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TODAY'S CHALLENGES AND RESOLUTIONS
REGARDING CHURCH MUSIC

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this thesis is to first affirm the fact that music is one of the most powerful mediums that can control and influence people today. By emphasizing music's impact, the objective for churches and pastors is to understand that although music plays a major part within church worship, it is only one of many functions of the church. This thesis will serve the purpose of helping pastors, church leaders, and Christians to understand the influence of music that can lead to potential challenges and problems, and to give biblically based, historical, and practical resolutions. Christians must not let music in the church hinder true worship but rather must allow it to be a means of honoring and praising God.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Music's importance and significance within the church has been manifested through many worship wars that have occurred throughout the history of the church. The genre and style of the music, the use of instruments in the church, among numerous other preferences have caused many fights and church splits. Music may very well be the most conventional and standard ingredient in a successful service.

Can the church help that the emphasis on music is such an important ingredient within congregational worship? Absolutely not! People are naturally attracted to music and music is involved in an integral part of every human's life. Music is virtually everywhere and virtually every aspect of life today seems to march to some kind of rhythm. People are even attracted to a particular church more for their taste for that kind of music and less for the theology that is preached. For many Christians, music is a source of their identity and character.

The Prince of this World, namely Satan, understands the power and influence of music and worship. Ezekiel 28:13 may seem to hint that Satan was involved with music in Heaven. Before Satan fell, he was "anointed cherub" (Ezekiel 28:14), he was adorned with every precious jewel imaginable (Ezekiel 28:13), he was "the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty" (Ezekiel 28:12b), and he was persuasive enough to

convince one-third of the angels to join him in his rebellion (Revelation 12:4). The Bible explains that Satan fell because of pride, for he said “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain” (Isaiah 14:13). The Bible makes it clear that the angels constantly worship God (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8), and one can certainly suggest that Satan understands the worship of God and the power that is in music. Therefore, it is no surprise that Satan is out to swindle and demolish as many people on earth as he can. Since Satan was in Heaven and he understands the power of music and worship, it is no wonder that he would use this device to deceive the world; for he has had extensive experience using music to worship God.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this thesis is to first affirm the fact that music is one of the most powerful mediums that can control and influence people today. By emphasizing music’s impact, the objective for churches and pastors is to understand that although music plays a major role within church worship, it is only one aspect within congregational worship today. Although music was not necessarily one of the functions of the church listed in the New Testament, it can be used as a means to center the Christian’s mind and heart on God. This thesis will serve the purpose of helping pastors, church leaders, and Christians to understand the influence of music that can lead to potential challenges and problems, and to give biblically based, historical, and practical resolutions. Christians must not let music in the church hinder true worship but rather must allow it to be a means of honoring and praising God.

METHODOLOGY

In answering the question of “how” the solution to the problem will be reached, there will be three main areas of resolution. First, a resolution will be made through “Bible-Based Education.” Many people simply don’t know or fully comprehend that music is just one of the elements within congregational worship. On the same lines, worship is about God; therefore, whether the music was good or bad should not take the Christian’s attention away for Him.

Second, a resolution will be made through “Historical Education.” The historical analysis will include the Bible, the history of the Christian church, African American history, and 20th century history. This resolution will give helpful insight on the history of music in the Bible and throughout the centuries of the Christian church. There will be historical evidence of how people have equated music with worship, but also, how they have resolved the issue.

Third, a resolution will be made through “Practical Education.” This writer’s current church will be used as a case study and experiment and there will be three months of training in which surveys, workshops, and various other teaching methods will be used to train and educate the congregation on music and worship. There will be documentation pertaining to a series of questions to see people’s view on the equivalence of music and worship, who in the church is considered the “worship leader” in the church, etc. At the end of a three month period, there will be documentation on the responses of the congregation from the education of music and worship, workshops,

surveys, and various other teaching methods used. This case study will also include feedback from the members, pastors and staff.

Chapter one will give an overall introduction of the thesis. It sets the stage and tone of what will be covered in the thesis.

Chapter two of the thesis will unfold the impact of music today especially in the church. This chapter simply emphasizes the overall attraction of music, music's impact within the church, music's diversity and genre, and music's unique characteristic by which all people are able to participate (example: singing). This chapter helps set the mood and foundation of the entire dissertation; for people need to first see the impact of music before understanding that music can truly cause problems and challenges within the church.

Chapter three will emphasize music's challenges within the church. Five potential challenges will be given for churches today including the challenges of worship wars, the over-emphasis of music, the over-emphasis on feelings and experiences, order, unity, and worldly identification, and finally the challenges pertaining to the use of contemporary, traditional, and blended music in the church.

Chapter four will be most meaningful because after stating the overall impact of music today and its challenges within the church, one will be able to easily understand some of music's potential hindrances. It can be easy for Satan to use the use of music to cause division, complacency, and pride among church goers. Pastors, church leaders, and Christians in general must determine to not let this happen or allow Satan to get a foothold in the church.

Chapter five begins the second part of the dissertation, which gives meaningful solutions to the challenges of church music. This chapter will give “Bible-Based Education” for the church specifically in the areas of worship and music. This chapter helps pastors, church leaders, and Christian leaders to retrieve the biblical foundations of church worship. Once the foundational principles of worship are understood, music’s emphasis in the church can easily fit in line with God’s acceptable standards for His people.

Chapter six gives a second resolution for pastors, church leaders, and Christians on the need for historical education. This chapter will unfold historical details from the Bible and church history to give resolution to our present challenge of music in the church.

And last, chapter seven gives a third resolution on practical education for the church. This chapter encompasses the three months of training in which surveys, workshops, and various other teaching methods have been conducted to train and educate the congregation on music and worship. Meaningful results will be given from the answers and findings of the various teaching methods conducted. This chapter should be of great help in giving resolutions to the challenges of music in the church.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

There are special terms that will become evident throughout my thesis that will need to be explained.

Contemporary Worship Movement is a movement that has arisen to bring reform. Up until a century ago, many churches had become stagnant in worship and ineffective in

reaching their present generation. With this movement in full affect, the church has sought ways to make the gospel more relevant and influential to its present generation while preserving biblical doctrine.

Praise is the preparation and the prelude to worship. Praise emphasizes what God has done.

Worship is different from praise in that worship is done in recognition for who God is in emphasizing his person, nature, and deity. First, worship emphasizes the bowing or prostrating as a dominant image. Secondly, worship emphasizes the service to God and in living a lifestyle of worship. When we consider all the words used for worship in both the Old and New Testaments, we find that worship involves attitudes of awe, reverence and respect as well as actions of bowing, praising and serving.

The Worship Leader is the one responsible not only for managing all music within congregational worship but for using the means of worship to lead people into the presence of God. He must take the worshipper away from himself and into a full conscious worship centered on God alone.

Blended Worship is the combining of both traditional and modern forms of worship. Blended worship incorporates elements from a number of styles and traditions. As people are experiencing more of today's culture, people are more open to worship practices of other customs. The word "convergence" is one of the best meanings of bringing together the cultures and traditions of the world. Rather than separating the congregation, blended worship allows all worships to experience both ancient and contemporary styles of worship.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are some limitations that will result from this thesis. First, there will not be surveys and questionnaires conducted in 100's of churches throughout the United States. Rather, there will be study conducted within this writer's present church, White Oak Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Dry Fork, Virginia, on music and worship education. This information will be documented within my thesis.

Second, there will only be emphasis on music within the church as it relates to Christian worship. There will not be a study of worship as a whole conducted within this thesis.

Third, music and worship will only be related to its over-emphasis in the church, which can cause people to lose focus of other areas of worship including offering, prayer, etc. There will not be a main emphasis on music instruments, musical styles, musical preference, etc.

And fourth, there will not be a denominational emphasis in this paper.

BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE STUDY

Music's emphasis in the church is closely related to the theoretical fields of Christian worship and Christian theology. Theology is a set of beliefs about God, His nature, His revelation, and His relationship to man. In a more meaningful and applicable sense, theology for the believer is portraying Jesus Christ to others so that they may long to desire a relationship with God who has revealed himself to man.

Worship emphasizes not only the act of bowing or prostrating but in service to God and in living a lifestyle of worship. When it comes to music's emphasis in the

church, it must not be separated from worship and theology, for they complement each other and encourage the believer through his lifelong journey to live a productive and dynamic life.

The biblical data that corresponds to this emphasis of music, worship, and theology includes numerous verses from Scripture. The purpose of music is to praise the Lord (Psalm 150). The psalmist said “I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High” (Psalm 9:2). Psalm 21:13 states, “Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power.” Psalm 28:7 states, “The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.”

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There are six major sections of literature that will be used in this thesis. The first section is on church music. Two of the books that are used included *Contemporary Worship Music - A Biblical Defense* by John M. Frame and *The Black Church in the African American Experience* by Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya. These books helped explain the history of church music and the role of music in the church.

The second section is on music and worship. Two of the books that are used included *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* by Claus Westermann and *Worship at the Next Level* by Tim A. Dearborn. These books helped emphasize the true meaning of music within congregational worship, since many Christians have a tendency to equate good music with good worship.

The third section deals with the aspects of the church and church ministry. Two of the books that are used included *The Purpose Driven Church* by Rick Warren and *Worship Evangelism* by Sally Morgenthaler. These books helped explain the purpose of the church and the importance of Christians centering their focus on God during congregational worship.

The fourth section deals with church history and Bible history. Two of the books that are used included *A Brief History of Christian Worship* by James White and *Worship Old and New - A Biblical Historical, and Practical Introduction* by Robert E. Webber. These books helped serve the purpose of educating people on the history of the church and the Christian faith in order to help Christians keep music in its proper place.

The fifth section incorporates dictionaries, lexicons, and commentaries. Two of the books that are used included *1 & 2 Samuel – A Commentary* by Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg and the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* by Walter A. Elwell. These books help explain a lot of the various terms within music and worship in the church.

The sixth and final section deals with books on contemporary music and contemporary worship. Two of the books that are used included *Contemporary Worship Music - A Biblical Defense* by John M. Frame and *The New Worship* by Barry Liesch. These books helped emphasize the challenges for churches today to stay connected with their generation as well as biblical solutions to staying true to God's word.

CHAPTER 2

MUSIC'S IMPACT WITHIN THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

Music is virtually everywhere. You can find music in sports arenas, on commercials and advertisements, in movies and television shows, and in the mall. Every aspect of life today seems to march to some kind of rhythm. One author states, “People are naturally drawn to music and music is truly an integral part of one’s everyday life. We eat with it, drive with it, shop with it, and relax with it.”¹

People are often attracted to a particular church more for the taste of good music and less for the theology that is preached. The 21st century has shown that the style of music offered by the church most likely will determine the kind of person who will attend the church.² This could be the reason why many churches market their music and worship service more than the message that is taught or the denomination of which they are affiliated with. For many Christians, music is a source of their identity and character.

¹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 279.

² For further reading, please see “The Purpose Driven Church – Outline & Synopsis”; available from <http://www.cbchouston.org/40days/The%20PDC%20-%20Outline.doc>; Internet. For further reading, please see Craig Kennet Miller, “Tips for New Church Starts”; (Copyright © 2005 General Board of Discipleship); available from <http://www.umcncd.org/manual/tips/cm.html/index.html>; Internet. Date of access (11-03-05).

MUSIC'S CONGREGATIONAL IMPACT

Among pastors, statistics have shown the nature of music's impact in the church. Using a national omnibus survey conducted in April and May 2002 by the Barna Research Group, 601 Senior Pastors of Protestant churches were interviewed, as well as 69 worship leaders. More than four out of five pastors (84%) said music is very important to facilitate effective worship. In assessing the ranking of the ten worship elements studied, pastors rated music second only to prayer, and tied with the sermon, in importance.³ Therefore, the quality of the music within congregational worship services has been the number one impression.

For twenty-five years, many churches have been using Contemporary Christian Music. *Time Magazine* has observed that Christian contemporary music is making a major impact upon the popular recording industry. More radio stations are adopting religious music formats in which many consists of contemporary Christian music. Christian music's impact has spread all across the world through various means of revivals, concerts, and conferences. Maranatha, Integrity, and Vineyard, which are the three largest praise and worship publishers, took root out of the church and all three of these companies have probably made the greatest impact in the Christian music industry today. The business of song writing and recording has been marketed to churches nationwide and it is reported that one out of three churches in America take part in CCL (Christian Copyright Licensing Inc). By this, churches must pay royalties for using transparencies of the songs they use from music companies.

³ The Barna Group, "Focus On Worship Wars: Hides The Real Issues Regarding Connection to God"; (Copyright © 2006 by The Barna Group; November 19, 2002); available from <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=126>; Internet.

MUSIC'S DIVERSITY IMPACT

James F. White states:

The God, whom we worship, after all, seems to relish diversity. If no two leaves of grass are the same and certainly no two people identical, then it does not seem strange that there is so much variety in cultures. Our hope is that every culture can learn to name the name of Jesus in its own tongue each culture will have its own contribution to make to the totality of Christian worship.⁴

God is a God of diversity and to ignore this fact is a blatant disregard for His Deity.

Music has a strong impact because of the diversity it brings to a variety of people.

Music has a way of touching someone in some way because it knows no limit.

“Contemporary worship describes itself as worship attuned to popular culture, particularly in entertainment forms. Its use of music is highly repetitive, syncopated, and reflective of pop music.”⁵ Contemporary worship is another means of reaching people today. The words of many contemporary songs are usually snippets of Scriptural texts that are repetitively sung. Most of the choruses and songs are one stanza and its tunes and musical sound imitate the outside culture including soft rock and African American gospel music.

The national omnibus survey conducted in April and May 2002 by the Barna

Research Group states:

The styles of music used in church services vary tremendously. Nearly half of all Protestant churches (46%) offer at least one service featuring traditional worship music - hymns and other tunes utilizing a choir, an organ or congregational singing of that music. Just as prolific is the number of churches (43%) using ‘blended’ music - a combination of two or more different music styles within the same service. Less common styles used include rock or contemporary Christian (used in

⁴ James White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 180.

⁵ Todd E. Johnson, *The Conviction of Things Not Seen* (New York: Brazos, 2002), 34.

24% of churches), praise and worship (in 8% of churches) and gospel (in 7% of churches).⁶

For almost any new Christian today, it is easier than ever to find a church which incorporates one's style of music.

Praise and worship is one of the genres and diverse forms of music that makes a great impact in churches today. Praise and worship is sung in almost every church in America. It is a form of singing, commonly done at the beginning of worship that ushers the worshiper into the presence of God. There is a distinction between praise and worship. Praise prepares us for worship and is a prelude to worship. Praise emphasizes what God has done. This is different from worship. Worship is done in recognition for who God is emphasizing his person, nature, and deity.

MUSIC'S PARTICIPATION IMPACT

The church is not a theater where the Christian becomes entertained. It is rather a place where the Christians can join in and give praise and worship to God. Everyone can participate in singing but not all can contribute in drama, preaching, etc. For the Christian, music should impact one's participation in worship.

Music has a way of speaking to the soul of man and affecting his attitude and relationship with God unlike any other form of worship. One author states, "Music elicits from deep within a person the sense of awe and mystery that accompanies a meeting with God. In this way music releases an inner, non-rational part of our being that mere words cannot set free to utter praise."⁷ Because of this, all people within congregational worship can actively participate within the worship aspect of music. This is just one of

⁶ The Barna Group, "Focus On Worship Wars", November 19, 2002.

⁷ Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (New York: Oxford, 1977), 186.

the major advantages that music's impact has above many other forms of worship in the church.

God created man for fellowship and with fellowship comes communication. Believers can use both thoughts and feelings through singing songs. Songs are meant to be shared with God and His people and to help the worshiper proclaim what is in his heart. The psalmist says "Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright. Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise" (Psalm 33: 1-3).

Worship through song should always be led by the Holy Spirit, because it is God we desire to worship and it is Him who we seek to hear from. In the Bible, we observe that God allowed men write inspired words of song. Thus singing is a wonderful way for the church to actively participate in the worship of God.

MUSIC'S CONTEMPORARY IMPACT

Jesus told the disciples, "And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you" (Luke 10:8). In this passage, "Jesus was giving more than dietary advice; he was commanding them to be sensitive to local culture. He was telling them to fit in which those they wanted to reach. They were to adapt to local customs and culture when it didn't violate a biblical principle."⁸ Amongst the numerous impacts that music has today, it certainly has a contemporary impact within the church and within culture. Luke 14:23-24 says "And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into

⁸ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 195.

the high-ways, and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.”

Jesus desire for his house to be full and left an open method for his servant to do what was necessary to bring in the lost. “The Gospel is always communicated in the terms of some culture.”⁹ Therefore, Christians must find effective ways to carry this out. This brings us to the nature of contemporary music.

Contemporary worship distinguishes itself with the worship of God that has sought ways relevancy within the present culture. It is the reformation of worship that connects with today’s generation by understanding worships history and development. It involves the quest for worship to be culturally relevant especially in the areas of music, architecture, and language.

Contemporary worship is characterized by using music as a means to appeal to the present culture. The use of music is one of the main strengths of contemporary worship and it mostly emphasizes joy and celebration rather than mourning and sorrow. Many of the songs that are sung centers on topics such as praise, the divine attributes of God, the church, the family of God and the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The use of contemporary instruments are also unique. Many churches have gone away from pipe organs and have contemporized their sound with full drum kits, multiple keyboards, acoustic, electric, and bass guitar, and synthesizers. Vocally, many churches use several microphones for praise choruses and group singing. All these have been added to the church to characterize its worship.

⁹ Ibid., 196.

MUSIC'S EMOTIONAL IMPACT

After the Lord saved Israel out of the hand of the Egyptians in Exodus chapters 1-14, Moses and the children of Israel sang a song of thanksgiving and triumph to God. They proclaimed, "I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him" (Exodus 15:1-2). After being in bondage for 400 years, the Israelites deliverance from the hand of the Egyptians was a truly emotional victory. The Bible proclaims that one of the ways by which they were able to celebrate was in the form of music. They all collectively sang and proclaimed the Lord's deliverance from the hand of their enemies. The children of Israel were continually reminded of God's triumph every Sabbath in the Temple. They were prompt to recall the facts that at one time they were surrounded by the Egyptian army but Jehovah interposed on their behalf destroying all of their enemies.

This great event has been a reminder throughout history of God's intervention and deliverance. It has served as a means of comfort and a song of victory for all Christians. Many saints who have been through a "Red Sea", who have experienced a "Pharaoh's army", and who have receive victory from God, can relate to the song of Moses and the children of Israel.

Music is and always has been an integral part of the black church experience. In understanding the significance of African American spirituals, history has shown that African American slaves have been through a "Red Sea" and have experienced a "Pharaoh's army". More importantly, these people have experienced deliverance and

triumph from God. African Americans throughout history have used their songs of victory through religious and emotional songs called spirituals. Spirituals have served to be a forever reminder of the hardship and toil they have experienced along with God's victory. The spirituals enabled blacks to retain a measure of African identity while living in the midst of American slavery, providing both the substance and the rhythm to cope with human servitude.¹⁰

It was through the collective singing of the spirituals that allowed the slaves to experience God and religious worship. The Negro Spirituals eventually turned into Gospel music, which is considered another genre of Christian music. Like the spirituals, Gospel music incorporated biblical doctrine and related to the Christian's daily life. Gospel music grew mainly from northern cities and its music was first accompanied by pianos and keyboards and then resolved to percussion and electronic instruments. The lyrics of Gospel music tends to emphasize salvation and comfort to those who are in need. Its music incorporated a mixture of genres including blues and jazz and its reformation caused a new focus to take place on individual performers.

Therefore, one of the central motifs of the spirituals was a means of religious experience. A deeper level of experience was one of the real implications that the slaves needed in religious worship. Howard Thurman writes:

The Negro spirituals as a source of right testimony concerning life and death, because in many ways they are the voice, sometimes strident, sometimes muted and wary, of a people for whom the cup of suffering overflowed in haunting overtones of majesty, beauty and power. For many years it has been a growing conviction with me that the clue to the meaning of the spirituals is to be found in religious experience and spiritual discernment.¹¹

¹⁰ James H. Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues* (New York, New York: Seabury, 1972), 778.

¹¹ Cornel West and Eddie S. Glaude Jr., *African American Religious Thought. An Anthology* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 29.

MUSIC'S SEEKER-FRIENDLY IMPACT

Contemporary music today defines itself as being more “seeker friendly” than the traditional forms and models. Because the Bible has not given the Christian a specific way to evangelize, the Christian has sought the Holy Spirit’s guidance in areas to be most effective in evangelism. Therefore, changes could certainly benefit the conveyance of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost.

In creating services that are attractive to the lost, a change of music has helped numerous churches. Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church, has mentioned a number of areas in the church that can be most effective. He says to “create a service that is intentionally designed for your members to bring their friends to. And make the serve so attractive, appealing, and relevant to the un-churched that your members are eager to share it with the lost people they care about.”¹² Contemporary music has been one of the most influential ways by which this seeker-friendly impact has been made.

Keith Drury wrote an article to help explain music’s seeker-friendly impact. He stated that boomers inherited revivalist remnant worship from their parents. After examining it, the boomers wanted something more professional, more upbeat, more relevant, and more contemporary. Therefore, the church imported a band, a praise team, and projected praise choruses on a large screen. The church developed minute-by-minute schedules, spotlights, a stage, and banished all “dead air” in our upbeat fast-paced brightly-lit services. This was done in most growing churches in the 1980s.¹³ This explains much of what was done during the early stages of contemporary worship to help

¹² Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 253.

¹³ Keith Drury, “Five Recent Worship Trends”; (November, 2001); available from <http://www.indwes.edu/tuesday/1 wortren.htm>; Internet.

create a seeker-friendly service. The article stated that these changes were done in many of the growing church; therefore, it was a method that truly worked in bringing people in the church.

CHAPTER 3

MUSIC'S CHALLENGES WITHIN THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

Music truly has an influence in which the world knows no limit. Pastors in churches all across America understand the impact that music has within congregational worship. After understanding the facts of music's impact, it is important for the Christian church to understand its potential challenges today.

Throughout the history of the Christian church, numerous transformations have existed within Christian worship. One author notes:

Worship in the Middle Ages was caught up in the transcendence of God and human sinfulness, emphasizing the distance between God and humankind. The people could not be trusted with participation in worship because of their sinfulness, so worship became an elaborate spectacle to be observed with fear and trembling. The Lord's Supper of the early church, in which the faithful participated, was replaced by 'the Mass' which was said for the people by the priest.¹

Another author notes:

In the centuries after its founding, the Lutheran church was torn over a new style of church music that many found more entertaining than devotional. By the end of the eighteenth century, Lutherans were trying to hold their own against a new secularism, and many members of the clergy favored wholesale revision or even abandonment of the historic liturgy in order to make worship more relevant in contemporary society.²

¹ John Throop, "Learning to Love Liturgy Ending The Worship Wars!"; (Copyright © 2006 by CCLI); available from <http://www.ccli.com/WorshipResources/Articles.cfm?itemID=14>; Internet. Access date (11-11-05).

² Joseph Herl, "Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism Choir, Congregation, and Three Centuries of Conflict" available from <http://www.oup.com/us/catalog/general/subject/Music/ChurchMusic/?view=usa&ci=0195154398>; Internet. Access date (11-14-05).

The Pentecostal movement, and the post World War II charismatic movement, introduced the immediacy, urgency, and the joy of the Holy Spirit in church worship. R. J. Seymour became a major catalyst for the world-wide Pentecostal Movement, which helped bring about a change in worship during the beginning of the 20th century. Spirit-filled animation began to immediately become more emphasized in the congregational church and a change in worship occurred that would shape the way of the future congregational church. Both singing and music were strong in Pentecostal worship and this movement has used the language of popular culture to present the Gospel. Many Pentecostal churches used the gospel organ and a number of different instruments including guitar, drums, and synthesizer. Some of the churches use orchestras to accompany congregational singing, soloists, and the choir.

WORSHIP WARS

Throughout the history of these numerous transformations within Christian worship, there have arisen challenges specifically in the area of music. “Worship wars” have been a problem for centuries and have continued to exist today. Although choir robes versus regular clothes, hymnals versus projection screens, and the order of the service have constituted some of these “wars”, the vast majority of the controversy centers around music.

George Barna has noted that magazines have featured articles on “worship wars” and has said that they are “raging in the nation’s churches”. The Barna Research Group has statistically recorded:

While there are definitely battles being waged within Protestant churches regarding music, the battle is not widespread. One-quarter (24%) of Senior Pastors say their

church has music-related tensions, but only 5% of them claim that those tensions are ‘severe’ - which amounts to just 1% of the Protestant congregations in the U.S. About three out of ten pastors at the music-conflicted churches say the tensions are ‘somewhat serious.’ All together, then, only 7% of Protestant churches have ‘severe’ or ‘somewhat serious’ music issues rattling their congregation.³

If one-quarter of the churches in the United States are statistically stated of having “music-related tension,” it proves the fact of the potential challenges that music can bring in the church.

In addition to this statistic, the Barna Research Group has noted that “music-related tension” is a key factor among specific groups of people. The Barna Research Group states that “only three out of ten adults say that worship music is the single, most important factor in their choice of what church to attend. However, the people most likely to list music as a key factor were blacks, people 56 or older, adults who attend a church that has 500 or more attendees, women, and born again Christians.”⁴ Concerning blacks being one of the ones likely to list music as a key factor, Milton C. Sernett, author of *Black Religion and American Evangelicalism*, expresses that “the soul of the Negro just naturally has so much rhythm and music in it that ‘testifying’ to music in church and ‘getting happy’ with singing has always been a way in which the Negro has sought to renew his strength.”⁵ Concerning adults over the age of 56, it is true that they are far less willing to change today. Since the world is in constant change, particularly in the area of music, older adults will not easily tolerate much change in the area of music.

³ The Barna Group, “Focus On Worship Wars”, November 19, 2002.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Milton C. Sernett, *Black Religion and American Evangelicalism: White Protestants, Plantation Missions and the Flowering of Negro Christianity 1787-1865* (The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1975), 453.

Nonetheless, every church in America has some kind of order or pattern in worship and all individuals in the church are people of habit. People naturally desire pleasure, contentment, and even a sense of reminiscence, especially in today's overwhelming changing world. Christians also desire a sense of rest and consistency even in their relationship with God. Therefore, these truths are all noble reasons for the influence of music and the potential challenges that it brings within congregational worship, but not an excuse for the "worship wars" in churches.

OVER-EMPHASIS ON MUSIC

A second potential challenge to music today is the over-emphasis that people attribute to it. In the church today, music certainly makes up an important aspect of the service. Music must be carefully considered and chosen to lead God's people into worship. John Hodges states that music in the church should be evaluated according to content (what the music and words communicate), performance, and composition (how skillfully the music has been constructed, and how well the music complements the words). He states that on Sunday morning, usually the best studio musicians are hired, so its performance level is high.⁶ Good music in the church can certainly shape and define people's moods. It can allow worshipers to see God in a different way, enjoy the worship service, and enhance our joy in the Lord. Even in the Bible, the Levites were God's appointed people in the Old Testament to be the musicians. They were in charge of the preparation for music during worship (I Chronicles 6:31-32; 15:16). The Bible tells us

⁶ "Music and The Word" (Copyright © 2000 by Reformation of the Arts and Music. April 14, 2000); available from <http://www.artsreformation.com/a001/music-the-word.html>; Internet.

that they were held to a high standard of excellence, and this task was their full-time occupation.

However, although the whole idea of Christian worship is to put God on display, many people tend to be driven more by the music than by worship itself. In other words, Christians in the church can over-emphasize God's intended use for music, especially within congregational worship. One author states, "In our era, people equate worship with music: if the music is good, then the worship is good. We are in danger of becoming neglectful of their worthy activities such as prayer and Scripture reading."⁷ Because of this, many worshipers fail to see that baptism, communion, offering, and other acts of worship in the service are necessary and/or important; therefore, the worshiper falls short of comprehending the true God of worship.

John M. Frame says in *Contemporary Worship Music*:

When we go into a church building, sit down facing forward, listen and watch, the situation is so much like that of entertainment that we are tempted to equate the two, thus bringing into worship the attitudes we bring into entertainment. So we focus on the talent of the leaders, their cleverness, skill, literary polish, pleasant personalities – anything but the presence of the Lord himself.⁸

People expect the music in the church to be entertaining to them just like the music on television and in the music theatre.

Judson Cornwall states, "If a worship service requires emotional stories and psychological impetus to stir it into being, it is very likely soulish worship. So much of America's evangelistic services and gospel music are soulish both in origin and in

⁷ Barry Liesch, *The New Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 101-102.

⁸ John M Frame, *Contemporary Worship Music*, 59.

result.”⁹ Music is a wonderful way to express the God in which we worship; however, the challenge is to keep and maintain this focus. Christians must “ensure that God is the primary object of worship, not the music. God should be primary – not the music performance, style, or instrumentation.”¹⁰

OVER-EMPHASIS ON FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES

A third potential challenge to the influence of music in the church today is its over-emphasis on feelings and experiences. What is probably music’s most important defining characteristic is its emotional dimension, which gives humans power to feel, and to know through feeling. Music has the power to improve and increase the conscious experience and to enhance the quality of life. Studies have shown that even after a musical experience, emotions and sensations still remain.

One author states:

In the past few years there have been several movies whose soundtracks made more money than the movies themselves. While it’s true that there have been bestselling soundtracks throughout the history of film, it is rare that so many have recently outsold their films. There is something telling in this. The music in a film is used to evoke feelings and responses in the audience. While film can be a powerful medium, good music properly used tends to be more powerful. Appropriate music can also make a movie more memorable. If music is used in movies to drive home a feeling or point or to make a scene become fixed in our brains, how does music function in our lives?¹¹

However, music’s purpose in the church is to put God on display. Some counterfeit perceptions of church goers is that if music on Sunday morning does not meet

⁹ Judson Cornwall, *Let Us Worship* (South Plainfield, N.J.: Bridge Publishing, 1983), 109, 110.

¹⁰ Barry Liesch, *The New Worship*, 101-102.

¹¹ Travis Scott, “Listening to Music with Discernment”; available from http://www.ransomfellowship.org/Article_ListeningtoMusic.html; Internet.

their feelings and experiences, they should not have to get involved or even come to church. Many times the gospel message is even watered down in order to not offend those listening. One author equates this as a “psychologism, which plays along with the psychological preoccupation of modern culture, offering therapy to meet the felt needs of the audience, rather than the gospel of divine grace and the forgiveness of sins.”¹²

Along with this challenge of over emphasizing feelings and experiences comes a form of humanism that God is one who is “user-friendly”. Frame says that individuals in the church can often receive the impression that they can manipulate God or use him for their own purposes. They downplay biblical teachings about divine law and human sin, leaving us with a gospel void of atonement and forgiveness.¹³ Church music, among many other means, is one of the ways of how this can happen. Music for some is only the means of how they feel about God and seek Him. As a means of resolutions, one author encourages worship leaders saying:

Worship takes time: don’t rush the people. Let them sing: let them repeat any chorus or verse of a hymn that seems to give honest expression to what they are feeling and doing at the moment. The mind can jump from one concept to another far faster than the spirit can. Therefore, give the Spirit time to savor the sense of the presence of the Lord.¹⁴

This advice is a good tactic to ensure the worshipers in the church that music is to please God and to see Him, not feel Him. When music is rushed along with the entire service, people have the tendency to walk out the service either “feeling” God or not. This should not be!

¹² John M. Frame, *Contemporary Worship Music*, 48, 49.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 48, 49.

¹⁴ Judson Cornwall, *Let Us Worship*, 157, 158.

Seeker-services are a great tactic that have been used by the church; however, there are some cautions that need to be emphasized. Congregational worship attendance is in jeopardy in many of the seeker-driven churches, for many people rationalize themselves by saying that they have been to church! Sally Morgenthaler, author of *Worship Evangelism* states:

Current trend toward offering seeker events would be quite positive if it were not for two significant developments. First, it is becoming more and more difficult for seeker-driven churches (those who have adopted the seeker-event approach) to establish or maintain worship as their number one priority. Second, there is now a widespread tendency within evangelicalism to equate seeker events with worship.¹⁵

The Bible teaches that emotionalism and worship are contrary to each other. Although worship may involve feelings and sensations, the Christian's mind must remain functional and in control. Paul instructs the people that in worship (and specifically in music making), both the mind and the spirit are to be engaged (I Corinthians 14:15). As one author notes, "When our worship is spirit only, we run the risk of emotionalism and mindlessness; when our worship is mind only, the Holy Spirit's power and fervency may be absent."¹⁶

ORDER, UNITY, AND WORLDLY IDENTIFICATION

A fourth challenge for music today in the church is in keeping and maintaining order and unity and in abstaining from worldliness. "Biblical worship is ordered worship."¹⁷ Paul says, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all

¹⁵ Sally Morgenthaler, *Worship Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 44.

¹⁶ "A Concise Philosophy of Worship and Music for the First Congregational Church of Hamilton" (Copyright © 2004 FCC Hamilton); available from <http://www.fcchamilton.org/WorshipPhilosophy.htm>; Internet.

¹⁷ C. Welton Gaddy, *The Gift of Worship* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 179.

churches of the saints” (1 Corinthians 14:33). Paul also says “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40). Paul instructed Timothy to follow doctrinal purity and the example of the apostles until Christ returns. Satan would desire nothing more but to keep God’s people from being unified and in conducting their services (as the early church practiced) with order.

Darlene Zschech, recording artist and author stated her vision for the future of worship and the importance of unity and order. She said concerning unbiblical practices and doctrine today:

This strict biblical attitude about doctrine is 180 degrees contrary to the philosophy of those who are creating the modern praise movement. They [people today in various churches] teach that the Holy Spirit cannot be ‘put in a box,’ meaning we cannot be sure how He will act and that He can create disorder and confusion. They teach that doctrine is less important than unity. They teach that women can be leaders. These philosophies are in open and direct rebellion to the Word of God.¹⁸

She had a vision of future churches who had no celebrities but only worshipers who left no one behind. She envisioned unity and order and people who came together for the cause of putting God on display.

A more serious challenge within church music is instead of being different and distinct from the world, many would rather like to become like the world in order to attract outsiders. Many leaders of the church see Christ and Christianity as a product to be marketed like any other product to bring in money for the church.

1 John 2:16 gives the basic definition of worldliness. It states, “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the

¹⁸ “Darlene Zschech and Contemporary Praise Music”; (Distributed by Way of Life Literature’s Fundamental Baptist Information Service, Copyright 2001); available from <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/darlene-zschech.html>; Internet.

Father, but is of the world.” Worldliness can therefore be defined as “the love of beauty that which one finds attractive, appealing or desirable, without a corresponding love of righteousness.”¹⁹ In the New Testament, world is the translation of the Greek *kosmos* which means “an order or arrangement, ornament or decoration. Our word cosmetics come from this word.”²⁰ The word *kosmos* is used in the Bible in several ways. One meaning refers to the inhabitants of the earth and of the order or arrangement of the heavens or the earth. A second meaning refers “to the vast system and arrangement of human affairs which always stand opposed to the will of God and are controlled by Satan who is called the ruler of this world and the god of this age (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).”²¹

One author states, “the world along with the devil and the flesh are among the obstacles for the Christian.”²² The apostle Paul states “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Galatians 5:17). The church’s worship should rather confront the world, rather than the world influence Christianity.

¹⁹ John W. Ritenbaugh, “The World, the Church and Laodiceanism” (Copyright © 1993 by Church of the Great God); available from <http://bibletools.org>; Internet

²⁰ J. Hampton Keathley, “The Subjects of the Kingdom and Their Influence in the World” (Copyright 2005); available from <http://www.bible.org>; Internet.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Alfred P. Gibbs, *Worship, The Christian’s Highest Occupation* (Walterick Publisher, n.d.), 216.

CONTEMPORARY, TRADITIONAL, AND BLENDED MUSIC

The fifth and final challenge to church music today is its quest for being contemporary, traditional, or a mixture of both. Contemporary music today is one of the new reforms that churches have undertaken to revitalize worship. With most new reforms instituted by mankind, there are both strengths and weaknesses to be found. Some of the challenges in promoting contemporary music are not necessarily wrong, but, when over-emphasized, it can lead both the Christian and unbeliever away from God-centered worship.

The Contemporary Worship Movement is the movement by which much of today's contemporary music comes from. This movement, only being a phenomenon of the past 15 years, has spread to various cultural and ethnic groups with various forms of worship. Each church has shown different ways of expressing their worship mainly because worship is identified and practiced by people with various values, needs, and beliefs of God.

Some advocates of contemporary music believe that traditional music is monotonous, unfashionable, and non-relevant for today. One of the main factors that contributes to this thought is that traditionalist themselves resist change. Most of them are so deeply committed to a particular historical model of worship that talk of incorporating new styles of worship is intolerable.²³ Therefore, many contemporary churches desire the same willful attitude against traditional music and believe that

²³ Robert E Webber, *Worship Old and New. A Biblical Historical, and Practical Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 12.

nothing good could come out of its worship. However, any type of worship music that is strictly contemporary will soon become outdated.

Traditional music in churches today is a second option within congregational worship. Tradition by definition is the “passing down of elements of a culture from generation to generation, especially by oral communication” and “a mode of thought or behavior followed by a people continuously from generation to generation; a custom or usage.”²⁴ The word “custom” is a word associated with “a mode of thought or behavior followed by a people.” Custom by definition is “a practice followed by people of a particular group or region; a habitual practice of a person; and a common tradition or usage so long established that it has the force or validity of law.”²⁵

Traditional music escapes the constant change of music from week to week, month to month, and year to year. Since, every year brings on a contemporary alteration in trend, style and in worship, advocates for traditional music would rather stick with the ancient hymns than today’s most recent praise and worship chorus.

And thirdly, the solution of incorporating blended music is another option for churches today. The basic interpretation of blended worship is combining traditional and modern forms of worship with contemporary forms of worship. Blended worship incorporates elements from a number of styles and traditions. As people are experiencing more of today’s culture, people are more open to worship practices of other customs. Therefore, the word “convergence” is one of the best meanings of bringing together the cultures and traditions of the world. Rather than separating the congregation, blended

²⁴ Answers.com, “Dictionary” (Copyright © 1999-2005 by Answers Corporation); available from <http://www.answers.com/topic/tradition>; Internet.

²⁵ Ibid

worship allows all worships to experience both ancient and cotemporary styles of worship.

One major importance of blended worship is in knowing the importance of history; for history is important in understanding the present. Tim Dearborn says in *Worship at the Next Level*, “The past is understood more positively, it is not just a limit to be surpassed. Rather, through the activity of God in human history, the past bears relation to the future – especially in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, which contain the meaning of the future.”²⁶ In understanding the past, it is helpful to understand the traditions that were practiced and to observe and understand the development of worship that has evolved. This is what has shaped our worship today!

A second major importance of blended worship is that it is important for the church to understand the world in which it is in. Worship in the 21st Century involves a mixture of multi-media, a variety of music, and artistic expressions. Many radio stations and television shows incorporate both the old and new. The 21st century has brought about a world of opportunity like never before and most churches are trying to make the necessary changes to adapt to the culture. Therefore, worship must be committed to contemporary relevance.

A third major importance of blended worship is that it is important in training and educating the Body of Christ. Tim A. Dearborn states that training the congregation to “integrate all these diverse forms of worship including hymnals and choruses, organists and worship band, historic rites and spontaneous expressions, art, drama, and dance into a multidimensional worship experience”²⁷ is vital to church growth. He says, if done well,

²⁶ Tim A. Dearborn, *Worship at the Next Level* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 58.

“this multidimensional approach will invite worshipers into rich encounters with the triune God that engages every aspect of their being and equip every aspect of their lives as Disciples of Christ.”²⁸

In conclusion, music not only is a major impact in churches today, but we have seen numerous challenges that can surface because of it. After stating the overall impact and potential challenges within the church, the next chapter will unfold some of music’s potential hindrances within the church. When music is over emphasized, people naturally take their eyes off of God and it is easy for Satan to use the use of music to cause division, complacency, and pride amongst God’s people.

²⁷ Ibid., 10.

²⁸ Ibid., 10.

CHAPTER 4

MUSIC'S POTENTIAL HINDRANCES WITHIN THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

After understanding the overall impact of music today and its challenges within the church, Christians need to understand that music can bring about potential hindrances within worship. Satan has used music to cause dissention, gratification, and pride among church goers in history and he will continue to do so today. Church leaders and Christians must not allow Satan to have a foot-hold in their Christian life.

UNABLE TO SEE OTHER ACTS AND FUNCTIONS OF WORSHIP

“Music is an act of worship, one among many offerings we bring to God. And like all offerings, it needs to be authentic and excellent.”¹ However, because of so many people equating good music with good worship and bad music with bad worship, many people are unable to see other functions and acts of worship within a congregational worship service.

If music is only one of the acts of worship by which God’s people can engage in during worship, what then are some other acts within congregational worship? Several acts of worship in the Old Testament among the Israelite assembly included dancing, playing musical instruments, sacrifices and offerings, the singing from the Levites, etc.

¹ “A Concise Philosophy of Worship and Music for the First Congregational Church of Hamilton Copyright” (Copyright © 2004 FCC Hamilton); available from <http://www.fcchamilton.org/WorshipPhilosophy.htm>; Internet.

The New Testament has given clear acts of worship that were not only practiced during the early church period but that the Christian church must implement today. These acts of worship include: the ordinances, prayer, preaching and teaching God's Word, giving, singing and the playing of musical instruments, the reading of Scripture, exhortation, confession, and acts of service. Although there may be other acts and functions of worship given in Scripture, these acts of worship need to be considered along with music as meaningful ways of expressing worship to God.

An ordinance is a custom or practice established by long usage. Christian worship in the early church included the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both were important to the early Christian church and to the fellowship and worship of believers in the assembly. Baptism is an act that follows conversion and identifies the new Christian's life with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper was an institution established by Jesus Christ that celebrates His return.

Prayer is an important element of the Christian church. The consistency in offering prayer up to God was practiced in early Christian worship and should be practiced today. The Bible shows prayer and praise together and the importance of them being a part of worship.

The preaching and teaching of God's Word are functions within congregational worship. 1 Timothy 2:12 refers solely to the function of the authoritative teacher of doctrine in the church. The spiritual gift of teaching is an important gift in the church, for some people have special abilities in teaching and relaying information to others. It is by the preaching and teaching of God's word that one can overcome false teachings (1 Peter 2:1, 2; 2 Timothy 2:2; 4:1-5), and these functions must never be overlooked.

Giving is a part of worship and it is the way that the church acquires the necessary funds to perform its work of ministry. Paul says, “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:6-8). Paul not only shares the importance of giving cheerfully and bountifully but reveals the blessings that God gives us as a result of our giving.

The singing and the playing of musical instruments is a part of worship; however, many people have a tendency to equate the whole worship service on the basis of these acts of worship. Believers can communicate both thoughts and feelings through singing songs, for songs are meant to be shared with God and His people and to help the worshiper proclaim what is in his heart. Christians believe God has given the vocal chords and musical instruments as a means of expressing our love, thanks, and praise to Him. In Psalm 150, the Bible instructs us to use varied instruments to praise God, thus musical instruments is just another response for the Christian worshiper.

The reading of Scripture is also a part of congregational worship. Jesus himself led the way in example when he stood up in the synagogue to read the Scripture (Luke 4:16-17). Paul, in his letter to the Colossian Church, states, “ After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea” (Colossians 4:16 NIV). Scripture was meant to be important to the Christian church not just for the reading but for the theological doctrine

that was taught. The apostle John encouraged his readers to understand the theology of Scripture, for many false teachers have come to divert the worship and teachings of Jesus Christ (1 John 2:18-27).

Exhortation is one of the fundamental elements of Scripture that emphasizes the social and community character of the believer's life in Christ. Exhortation has everything to do with encouragement, support, and upholding another individual. It centers on embracing others without seeking public acknowledgement. The writer of Hebrews encourages believers to "exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13), and to "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Hebrews 10:24).

Confession, which is the acknowledgement of one's sin, was practiced in the early church and should be an element of worship today. Confession was taught by Jesus to not just be practiced in the presence of one or two but among many witnesses. Confessions is not only a mandatory part in being born again but is an element within the Christian faith that will always and forever be apart of the Christians life.

And last, acts of service are not to be overlooked as a part of Christian worship. In the Old Testament, service (*abad*) pertained to the work for God and to obey His divine commands as part of one's total lifestyle. In the New Testament, service pertained to a range of relationships and responsibilities believers have to one another. Some examples of ways to serve include acts of kindness and compassion, teaching others the truth of God, and leading them to put their faith and trust in Christ. Whatever acts of service we do, we place ourselves at God's instruments. It is a part of our daily sanctification and can be used to make a life-changing impact in the lives of others.

God's people must understand that music is just one of many acts and functions within congregational worship. The understanding as a whole of the many acts of worship gives a more complete way for the Christian to worship God in the church.

UNABLE TO MAKE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MUSIC AND THE WORSHIP OF GOD

Christian worship must center its attention first and foremost on God. Whether worship is done individually, with the family, or collectively, the Christian must understand that worship must take place before the audience of One. Therefore, everything else must take secondary importance. However, many Christians are unable to see this importance because the music in the church is their primary force of attention. Some people go to church looking forward to participating in the worship songs and fail to truly see that worship is about God and who he is and what he has done.

There was a study conducted for Baylor University's Hearn Symposium on music in the church. Specifically, this study dealt with the past and present "worship wars" and fights that have taken place in the church. The study concluded that although numerous people believed that worship wars are the main problem in the church, this was not a wide spread occurrence as many people had expected. The greater issue was that people did not comprehend what true worship is all about and who is worship's audience. The real conclusion was that people failed to connect with God through genuine worship.

Barna gives his remarks and conclusion to these findings conducted for Baylor University's Hearn Symposium on music. His analysis was as following:

Describing the national research conducted by his company for the Billy Ray Hearn Symposium on Christian Music, held at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, Barna indicated that the coverage afforded the "worship wars" has exaggerated the scope

of the problem while ignoring the real issues regarding worship. The major challenge, according to Barna, is not about how to use music to facilitate worship as much as it is to help people understand worship and have an intense passion to connect with God. Citing various findings from three recent nationwide surveys he directed on the issue, Barna noted that relatively few churches have intense musical battles but most churches have too few people who truly engage God in worship.²

It is true that sometimes the most important issues are the ones that people most likely ignore. The particular study conducted for Baylor University's Hearn Symposium on music showed this reality and that the church can sometimes make assumptions about people's spiritual understanding. So then, the church urgently needs a back-to-basics concept and knowledge of truth given in Scripture. Johann Sebastian Bach who was one of the greatest musicians of all times said that the end of all music should be the glory of God and the refreshment of the human spirit.

The Barna Group conducted research using a national omnibus survey conducted in April 2002. There were 1007 randomly sampled adults surveyed of which 727 described themselves as Christian and who attends a Christian church. Regarding the real issues of connecting with God and not on music, the results of the surveys concluded the following:

Most of the church people who fight about their musical preference do so because they don't understand the relationship between music, communication, God and worship. Church leaders foster the problem by focusing on how to please people with music or how to offer enough styles of music to meet everyone's tastes rather dealing with the underlying issues of limited interest in, comprehension of, and investment in fervent worship of a holy, deserving God.

Barna also stated that although music is important in the worship process, it is often elevated beyond its rightful place in the worship effort. Music is just a tool meant to enable people to express themselves to God, yet we sometimes spend more time arguing over the tool than over the product and purpose of the tool.³

² The Barna Group, "Focus On Worship Wars", November 19, 2002.

³ Ibid.

The problems and controversies that churches undertake are not going to be resolved by meeting people's styles of music or through any other method. What people need to understand is the basics of Christian worship, and that the reason why Christian's congregate is to center its attention on God. The Barna Group made the notion that music sometimes can be "elevated beyond its rightful place in the worship effort." Although music is an important part of the worship service, there are other acts and functions within congregational worship in which God's people need to participate. Music truly is a tool to usher people into the presence of God and not just for the sake of mere enjoyment and gratification.

In addition, the Barna Group conducted a survey pertaining to the synchronization of the pastor and the church members on the true purpose of worship. The results of the study concluded the following:

Church-going adults and Protestant Senior Pastors do not share a common perception of the most important outcome of worship. Congregants were most likely to understand worship as activity undertaken for their personal benefit (47%) while Senior Pastors described the purpose of worship as connecting with God (41%) or experiencing His presence (30%). Only three out of ten church-going adults (29%) indicated that they view worship as something that is focused primarily on God. One out of every five attendees admitted that they had no idea what the most important outcome of worship is.

Another relevant research finding was that most pastors do not prioritize worship as a main thrust of their church's ministry. When asked to list the two or three top ministry priorities of their church, the survey revealed that worship was included in that list by only one out of every four pastors (26%). Other top-rated priorities included evangelism (listed as a top-3 priority by 41%), preaching/teaching (34%), ministry to youth and children (25%), and discipleship (19%).⁴

This study has shown that pastors and church leaders must take the initiative to teach and preach the facts of true worship. Jesus declared that "the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23); therefore, pastors today must understand this truth found in

⁴ Ibid.

Scripture and that the purpose of worship is connecting with God. Church leaders can not assume that the congregation knows the facts of true worship, but rather must make sure that they and the congregation are on the same page when it comes to the outcome of worship.

Although evangelism, preaching/teaching, discipleship, and other forms of church disciplines are vital within the church, Jesus stated that the Father is looking for worshipers (John 4:23). Therefore, church leaders must first encourage God's people that the Father is looking for worshipers and not for individuals who come to church looking forward toward hearing the music, etc.

UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL PREPARATION

Because music is a part of people's everyday lives including Sunday morning, it can be easy for Christians to come to church and to not have prepared themselves for worship. Sometimes, when people go to church, they expect the church service to "do something for them." Some expect to get entertained, emotionally charged, or to have their personal problems and needs met. This ideology can cause for people to miss the purpose of worship and to not come to church having personally prepared. However, since worship is all about God and not specifically on the music or any other entity within the service, it is important for Christians to personally prepare for worship.

It is a psychological principle which we all recognize as true that we get the most out of any life experience when we are "ready" for it. In light of the Christian life, one author notes, "It follows, then, that the worshiper who is intellectually and emotionally 'ready' for worship, will participate in it more heartily and will derive greater enrichment

from it than if he or she were totally unprepared.”⁵ With the numerous situations and problems that arise during any given day, believers at times may lose focus of their worship to God. Moreover, the need for preparation is extremely important as we come together to worship God.

Before coming to church, there are certain ways for Christians to prepare that demand a special period of time. One way is to:

Prepare on Saturday night by going to bed early, by having an inward experience of examination and confession, by going over the hymns and Scripture passages that will be used on Sunday, by gathering early before the actual worship service and filling the room with the presence of God, and by letting go of inner distractions so that you can really participate.⁶

Satan desires that distractions during corporate worship will hinder our worship to God. He would like the music on Sunday to deter the Christian’s worship of God and center it on something else. So then, individually preparing before coming to church is vital to the Christian experience.

A second way to prepare for corporate worship is for the believer to define his purpose before coming to church. In defining his purpose, one of the first steps could be to simply ask the question, “What I am coming to church for?” This can apply to the minister who is leading the worship service or to the worshiper who simply comes to church to worship God. Remember, worship is all about God. When this question is truly answered biblically, the Christian’s true purpose can be realized while eliminating everyday distractions.

⁵ Marie Cole Powell, *Guiding the Experience of Worship* (New York: The Leadership Training Publishing Association, 1935), 225.

⁶ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), 171.

A third and final way of preparation for corporate worship is through prayer and confession. The Scriptures tell us that God is gracious to forgive and to cleanse us from the guilt of unrighteousness. This is how a believer can feel so free to worship privately or corporately. Acknowledging sin in one's life will help the believer's worship to become more meaningful and will in return help the believer to be accustomed and familiar to the Spirit of God.

There are basic questions that can help each believer's preparation before entering into worship. One question is, "What aspect of God's person and glory has become vital to my relationship with Him?" This question helps the believer consider God's glory and magnificence. Even Jesus said, "Hallowed be thy name" in reference to God the Father. In answering this question, the believer can reflect on the many attributes of God, including His holiness, power, love, and supremacy.

A second question to ask is, "What can I be especially thankful for as I come before God in worship?" This question helps the believer develop an attitude of thankfulness and a consistent prayer life. When it comes to being thankful, the Bible tells us that God "hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Psalm 103:10). The Bible also tells us, "But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children." (Psalm 103:17 NIV). Therefore, this question can truly give the believer much to be thankful for and can prepare him for exciting worship.

The Barna Group gave its finding on their surveys regarding personal preparation. Their results were as following:

The study discovered that only four out of ten adults claim to always attend church having prepared themselves for worship. The individuals most likely to ready

themselves for worship were women and residents of the Northeast. Similarly, many church attendees do not make worship a daily exercise, but reserve it as a special weekend activity. While two-thirds of all church-going adults (68%) said they always look forward to worshipping God, the survey shows that millions of churchgoers struggle to clear their minds to focus on God in worship.

According to George Barna, who directed the studies, many adults find that having a truly worshipful experience is not something they can turn on and turn off at will. Without giving themselves time to clear their minds and hearts of their daily distractions and other problems, many people attend a worship event but never enter a worshipful frame of mind. A large share of churchgoers do not pray, meditate, confess or focus on God prior to the start of a church worship event. One consequence is that they find it difficult to connect with Him spiritually. Having never been taught much about worship, they find the inability to interact with God on a deeper level frustrating, but don't know what to do about it.⁷

The survey concluded that “many church attendees do not make worship a daily exercise, but reserve it as a special weekend activity.” Pastors and church leaders must insist that their people personally prepare before worship and to more importantly live a life of worship. As one author notes, “Worship is to be continual. It is not to start and stop as songs do. But it is a constant attitude that results in interactive communion with our heavenly Father.”⁸ David stated, “I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth (Psalm 34:1). D. A. Carson states:

As to everyday living, the fact that Christian worship is to be coextensive with all of life suggests that care must be taken in the way we speak of it. Because worship is a way of life, you cannot worship corporately on the Lord's Day if you haven't been worshipping throughout the week apart from repentance!”⁹

Once we become a Christian, we enter into a daily relationship with Jesus Christ, and pastors and church leaders must make this know publicly to God's people.

⁷ “Worship Tops the List of Important Church-Based Experiences”; (Copyright © 2006 The Barna Group; Ventura, California); available from <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=83>; Internet.

⁸ Lamar Boschman, *A Heart of Worship* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma, 1994), 17.

⁹ D. A. Carson, *Worship by the Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 140-141.

The survey also concluded that “that millions of churchgoers struggle to clear their minds to focus on God in worship,” that “a large share of churchgoers do not pray, meditate, confess or focus on God prior to the start of a church worship event,” and that “having never been taught much about worship, they find the inability to interact with God on a deeper level frustrating, but don’t know what to do about it.” Pastors and church leaders must educate their members on the consistency of personal consecration with God. Personal consecration is the sanctification and dedication of the believer’s entire life to God. It is the approval and consent of the believer to allow God to work in and through him for His intended purpose. When the worshiper has a serious desire to live a life of worship, he should desire the dedication of his entire life to God that will include prayer, meditation, and confession. In order to worship a holy God, the believer must become consciously aware of his own ungodliness and must therefore desire a life of personal holiness and righteousness.

The apostle Peter states, “But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation” (I Peter 1:15). One’s worship brings repentance and confession, and thus causes the believer to want to fulfill Peter’s exhortation to the church. It keeps the goal of holiness before the believer and provides the inner power to make the goal a reality.

In conclusion, Jesus warns his followers that “the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy...” (John 10:10 NIV). Satan only desires to hinder the worship of the church. Since music is such a powerful medium, Satan would desire to use this along with many other things to keep an individual mind off of worshiping the God of creation.

Pastors, church leaders, and Christians must not let this happen, but must teach others the truth about true worship.

CHAPTER 5

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF WORSHIP AND THE PURPOSE OF MUSIC

This chapter begins the second section of the dissertation and it gives meaningful solutions to the challenges of church music. The first main areas of resolution will come from Bible-based education centering on the meaning of worship and the purpose of music. Since music is an act of worship, it is important to first understand what Christian worship is all about. With this understanding, Christians are then able to understand the purpose of music and its place in the church. This chapter will first give a biblical explanation to the foundations of worship and secondly, it will give a biblical basis for the purpose of music.

INTRODUCTION TO WORSHIP

One of the potential hindrances to music in the church is that people are unable to make the connection between music and the worship of God. By this, people are unable to understand that the purpose of music is to make a connection with God. The Barna research team discovered that most of the people in the church who fight about their musical preference do so because they don't understand the relationship between music and the God of worship. Therefore, it is imperative that God's people to first understand the biblical foundations of Christian worship before understanding the nature of music.

The biblical foundations of worship must first involve the meaning and definitions of worship. Worship in both the Old and New Testament is shown in two main ways. First, worship emphasizes the bowing or prostrating as a dominant image. Second, the emphasis is on service to God and on a lifestyle of worship. When considering all the words used for worship in both the Old and New Testaments, one can find that worship involves attitudes of awe, reverence and respect as well as actions of bowing, praising and serving. Thus, “worship is both a subjective experience and an objective activity.”¹

The Old Testament words associated with worship depict the attitude of a people toward God and the nature of their approach to him. Worship is shown as seeking God with one’s whole heart, to inquire (*darash*), to come and enter (*bo*), to approach (*nagash*), to draw near (*qarab*), and to offer a sacrifice. Words like “seek” and “draw near” convey a sense of intimacy and relationship in Old Testament worship, and not merely an obligatory observance of ritual.²

The primary word that defines worship in the Old Testament makes explicit reference to the body. *Shachah*, translated “worship,” appears in the NASB eighty one times and means literally to “bow” politely or respectfully, to “prostrate oneself,” to “make obeisance,” or to “bend low.”³ The translators of the King James Version used five different words or expressions in translating *shachah*, which include to “prostrate,”

¹ Lamar Boschman, *A Heart of Worship*, 24.

² Barry Liesch, *The New Worship*, 152.

³ Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 4:249.

“bow down,” “make obeisance,” “do reverence” and “worship.” The most frequent translation, however, is “worship.”⁴

The definition and nature of worship in the New Testament does not replace or nullify the Old Testament definitions. Rather, the New Testament nature of worship only confirms, clarifies, and enhances the Old Testament definition with its basis being in the person of Jesus Christ. Worship in the Old Testament is mostly depicted through action with an emphasis on bowing, prostrating, and kneeling. This was the more dominant image of worship as shown by Old Testament saints. However, in the New Testament we see this same dominance but with more emphasis in service to God and in living a life of worship.

In the New Testament, there are several Greek words that are mentioned for worship. One of its strongest words is *proskuneo* (*proskyneo*). This word means to “reverence” and its most frequent definition is to “worship.” This word is an action word, and it shows reverence to God (Matthew 4:10; John 4:21-24); Christ (Matthew 2:2, 8, 11; 8:2; 9:18); man (Matthew 18:26); the Dragon (Revelation 13:4); the Beast, his human instrument (Revelation 13:4, 8, 12; 14:9,11); the image of the Beast (Revelation 13:15; 14:11; 16:2); demons (Revelation 9:20); and to idols.

One of the ways in which the New Testament enhances the Old Testament’s definition comes by way of the Christian living a life of worship and obedience to Jesus Christ. Paul teaches each Christian and not some sacred place is now considered the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16). The words “touch not the unclean thing” as stated in 2 Corinthians 6:17 “is a ritual command strictly observed in the Old Testament and becomes an ethical command for Christians to live a holy life. We see, then, that the Old

⁴ Lamar Boschman, *A Heart of Worship*, 23.

Testament's terminology is foundational to Paul's writings and is both transformed and renewed. Paul's emphasis is on a total lifestyle of worship."⁵

One author notes, "The Torah and the system of sacrificial worship in the Old Testament ends and is fulfilled and replaced by Christ-centered, Spirit-energized worship."⁶ Christ, the obedient "Adam," is our leader, and he perfectly models a lifestyle of worship, doing his Father's will in everything, and living consciously in his Father's presence. Abraham was obedient to God, not knowing the true outcome from God's command yet offering his son as a sacrifice. However, he willingly obeyed God, and his faith was not only counted righteous but he was also an example of a true worshiper. Therefore, "a life of sacrificial obedience in all of life, as a result of renewed mind, becomes the New Testament measure of acceptable worship (Romans 12:1)."⁷

"Our English word for worship means 'worthship,' denoting the worthiness of an individual to receive special honor in accordance with that worth."⁸ "The words in the Bible that have been translated into worship in English speak of an attitude as being expressed with an action. There is an inference of depth of feelings, closeness, and covenant relationship. Worship speaks of communicated affection between man and God. It involves motion, emotion, and devotion."⁹ The English definition of worship carries a similar meaning to the Greek and Hebrew words for worship. This "depth of

⁵ Barry Liesch, *The New Worship*, 157.

⁶ David Peterson, *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 206.

⁷ Barry Liesch, *The New Worship*, 156.

⁸ Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 1300.

⁹ Lamar Boschman, *A Heart of Worship*, 24.

feelings, closeness, and covenant relationship” is truly what God desires for all mankind whom he has created.

THE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP

After understanding the basic meaning of worship, it is important to understand the purpose of worship and who it is for. Barna’s research team discovered that church leaders foster problems with the church by focusing on how to please people with music or how to offer enough styles of music to meet everyone’s tastes rather than dealing with the underlying issues of comprehending that worship is about a holy and deserving God. So then, it is imperative for people to understand the purpose of worship and who it must be centered on.

As one author notes, “What is believed will and must govern what is done in worship.”¹⁰ The Christian’s worship is based strictly on God; therefore, we must understand God to truly understand worship. Worship, when thoughtfully understood, takes the believer outside himself and his selfish interests by introducing him to God and brings himself before his presence. Within God’s presence, the worshiper is challenged to join him in a fellowship of living a full life and in serving him effectively.

If worship must be centered on God, than what is God like? Psalm 77:13 states, “Your ways, O God, are holy. What god is so great as our God?” And speaking from God’s perspective, Jeremiah 1:5 states, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” The Bible tells us that God is all powerful and he is both the creator and sustainer of heaven and earth. He cannot lie and is the one and only true God. One author states, “The God

¹⁰ Neville Clark, *Call to Worship* (London: SCM Press, 1960), 38.

of the Bible is the God who acts. His goodness, faithfulness, justice, mercy, and all can be seen in his dealings with His people.”¹¹ God has acted first on mankind’s behalf and has initiated his love to the world. We are thus able to know of God because of him revealing himself to us.

If worship must be centered on God, what has he done? Well, God has a definite plan for history. What God does and determines has no effect on what humans must do in order for God’s purpose to take place. God’s general plan for His creation is His “eternal decision rendering certain all things that will come to pass.”¹² As Millard J. Erickson notes, “The plan of God is like the architect’s plans, first drawn mentally and then on paper according to an intention and design, and only afterward executed in an actual structure.”¹³

One of the Christian’s most noted actions of God is His creation of the world. The book of Genesis records the fact of God creating the world out of nothing and that He holds its mere existed together. God’s creation is all-inclusive, for John 1:3 states, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” Although the very purpose of God’s creation was to give him glory (Psalm 19:1), only humans are capable of “obeying God consciously and willingly and thus glorifying God most fully.”¹⁴ It is important for each Christian to understand that we have the option of worshipping God the creator, for the rest of creation does not have that same option.

¹¹ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), 160.

¹² Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 372.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 373.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 399.

God is not only the God of creation, but he continues to preserve his creation and guide it toward his intended purposes. God's providence is understood by the Christian as his preservation and maintenance of all creation that he brought into existence.

Millard J. Erickson states, "While creation is God's originating work with respect to the universe, providence is his continuing relationship to it."¹⁵ Christian worship is not only God's relationship with his people but the Christian's relationship with God. God could have created the world, including mankind, and could have chosen to not keep us and have a continuing relationship with us. However, God has initiated his love and has done more than enough to require our love and worship to him.

MAN'S ROLE TO GOD

Christians actually have only one free choice, and that is whether or not we will worship the Lord. All other decisions take second place in our life. By choosing to worship, the believer has made the most crucial decision ever. From this point on, every other choice in life is secondary and thus presents either an obstacle or an opportunity for a relationship to grow.

John chapter 12 gives the example of Mary who chose everything else around her to be secondary to Jesus. Her simple expression of love and gratitude to Jesus came from her perfume which cost her about a year's earnings! Her heart was so completely sold out to the Savior that the cost of her gift didn't matter to her. Even though there were distractions, including Judas Iscariot, her heart was set on worshiping Christ, for everything else around her was meaningless.

¹⁵ Ibid., 413.

What is man's role to God who deserves our worship? First, since God desires a relationship with us, we need to desire a relationship with him. Because Jesus is a person, he is regarded as someone with whom mankind can have a personal relationship (1 John 2:3-6). Many people, when they are just getting started in their spiritual walk with God, worship him as an impersonal God. Believers must maintain that worship is not just tradition or a religion but also is a personal relationship with God. God has graciously provided the means to reconcile this relationship through faith in Jesus Christ. Our relationship is re-established when we make a commitment to accept Jesus as God's son and our Savior and Lord.

Second, Christians must draw close to God. The closer we are to God as worshipers, the more spontaneously and enthusiastically we will worship him. The human intellect does contribute to worship, but the Bible teaches that God is not interested in our special intelligence but in a contrite spirit. The psalmist states, "My sacrifice [the sacrifice acceptable] to God is a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart [broken down with sorrow for sin and humbly and thoroughly penitent], such, O God, You will not despise" (Psalm 51:17 Amplified Bible). When we live obediently and pray genuinely and honestly, we will truly experience God's presence in our lives.

And last, we must set an example for others. Our personal worship with God is not to just enjoy our own experience but to also set an example for others. Paul told Timothy, "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." The Greek words *deigma* and *deigmatizo* mean "a thing shown" and "to make a show of, to expose, and to make a public example" respectively.

The Christian must show others that the intellect, sensibility, and will of mankind must be used for God's glory and not for any other purpose.

MAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

The Barna research group discovered that “the major challenge is not about how to use music to facilitate worship as much as it is to help people understand worship and have an intense passion to connect with God. Citing various findings from three recent nationwide surveys he directed on the issue, Barna noted that relatively few churches have intense musical battles but most churches have too few people who truly engage God in worship.”¹⁶ One of music's final goals should be to allow an individual to make a connection with God. This connection is about establishing and developing a relationship with God on a daily basis. Christian worship is not just applied on Sunday morning but should rather be an everyday process.

“Worship is to be continual. It is not to start and stop as songs do. But it is a constant attitude that results in interactive communion with our heavenly Father.”¹⁷ David stated, “I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth (Psalm 34:1). D. A. Carson states, “As to everyday living, the fact that Christian worship is to be coextensive with all of life suggests that care must be taken in the way we speak of it. Because worship is a way of life, you cannot worship corporately on the Lord's Day if you haven't been worshipping throughout the week apart from repentance!”¹⁸ Once we become a Christian, we enter into a daily relationship with Jesus

¹⁶The Barna Group, “Focus On Worship Wars”, November 19, 2002.

¹⁷ Lamar Boschman, *A Heart of Worship*, 17.

Christ, for our worship must involve continuity. Barry Liesch states, “The offering of our lives in service to God each day is our lifelong calling. Sunday morning worship is the continuation of that calling. Encourage not only strong singing but also a life of praise and worship.”¹⁹

Paul states, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Colossians 2:6). The believer must live and walk his daily course with God and must maintain both fellowship and communion with him. The more intimately we walk with Christ the more we will be rooted and strengthened in our faith.

Just because the Christian understands the meaning of worship, the God of worship, and how to approach him, does not necessarily mean that he is having a worship experience. A Christian can know what the Bible says but may live his life never having entered into sweet fellowship with God. The truth is that only those who have been brought into a vital relationship with God through Jesus Christ are capable of the kind of worship God has in mind.

UNDERSTANDING ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

Worship that is acceptable to God must come through obedience and must promote holiness. Many people seemingly worship God, but few actually offer to God that which is pleasing to him. The Christian must not always believe that God will be pleased just because we worship him and just because we have entered into worship does not mean that we are offering that which is acceptable to him. The Bible gives us many examples of both believers and unbelievers who knew what was acceptable to God, who

¹⁸ D. A. Carson, *Worship by the Book*, 140-141.

¹⁹ Barry Liesch, *The New Worship*, 101.

understood their calling and purpose, and still offered to God improper worship. Thus, every believer must evaluate his or her life to see if their worship is pleasing to God. Let us look at some of the men and women in the Bible who offered acceptable “sacrifices” of worship to God.

The book of Genesis states, “Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away” (Genesis 5:24 NIV). The fact that “he was no more” means that he did not see death. The writer of Hebrews states that Enoch “was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God” (Hebrews 11:5-8 NIV). Enoch not only believed God, but had the faith to obey him. Enoch’s great faith was mentioned in Hebrews along with the list of many others. Enoch’s walk with God and his worship can show Christians today what truly constitutes acceptable worship. Although the Old and New Testament do not go in depth into Enoch’s life, we can learn the foundation of true and acceptable worship.

The life of David was a life that every believer should consider emulating because he longed to seek God and desired him with his entire heart. David said, “O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is” (Psalm 63:1). David had a desire to seek God and his writings throughout the book of Psalms express this passion. God even said to Saul on a particular occasion that he was seeking “a man after his own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14). David’s worship was acceptable to God because God considered him a man after His own heart.

David was also a man who was vulnerable to sin just like any other human. He had desires and fleshly cravings and was tempted at various times. Through the many years of running from King Saul, David understood how easy it was to fall away from God. 2 Samuel 11 gives the story of how David sinned against God in committing adultery and murder. God sent Nathan the prophet to confront and give the consequences of David's sin (2 Samuel 12). However, after David understood that his son was dead as a result of his sin, he "came into the house of the LORD, and worshiped" (2 Samuel 12:19-20). One writer states, "True, David sought to ward off the threatened loss of the child by prayer and self-abasement."²⁰ Every Christians should take note of David the worshiper, for he was still able to worship God after being humbled by sin.

Job chapter 1 gives the narrative of the harm and suffering upon Job, his family, and his possessions. The passage explains how the Chaldeans took Job's camels away, killed his servants, and how Job's house fell on his children, killing all that was in the house. When all this was over, the Bible tells us that Job fell down upon the ground and worshiped God. He said, "...Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21).

One author states, "Job was able to worship because God never changes. Circumstances change. But God never changes. He is immutable. Rock-solid. Pristine. Unaltered. Therefore, in any and every circumstance, we can praise God."²¹ Job had an honorable testimony. He not only passed God's test with his godliness but acknowledged

²⁰ Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *1 & 2 Samuel – A Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 316.

²¹ Steven J. Lawson, *When All Hell Breaks Loose* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1993), 41.

the hand of God both in his mercies and his afflictions he had experienced. As Christians, afflictions must not keep us from worshiping God, for we are encouraged that "...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).

One of the most meaningful acts of worship recorded in the New Testament is in John 12:1-3. Notice the act of worship that was given to Jesus by Mary. "Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment." Mary showed honor to Jesus with a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume, as she poured it on his feet.

It must be noted that "to unbind and loosen the hair in the presence of outsiders was considered an indecent act. Mary's act is thus one in which she lays her own woman's honor at the feet of Jesus. She takes that honor and makes it a towel for his holy feet."²² This act was a sign of her love for Christ. Her love for him appeared to have been an exceptionally generous. Those who love Christ should truly love him much more than this world and should be willing to offer him their best.

THE PURPOSE OF MUSIC

Now that the meaning and foundations of worship have been discussed, one is able to understand music's significance and purpose within worship. The purpose of music is to praise the Lord (Psalm 150). One of the Hebrew words for praise is *Halal*, which means to boast, to shine, to be clamorous, to rave, to make a show, to celebrate.

²² R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1943), 840.

Praise is found in Hebrews 13:15 where it is metaphorically represented as a sacrificial offering. Praise may be given in many and varied circumstances, from a social gathering to the congregation at worship.

In explaining the general meaning of praise, Ronald B. Allen states:

Praise is always directed to God. That is the only way praise may be said to be on target. Praise is not merely feeling good inside. Praise is not just a sense of belonging in the community. Praise is rather participation in the worship of God. It is the expression of delight in knowing him and in learning more about the Savior. Praise happens when God is glorified.²³

Praise is used to speak of God by angels (Luke 2:13) and by men (Luke 2:20), and it is acknowledging and celebrating the person and work of God.

The psalmist said, “I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High” (Psalm 9:2). Psalm 21:13 states, “Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power.” Psalm 28:7 states, “The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.” Our praise that we give to God is not something that we “work up,” “fake,” or “just do” but rather is what God puts in our mouth to give back to him. After being thrown in jail, Paul and Silas sang praises to the Lord (Acts 16:25). Their example shows the importance and purpose of music despite circumstances.

Jesus is our ultimate example of praise and the expectations of the Old Testament are fulfilled in him. So must also the Christians’ “praise in expectation” be fulfilled in Him as well. The gospel of John says that Christ is come to “honor” the Father among

²³ Ronald B. Allen, *And I will Praise Him* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992), 73.

men. This word honor can also be translated as “praise.”²⁴ One author states, “Christ praises the Father through his death, in death. Among the followers of Christ who honored God by his existence and his death, there is the new possibility of praise by existence, which includes the possibility of praising God through death in following Christ (John 21:19).”²⁵ Christ’s example of praise should be the ultimate example for the Christian church and Christians should desire to praise God the Father by being obedient in following Christ.

THE EVALUATION OF MUSIC

How should Christians evaluate music today? Although times have changed, the central message of the gospel has not. Paul states, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16). Music’s role is clearly in the message of the songs and not necessarily in the music.

One of Christianity’s most important doctrines is that of the authority of Scripture. Scripture is the basis for what we teach and it emphasizes the importance of doctrine and the truth of Jesus Christ. It is this same truth that not only sets people free but needs to be the basis of Christian worship. The psalmist states, “I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name” (Psalm 138:2).

The apostle Paul states, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Christians believe that the Scriptures contain a general

²⁴ Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 161.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 162.

prevention against all elements in worship besides those that God Himself has instituted through His word. Certainly, any method of worship that is unbiblical should be discarded immediately.

Concerning Colossians 3:16 and the evaluation of music, Barry Liesch states, “Clearly we have here a very strong case for the teaching or didactic role of music. The word or message of Christ is to dwell richly within us, teaching and admonishing (encouraging or warning) us, by means of the texts that we sing.”²⁶ Rick Warren states, “Churches also need to admit that no particular style of music is ‘sacred.’ What makes a song sacred is its message. Music is nothing more than an arrangement of notes and rhythms; its the words that make a song spiritual. There is no such thing as ‘Christian music,’ only Christian lyrics.”²⁷ God’s people need to be taught on how to evaluate music, especially before listening to it. This evaluation is not in the rhythm or beat but in the message of the song. It is this message that is to dwell richly within us, teaching and admonishing us.

Examples have been shown in Scripture of saints who understood this principle. In the book of Acts, both Paul and Barnabas taught and preached the word of God (Acts 15:35). Jesus himself stated, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). John Macpherson writes in *The Confession of Faith*, “The ultimate authority of the Holy Scripture is declared to rest upon God himself, from whom it comes. His Spirit inspires it, and this

²⁶ Barry Liesch, *The New Worship*, 44.

²⁷ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 281.

renders it infallible.”²⁸ It is therefore important for the Christian worshiper to be led by God’s word for a complete understanding and practice.

²⁸ John Macpherson, *The Confession of Faith* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1882), 35.

CHAPTER 6

UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORY OF MUSIC

INTRODUCTION

Resolutions must not only be made through Bible-based education but also through an understanding of the past. Understanding history is important because through this knowledge, one is able to understand both the present and future. The historical analysis in this chapter will include an understanding of Biblical history, church history, African American history, and 20th century history. This means of resolution will give helpful insight on the history of God's people, and how people have stayed their course in keeping music with worship centered on God.

BIBLICAL HISTORY

The history of music in the Bible sets the stage for the rest of Christian history. This history helps the Christian see how music played a key element in worship and how God was glorified. Genesis 4:20-21 says, "And Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of all those who dwell in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and the flute." This verse tells us that from the very beginning man made and played sophisticated musical instruments. One author notes, "Some recent commentators, with some support from such sources as Josephus and Philo

(1st century A.D.), suggest that Jubal was not the inventor of the instruments themselves, but rather the teacher of those who “played” these instruments.”¹

There are uses of instruments being played for personal pleasure. After Jacob left Laban during the night, Laban eventually found him and said, “Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp?” (Genesis 31:27). This verse truly shows how music was used for personal pleasure and enjoyment. The book of Job states, “They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They sing to the tambourine and harp, and rejoice to the sound of the flute” (Job 21:11-12). These verses reflect the uses of music for both family and entertainment uses.

From the start of Exodus, we see a more expressive way of worship through music. This new way comes in the form of dance and celebration. As one author notes, “Dancing in the Bible was generally not a sexually suggestive act involving couples as is done today. It meant to leap, twirl, and gyrate as an expression of joy.”² Many of these occasions of music and worship were direct responses to a victory in which God delivered his people and were not just set times of worship.

One of our first examples of music being expressed directly to God comes from Miriam, the prophetess and leader of Israel. Exodus 15:20-21 says, “Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrel and with dances. And Miriam answered them: Sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!”

¹ “The Biblical Musical Instruments”; (March 7, 2005); available from <http://www.rakkav.com/kdhinc/pages/instruments.htm>; Internet.

² David E. Pratte, “Instrumental Music in Worship”; (Copyright 1999); available from <http://www.gospelway.com/church/instrumental%20music.htm>; Internet.

Victory celebration would be a common way of expressing worship to God. After God's deliverance of the people of Israel from the armies of Egypt, the people celebrated and sang the song of Moses. It was the common practice of Israel to celebrate great victories with women dancing, singing, and playing musical instruments.³ This early example in Scripture shows the importance of who our music should be directed towards.

Music during the kings of Israel emphasized even more heavily on singing, playing instruments, and dancing. 1 Chronicles 15:16 states, "David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy." This expression of worship showed a variety of ways in worshipping God through music. As one writer states, "Singing, playing instruments, and dancing were clearly stated to be acceptable acts of worship. They were often done together, but each one constituted an additional, distinct act of praise to God. Playing instruments and dancing were each, in and of themselves, a means or avenue of praising God, just as singing was."⁴

The development of music in the psalms is closely related to the celebration mentioned during the kings. Since King David is the author of the majority of the psalms, he mentions many uses of singing and musical instruments. Psalm 40:3 states, "He has put a new song in my mouth." Psalm 51:14-15 states, "My tongue shall sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth your praise." Psalm 43:4 states, "On the harp I will praise you." Psalm 150:3-5 states, "Praise

³ Brian Schwertley, "Musical Instruments in the Public Worship of God" (Lansing, MI, 1998; Portions Copyright © Kevin Reed, 1996); available from <http://reformedonline.com/view/reformedonline/music.htm>; Internet. Accessed date (11-05-05).

⁴ David E. Pratte, "Instrumental Music in Worship", 1999.

him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs, Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.”

Jeremiah the prophet spoke of celebration and musical instruments referring to the Israelites returning back to their homeland. He said, “Again I will build you, and shall be rebuilt, a virgin of Israel! You shall again be adorned with your tambourines, and shall go forth in the dances of those who rejoice” (Jeremiah. 31:4).

In the New Testament, music was a way for the Christian church to express their praise and adoration to God. However, the New Testament does not give details of the extent of music that formed a part of the religious devotion of the first Christian congregations. Music just seemed to be purely vocal. As one author states:

Although Jesus never forbade the use and playing of musical instruments, its use in the New Testament was not commanded nor was there even one historical example of its use in the apostolic church. This should come as no surprise, given the fact that the new covenant church was closely patterned after the synagogue which did not use musical instruments and the overwhelming Old Testament evidence that musical instruments served as ceremonial types.⁵

Instead of listing instruments, the New Testament gives the purpose for music. Ephesians 5:19 says, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” and Colossians 3:16 says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” In these verses, God establishes three kinds of proper perspective for New Testament music and worship. Despite what form or genre music is carried out, its purpose must be centered on God.

⁵ Brian Schwertley, “Musical Instruments in the Public Worship of God”, 1998.

Our example of singing that focuses on God comes from Paul and Silas. These two men were in prison, yet they still found time after their pain and persecution to pray and to sing songs to God. Acts 16:25 says, “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.”

CHURCH HISTORY

Throughout the history of the church, Christians have searched for areas of triumph to give shape to God’s view of music, worship, and biblical truth. With the Holy Spirit’s help, these Christians gave way to many unique but biblical conducts and approaches to music and more particularly to worship. From the development of Christian worship from 1st Century to 20th Century, Christians’ today can not only learn from the past but can receive a plethora of wisdom and resources for worship today. This study of Church history will unfold how Christians and the church have stayed true to God’s view of worship and have not allowed the challenges of their day to hinder the purpose of music and worship.

The Apostolic Period started 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This period, formally initiating the Christian church, started when about 3000 Jews heard the gospel and responded with faith to Jesus Christ. During this time, the worship of many gods was highly common. Every person could worship the gods of a variety of cults, so as long as Caesar was acknowledged as god. However, the church’s worship proclaimed an exclusive worship to God and to the Old Testament Scriptures. The early church did not let their culture distract their worship from God nor did they follow after pagan gods.

The early Christian movement during this period quickly began to include those who were non-Jews. Two individuals that were mentioned in the New Testament included an Ethiopian official and a Roman Officer and his family (Acts 8:26-39). Both Jewish and non-Jewish converts increased rapidly after the death of Christ and people were open, receptive, and excited to this new movement of Christianity that was spreading world wide. Now God's Kingdom began to broaden the way God intended and his everlasting covenant would now be able to include those who are not Jews nor who those follow after Jewish tradition.

From the Apostolic Period to 325 AD, there were plenty of sermons recorded but there were no mentions of music. However, there was plenty of evidence for the use of music in worship. There were references to women singers, choirs of virgins, and female cantors. However, in some areas women singers were forbidden. Although there were not many references to music, the foundation of the early Christian's faith and focus was on God. Although time would eventually unfold throughout the history of the church when music would be more emphasized, it was important for the early Christians to establish their focus on the God who created music.

Before 305 AD, it was generally safer for Christians to worship both individually and corporately within the privacy of homes, for there was great persecution under Nero, Diocletian the Emperor, and other groups of people. This setting of early Christian worship was quite different from today, for these Christians were not in a location where musical instruments could be used and choirs could sing. Since Christians were being persecuted, they were more in a reserved and concealed setting. However, in 305, the

persecution of Christians ended with Diocletian retiring, and within ten years, Christianity would become legal under Emperor Constantine.

Constantine, who ruled from 306-337 AD, was the first Roman Emperor to endorse Christianity. Following the victory of Licinius in 313 AD where Constantine defeated Maximinus Daia, the Edict of Milan was signed by this great emperor, which set the atmosphere of tranquility for Christians. This allowed Christianity to be both legal and practiced without the fear of persecution. This transition in church history was important for the progression of music in the church and for the free expressions of Christian worship which exists today.

During the Constantine era, worship gradually changed by the increasing addition of ceremony and the subtle influence of mystery religions. This new emphasis became more extreme in the medieval period. Although the basic structure and content of worship remained continuous with the past, the meaning of worship for both the clergy and the laity underwent some major changes. For many people, worship became a “mystery” in which God was present. So then, one of the major challenges during this era was to not allow worship to be accommodated by the current cultural norms to the extent that worship loses its meaning.⁶ Even today, the culture that surrounds the church has influences within the music and worship of the church. However, this must not hinder God’s ultimate purpose of music that is stated through Scripture.

One of the results of the Constantine Era was that only the Christian God of the Bible could be freely worshiped. A second result was that the church would shift slightly from intimacy to theater and performance. The third result was the erecting of structures of worship buildings. During Constantine’s reign, the two models of public buildings

⁶ For more information see, Webber, Robert E. *Worship Old and New*, 106.

were the temples of pagans and the civil basilicas. Temples were only to be entered by priests and people who sacrificed unto their gods. Therefore, the vast majority of people including Christians were not entering the pagan temples. However the civil basilicas could relate more to the Christians, for it portrayed rows of columns and windows. It could be a place where the pastor could lead God's people into worship. So then, Christians no longer met within the homes but sought fellowship with places of worship.

During the latter fourth century, the impact of modern hymnology was given to the church from Ambrose of Milan. Ambrose, who lived from 340-397, is considered the Father of Latin hymnody. By tradition, he is said to have introduced antiphonal or responsive singing in Milan, and was the first in Italy to encourage general congregational singing.⁷ This was an important element within the church that allowed all of God's people to participate within congregational worship. It was a way of encouraging all the Christians to center their worship on God. As one author states, "Ambrose taught of the persuasiveness of hymn singing and how God views the praises of his people. This gave music a more popular character and emphasized the text rather than the sound itself."⁸ Even today, the church must emphasize the words that are being sung above the music and the emotionalism of the songs themselves.

During the fourth and fifth centuries, when the liturgy was developing along a more elaborate Roman and Byzantine style, music in the church became more highly developed. The most important development during this period was the spread of the

⁷ Duncan Campbell, *Hymns and Hymn Makers* 4th edition (London: A. & C. Black, 1908)

⁸ Robert E. Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 197.

responsorial psalm. By this, a soloist sang the psalm and the congregation responded at the end of each verse with a refrain chosen from the psalm.⁹

The cities during the Middle Ages were mostly small and most of the religious worship took place in the rural church. Christianity was reaching the far ends of the North and East; however, in the South, Christianity was at a standstill because of the Muslims influence and evangelism. The worship movement in this era steadily had a more foundational theology that kept the church true to God's word. The style and tone of music was set mostly by the monks and the churches worship took place in either the monastery or in the rural church. The music and worship of God became more effective and significant, and throughout this period, new office hymns were written for the daily office and to commemorate new saints as they were added to the calendar. As one writer notes, "A luxuriant growth of sequences grew up to be sung as mass. These were in Latin and virtually exterminated in 1570 but left behind a great heritage of liturgical poetry, some of which was translated by Victorian hymn writes."¹⁰

During the beginning of the 14th century, a drastic change occurred in the rural churches. With the institution of pews, congregations were now able to sit down and hear the word of God. Before pews, the congregation was entirely mobile. Now the worship of the rural church could include people who were both mobility and seated. This, however, was not entire beneficial for the church. Now, many Christians started to become sluggish and inactive within the worship service. James White expresses, "This never happened previously except where the church had been corrupted by western influence. Therefore, a now seated congregation may have been the most significant

⁹ Ibid., 198.

¹⁰ James White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship*, 101.

change in Christian worship since Constantine.”¹¹ Although this change in the church was drastic and foreseen, the church had to determine to keep their worship centered on God.

During the middle of the 14th century, the plague called the “Black Death” annihilated the population of many countries in the world, and many villages never recovered from its impact. The Black Death was actually the combination of both the Bubonic Plague, which consisted of chills, high fever, and swelling, and the Pneumonic Plague, which caused victims to cough up blood, slip into a comma and eventually die. The plague, which started in 1331 and ended in 1353, originated in the Gobi desert of China, and started with rats and then spread to fleas. Soon, two thirds of China was destroyed between the span of 1331-1353. The plague quickly spread to India, then to Egypt, and was then carried to ships to Italy. This was the start of the plague spreading entirely to Europe, thus killing about one third of its population.

The Church, however, faced some of the greatest criticism during this time and like the rest of Britain, faced incredible strain during the plague’s passing. When the Black Death reached Britain in 1348, the Church had to suddenly explain why its own people were dying, when the plague was supposed to be killing only heretics, infidels, and nonbelievers. The Church was hard pressed to find answers, especially when people began to die quickly, many of whom had not received their last rites and were doomed to spend millennia in purgatory. Priests, fearing they might catch the highly contagious pestilence, would not even perform last rites to the dying.¹² The church also lost many of

¹¹ Ibid., 77.

¹² “British Church in the 14th Century”; (Copyright 1999-2004); available from <http://www.wowessays.com/dbase/ad1/bsw176.shtml>; Internet.

their priests and bishops and had to thus ordain those who were not as educated. Since many of their overseers were not affective in their calling, many of the Christians began to loose faith in God.

Although this was a trying and difficult time for the church, many of the Christians stayed true to their faith in God. Although many people lost their faith in God, God was able to manifest his presence during this dark and terrible time. Even today, there are catastrophes and dangers that affect the world and the church. However, each Christian must maintain their trust and faith in God.

The invention of the Gutenberg Printing press changed the worship of the church and the way of communication and philosophy for the entire world. Although the practice of printing books took place in China sometime before 868 AD, it was in 1440 AD that Johannes Gutenberg's (1397-1468) invention changed the whole world. The importance of printing for the Protestant church greatly helped the opening up for services in the church. Because of now having printed material for the masses, the church could make a new start in worship because they were dealing with literate people. As one author notes, "All this had tremendous consequences for the shaping of Protestant worship. Worship for Protestants then came to be expressed primarily through two mediums, the word spoken and the word read. It is not an accident that the biblical image of the "Word of God" came to be so important."¹³ Soon, many congregational hymns would be able to be sung by the masses and would serve as a means of offering up to God a new form of worship.

The dominant event in western Christianity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the Reformation. An important characteristic of the Reformation period

¹³ Tim A. Dearborn, *Worship at the Next Level*, 63, 64.

was its richness and variety of possibilities that develop in worship. This richness consisted in diversity and the ability to serve a wide variety of peoples.”¹⁴ As one author notes:

The Reformation was a reform in theology and of worship. Some church members retained continuity with the past while others broke from tradition to search for new styles of worship. For the Reformed tradition, the focus became more on the centrality of the pulpit; for it became an earmark of reformed churches since they brought many people within hearing distance of the preacher. America during the Reformation period provided a vast laboratory for experiment in church building for both Anglicans and Puritans.¹⁵

Martin Luther, known for the German Reformation, was influential in his translation of the whole Bible in 1534. He was able to translate both the German and Tyndale Bible into English. After its publication, the Bible was made available to the entire world. Luther also wrote hymns for the congregational church. He desired to make worship more meaningful to Christians and to give them order and structure during church service. One of his most famous hymns was “A Mighty Fortress.”

John Calvin made a reform that strictly emphasized obedience to God word. He believed that the Bible was the key handbook in informing Christians how to live their lives. As seen by many to be more influential than both Luther and Zwingli, Calvin emphasized good works, faith, and God’s grace as key themes to understand the Bible and living a life pleasing unto God.

Calvin made not just a form in theology but in congregational music as well. He believed that Christian music should be both Scriptural and Christ-centered. Calvin’s contribution to music in the church was in the restoration of psalm singing. He viewed

¹⁴ James White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship*, 104, 105.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.

hymns as manmade, whereas the psalms were the inspired Word of God. Calvin's followers produced a number of psalm books that are used in many churches today.

One of the major influences of modern hymnology and the development of contemporary worship was given to us by Isaac Watts. Isaac Watts, who was born in 1674, was considered an English pastor, preacher, poet, and hymn writer. Through the influence of Isaac Watts, who wrote more than 6,000 hymns, the eighteenth century became the first age of Hymn singing in England. Watts was followed by John and Charles Wesley, two of the most prolific hymn writers of all times.¹⁶

In the period beyond the Reformation (1700-1900) the western world continued to undergo vast changes. The most significant was the rise of the Enlightenment or the Age of Reason. With the world becoming more advance and sophisticated in logic and knowledge, this European intellectual movement began to develop that changed the world forever.

During this period, Fanny Crosby contributed to the church a more expressive way of worshiping God. As probably the most prolific hymnist in Christian history, she did not let her handicap keep her from impacting the Christians' life of worship to God. Though blinded by an incompetent doctor at six weeks of age, she wrote over 8,000 hymns. About her blindness, she said, "It seemed intended by the blessed providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank him for the dispensation. If perfect earthly sight were offered me tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung

¹⁶ Robert E. Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 200.

hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me.”¹⁷

Although she was well known during her day, the church has known her mostly for one of her most celebrated and recognized hymn, “Blessed Assurance.” She lived a life of worship and contributed her proceeds to serving the poor and the needy.

Supporting herself by her writing, she quickly gained fame for her hymns. It is said that publishers had so much of her work that they took to using them under pseudonyms. Her usual fee was a mere \$2 which frequently went to her work with the poor. Her mission work is legendary, as is her devotion to serving others above herself.¹⁸

The most famous revivalist of the eighteenth century was John Wesley. His approach to worship represented a blend of classical Protestant forms with the personal element of Pietism. He was strongly influenced by the Moravians and through them leaned to stress the importance of conversion and personal experience. John Wesley was known for his dedication to God and to the Scriptures. God used his humility, commitment, and yearning for devotion to restore transformation to the Church of England.

Charles Wesley, the brother of John Wesley, was a preacher and evangelist just like his brother but was more known for his hymn writings and poetry in the English language. Frederic M. Bird wrote of Charles Wesley stating:

As a hymn-writer Charles Wesley was unique. He is said to have written 6,500 hymns, and though in so vast a number some are of unequal merit, it is marvelous how many there are which rise to the highest degree of excellence. His feelings on

¹⁷ Frances Jane Crosby, “Fanny Crosby”; available from http://www.cyberhymnal.org/bio/c/t/o/crosby_fj.htm; Internet.

¹⁸ Fanny Crosby, “The New York Institute for Special Education”; available from <http://www.nyise.org/fanny/>; Internet.

every occasion of importance found their best expression in a hymn. The saying that a really good hymn is as rare an appearance as that of a comet is falsified by the work of Charles Wesley.¹⁹

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

The significance in discussing African American history is because the Christian church needs to understand that although there are many challenges and hindrances to music and worship, there is ultimately a choice that can be made. The church is able to understand that there are resolutions to the various challenges today and Christians are more than able to keep their focus and attention on God and his Word. We will unfold many of the challenges that the African American church undertook and how they were able to maintain their faith in God and not let the impact of music take their mind off of him.

Because of the social climate during the 17th century including slavery, illiteracy, oppression, and religion, many slaves would steal away from civilization and would conduct religious services and worship in the back woods. They would sing songs and would conduct meetings to exercise a measure of freedom that was restricted in public. Country slaves sometimes would stay after church services to partake in singing and in dance, for they could not do so during service within white congregations.

Through this time of adversity, history records that the slaves were drawn to the Bible or “the sacred book” and they gave much attention to memorizing Scripture from which they heard from missionaries and preachers. Although the slaves desired to attend their own churches, many of them were only permitted to attend the white churches of

¹⁹ Frederic M. Bird, “The Poet of Methodism”; (Copied from *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1912.);available from <http://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/bwesley2.html>; Internet. Access date (10-02-05).

their masters or black churches that had a white pastor. Even some slaves were granted the opportunity to worship in remote places that was away from society.

Spirituals often told stories about biblical characters and events. These folk songs were born in the rural regions of the American South, and their anonymous creators were inspired by the hardships of slavery. These songs were usually created at the moment using call-and-response between a leader and the group. They were accompanied only by the slaves clapping their hands or stomping their feet. The steady duple rhythm was the driving force in the song, and words were often modified to fit the beat. Additionally, spirituals had to be passed orally from person to person.²⁰ The most resembled biblical story of slavery's bondage and brutality was the Israelites bondage in Egypt. This story depicts faith, freedom, and the promising hope for God's deliverance as his people waited on him. The prophet Moses was the main character mentioned in most spirituals and "Go Down, Moses" is perhaps the best-known spiritual of all times.

After 1865 when the institution of slavery no longer existed because of the Civil War, blacks continued to suffer oppression, especially in urban cities in the North. Because of many circumstances including lack of employment, blacks took comfort in hymns, church revivals and gospel hymnody, while still maintaining their wide range of practices and beliefs. Many African American churches sought interest in hymnology from Dr. Isaac Watts' Hymns and Spiritual Songs published in 1707. The doctrine within these hymns and songs included strong biblical theology pertaining to God, sin, man, and angels. They emphasized the Godhead, God's creation, his majesty, and his love. Dr Watts' hymnal, which the slaves used within their worship, was just one of the strong

²⁰ Randy Jones, "The Gospel Truth about the Negro Spiritual"; available from <http://www.bharatbhasha.com/entertainment.php/18216>; Internet. Access date (10-04-05).

foundations of religious worship that helped set the stage for the rise of African American music.

Dr Watts' hymns were primarily used for collective singing and required congregational participation. However, the black church made a transition from hymns to songs, which were more designed for soloists and ensembles. These songs not only assumed the role of the audience but also caused worshipers in the church to become spectators who would witness preaching, singing, and other forms of worship in the church. As a result, gospel hymnody and gospel music emerged from this transition. Although this was a challenge within African American worship, many blacks continued to seek God first within the music and preaching that took place during the service.

Within the black church, preaching became the focal point and music became the second magnet of attraction. Authors of *The Black Church in the African American Experience* expressed, "In the black church, good preaching and good singing are almost invariably the minimum conditions of a successful ministry. Both activities trace their roots back to Africa where music and religion and life itself were all one holistic enterprise."²¹ The black churches congregational singing helped reduce the social divisions and hostility that the blacks still experienced. By coming together in their own sanctuaries, African American felt a sense of closeness and fellowship. In the words of James Cone, "Black music is unity music. It unites the joy and the sorrow, the love and the hate, the hope and the despair of black people...it shapes and defines black being and

²¹ Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press 1990), 346.

creates cultural structures for black expression. Black music is unifying because it affirms that black being is possible only in a communal context.”²²

Originating in late 19th century, Gospel hymnody became one of the main musical genres that developed from black religion. Gospel hymnody was identified as songs of protest along with Negro spirituals, antislavery hymnody, civil rights songs, and the blues. Its contrast was songs of praise, which expressed adoration to God and showed an account of the early saint’s struggle in history. Although its origin was birth out of revolt, Gospel hymnody had hope in God and envisioned God’s Kingdom. By the early 20th century, Gospel hymnody had achieved independence and had a major influence within the world and specifically within congregational worship amongst African Americans.

The Negro Spirituals eventually turned into Gospel music, which is considered another genre of Christian music. Like the spirituals, Gospel music incorporated biblical doctrine and related to the Christians daily life. The lyrics of Gospel music tends to emphasize salvation and comfort to those who are in need.

Although much of African American history has undergone much adversity, many African Americans used biblically sound music as a means of handling their various situations. Many of them did not let the changes of their day affect their worship to God. The church today must understand that we cannot control the challenges of life, but rather can control who will be the focal point of interest during congregational worship.

²² James H. Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues* (New York: Seabury, 1972), 5.

20TH CENTURY HISTORY

Within the last hundred years, the church has experienced a revolution in music and in worship. Much of today's revitalization in the church has come about because of the changes that took place within the past century. 20th Century history helps give the church and Christians an understanding of how to keep music focused on God and not on anything else.

William Joseph Seymour became a major catalyst for the worldwide Pentecostal Movement, which helped bring about a change in worship during the beginning of the 20th century. Spirit-filled animation began to immediately become more emphasized in the congregational church and a change in worship occurred that would shape the way of the future congregational church. The Pentecostal Movement is considered the first post-Enlightenment tradition that takes pride in experiencing the reality of God's presence in formal worship.

Both the Holiness movement and gospel music has played a key role in the characteristics of freedom, spontaneity, individual expression, and joy of the Pentecostal Movement. The Holiness movement traces its origin to John Wesley and to his conviction that a conversion experience should be followed by a second work of God's grace.²³ In regards to Gospel Music, James White states, "Gospel music has played a critical role in the development of Pentecostalism, and reciprocally, Pentecostalism has performed an indispensable service in the development and acceptance of contemporary gospel."²⁴

²³ Robert E. Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 122.

²⁴ James White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship*, 363-364.

Both singing and music were strong in Pentecostal worship and this movement has used the language of popular culture to present the Gospel. Many of the Pentecostal churches use the gospel organ and a number of different instruments including guitar, drums, and the synthesizer. Some of its churches use orchestras to accompany congregational singing, soloists, and the choir.

Todd E. Johnson, author of *Conviction of Things Not Seen*, believes arguably that the most far-reaching worship renewal movement of the second half of the twentieth century occurred not in the Protestant churches, but in the Catholic Church. The touchstone for these renewals was the *Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican council* (Vatican II) in 1963. The *Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy* centralized worship as the most vital activity of the church and allowed it to be the number one facet above all other activity during congregational worship. This constitution was needed during the early part of the 20th Century because there were basically no changes in Catholic worship for over 300 years. Changes in congregational worship were previously attempted; however, they all were successful.

Since the institution of this constitution in 1963, other reforms of the Catholic Church has resulted including new texts of worship, diversified preaching, new forms of music and songs, and newer ways to reach the 21st century culture. As a result, Catholic worship has lost its rigid uniformity and, while the order of worship is fixed, the liturgy has been opened to a greater degree of flexibility and spontaneity. This is particularly true in those Catholic Churches that have incorporated the musical style of the contemporary culture and worked toward a more informal liturgy.²⁵

²⁵ Robert E. Webber, *Worship Old and New*, 125.

The Charismatic movement in the 1960's and 1970's characterized itself with openness to the Holy Spirit, similar to that of the Pentecostal Movement. The movement started off predominantly as a prayer movement that was directed by the Spirit of God. The Charismatic movement helped emphasized that music was a predominant form of communication and when done properly, it can create a spirit of worship in the church.

An association called the Jesus Movement occurred in the 1960's and emphasized a change in congregational worship. This movement, originating from the West coast, was led by young Christians who desired to make drastic contributions to the era of disorientation in church worship. Music was emphasized in the Jesus Movement's worship and those willing to make a reform desired to go against the traditional and stagnant forms of Christian worship. The goal of the Jesus Movement was to reform both the order and leadership of the congregation church and to allow their worship to appeal to the culture of the changing world.

Bill Gaither of the early 1960's helped shaped the influence of praise and worship music. The praise and worship movement emerged from several trends in the sixties and early seventies. These trends emphasized that traditional worship forms were dead. There was a concern for the immediacy of the Spirit, a desire for intimacy, and a persuasion that music and informality must connect with people of a post-Christian culture.²⁶ Therefore, by the writing of Christian hymns and songs, Bill Gaither's music helped set the stage for the rise of congregational singing.

The songs that Bill Gaither wrote were first intended for performance singing, however, they quickly were sung in churches all over America. Some of his songs including *He Touched Me*, *There's something about that name*, *Lets just praise the Lord*,

²⁶ Ibid., 128.

and *Because He lives*. These songs, among many others, helped institute a new genre of music for the church. His influence helped bring a new form of worship along with the 21st Century Contemporary Worship Movement.

In conclusion, one of the most subtle changes during the late 20th century was in how individuals perceived themselves. This created a conflict with choosing that which is of God and that which gratifies the self. Since music became one of the primary forms of communication, the church needed to emphasize music and worship that solemnly focused on God. With the influences of Folk songs, which focus of the self, rock music, and other worldly influence, the genre of contemporary music was birth in the church and the rise of the Contemporary Worship Movement helped establish the centrality of God in both music and worship.

CHAPTER 7

UNDERSTANDING THE NEED FOR EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Not only should education be Bible-based, and historical, but it should be practical as well. This method of practical education will take place at the church where this writer currently serves in ministry. As the minister of music and youth minister at White Oak Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Dry Fork, Virginia, there will be four months of teaching and three months of training the congregation. There would be surveys, workshops, and various other teaching methods conducted, and meaningful results will be given from the findings of the various teaching methods conducted. This chapter should be of great help in giving a means of resolution to the challenges of music in the church.

CHURCH OBSERVATION

Before any teaching or surveys, there was much prayer and observations made of the congregation to see their condition and outlook regarding church worship. The first observation that was noted was that not all the people in the church participated during the songs and hymns that are sung. Some of the youth and young adults who sat in the rear of the church usually did not participate as much in the songs that are being led by the worship leader. Usually the elderly and those who sat closer to the front were more

open to participating in singing and in clapping. Although it may seem challenging to have 100 percent of the congregation actively participating during the worship, the primary goal as the worship leader was to have and sense full participation in the songs that are being sung.

Second, there were a number of people who were not active in the church and who only came to get what they could get out of the service. It seemed that some people came to church just to say that they had their church for the week, and less than half consistently came to Sunday School and Wednesday night Bible study. Overall, many people in the congregation did know and understand the purpose of worship and why they came to church. On the contrary, it was observed that many people did come to church knowing their purpose, and despite what may have gone wrong the previous week, these people came to church willing to serve and work for God.

Third, there were observations especially among some of the youth and young adults that some people slouched in their seats or either fell asleep during the message. Some people did not pay attention during the sermon and consistently talked or either looked jaded during the message. However, most people in the church seemed to listen to the message and to what the pastor was sharing from God's Word.

PASTOR'S OBSERVATION

Weekly meetings took place in which the senior pastor had expressed his observations and concerns regarding music and worship in the church. The senior pastor has continually stated that the words of the songs that are sung in the church should be God honoring, Christ-centered, and biblically sound. However, since many of the songs

that the choir had sung in the past dealt with trial, tribulations, hardships, and pain, the pastor has challenged the music ministry to choose songs that will lift up Jesus and put him on display.

In addition, the pastor has observed that some people in the music department are not as committed as they should be. A few people show up late to rehearsal, and when some people are absent, they do not inform the director. The pastor desires the music department to make major progressions in the upcoming year; however, if there is not 100 percent participation, this goal will not be achieved.

Last, the pastor desires for the worship in the church to be elevated and authentic with God. The pastor has observed the congregation's commitment through giving, serving, active participation, and commitment to God's word. Although many people in the church strive to make efforts in establishing a committed relationship with God, the pastor has concerns about the overall commitment level of the people's giving and serving.

TEACHINGS BEFORE THE CONGREGATION

After observing the congregation, there was a desire to first teach the congregation on the overall purpose of music and worship in the church. Although the majority of the congregation seems to understand the purpose of music and worship, it is obvious that some people do not. As the minister of music, there are weekly opportunities during the church service by which small statements and words of Scripture can serve as a teaching method for the congregation. This specific teaching on the purpose of music and worship would be presented for 4 ½ months. The goal would be to

first teach the congregation and then to see if there are measurable results after the 4 ½ months.

Objectives

The general instructional objectives and list of specific learning outcomes that this writer desired from the congregation were as following: 1.) To gain knowledge in describing the purpose of worship and music in the church; 2.) To evaluate worship in their personal lives and not just during a Sunday morning worship service; and 3.) To respond and show interest in worshiping God by singing and through bodily expression.

First, the desire was for the congregation in general to recall and retain the basic purpose of worship and music in the church. If the congregation were able to reproduce this specific understanding, God would have a basis to work on within their heart and lives.

Second, the desire was that through the continual teachings of truth, the congregation would relate worship to their own personal lives. It is not uncommon for Christians to only hear from God on Sunday morning and not to read and study the Bible on a regular basis. So then, this objective would emphasis a daily personal walk with God.

Third, the desire was for the congregation to not only attend the worship service but to also react to it in some way. This desire was for a voluntarily willingness to sing, lift their hands, and to respond to God in a way that exemplified action.

Preparation and Anticipation before Teaching

Before teaching the congregation specifically on the purpose of music and worship, there needed to be preparation on how this purpose would be interjected during the various songs sung. As the music minister, there had to have been a preplanned layout of the song selections and teachings that were going to be presented to the congregation. There needed to be a brief yet purposeful approach in teaching the congregation so that upon leaving the service, they would understand more clearly the purpose of music and worship.

Before the teaching began, there was a desire for the congregation to listen intuitively and wholeheartedly on the teachings regarding music and worship. There was a desire for an obvious connection to have been made as biblical teachings were brought forth. This would be important because there would be a sensation knowing that the congregation did indeed hear these important teachings and would leave the service encouraged and spiritually fed.

At the end of the service, there were anticipations that some of the people in the congregation would come and say that they were encouraged by the ministry of the music and its teachings during the service. There were even desires that some of the leaders in the church would share some encouraging words regarding any of the teachings that were presented. There were no expectations that all of a sudden, the mood and disposition of the congregation as a whole would change from week to week. Ultimately, after planting the seeds of the Word, the Holy Spirit is responsible for guiding them in all truth. However, there was a desire to receive some form of feedback from the teachings on music and worship.

Experience during the Teaching

During the Sundays in which the specific teachings were carried out, there was an effort made to clearly and profoundly interject truth during the worship services. There were a number of Scripture references addressed that supported that the purpose of music and worship should be centered on God first and foremost. On an average of six to seven songs sung each Sunday morning, at least two songs were introduced with Scripture verses and a brief statement supporting music's purpose, and at least one additional song was introduced by a statement that geared the congregation's thoughts on God.

During the service, there were not many distractions from the youth or adults, for everyone for the most part gave their undivided attention. There were times when the teaching of God's word would be shared and some of the people sitting toward the front would nod their head in support of what was being said. There were also people in the back who would be listening to what was being shared from God's Word and there was a sense of reception and understanding.

However, only about five or six people would seem to not be paying attention to what was being shared. Some of these people seemed to have been doing other things while the teaching and songs were being sung. Some would have their head down looking at something else or would be sitting down and not paying attention. This small amount of people did not cause much of a distraction to this writer because the vast majority of the people were very intuitive and active during the service.

Results after the Teaching

After the majority of the songs were song by either the choir or a soloist, there was a feeling of pleasure and delight with the worship. There was an overall feeling of delight knowing that the truth of the purpose of music and worship was clearly stated and the songs were overall well sung. However, during the course of the 4 ½ months, there were only about 3 Sundays when the choir messed up in some form of way. Although the mistakes were not noticeably blatant, some people in the church may have been distracted.

Overall, for the majority of the people who understood that worship should be centered on God, there was a feeling that through it all, God was glorified and his people were encouraged. Although only a few individuals came and shared their thoughts specifically on my teachings, many members of the church expressed their delight in the overall worship service. There was a sense of pleasure and excitement knowing that God and his people were pleased with the overall quality of music.

TEACHINGS BEFORE THE TEENAGERS

Not only were there teachings before the congregation as a whole, but there were teachings among the teenagers. Serving as both the youth minister and music minister, there was a desired to share with the teenagers at the church on the purpose of music and worship. This teaching before the teens would be more intimate than before the whole church, for there would be more interaction and a time for questions and answers. Quite different from the teachings before the congregation, this teaching would require questionnaires that would be passed out at the beginning of the lesson.

Objectives

The general instructional objectives and list of specific learning outcomes that this writer desired from the teenagers were as following: 1.) To acquire knowledge of the purpose of worship and music in the church; 2.) To obtain, hold, and direct the student's attention so that the student can receive the truths of God's word in their life; 3.) To evaluate worship in their personal lives and not just during a Sunday morning worship service.

First, there was a desire for the teenagers to acquire basic knowledge from the Bible on the purpose and meaning of worship. This objective would include the teenagers reading and memorizing Scripture that pertained to the fundamentals of Christian worship.

Second, there was a desire to receive the attention of the listeners and that they would show awareness that they understood what was being said. The Bible makes it clear that "the evil one" desires to bring distractions to hinder the Word from being understood (Matthew 13:19). Therefore, this desire was that the students would obtain and hold the truths that were going to be presented to them.

Third, there was a desire that the teenagers would relate worship to their own personal lives. David stated, "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth (Psalm 34:1). Once a person becomes a Christian, he enters into a daily relationship with Jesus Christ. So then, it was desired for the teenagers to live a life of worship and not to let music or anything to interfere with their relationship with God.

Preparation and Anticipation before Teaching

Before there were actual teachings on the purpose of worship and music, it was a common understanding that the teenagers needed to be active and pretty much entertained for the majority of the class time. The teenagers at the church can be easily distracted, therefore, there needed to be preparation on how to keep them listening the whole time.

It was desired that the teenagers would listen intuitively to the teachings on worship and music. This desire included them getting involved in the lesson, asking questions, and participating, for they sometimes tend to relax and not want to get involved. Prayer went forth God on the teenager's behalf and there was a desire for them to listen and to be active as God's truth was shared.

There was not a desire before the lesson was taught that some of the teenagers would come up afterward and ask questions about the teachings on worship. This desire came about because the majority of the times previously when lessons were taught, no one in the class hardly ever came up afterwards and talked to this writer about the lesson. Although this desire was a challenge, the overall prayer was that the Holy Spirit would use the teachings on worship to help convict and guide the teenagers in all truth.

Experience during the Teaching

Two separate teachings were prepared for the teenagers on the purpose of music and worship. Both were carried out during Wednesday night Bible study, and the second lesson was taught a week after the first. At the beginning of the first lesson, the topic and

outline was introduced. All the teenagers seemed to be listening and attentive. It was then explained to them that a survey was going to be passed out at the beginning of the lesson that dealt with questions on worship and music in the church. For the next 20 minutes, the teenagers took time to fill out 12 questions. These same questions would be the same for both my teaching before the teenagers and during the music workshop. The 12 questions regarding music and worship in the church were as following:

1. Who would you consider to be the worship leader (s) in the church (on a typical Sunday)?
2. What are some of the functions (purpose, role, job, work) of the church? Make a list of several functions!
3. What would you consider to be the “main” (top, greatest) function of the church?
4. What is the purpose (aim, goal) of music in the church?
5. What is the purpose of worship in the church?
6. What should be the Christian’s main purpose in coming to church (on a typical Sunday)?
7. Is there a need for the “typical” Christian in any way to prepare before Sunday morning? If yes, state what! If no, stay why!
8. Is the music/singing in the church the most important element within a typical worship service? (In order to have a smooth and orderly service) Why or why not?
9. If the music on Sunday morning was a failure (bad, choir/musicians messed up), would you consider some or much of the worship service to have been bad as well? Why or why not!

10. If the music on Sunday morning was a success (good songs, etc.) would you consider some or much of the worship service to have been a success as well?
Why or why not?
11. What are some other acts and functions within congregational worship besides the music by which the Christian can participate in? Make a list of several!
12. What would you consider to be the main challenge (s) in the church regarding music and worship?

After the questions were filled out, the teaching of God's word immediately proceeded. The introduction of the lesson first centered on understanding the facts of music and worship and Satan's impact on worship. This writer then proceeded to talk about the impact of music in the church and in the world. There were mentions of music's congregational impact, diversity impact, participation impact and emotional impact. There was much participation from the teenagers during this section and many of them were able to read quotes from George Barna on the impact of music.

Next, there were discussions on the challenges that music and worship have within the church. These challenges included worship wars, an over-emphasis on music, an over-emphasis on feelings and experiences, and a lack of order and unity in the church. After this time of discussion, the teens were able to talk about music's potential hindrances within the church. Three of these hindrances included the fact of people unable to see other acts and functions of worship, people unable to make the connection between music and the worship of God, and people unable to understand the importance of personal preparation before coming to church.

During the course of the lesson, almost every one of the 12 questions was answered directly or indirectly. Towards the end of class, the teenagers had a question and answer discussion on the right answers from the questions. At the end of class, it was told to them that next week, there would be discussions on the resolutions regarding church music and worship.

Reviewing over the correct answers to the survey questions served as a good time for some of the teenagers to talk about their misconceptions regarding the purpose of music and worship in the church. Some of the teenagers believed that if the pastor's message was boring, then the church service in general was not successful. It had to be explain to some of them again that the purpose of music, the pastor's message, and all other forms of worship in the church should be centered on God and not on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the service.

The very next week was a continuation of the discussions with the teenagers and this time emphasized the resolutions regarding church music and worship. This second time of teaching was just as effective as the first, for many of the teenagers were able to get involved and ask questions.

TEACHING BEFORE THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT

There were not only teachings in front of the teenagers but there were teachings before the music department. This teaching took place during a 3 ½ month period (from December 1, 2005 – March 15, 2006). The majority of these teachings on the purpose of music and worship came during weekly choir rehearsals. There would be approximately 10-20 minutes spent during each choir rehearsal to teach the choir that worship and the

songs we sing must be directed towards God. Many Scriptural references to support the purpose of music were given and this writer shared with them how they have a great responsibility in helping to bring people before the presence of God. Many of these teachings were interjected throughout the course of the choir rehearsals and not just at the beginning. During this 3 ½ month period, no choir member came up to me and spoke specifically on my teachings, but rather, many of them told me that they left encouraged and spiritually filled.

There was, however, a more specific occasion of teaching before the music department and choir members that came through a workshop. This workshop took place on Saturday, March 4, 2006, and the church and the choir were invited to attend. The workshop would start at 12:00 p.m. and would end at 3:00 p.m.

Objectives

The general instructional objectives and list of specific learning outcomes that this writer desired from the choir were as following: 1.) To integrate learning from different areas in order to create a more unified and effective choir; 2.) To acquire knowledge of the purpose of worship and music in the church; 3.) To evaluate worship in their personal lives and not just during a Sunday morning worship service.

First, there was a desire to bring together elements from Scripture, history, etc, in order to educate the music department and to bring about a more effective and unified choir. By doing this, the objective was that conflicts would be resolved both internally

and externally, and that the choir would be able to understand their own strengths and limitations in order to function more effectively.

Second, there was a desire for the music department in general to understand and retain the basic purpose of worship and music in the church. This writer wanted the music department to be able to share with the rest of the church of the importance of music and worship and that it should be centered on God.

Third, there was a desire for the music department to live a life of worship everyday of the week and not just on Saturdays and Sundays. Worship is to be continual and is not to start and stop as songs do. This objective was for them to understand that worship is a constant attitude that results in interactive communion with our heavenly Father on a regular basis.

Preparation and Anticipation before Teaching

Before the workshop, there was a goal of 25 people attending and for some of the people to be non-choir members. There was also a desire for much interaction, similar with the teenagers, so that it would not just be me lecturing and the audience listening. At the end of the workshop, there was a goal for at least 1-2 people to share that they were spiritually encouraged and revived because of the information given to them. Overall, there was a desire for the people in the church to leave with a better understanding of God's word and the purpose that music has in the church.

Right before the workshop, there was a choice that needed to be made whether to teach in the sanctuary or down in the basement area of the church. The church sanctuary did seem a little too big if only 25 people were present, for it seats about 400 people. The

basement area was a smaller setting where the fellowship would be more intimate. After much consideration, the decision was made to have the workshop in the church sanctuary, for it was made known that this was where the church usually conducts its meetings and fellowship gatherings.

Experience during the Teaching

At the start of the workshop, a relevant story was shared of a church in Detroit, Michigan in which a gunman came in during the service and shot and killed a young boy. The gunman then fled the church and eventually killed himself. After the police and ambulance came and cleared the crime scene, the people in church resumed their worship service. This story actually took place six days before it was presented during the workshop. The importance for telling this story at the beginning of the workshop was to set the tone for the teachings on the purpose of music and worship. It was explained to the audience that these people in Detroit seemed to understand that not even the killing of a young boy in the church was going to stop them from worshiping God. So then, the purpose of worship and in coming to church should be centered on God and not on the situations around them. During this introduction, it was observed that people were excited and encouraged, for many of them had heard this story in the news as well.

After giving this introductory story, it was noticed that only choir members were present in the church sanctuary and that less than 25 members were present. However, this did not upset me or hinder my excitement. As 12 questions on worship and music were then passed out, this writer explained that these questions would help give a better understanding of where the choir and ultimately the church stood. It was explained to

them that some of their answers may be right and some may be wrong. It was explained that some of them may have erroneous perceptions of music and worship in the church and that this was alright because now they would be able to learn the truth in God's Word regarding true worship and the purpose of music.

After the audience filled out the questionnaires, the teaching of God's word was presented. The outline was basically the same, but the discussions were different. After talking briefly about worship wars in the church and how tension can take place within the music department or church, the pastor asked a question that was not expected and which put this writer on the spot before the choir members. He asked if this writer felt that there were any tensions within the music department, and if so, what could be done about it. Knowing that this writer was the minister of music, a good and justifiable answer had to be given. This writer then explained to the pastor and the music department that there were no observations of tension with me against anyone else or dissention within the choir as a whole. However, after an open discussion with the audience and choir members, many of them felt that there was tension in the church and not specifically with me against anyone else.

Results after the Teaching

At the end of the workshop, there was a question and answer time. During this time, this writer was able to pick up the questionnaires and to give some last minute challenges on the purpose of music and worship in the church. When the workshop had finally ended, many people came up to me and told me that my teaching was excellent, for most of them stated that they learned something new. The pastor announced that

following Sunday that he wanted me to share this same information during a Wednesday night bible study. He explained to the congregation that it was a great workshop and that he desired for more people in the church to have been present. Overall, there was much affirmation that God had touched people's lives because of my teaching.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

It was explained to both the music department and teenagers that these series of 12 questions would be helpful in understanding the purpose of music and worship in the church. It would also help this writer see where the church as a whole stood on biblical truths and how they could overcome some of their erroneous conceptions of music. After constructing the results of the 12 questions on worship and music, the results have been finalized.

In reply to the first question, "Whom would you consider to be the worship leader (s) in the church on a typical Sunday?" the majority of the church members (34 %) stated that it was the music director/choir. About 28 percent stated that it was the pastor only, while only 21 percent stated that it was both the music director and pastor. The correct response was only given by three percent of the people stating that it should be a combination of the pastor, ministers, deacons, music director and choir, etc (see Chart 1 – Appendix).

In reply to the second question, "What are some of the functions of the church?" the number one answer (18 %) stated that it was evangelism. Ministry (13 %) was second, while both teaching and worship (11 %) were third. Only 4 % stated the correct

answer in that the church consisted of six or more functions and not just of a single function (see Chart 2 – Appendix).

In reply to the third question, “What would you consider to be the ‘main’ function of the church?” 43 percent stated evangelism. Both worship and hearing the Word of God came in second (18 %), while music (7 %) was considered to be third (see Chart 3 – Appendix). John 4:24 states that the Father is seeking worshipers. Although evangelism and hearing the Word of God, among many others, are very important functions of the church, the number one answer should have been worship.

In reply to the fourth question, “What is the purpose of music in the church?” the number one answer (32 %), which was the correct answer, was to give praise, honor, and glory to God. Both to minister and to worship were second (18 %), while entertainment (11 %) was third. Other receiving answers included evangelism, enhancing the service before preaching, setting the mood of the service, and fellowship (see Chart 4 – Appendix).

In reply to the fifth question, “What is the purpose of worship in the church?” the overwhelming and correct answer (54 %) stated that it was to give glory, honor, and praise to God. Other receiving votes included fellowship, connecting with God, service, evangelism, and to learn about God daily (see Chart 5 – Appendix).

In reply to the sixth question, “What should be the Christian’s main purpose in coming to church?” the number one answer, which was the correct answer, was to worship, give glory, honor, and praise to God. To learn and hear God’s Word was second, and to fellowship was third. Other answers included service, spending time with God, and encouragement (see Chart 6 – Appendix).

In reply to the seventh question, “Is there a need for a Christian in any way to prepare before Sunday morning?” 52 percent stated the correct answer being absolutely yes. Those who stated absolutely yes said that this preparation should include spending time with God throughout the week, prayer before the service, meditation, etc. About 28 percent said that it was not necessary to prepare in any way before coming to church. Those who stated this said that a Christian should come to church as they are. About 12 percent stated that preparation was only needed for the Sunday school lesson or in reading the daily bread. However, only 4 percent stated that preparation was sometimes needed (see Chart 7 – Appendix).

In reply to the eighth question, “Is the music/singing in the church the most important element within a typical worship service?” the majority of the people (55 %) stated no and that the preaching of the word was most important. About 21 percent stated yes, while 10 percent stated that music does play an important role. The correct answer, only given by 3 percent of the people, stated that all the elements within a worship service including the preaching, music, offering, prayer, reading of Scripture, exhortation, were important (see Chart 8 – Appendix).

In reply to the ninth question, “If the music on Sunday morning was a failure would you consider some or much of the worship service to have been bad as well?” 54 percent said no while 36 percent said either yes or some. Only 11 percent specifically stated no and that worshiping God is most important (see Chart 9 – Appendix). The correct answer is certainly no because the purpose of worship is to center its attention on God and not on the success of the music on Sunday morning.

In response to the tenth question, “If the music on Sunday morning was a success would you consider some or much of the worship service to have been a success as well?” 38 percent stated an emphatic “yes” while 33 percent said either no, not necessarily, or that music alone can not make a successful Sunday. Surprisingly, 19 percent stated that if a service had good music and a good message, then the service was successful (see Chart 10 – Appendix). The correct answer to this question is certainly “no” because even though the music may have been good, people may not have had a worship encounter with God. Although preaching and the music are important for a smooth service, it is not the chief purpose for the Christian in coming to church.

In response to the eleventh question, “What are some other acts and functions within congregational worship besides the music by which the Christian can participate in?” the people gave a plethora of answers including music, evangelism, offering, the reading of Scripture, preaching and teaching, prayer, exhortation, and the sacraments. All of these answers are important functions of worship within the church (see Chart 11 – Appendix).

In response to the twelfth question, “What would you consider to be the main challenge (s) in the church regarding music and worship?” the number answer was that people were not really coming to church to worship and love God. Gossip and unity received the second amount of votes (see Chart 12 – Appendix).

THE CHURCH'S LEARNING

After teaching the congregation on biblical foundations of music and worship, only a few people came up to this writer directly and stated that they were encouraged by the teaching during the service. However, more people came up to this writer and stated their delight in the overall quality, selections of the songs, and worship of the service.

Some of the specific comments that were mentioned from the congregation's teaching were from the pastor, choir members, and a few adults. The senior pastor had stated that he was pleased with the overall teaching and truths that are being presented before the congregation. The choir members who had come and talked to me stated that they learned the importance of preparing for congregational worship throughout the week. Some of the adults stated that they had learned the importance of not over-emphasizing music during worship but in participating more in the offerings and in the reading of Scripture.

After teaching the teenagers, this writer asked the teen class during Sunday School what they had learned from the past two lessons on music and worship. The three most common responses were that they should prepare for worship throughout the week and not just on Sunday morning, that worship and music should be centered on God first and foremost, and that the music on Sunday morning should not affect the Christian's worship of God.

After teaching the music department, there were many responses given that displayed the choir members' comprehension from my teachings. At the end of the workshop, this writer opened up a time of reflection and comments. About six people stated that they wanted to keep their focus on God and not on any other factors within

congregational worship. About two individuals stated that they wanted to do a better job with staying in touch with God throughout the week in order to better their worship on Sunday morning. One of the greatest examples of learning came that following Sunday. One of the ministers, who also is a choir member, gave a testimony on what he learned in the workshop; for he stated how encouraged he was to not esteem anything above the worship of God.

THE WRITER'S LEARNING

One of the disappointments that were experienced was that this writer would have desired for more people to have given me encouragement on the teachings that took place during the service. Because of this disappointment, this writer has learned the importance in putting trust in God and in not depending on people's acclamations and encouragement. This writer has learned that God the Holy Spirit is the person who ultimately convicts and teaches both the believer and unbeliever.

Second, this writer would have desired for the few people who were not paying attention during the worship service to have made a change throughout the course of my teachings on Sunday. This is because the people who usually were not interested and paying attention during my teachings were consistent throughout the 4 ½ months of teaching. Because of this, this writer has learned to depend on God and to know that after my many hours of preparation, it is God who ultimately gives me strength. This area of learning was also applied in my teachings before the choir and the youth.

Third, this writer learned to accept the fact that all of the objectives that were prepared before each teaching may actually not be attained. More importantly, this writer

learned that there could be new results that could be generated that may in fact be better than that which was intended. If prepared again, this writer has learned to continue to make objectives with the openness that God can indeed bring about a different outcome than was expected.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of music is to praise the Lord and praise should always be directed to God. Music's rightful outcome is when God is glorified and his people are able to know him and obey him. Music must be rightfully understood in light of true worship. Christ's example of worship should be the ultimate example for the Christian church and Christians should desire to praise God the Father by being obedient in following Christ.

Although music has a great impact in the world and in the church, its true influence must be evaluated by its message. Although times have changed, the central message of the gospel has not. Music's role is clearly in the message of the songs and Scripture must be the basis for what is taught and emphasized within congregational worship.

Churches and pastors must understand that although music plays a major part within church worship, it is only one of many functions of the church. Some of the other elements within congregational worship must include evangelism, offering, the reading of Scripture, preaching and teaching, prayer, exhortation, and the sacraments. Music must not be elevated to the point to where the church is not able to see these other elements within worship.

The church must also understand the areas of resolution to the challenges that music can bring in the church. Although music is extremely influential, resolutions that are biblically based, historical, and practical must be emphasized. Christians must not let music in the church hinder true worship but rather must allow it to be a means of honoring and praising God.

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APPENDIX

Chart 1

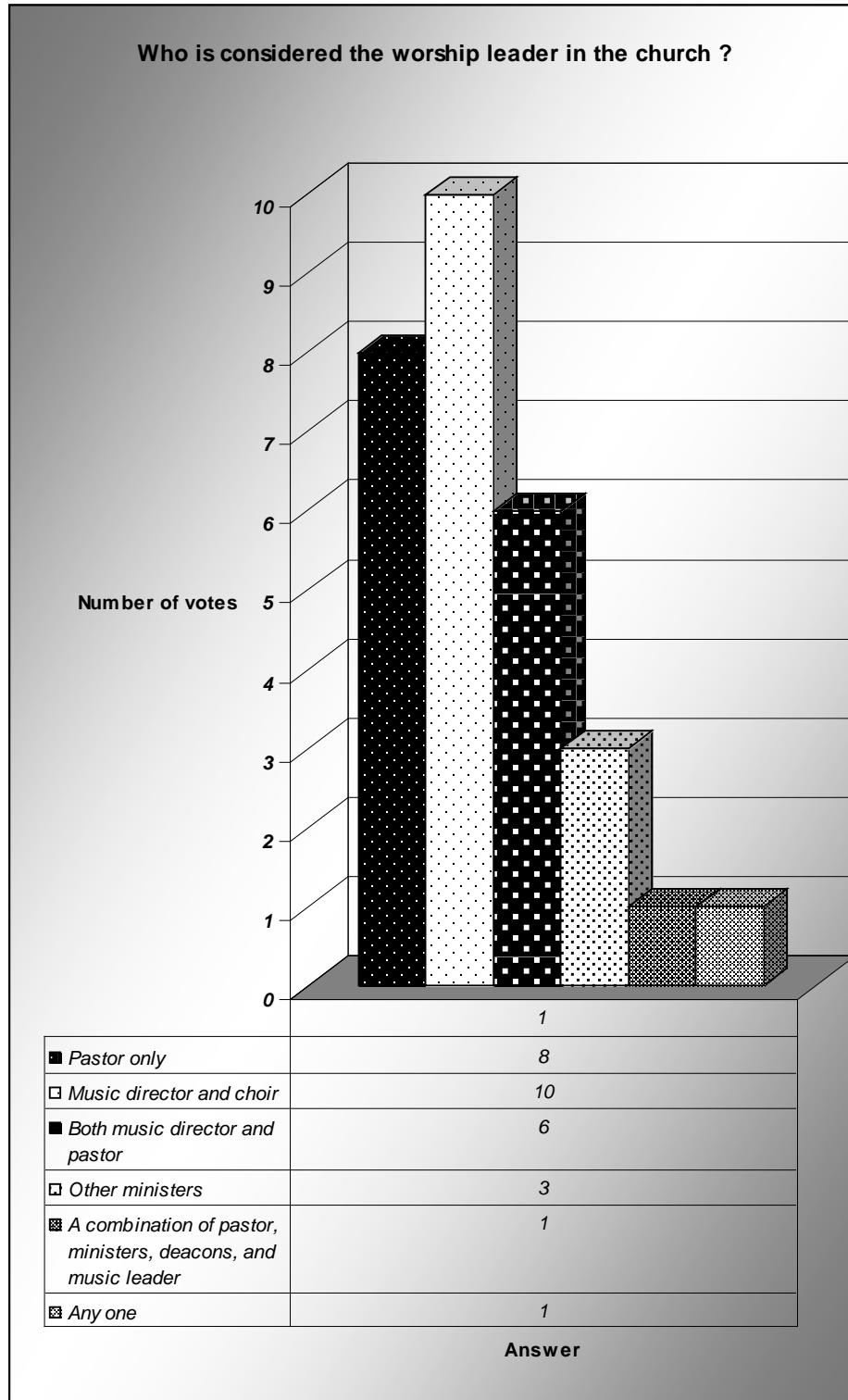


Chart 2

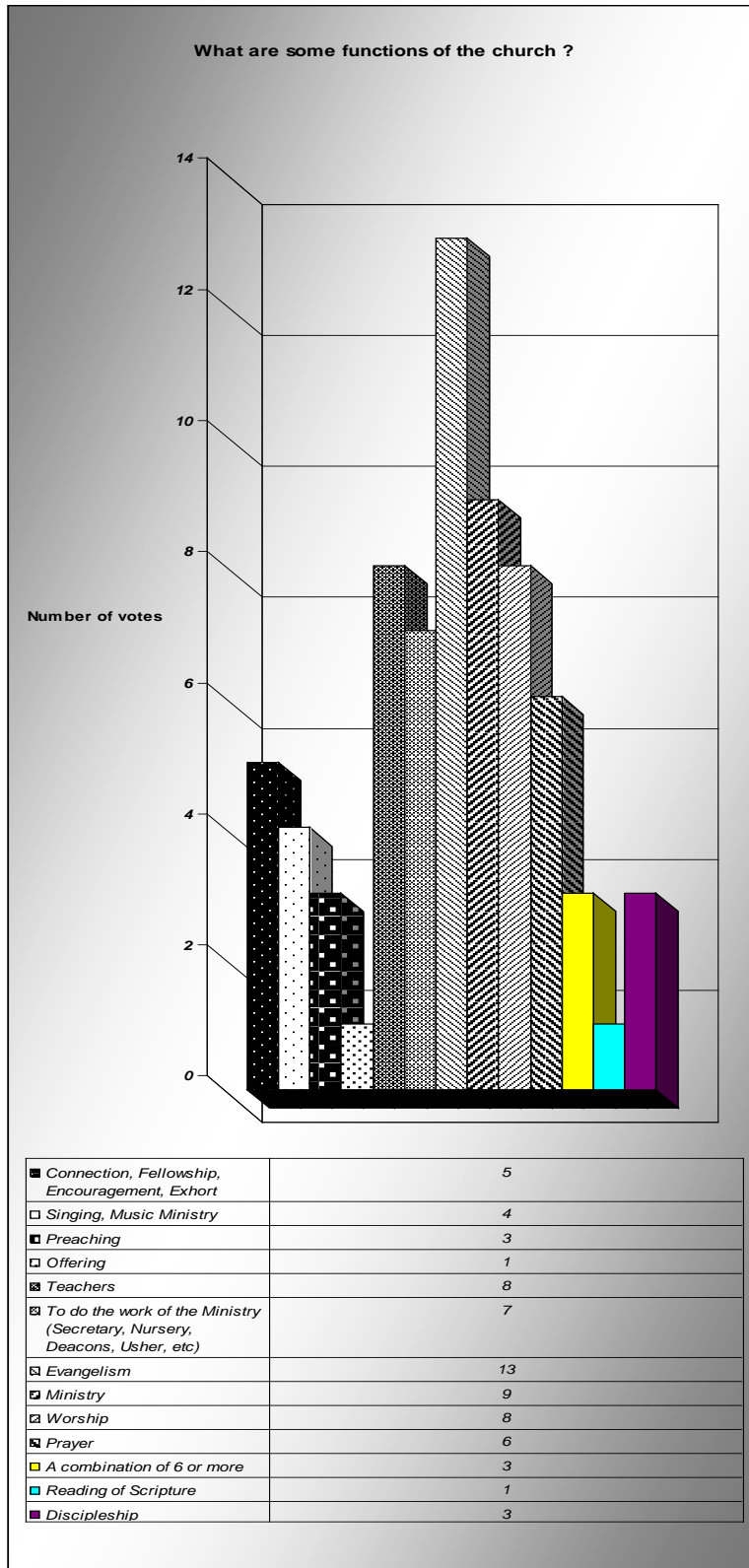


Chart 3

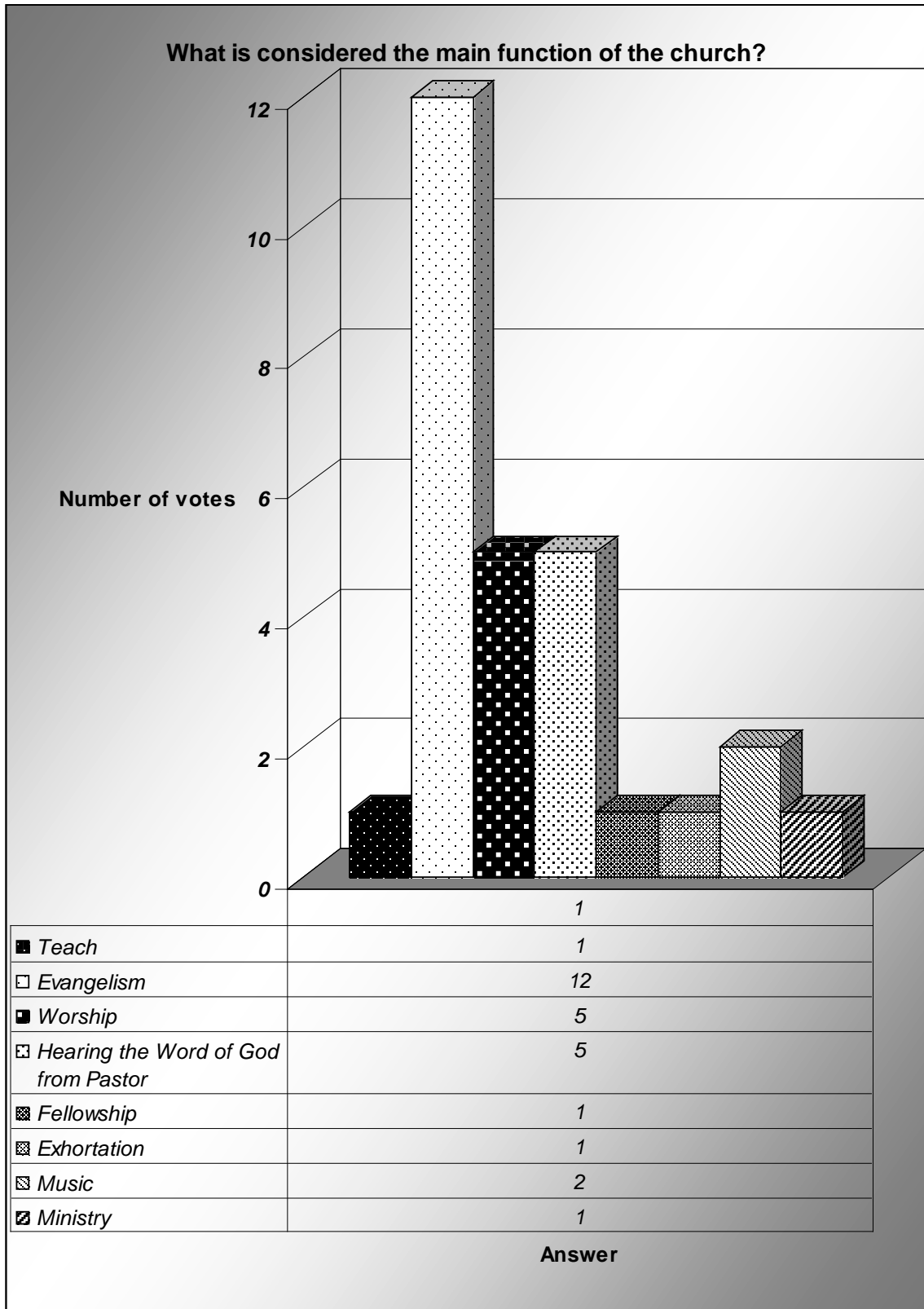


Chart 4

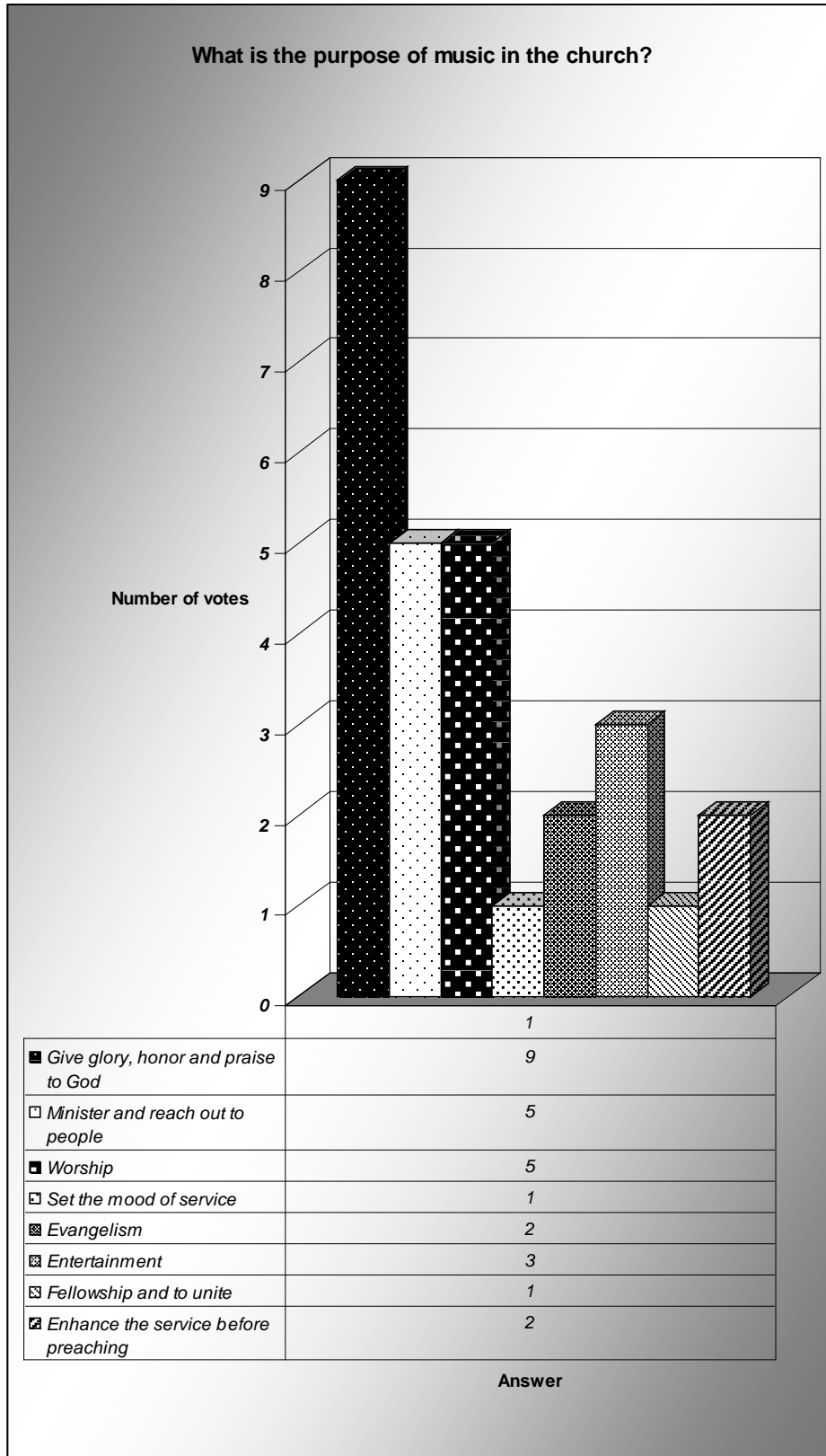


Chart 5

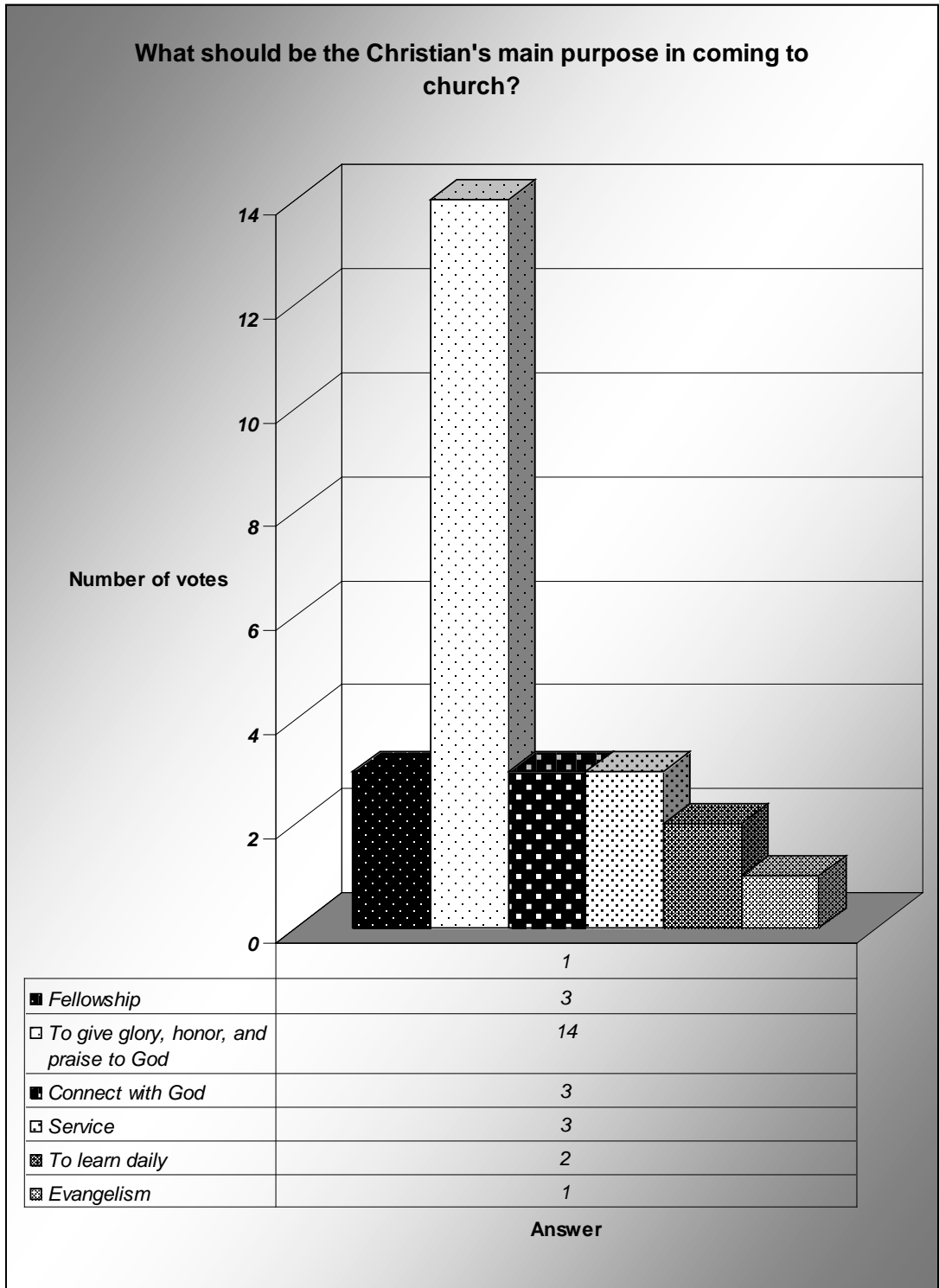


Chart 6

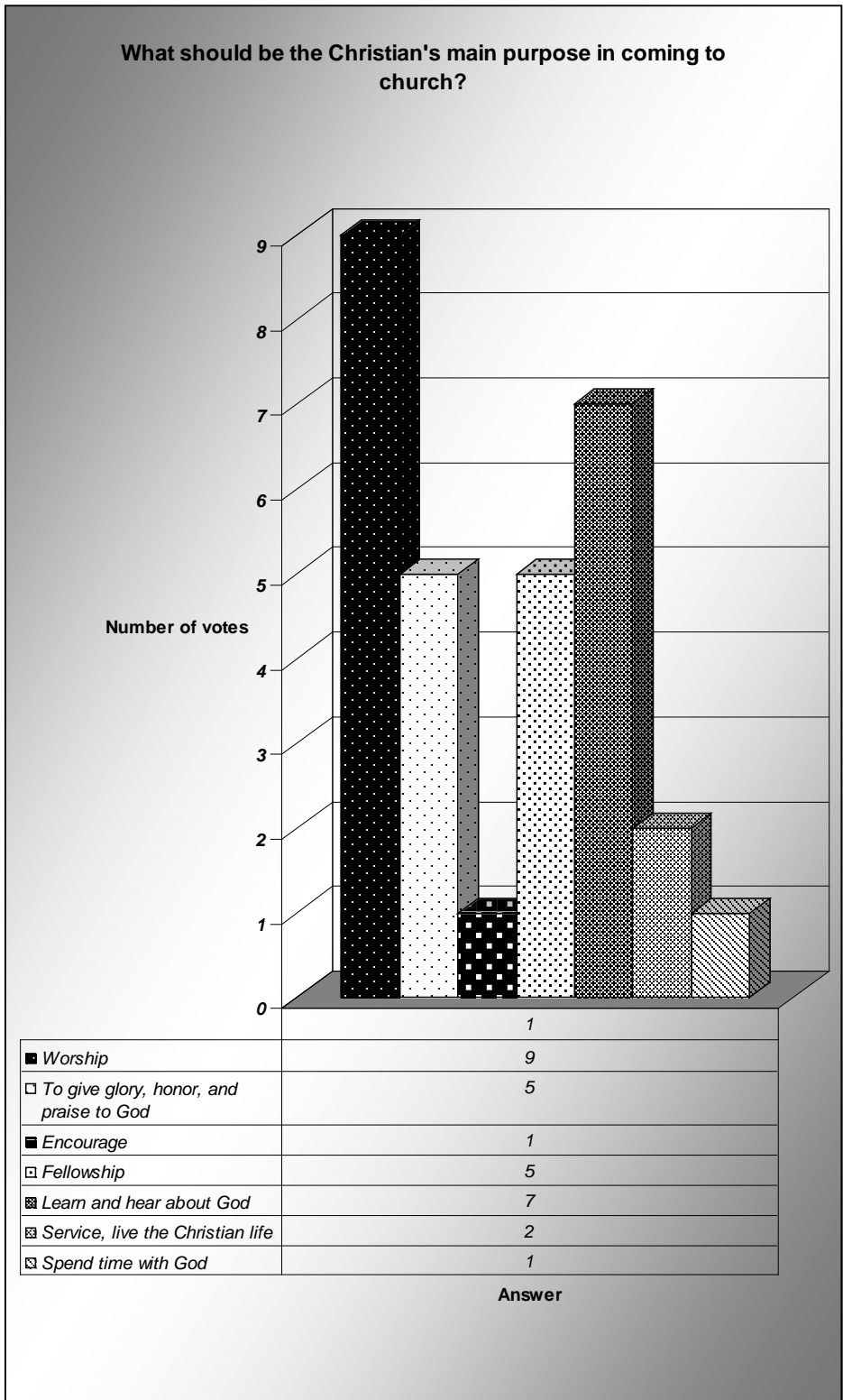


Chart 7

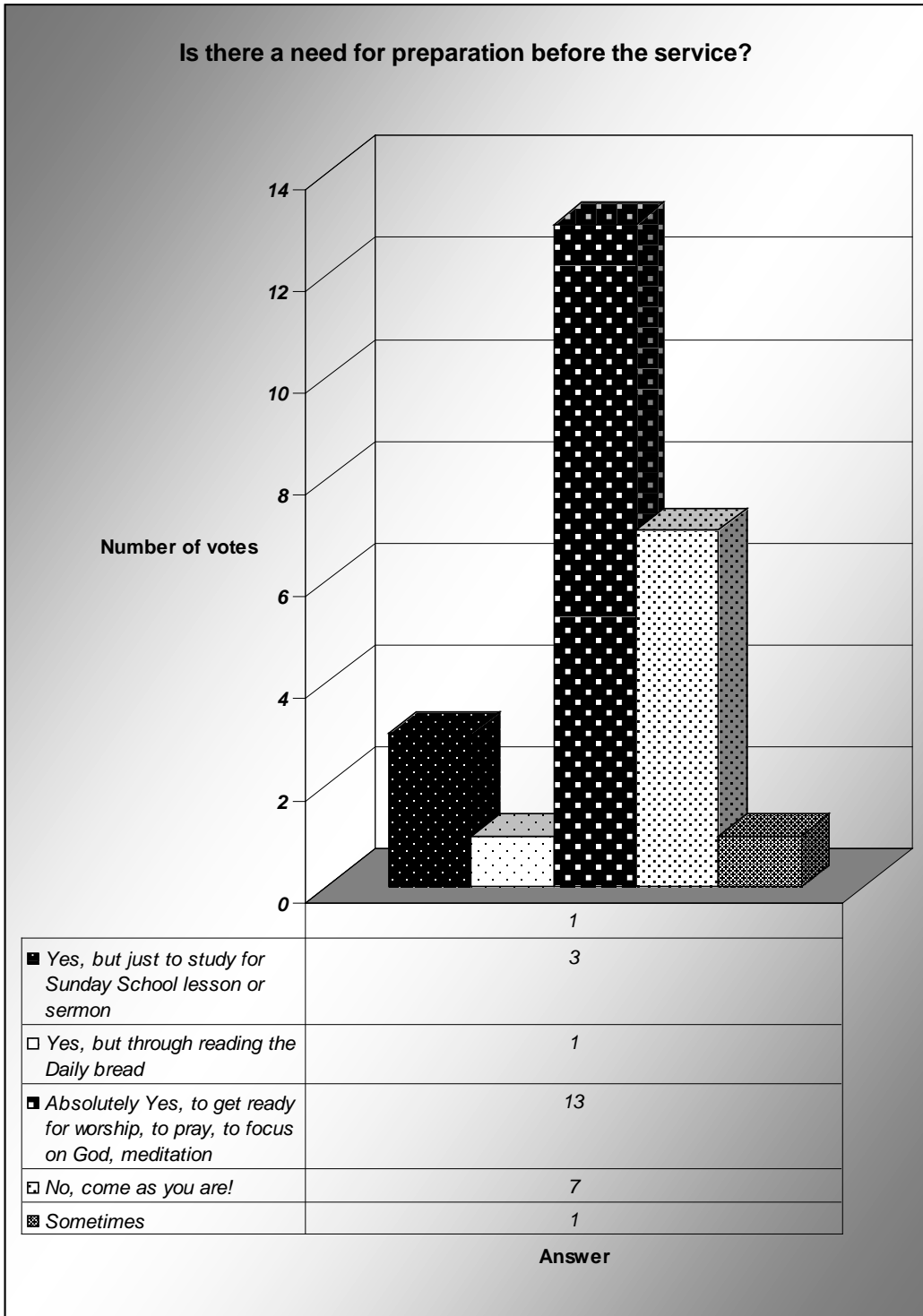
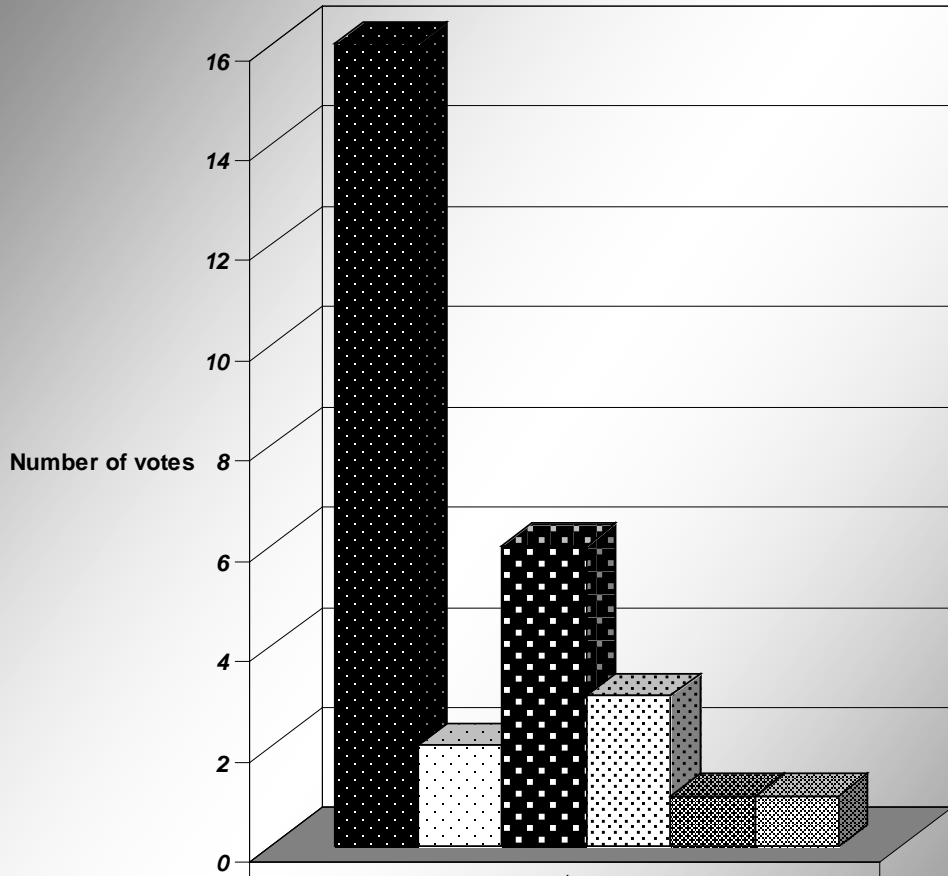


Chart 8

Is the music/singing the most important element within a worship service?

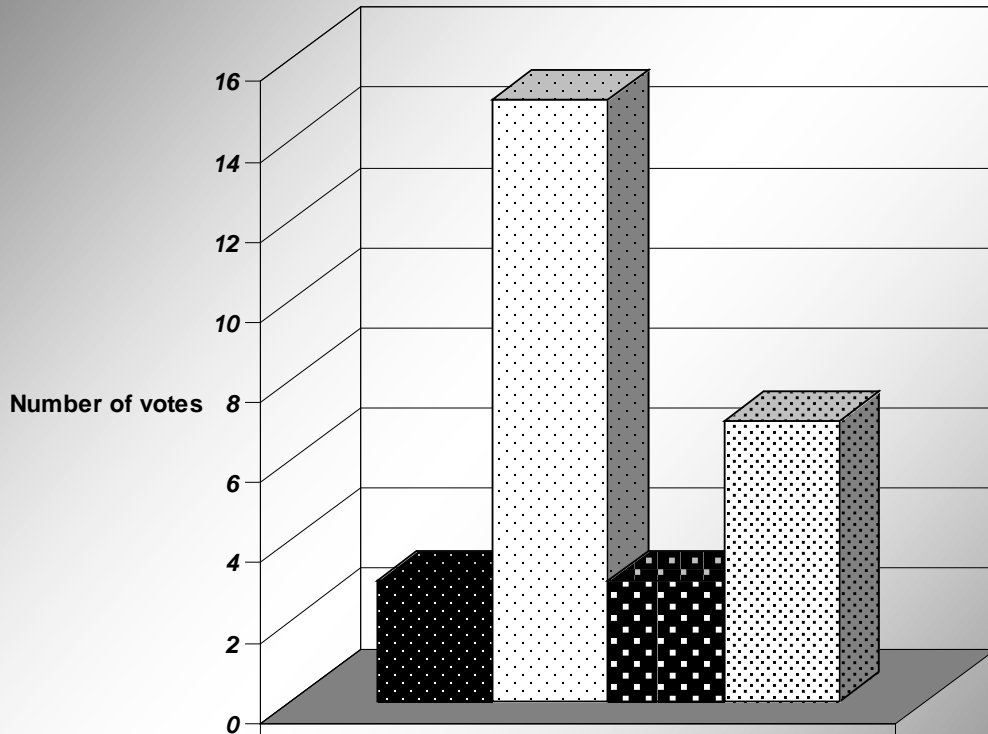


<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, the preaching of the word is most important	16
<input type="checkbox"/> No	2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	6
<input type="checkbox"/> Music does play an important role / Music sets the stage	3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Need both singing and music	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All the elements within the service are important (message, prayer, Scripture, etc.)	1

Answer

Chart 9

If the music on Sunday morning was a failure, would you consider some or much of the worship service to have been a failure as well?

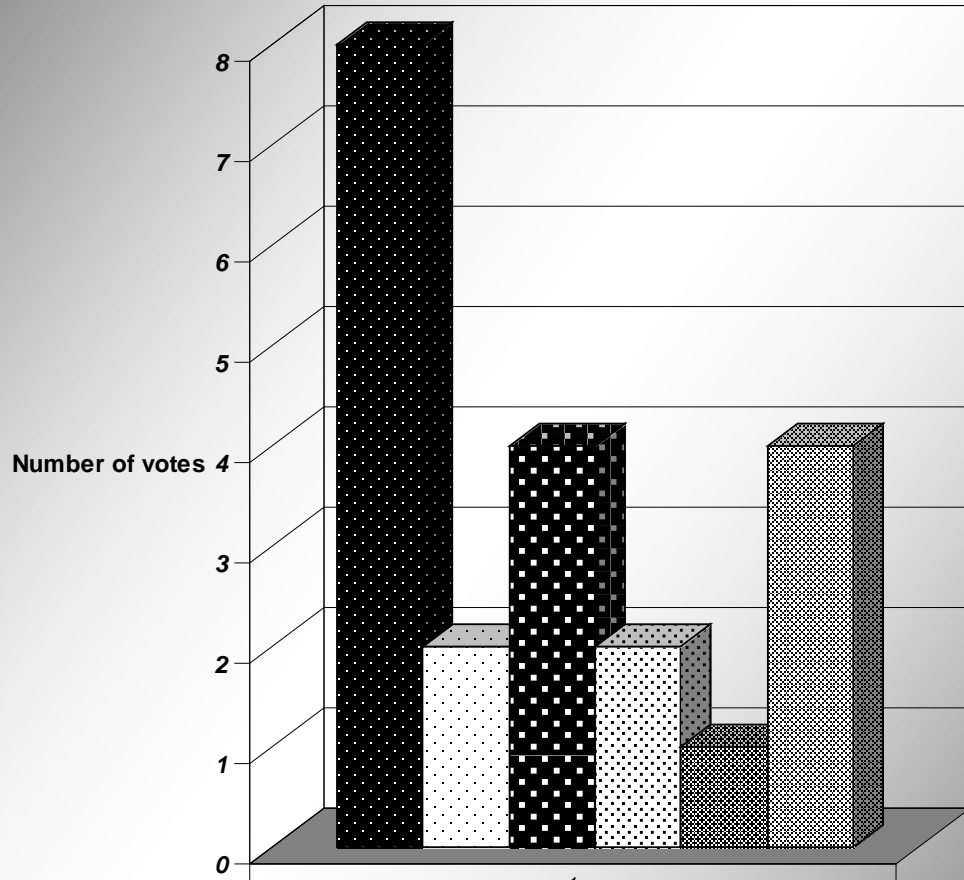


<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	3
<input type="checkbox"/> No	15
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, worshipping God is most important and not the music	3
<input type="checkbox"/> Some, (Music does wake you up), Music is 1/2 and not the whole, must have preaching	7

Answer

Chart 10

If the music on Sunday morning was a success, would you consider some or much of the worship service to have been a success as well?

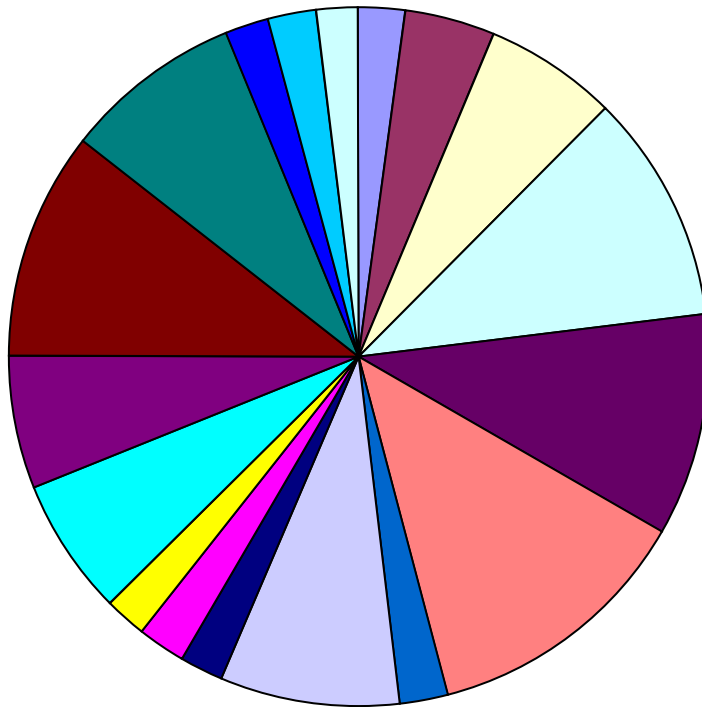


<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	8
<input type="checkbox"/> Not necessarily	2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	4
<input type="checkbox"/> Some	2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No, music alone cannot make a Sunday a success	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good music + Good preaching = Good Service	4

Answer

Chart 11

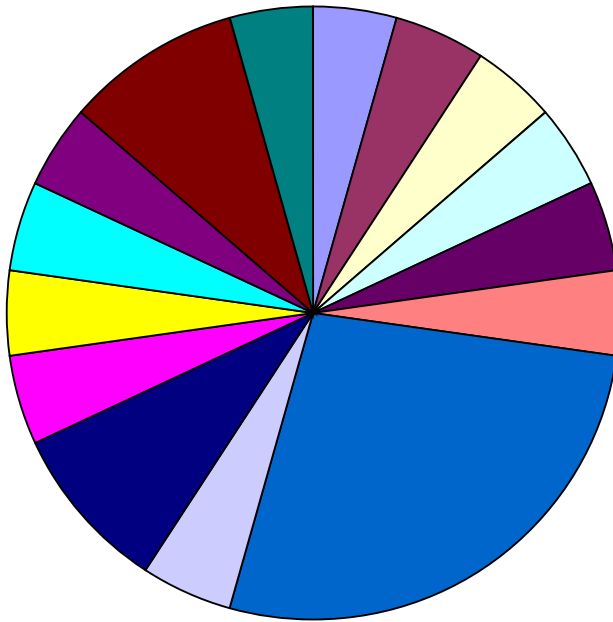
What are some other acts and functions within congregational worship by which the Christian can participate in?



- Evangelism
- Visitation
- Music ministry
- Offering
- Ushering
- Reading of Scripture
- Testimony
- Preaching / Listening to the Word of God
- Deacon
- Teaching
- Nursury
- Prayer
- Worship and praise
- A combination of 3 or more
- Fellowship, exhortation
- Altar Call
- Communion
- Confession

Chart 12

What would you consider to be the main challenges in the church regarding music and worship?



- Singing what everyone likes
- Listening
- Chior not in place
- Attitudes
- Reaching out to others
- Quality of music
- People not really coming to Church to worship and love God, God-focused not man
- Getting along
- Gossip
- Dedication
- Understanding the message
- Entertainment
- Singing songs God would be pleased
- Unity
- Service