henry*, 188).

Suffering Requires a Passive Response

Resisting the impulse to modify the pressing situation to ease or end the suffering, Charles Simeon said,

I wished rather to suffer than to act; because in suffering I could not fail to be right; but in acting I might easily do amiss. Besides, if I suffered with a becoming spirit, my enemies, though unwittingly, must of necessity do me good; whereas if in acting I should have my own spirit unduly exercised, I must of necessity be injured in my own soul, however righteous my cause might be (Moule, 39).

Suffering Requires an Active Response

However, patience in trials does not consist in our being merely passive or resolutely grim. Charles Spurgeon’s wife, Susannah, was no stranger to suffering. From the beginning of her relationship with Charles, she had difficulty hearing the frequent, stinging criticism that was often a response to his aggressively evangelistic preaching. Twelve years into their marriage, Susannah’s health suffered seriously, and she became a frequent “prisoner in a sick chamber” while her husband’s preaching ministry still demanded much activity and travel. One evening while sitting quietly in a room with a friend who was attending her, Susannah suffered an unusually strong attack of doubts about God. She recounts the scene in her own words:

“Why does God so often send sharp and bitter pain to visit me? Why does my Lord thus deal with His child?” The answer, unexpected yet plain, came in the form of a parable. Into the silence of the room, disturbed only by the noise of the crackling log burning in the hearth, broke a sound, clear and musical, not unlike birdsong. “We listened again and heard the faint plaintive notes, so sweet, so melodious, yet mysterious enough to provoke for a moment our undisguised wonder.” Suddenly Susannah’s friend exclaimed, “It comes from the log on the fire.” She was right.

The fire was letting loose the imprisoned music from

the old oak’s inmost heart! . . . Ah, thought I, when the affliction draws songs of praise from us, then indeed are we purified, and our God is glorified. . . . Singing in the fire! Yes! God helping us, if that is the only way to get harmony out of these hard apathetic hearts, let the furnace be heated seven times hotter than before (Faith Cook, *Singing in the Fire* [Banner of Truth, 1995], 43–44).

Suffering Faithfully Requires Preparation

Though growth in grace often results from trials, we can prepare to stand in trials by disciplining ourselves to yield to the Spirit in the daily course of our lives. Richard Baxter (1615–91), one of the most prolific of the English Puritan writers, was twice imprisoned for his religious nonconformity. During his longer imprisonment when he was seventy years old, he received a visit from Matthew Henry and Samuel Lawrence, both young men in their early twenties. Matthew would later record the substance of the hour they spent together at the feet of the elderly Baxter:

He gave us some good counsel to prepare for trials, and said that the best preparation for them was a life of faith, and a constant course of self-denial. He thought it harder constantly to deny temptations to sensual lusts and pleasures, than to resist one single temptation to deny Christ for fear of suffering: the former requiring such constant watchfulness; however, after the former, the latter will be the easier (Williams, 22).

Suffering Has Spiritual Benefits

John Newton (1725–1807) performed a great service to his church and to future generations through many of his hymns. His pastoral ministry, however, is often overlooked. Newton left behind many letters filled with wise pastoral counsel. The letters are so good, in fact, that some have commented that Newton was a better letter-writer than he was a preacher! In one correspondence to a lady (Letter XXXIII), Newton attempted to summarize the benefits of affliction. Below is a summary of his counsel (*Letters of John Newton* [Banner of Truth, 1960], 173–74):

1. Afflictions quicken us to prayer.
2. Afflictions keep alive in us a conviction of the vanity and unsatisfying nature of the present world and all its enjoyments.
3. Afflictions increase our desire for an enlarged and experimental acquaintance with the Bible.
4. Afflictions teach us and others the reality of God’s grace.
5. Afflictions strengthen the exercise of our Christian graces.
6. Afflictions advance our conformity to Christ—“Why should we ever wish to go by any other path than that which he has consecrated and endeared by his own example? especially as his people’s sufferings are not penal; there is no wrath in them; the cup he puts in their hands is very different from that which he drank for their sakes, and is only medicinal to promote their chief good.” ☞

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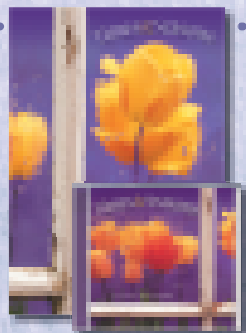
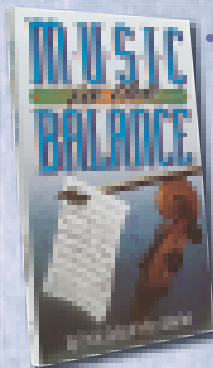
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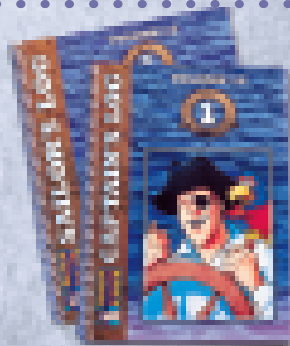
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Is CCM A Cultural Thing?

Before there can ever be a discussion about whether or not anything belongs to a particular culture, we must come to an understanding of what culture is. According to *Webster's Dictionary*, culture is a French word that comes from the Latin *colere* or *cultura* and means "to cultivate" or "the characteristic features and values of a civilization or group of people." Culture is the practice of what we believe.

If we apply this definition to those who are members of the Body of Christ, particularly those who believe and practice the Word of God, there must be *Christian Culture*. God has allowed me in the more than fifty years of my ministry to travel and minister in more than thirty-five countries, and I have found that wherever I go, Bible-believing Christians have similar standards.

Why is this true? Because the Bible teaches that there are principles of life that all Christians are to follow. In Ephesians 4:22 we learn that we are to "put off concerning the former **conversation** the old man, which is corrupt." And Philippians 1:27 instructs us to let our "**conversation** be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." Any Bible scholar will verify the fact that the word *αναστροφή*, translated "conversation" in the KJV, means a **way of life** or by our definition, culture. This is because those who love the Lord and believe His Word are to adopt and practice a way of life that very practically becomes what can be called Christian Culture.

God is unchangeable; His principles of right are always the same, and they will never pass away. In His Word He has given us the principles of "a way of life" (culture) that will never change and must be applied to every area of life, including music.

How does this apply to CCM? Any observer of the culture that accompanies much of CCM must admit that the lifestyle, the language, the attitude, and the lack of separation and musical standards all fall far short of what the Bible requires of those who believe "the gospel of Christ." Even those who are involved in this genre recognize the power of CCM to control the culture of those who adhere to it. For instance, Michael Hamilton in writing for *Christianity Today* says, "When one chooses a musical style today, one is making a statement about whom one identifies with, what one's values are, and ultimately who one is."

Edward Rothstein, chief critic for the *New York Times*,

writes that a musical style "suggests ways to think. A style even defines a musical community—a group with shared notions about music and its purpose. . . . The shared style allows for musical communication without misunderstanding." What both of these authors are clearly describing, perhaps without realizing it, is the culture of CCM.

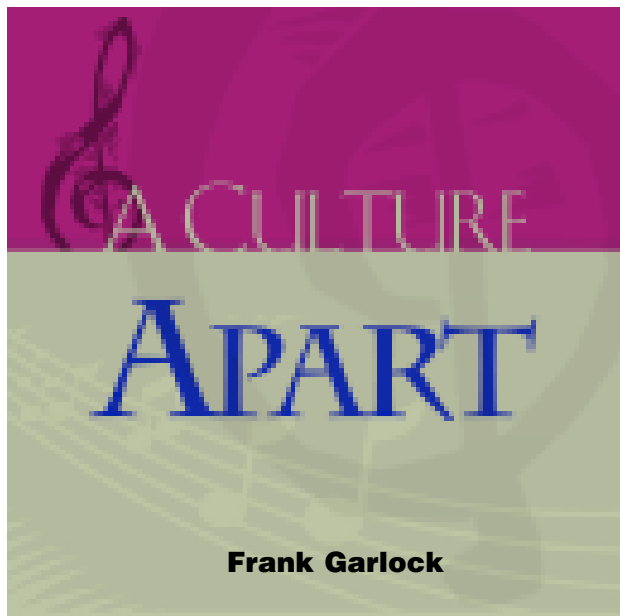
It is significant to note that as *WORLD* magazine reports, "Secular media companies . . . swallowed up more than 90 percent of Christian recording labels in the 1990's." If the world adopts it as their own, there must be something un-Christian about it that allows the world to embrace it. As Cal Thomas, in talking about the problems Christians face in the political realm, has pointed out in his

insightful book *Blinded by Might*, whenever we try to marry Christianity and the world, Christianity always loses. He says that "we try . . . to usher in a kingdom not of this world by using tools that are of this world," and it doesn't accomplish the goal that it is supposed to be seeking.

But, the CCM proponents protest, we are just using pop music to get the message of the gospel out to the world. What they fail to recognize is what communication experts like Neil Postman of New York University states in his book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*: "The form in which ideas are expressed affects what those ideas will be." He

elucidates this idea even further when he says: "It is naïve to think that something that has been expressed in one form can be expressed in another without significantly changing its meaning, texture, or value." To apply this truth to CCM means that even Bible words change their meaning when they are set to today's pop or rock music, thus changing God's gospel into "another gospel." As Galatians 1:7 says, they "pervert the gospel of Christ." Probably without recognizing that what he was saying came from this Scripture, Robert Shaw said: "I don't know if the church today understands the music being brought into the church. The people don't understand the music. . . . It's perverse."

Even *Newsweek* magazine, after noting that CCM festivals have "gangsta-style rhymes about the Lord," and that "the kids have the option to visit the prayer area if they're not moshing," comments: "Maybe the mainstreaming of Christianity *has* gone too far." Evidently this worldly magazine recognizes that the culture of CCM and the culture of Christianity don't belong together.



I have heard a number of missionaries say, "But we don't want to impose American culture on the culture in the country where we minister." And I couldn't agree more!

American culture is not worth much. In fact, many other countries are experiencing the same problems America is having because our country is exporting the basest areas of its culture to other countries through its movies and music. But there is Christian culture, and we do need to proclaim the Biblical principles that will lead to adoption of Biblical standards to every country in the world.


To spread the culture of CCM will only lead to an anemic, counterfeit Christianity that Steve Camp says "yodels as a Christless, watered-down, God-as-my-girlfriend kind of thing." To paraphrase Vance Havner, an old-time evangelist: "If CCM is the light of the world, why is everything so dark?" Several CCM recordings have sold in the millions, and, according to *Newsweek* magazine, the overall "Christian entertainment business is a 3 billion dollar industry." To paraphrase Vance Havner again: "If CCM is the salt of the earth, why is everything so corrupt?" I believe the problem is that the culture of CCM is not the culture, the way of life, that the Bible teaches ought to be characteristic of Christians.

But I can almost hear someone saying: "Why make a blanket condemnation of CCM? It isn't all bad. It may be insipid and not have much content, but it isn't all that bad." This also relates to culture, because the worst thing that a church or a Christian organization can have is a mixture of error and truth. It would be better to go to a

secular school than to go to one that claims to be Christian and then teaches evolution. It would be better to go to a secular psychologist than to go to one who prays with you and then gives you Freudian psychology. And it would be better to go to a church that you know doesn't teach the Bible than to go to one that still preaches the Bible but then allows worldly practices to be a part of its ministry. The "Christian culture" that mixes truth and error is the worst one of all because of its inconsistency and compromise, and CCM is just such a culture.

Without realizing it, *Time* magazine, in a special issue titled "Music Goes Global," revealed one of the main problems Bible-believing Christians should have with today's pop music, especially Christian pop, which is what CCM is. This magazine says, "Musicians are rocking old traditions. Your world will never be the same. . . . The we-are-the-world maxim is this: music is the universal language." In other words, pop music will be one of the main vehicles the Devil uses to help establish a one-world church. Could it be that the Devil is promoting CCM to try to accomplish his anti-Christian goals for the world? It is certainly uniting believers and unbelievers in some strange alliances. And as John Makujina has so succinctly said in his book *Measuring the Music*, "Anyone who attempts to battle CCM today will be facing not just a Goliath, but a Goliath on steroids."

Dr. Fank Garlock is the founder and president of Majesty Music. He has lead the MusiCollege seminars over the last 30 years, and he has presented his Language of Music Seminars in local churches around the world.



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The people who have the greatest influence in shaping the hearts and minds of any generation are not the people who write the laws, but those who write the songs.
—Blaise Pascal

Fit me to bear my part in that music ever new, which elect angels and saints made perfect now sing before Thy throne and before the Lamb.
—from a Puritan prayer

Only a generation that loved Woodstock could love Willow Creek Community Church.
—Peter Masters

We are using some of the present-day modern things, strange songs with strange melodies and frivolous words. Music is changing a great deal. The great, vigorous singing by a congregation is not heard often.
—Lee Roberson

Music is Love in search of a word.
—Sidney Lanier

Sentimentally I am disposed to harmony; but organically I am incapable of a tune.
—Charles Lamb

When the world gives prime television to “Gospel” rock, enjoying and applauding its performers, it does so because “Christians” have made themselves indistinguishable from worldlings, and have renounced their cause.
—Peter Masters

One church attendee confessed he comes intentionally late to his church’s contemporary worship service just so he can miss what he calls, “Worship on Prozac.”
—Sally Morgenthaler

Rock music is the total celebration of the physical.
—Ted Nugent

Wit & Wisdom is taken from various sources with contributions from Pastor David Atkinson.



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You Can't Be Too Kind

Sharon Thomas

"Lynn Jones? Oh, yes, I know who she is. She's in my Sunday school class. Her brown hair is short and straight. Looks like she never uses a hair dryer or a curling iron. She has a crooked smile that somehow makes her charming."

That's what I might have said about "Lynn" (not her real name) the first few months after I first met her. But then came a chance moment after Sunday school, and everything changed.

On that particular morning Lynn and I happened to be the last ones to leave class. Because the class met in a corner of the church balcony, we had to descend a steep set of wooden steps to reach the ground floor. Lynn was a little ahead of me, but hesitated at the top of the stairs.

"I'm afraid I'm going to tumble down these stairs someday," Lynn said.

I smiled as I answered, "I know what you mean. They're awfully steep, and my short legs don't handle stairs gracefully."

Then I carefully began descending. My high heels clunked on the wooden boards as I made my way to the bottom. Nearing the final step, I stopped looking at my own feet and glanced upward. There, I saw a tall man watching Lynn

come down the stairs, a worried expression on his face. When I moved out of his way, he stretched a hand toward Lynn, and she accepted it, breathing an obvious sigh of relief as she did.

Watching the two walk away, I noticed for the first time that Lynn limped. She must have thought me an insensitive clod when we started down together and I ignored her need. Now I blinked back tears of shame. Lynn had truly needed help coming down that stairwell, but I had been so self-centered that I hadn't even noticed.

"Oh, God, forgive me for not seeing Lynn's need," I prayed as I listened to the organ music at the beginning of the church service. "And please help me not to be so insensitive from now on," I continued.

And through Lynn God answered that prayer. He has taught me to be more sensitive to the needs of

others. As my friendship with Lynn grew, I had many opportunities to visit her home. (By that time I had learned that Lynn was partially paralyzed on one side as the result of a stroke.) As we grew from acquaintances into friends, I found the way I related to her changing. For instance, I would offer my arm and accompany her down stairwells. Also, I watched for other moments when she might need a helping hand.

In time, though, I also learned when to offer help and when to let her struggle to accomplish something that was meaningful to her. For instance, when the class social was held at Lynn's house, I went early to see what I could do to lend a hand. "Just sit and talk to me," Lynn said, "while I mix up this cake batter." I

looked on apprehensively as she hooked her weak left arm around the mixing bowl and stirred the batter with her right hand. But I needn't have worried. Lynn didn't spill any ingredients or drop the mixing bowl, and her cake turned out to be delicious.

Even though I started out trying to help Lynn, she turned out helping me—she showed me how to recognize people for their abilities, not just their disabilities. Then, when people would

mention her, I would respond: "Lynn Jones? Oh, yes; I know her. She certainly has a 'can-do' spirit!"

Recently, I discovered the following poem by an unknown author. Every time I read it, its lines remind me of my experience with Lynn, and I remember that a person can't be too kind.

I have wept in the night
For the shortness of sight
That to somebody's need
Made me blind.
But I never have yet
Felt a twinge of regret
For being a little too kind.

Sharon Thomas, a great-grandmother and author of *Joybeams*, is a retired freelance writer living in Orange Park, Florida.

Even though I
started out trying to
help Lynn, she
turned out helping
me . . .

New Evangelical Entertainment Worship

In Acts 2:41, 42, Luke writes, “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” This is the response to Peter’s sermon following the Divine establishment of the church, and verse 42 provides a prototype of the local church worship service.

The Prototype of Worship Services

In this first worship service the saved, baptized believers were taught doctrinal truths about worship. Note the simplicity of their worship service. They fellowshiped together and had a time of prayer. Later on in Acts 6, this protocol was expanded to include congregational business in the election of deacons. So in these two passages of Scripture, God gives us the skeletal foundation for the worship service.

In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul instructs believers to be “speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). In another passage he writes, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Col. 3:16). So the overall picture of a local church’s worship service is one in which there is: (a) preaching of doctrinal Biblical truths, (b) Bible-based music, (c) commemoration of the Lord’s Supper, (d) fellowship, (e) congregational business. This is the skeletal development God gave to all future local churches as a pattern for their worship services.

The Practice of New Evangelical Worship Services

At this point, it’s easy to observe a stark difference between the Biblical pattern and many modern services. Specifically, note the absence of even a hint of an entertaining spirit in this prototype worship service. In contrast, the mood in many Evangelical church services in recent years has veered from sacred worship to secular entertainment.

By way of example, one actual newspaper ad boldly announced a youth event with the following words: “A touch of Class—Raucous Comedy, Live Bands, Hot

Dance Moves.” At first glance, that sounds like an advertisement for a disco joint—but, sadly, it was an advertisement for a rally sponsored by Youth for Christ in Auckland, New Zealand. The article went on to quote the director, who said, “It’s an effort to reach young people in a creative way.”

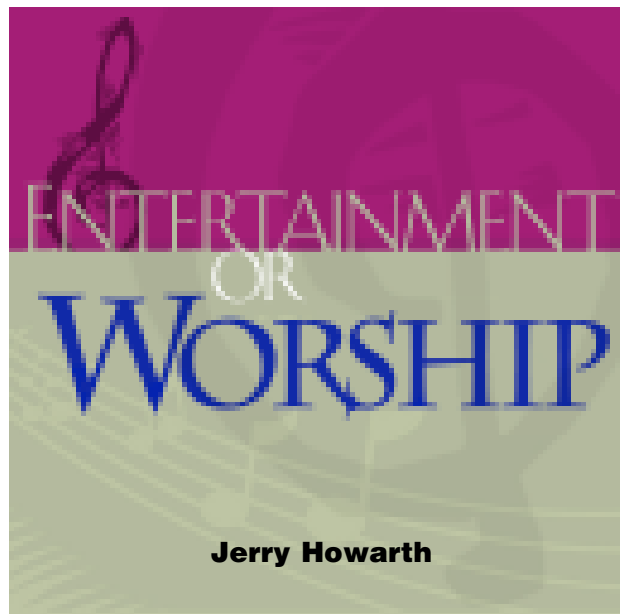
Granted, this was a YFC program and not a local church, but many American congregations—including some who would claim to be Evangelical—are promoting this same type of entertainment, attempting to reach whoever they can. These “seeker-driven” services, which are designed to meet people’s felt needs, are a long way from the Scripture’s pattern for worship services. Yet in many churches across America today we see a great push toward entertainment and a trend away from solemn, sacred worship.

Did God institute the local church to be a place of entertainment? No. True worship is centered upon the Person and work of Christ. The music of true worship, while it should exalt Christ in praise, should also emphasize commitment to Christ. But many of the songs and “praise choruses” in today’s New Evangelical and Charismatic services mimic the strains of nightclub bands, and they attune the emotions to the same fleshly pulses. When one cannot detect any difference between the music

and mood of a church service from that of a nightclub, then any spiritually minded person would recognize that something is not right with the church service.

In one instance, a father felt compelled to attend one of these entertainment-style churches with his married son’s family. Following that service, they went to a local restaurant. As the family entered the doors, they were met with the restaurant’s secular pop music, prompting the father to comment, “I thought we left the church, but I guess we didn’t. I hear the same kind of music here that I heard in church.” And it was. I know, because I was that father.

Charles H. Spurgeon is credited with having said, “The devil has seldom done a more clever thing than hinting to the church that part of their mission is to provide entertainment for the people, with a view to winning them. Providing amusement for the people is nowhere spoken of in the Scriptures as a function of the church.” Amen, Brother Spurgeon. The need of all church services is Biblical, doctrinal



nal preaching, so understood and felt that it alone sets hearts aglow with love for God and conviction of sin that brings men, women, and young people to their knees in repentance and confession of Christ as Savior and Lord.

The Power of the Gospel in Worship Services

Note the results of Peter's plain preaching from Acts 2:37: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter did not "dumb down" his message into "positive, politically correct" jargon of the world. He flat-out preached the Word of God, unconcerned that some might turn away because he lacked the entertaining words and phraseology of the world.

Many of today's "modern" churches endorse a false philosophy of soul winning that says, "We must be like the entertainment world in order to win the world." And, living up to that approach, they use an excess of gimmickry to catch the attention of multitudes. For example, they use rock concerts with a religious flavor; laser lights flashing across pulpless platforms, highlighting the drummer or bass player or some carnal prop that is supposed to draw one's attention to the religious theme of the moment; praise bands led by the heavy beat of the drums and bass, which are played by hip-wagging, dressed-down performers. In fact, many of today's church services with the dress-down style of jeans, cut-offs, tank-tops, and t-shirts—even worn by the preacher—bear closer resemblance to MTV than to the old-time power services, upon which the Fundamentalism of the Christian faith was established.

Entertainment-style worship may draw a crowd, but the question is, "Does it draw a person from a shallow, hollow, empty lifestyle to a meaningful, solid, life-changing personal fellowship-walk with Christ?" A key follow-up question is, "From what are the crowds drawn, and to what are they attracted?" True, these entertainment, seeker-driven events will attract people that old-time, Biblically Fundamental, separatist Baptist churches will not; but if they are attracted to the very same thing they came from, what's the point?

"Well, at least they are saved and on their way to heaven," someone might argue. Quite frankly, though, this preacher has some serious reservations about an entertainment-induced response in a service. Furthermore, the church service and its message ought to raise the dress standard, the music standard, the attitude standard, etc. There's something definitely wrong when a person feels as comfortable wearing the same t-shirt and cut-offs he would wear to a secular rock festival as he prepares to worship the King of kings and Lord of lords. Even Jay

Leno and David Letterman wear suits and ties on their programs—so what's wrong with our so-called worship leaders?

Let's not be misled and deceived by the trend toward New Evangelical or Charismatic-style entertainment in worship church services. The result is an empty, worldly, Christian life — a life void of meaningful prayer and Holy Spirit power. Discerning believers would not want to duplicate a life like unto the Israelites' of which Scripture says, God gave them the desire of their hearts, "but sent leanness into their soul" (Ps. 106:15).

Jerry Howarth is pastor of Winifred Baptist Church in Winifred, Kansas.



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Treasuring Our Time (Part Two)

Jerry Sivnksty

In Ephesians 5:16 the apostle Paul wrote, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." We as God's children are living in evil days; therefore we ought to be making the most of our time. Recently I read an article about how George Whitefield and his close friends kept records of how they spent their days. They would try to improve areas in which they felt they were wasting time. We, too, ought to take an inventory of how we spend our time.

In my previous article I stressed two areas that we should set apart in the use of our time. The first was our time of devotions. Our private time with the Lord will reveal our spiritual maturity and depth of character. The second was our time of prayer. We cannot ignore the importance of setting aside time for prayer, because this is how we build an intimate relationship with our Lord. As James 5:16 says, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." In Luke 18:1 we read, "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Clearly, every child of God should pursue a pulsating prayer life.

Now we will consider the two other vital activities that we should incorporate into our time schedule. The third area is our time of memorizing and meditating upon God's Word. I cannot stress enough the importance of memorizing the Scripture. Psalm 119:11 says, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." The Word of God is our authority for living as Christians. We are not to govern our decisions based upon our logic, reasoning, or emotions—our lives are to be controlled by the teaching of Scripture.

Psalm 119:130 says, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." In this darkened society of ours where millions are groping in darkness, the child of God has the illuminating light of His Word. In the Old Testament, God's people taught and memorized Scripture. Deuteronomy 11:18 says, "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes." Because God's Word places such a strong emphasis on memorizing Scripture, we must recognize that same urgency for our own lives.

I'm grateful that when I was saved as a teenager my Sunday school teacher challenged me to memorize the

Scriptures. It has been a wonderful blessing, and I encourage people to start a systematic program for memorizing the Bible. I stress two things on this matter: First, memorize God's Word out loud by saying the reference and then the verse over and over until you've memorized it. Second, meditate upon the memorized passage. The Lord does not say He will make us successful if we memorize the Scriptures; rather, He promises success only when we meditate upon them. Joshua 1:8 also emphasizes that truth: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." God's people are wise to set aside time for memorizing His Word for their personal growth and public ministry.

The fourth and final aspect of scheduling our time involves witnessing for the Lord. When I was first saved, this was a difficult thing for me to do. I was challenged by a dear friend in West Virginia to go out with him and witness for Christ. I told him I would go as long as I didn't have to say a word, because I was extremely shy and had a very hard time speaking in front of people. However, as I watched this man take the Word of God and deal with individuals and saw them come under conviction and accept Christ as Savior, I became eager to begin witnessing for the Lord. I asked my friend if I could witness to the next person, and he agreed. I talked so fast and got everything so mixed up that the lady to whom I was witnessing looked strangely at me with bewilderment in her eyes. But I kept working at it until I could clearly present the gospel to people. The thrill of leading people to Christ is one of the greatest privileges I've known.

In Romans 10:1 the apostle Paul wrote, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." We will never have a passion for souls if we lose sight of individuals without our Lord Jesus Christ. May it be our desire as God's people to treasure our time and take an inventory of how we are using it in these four areas.

You may contact Evangelist Jerry Sivnksty at P.O. Box 141, Starr, SC 29684, or via e-mail at evangjsivn@aol.com.

THE THREEFOLD OFFICE OF

Christ is the believer's Prophet, Priest, and King. This is not merely the poetic stuff of hymnody nor theological invention. Each mediatorial office has roots in the OT that spring to life in the NT and find their present fruition and future fulfillment in the person and work of Christ. Jesus is the quintessential expression of each of these offices and their respective functions (Donald MacLeod, *The Person of Christ*, 247). **As Prophet**, Christ is the Revealer to mankind of God. **As Priest**, Christ is the Reconciler of mankind to God. **As King**, Christ is the Ruler over mankind for God. This column will explore Christ as Priest and its current relevance to the relationship He sustains to believers.

Priest: Representative and Reconciler

The priest filled an essential and exclusive role in Israel: "For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons forever" (Deut. 18:5). This statement summarizes several key facets of priestly ministry.

1. Priesthood was *divinely appointed*—priests were "chosen" by God, not self-appointed.
2. Priesthood was *Levitical*—priests were chosen only from "him [Levi] out of all thy tribes."
3. Priesthood was *service-oriented*—priests were chosen by God from Levi "to minister" both to and on behalf of Israel.
4. Priesthood was *representative*—priests were chosen by God from Levi to minister "in the name of the LORD" as duly authorized representatives of God.
5. Priesthood was *perpetual*—priests were chosen by God from Levi to minister in the name of the LORD "forever."
6. Priesthood was *continual*—priests were chosen by God from Levi "to stand" to minister in the name of the LORD. The work of the priest was never done.

A priest functioned as the divinely appointed minister and representative mediator who stood between God and man. God could not appear in His holiness directly to the nation—the priest was God's go-between to man. Nor could Israel appear before their holy God in their sin and uncleanness—the priest was man's holy substitute representing them before God. God manifested His holiness to man through the intermediary person of the priest; man approached and was accepted by God in the representative person of the priest.

Anticipation of a Perfect Priest

In the Pentateuch, one book of history (Genesis) paves the way for four books of law (Exodus–Deuteronomy). The Pentateuch rests upon two institutional pillars: (1) laws, to govern fallen man's relationship to God and to one another, and (2) sacrifices, to atone (but only imperfectly and temporarily) for fallen man's failures in keeping God's laws. What necessitates these laws and sacrifices? In a word, sin. No sooner is the divine-human relationship underway than is it broken by the sin of disobedience (Gen. 3). No sooner is the law given to govern and curb that sin than it is broken by the sin of idolatry (Exod. 32). No sooner is the sacrificial system to repair these breaches in place than it is corrupted and marred by the sin of self-will (Lev. 10). No sooner is the privilege of priesthood instituted than it is marred by the sin of discontent, pride, and rebellion (Num. 16). The Pentateuch perpetually presses upon man the demand for holiness (Ex. 19:3–6; Lev. 19:1, 2)—a term that occurs nearly 275 times in the Pentateuch. Man lacks it, yet God requires it. What's to be done? The function of the Pentateuch is to show the need for a Perfect Priest who can offer a perfect sacrifice that actually takes away sin and makes the worshipper holy (cf. Gal. 3:19–24; Heb. 7:23–27; 10:1, 11–14). The ritual repetition of unceasing sacrifices highlighted this need. The best of the priests were themselves sinfully flawed and had to offer sacrifices for their own sin as well (Lev. 9:7; Heb. 7:27), and the sacrifices they offered "could never take away sin" nor "make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 9:9; 10:1, 4, 11). The Pentateuch creates anticipation for a Perfect Priest. The NT announces His arrival.

Appearance of the Perfect Priest

Gospels. The Gospels serve as the *introduction* to Christ. In terms of introducing Christ's priesthood, the Gospels are the least explicitly developed—for good reason. Jewish priests must be descendants of the tribe of Levi, and high priests must be descended from the family of Aaron. But Jesus was of the royal tribe of Judah, not Levi. How, then, can He possibly function as a priest? That would take some explaining, and the Gospels are designed merely to manifest and introduce the Person of Christ. (Matthew does, however, suggestively imply Christ's superiority to any priest because He is greater even than the temple itself in which they minister [12:6].)

CHRIST (PART ONE): CHRIST AS PRIEST

Nevertheless, the Gospels do record in the most detail the priestly work of Christ that became the basis for that future explanation. Each Gospel relates in more or less condensed form the busy three-year ministry of Christ. But when they hit the final week and last day of His earthly ministry, all four Gospels slam into slow motion and zoom in for a close-up of the final twenty-four hours of Jesus' life and the sacrificial cross work of Christ (Matt. 26–27; Mark 14–15; Luke 22–23; John 13–19). It is not coincidental that when Jesus died on the cross, the veil of the temple where the priests were ministering—symbolizing the separation between an unholy people and their holy God—inexplicably ripped from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51).

Acts. The presentation of Christ as Priest remains sketchy and undeveloped in Acts, which is concerned with history and proclamation, not theological explanation. Nevertheless, Christ's priestly work is implicit in the terms used to preach salvation—terms requiring priestly interposition: remission of sins (2:38), blotting out of sins (3:19), turning you away from iniquities (3:26).

Epistles. The Epistles furnish the theological explanation of the person of Christ. So it is here, particularly in Hebrews 5–10, that the Priesthood of Christ finds its fullest explication.

Revelation. The last book of the NT features Christ as the Lamb, the Priest who sacrifices not an animal but Himself as the perfect and only ultimately adequate and acceptable offering (e.g., Rev. 5:9–10).

Authenticity of Christ's Priesthood

Since God designated for priesthood the tribe of Levi alone out of all the tribes of Israel (Dt. 18:5), how can Christ function as a priest if He is from the tribe of Judah and of the seed of David? The writer of Hebrews raises that very question (Heb. 7:13–17) and then explains. The answer, foreshadowed back in Genesis 14 and prophetically proclaimed in Psalm 110, centers on a mysterious man named Melchizedek.*

In Genesis 14:17–20, Abraham first met Melchizedek, whose role combined both royal and priestly functions—"king of [Jeru]Salem" and "priest of the Most High God." Melchizedek's superiority over Abraham is further accentuated by (1) Melchizedek's blessing of Abraham, and (2) Abraham's offering of tithes to Melchizedek.

In Psalm 110:1–4, Melchizedek rises abruptly and briefly out of ten centuries of obscurity into a position of

profound theological prominence. Immediately after God announces His installment of Messiah as King (vv. 1–3), He swears irrevocably to Him, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (v. 4)—that is, according to Melchizedek's priestly line and kind of priesthood.

In the Book of Hebrews, the fulfillment of this prophetic oracle is finally announced (see 5:1, 4–11; 7:1–17, 21, 22). Christ is declared by God to be a priest not after the order of the Levitical priesthood. Rather, He has been "called of God a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek"—Psalm 110 terminology that Hebrews cites repeatedly. There has been, in short, "a change of priesthood" (7:12).

Christ's Priestly Authority

Nevertheless, Psalm 110:4 and its elaboration in Hebrews depicts the Priesthood of Christ as fulfilling all the essential features of the Levitical pattern expressed in Deuteronomy 18:5 (noted above):

1. Christ's Priesthood is *divinely appointed*—"the LORD hath sworn and will not repent" (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:4–6).

2. Christ's Priesthood is *Melchizedekan*—"after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4), an equally divinely ordained order by God's own declaration (Heb. 7:20–22).

3. Christ's Priesthood is *service-oriented*—"Thou art a priest" (Ps. 110:4), the minister of "the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle" of God (Heb. 8:1, 2) and the minister of a better covenant (Heb. 8:6–13).

4. Christ's Priesthood is *representative*—Christ is the divine representative "in things pertaining to God" (Heb. 5:1, 5) and the human representative of man to God (Heb. 2:9–18; 4:14–16).

5. Christ's Priesthood is *perpetual*—"Thou art a priest forever" (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21).

6. Christ's Priesthood is *continual*—He "ever lives to make intercession" for His people (Heb. 7:23–25; 9:24–28).

Hebrews argues for both the *superiority* and the *indispensability* of the Priesthood of Christ as the final and full replacement of the Divinely inaugurated, temporary Levitical priesthood by the Divinely decreed, eternal Melchizedekan priesthood of Christ.

Christ's Priestly Activity

Among the furniture of the tabernacle, there was no chair for the priest. The priests never sat down because

Continued on next page

At a Glance

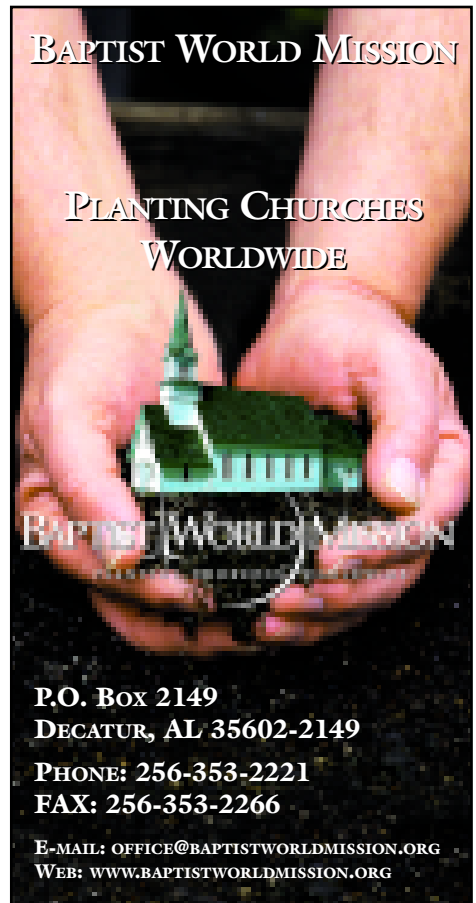
(Continued from page 31)

their work was never done. While Christ's Priesthood is *continual* in its benefits and efficacy, His priestly sacrificial work is *completed*—Christ finished His work and sat down (Heb. 1:3; 9:11–15; 10:12–18), in contrast to the *continual* unfinished sacrificial work of the Levitical priests. Christ's Priesthood is unique. He is the only priest called after the order of Melchizedek. He is the only priest who never had to offer for His own sin. He is the only priest who both sacrifices and is sacrificed, who is both offerer and offering. The God-Man is also the Priest-Lamb.

The Jews could approach God only through the mediatorial interposition of a Levitical priest. Believers have access into the very presence of God through the mediatorial interposition of Christ our High Priest. At the self-sacrificial

death of Christ our Priest-Lamb the temple veil was supernaturally ripped from top to bottom, "the Holy Spirit thus signifying that the way into the holiest of all" now *was* "made manifest" (Heb. 9:8)! We are accepted and received in Him, on the basis and merits of His perfect and final sacrifice. We are rendered forever perfect, sin-remitted, and conscience-cleansed by the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 9:11–14; 10:1–4, 11–14). The writer of Hebrews concludes (10:19–25): *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus . . . and having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith . . . let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering . . . and let us consider one another to provoke one another unto love and good works.*

* For a more detailed presentation of the significance of Melchizedek see "At a Glance," *FrontLine* (September–October 2000).



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Senator's Change from Pro-Choice to Pro-Life

Zell Miller, Georgia's Democratic senator and former governor, recounts his move from the pro-choice to pro-life cause in his book *A National Party No More: The Conscience of a Conservative Democrat*, published by Stroud and Hall. Miller spends much of the book criticizing the Democratic Party for what he sees as a drift to the left that has ended the party's appeal to Southerners. But Miller, who is retiring next year, also describes how his position on abortion began to change in the 1990s when his great-grandchildren were born. "I believe the thinking of many Americans is changing on this subject," he writes. "New science and technology can now show the heart of the unborn baby beating in the mother's womb. I say it on the front page of *Newsweek*, no less. I remember my grandson, only twenty, carrying a sonogram around to show off his yet unborn, but so alive daughter. . . . I know it is wrong to take these lives. For me it is no longer a political issue but a moral one, as it should have been from the beginning. I hope someday *Roe v. Wade* will be reversed." (Baptist Press, 11/11/2003)

Biblical Worldview Held by 4% of Adults

Everyone has a worldview, but few have one that is Biblical. That's the

conclusion of a national survey by Barna Research, which found that just 4 percent of American adults have a Biblical worldview. Additionally, only 9 percent of those categorized as born-again Christians have a Biblical worldview, Barna said. "Worldview" is a term used to describe the belief system by which a person understands or makes decisions about the world. Not surprisingly, the Barna research found that adults without a Biblical worldview and those with such a worldview had vastly different views of immoral and unethical behavior. The research found that those who attended college were more likely to have a Biblical worldview than those who did not (6 percent versus 2 percent). Married adults also were more likely to have such a worldview (5 percent for married people versus 2 percent for singles). Also, 10 percent of Republicans but only 2 percent of independents and 1 percent of Democrats had a Biblical worldview. Barna's definition of a Biblical worldview included a belief that absolutes exist and a belief that the Bible defines them. Additionally, the definition stipulated a belief that: Christ lived a sinless life; God is the "all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe and He still rules it today"; salvation is by grace and not by works; Satan is a real being; Christians have a responsibility to witness;

and the Bible is "accurate in all of its teachings." (Baptist Press, 12/02/2003)

The Late David Bloom's Conversion

Eric Metaxas, author and creative development writer for Big Idea Productions, told students how the death of his friend, NBC journalist David Bloom, resulted in hundreds of media personalities hearing the message of Christ. Bloom died of a pulmonary embolism while covering the war in Iraq. Bloom's journey to faith began more than a year ago when he began attending a home Bible study in the New York City area. Within a short period of time, Bloom formed a close friendship with Bible study attendees Jim Lane and B. J. Webber. Through their witness, Bloom committed his life to Christ. At the funeral, Lane delivered a eulogy for Bloom during which he read from Bloom's last e-mail to his wife, Melanie. "I hope and pray that all my guys get out of this in one piece. But I tell you, Mel, I am at peace . . . with my God, and with you. I know only that my whole way of looking at life has turned upside down—here I am, supposedly at the peak of professional success, and I could frankly care less. . . . It matters little compared to my relationship with you, the girls, and Jesus. . . . God did work a miracle in our lives." Attendees at the funeral included General Barry McCaffrey, Rudolph Giuliani, Katie Couric,

Anne Curry, Matt Lauer, Stone Phillips, Tom Brokaw, and many others. (Baptist Press, 10/13/2003)

Generation Gap in the Homosexual Debate

A generation gap exists in the country's debate over same-sex "marriage," new research by the Gallup Organization shows. According to the research, 55 percent of adults oppose legalizing same-sex "marriage," while 39 percent support it. However, 61 percent of young adults (ages 18–29) say they support legalizing same-sex "marriage." The 18–29 age bracket is the only one in the poll supportive of the controversial issue. Among those ages 30–49, only 37 percent support same-sex "marriage." The level of support is 40 percent for those ages 50–64, and a mere 22 percent for those ages 65 and older. Gallup's research, released July 22, is based on two separate polls—one of 1,003 adults in June and another of 1,005 adults in May. Richard Land, head of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, attributed the numbers among young adults to two factors: sex education in the public schools and homosexual-friendly entertainment. "Clearly, we are losing the battle for hearts and minds [of young adults] to the pop culture, to MTV, to Disney and ABC, and to other networks who are constantly bombarding our young people with positive

images of homosexuality," he told Baptist Press. (Baptist Press, 07/22/2003)

Hindu Militants Assault on Christianity

In Bhubaneswar, India, a fresh round of violence by Hindu militants in northern Indian state of Orissa has put Christian residents in the grip of fear. About a dozen members of the militant Hindu movement Bajrang Dal broke into a local church in the city of Deogarh in late November. They ransacked bookshelves in the church and took out hundreds of religious books and burned them, police reported. The Bjrang Dal is notorious for its role in the murder of Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two sons in January 1999. According to police, extremists opposed the recent conversion of four tribal families in Ambulpani village under the ministry of John Nayak, a Protestant preacher. They

NOTABLE QUOTES

Much of the singing in certain types of meetings has in it more of romance than it has of the Holy Ghost. Both words and music are designed to rouse the libidinous. Christ is courted with the familiarity that reveals a total ignorance of Who He is. It is not the reverent intimacy of the adoring saint but the impudent familiarity of the carnal lover.—A. W. Tozer

We are beset today by an epidemic of cheap religious music and gospel jazz. We have come from hymns to hootenannies. Somehow we have gotten the notion that we must drag the gospel down to the level of this age to make it please the perverted tastes of this generation. The natural man cannot receive spiritual truth, and it is not only stupid but sinful to get folksy with Sodom and Gomorrah to make our message acceptable. The whole sickening business is the clever strategy of Satan to debase the holy into the profane. We may have developed a generation incapable of reverence and worship in the presence of the holy God.—Vance Havner

Aposter above the music racks (in the "Christian" store) matches name-brand acts from secular radio with the closest "sanctified" equivalents. For the atheist teen who has suddenly been converted and wants to carry into his new life as many of his old attitudes and tastes as he can safely manage, such a chart would prove helpful, I imagine. . . . For me, though, the chart confirmed a preconception that Christian rock is a cultural oxymoron—a calculated, systematic rip off.—Walter Kim, unsaved literary editor of a secular magazine

broke into the church/residence rented by Nayak and ransacked it while he was away. Gang members wearing saffron-colored clothes—saffron being the symbol of Hindu ideology—burned an effigy of Jesus Christ along with a few copies of the Bible and shouted slogans against Christians. By noon, the mob marched to Deogarh and attacked a small church. Later they met a district magistrate and submitted a memorandum protesting the growing number of conversions in the area. So far this year, there have been more than 150 incidents of violence against Christians in India and, by unofficial estimates, Hindu militants have murdered at least sixteen Christian leaders and human rights activists. (Baptist Press, 12/02/2003)

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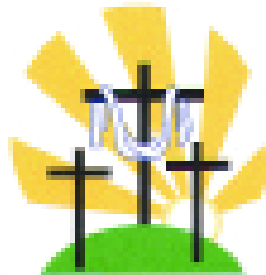
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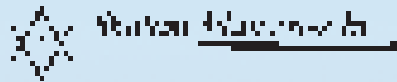
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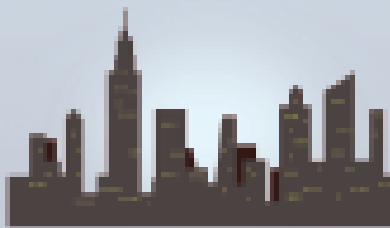
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Music and Morality

There are no absolutes." "What works is what counts." "The end justifies the means." "Music is amoral."

These are not statements of fact; they are statements of philosophy. The statements above are the rules of relativism ("no absolutes") and the principles of pragmatism ("it works"). Colossians 2:8 warns you to discard such philosophies because they do not honor Christ. The Christian is called to honor God in every area of his life, including his instrumental and vocal music.¹

To honor God with your music, you must reject these false musical philosophies. While admitting "music has the power to shape character" and that "Satan is clearly using music to do that today"² men such as Rick Warren still insist that "there is no such thing as 'Christian' music; there are only Christian lyrics. It is the words that make the song sacred, not the tune. There are no spiritual tunes."³

What is wrong with this thinking? The problem is that it moves musicality out of the realm of morality. In their opinion, no music or performance style comes short of the glory of God. They think that all music perfectly matches the character of our matchless Lord. All hip-hop, classical, rap, jazz, heavy metal, and disco correspond to God's holiness, beauty, order, perfection, variety, balance, peace, and truth. In Warren's words, "God likes variety and enjoys it all."⁴ Remember, these are statements of philosophy, and it's time to reject them. It is just this sort of teaching that leads others to say that music morally neutral. Some of Warren's works make Scripture practical in a remarkable way. In the case of music however, he insists that Scripture is silent with the conclusion that there is no good or bad instrumental music or style. Where does all this lead? Warren boasts, "We've often been referred to in the press as 'the flock that likes to rock.'"⁵ Do you see the natural progression? Since there are no spiritual tunes, then, conversely, there are no sensuous tunes or styles of

performance. That philosophy of music pushes aside the Lord and leaves what you like or even lust for. Sensuality is substituted for spirituality. "Cultural relevance" displaces Christ-filled reverence. Love for God starts to sound like lovesongs to a girlfriend. It's time to reject this ungodly thinking.

To honor God with your music, you must recognize Biblical reality. Music is a language (1 Cor. 14:7; Eph. 5:19) that, like all arts and languages, is affected by depravity (Rom. 5:12). The composers, performers and listeners all suffer the consequences of the curse (Rom. 8:20-23). This is why special care must be taken to honor the Father and not the flesh (1 Cor. 10:31; Gal. 5:13). Even great hymns such as "Amazing Grace" can be performed in a sensuous style. Perhaps you have heard an advocate of "Christian rock" say, "It is not what goes into a man that defiles him, but what comes out" (using Matthew 15). Matthew 15:10-20 compares the product of the harvest (wheat) with the product of the heart (wickedness). Musical compositions come out of the heart. Is it any surprise that Matthew 15:19 reads like the titles of today's "top ten hit list" on the rock or country western charts? The use of this language of the heart produces a response in the hearers as is readily evident. What may not be so evident is that music is a weapon of spiritual warfare. As David played (instrumental) music, the demon stopped harassing King Saul (1 Sam. 16:23) and this happened by design (see verse 16). Satan uses this weapon in his own wicked warfare. To really honor the Lord, you must look at music within the context of this spiritual warfare. Music is a medium with an inherent, intuitive message for the heart. You can prove this for yourself. Try singing the words to the hymn, "Rock of Ages" to the tune of Mozart's "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" or some other children's nursery tune. Why doesn't it work for you? It's because music is a medium with a built-in

meaning; the musical meaning must match those majestic lyrics! Like the human vocal cords, instruments can be skillfully used to convey any human emotion. As Warren admits, "Music exerts a great influence on human emotions."⁶ To say that music is "amoral" is to say that music is dispassionate or unfeeling, which is clearly not the case. Nothing that touches the heart can be morally neutral. To truly glorify God, you must return to Biblical reality concerning music.

To honor God with your music, you must return to musical morality. Yes, the Creator can be honored by a wide range of cultural creativity; but it is wrong to say God loves Satan's musical perversity. God created man and music and commands that both conform to His glory. Morality in music springs from the understanding of God's character as applied in music. God's holiness, perfection, beauty and order have implications for music.

These men are making a serious mistake when they insist that God's character does not apply to music. Move your musicality back into the realm of Scriptural theology and morality, which is to say, reality.

The fact is, the Christian is called to honor God in every area of his life, including his instrumental and vocal music. In every area (1 Cor. 10:31), the believer is commanded to think and act according to the glorious character of Christ. To do this, you must reject these false philosophies, recognize Biblical reality, and return to musical morality.

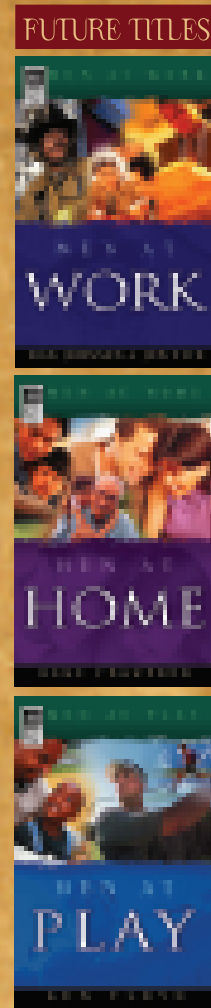
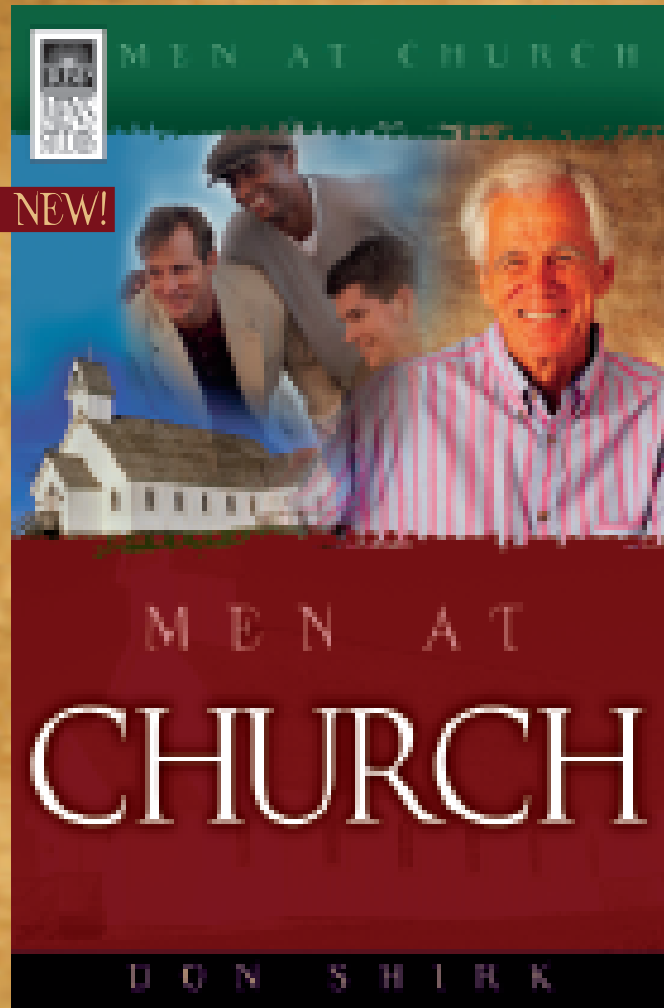
¹ The author would like to thank Dr. Gene Trantham, Associate Professor of Music Theory at Bowling Green State University, for his advice concerning this article. Dr. Trantham serves as the music director of Calvary Baptist Church in Findlay, Ohio.

² Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 279.



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