

WORSHIP MUSIC: MAINTAINING DYNAMIC TENSION

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Nothing is as contentious in current Christianity as worship style. Consider these two excerpts from essays, nestled cheek by jowl, in the same recent book on worship (Dearborn and Coil 2004). Gary M. Burge outlines his ideal approach:

Our evangelical tradition has taught us to champion spontaneity and to make a virtue out of informality... Here I have again changed my mind. Yes, there are liturgies that are memorized and meaningless. But what I have in mind are repetitive speech-forms that accompany every service. That is, when I introduce worship, when I offer the Eucharist, when I baptize, even when I bury, I employ familiar, dignified forms that evoke a history and an importance among my listeners (Burge 2004: 154).

In contrast, Mike Riddell, Mark Pierson and Cathy Kirkpatrick describe a worship service that they experienced and valued:

For the celebration we lay on the floor with our head on the stomach of the person next to us and had a communal laugh. The Word was chanted over a body percussion created by drumming on our knees and slapping our thighs. Simple, creative, very memorable and moving "...the sharing of an experience of the presence of God, and a celebration of that experience." It's called worship (Riddell, Pierson and Kirkpatrick 2004: 144).

The range of choices available to worshippers today is vast, and people tend to select a Christian church-home based less on theological criteria and more on the appeal of its worship style. One of the most significant elements of that style, although not the only one, is its music. As Michael S. Hamilton writes,

For better or for worse, the kind of music a church offers increasingly defines the kind of person who will attend, because for this generation music is at the very center of self-understanding. Music for the baby

boomers is the mediator of emotions, the carrier of dreams, and the marker of social location (Hamilton 2004: 77).

Consequently, a tremendous amount of energy has been expended on trying to determine the “best” or the “most popular” or the “most effective” type of music to include in worship.

Although there are many different definitions of worship that complement each other, a basic one that will serve here is: An encounter between God and his people, in which God graciously initiates the relationship, and the people respond with praise, thanks, and love (cf. Hustad 1993: 97-100; White 2004: 17-29; Morganthaler 1999: 46-47; Best 1993: 143-147).

The quest to find just the right style of music for worship has often resulted in two different outcomes: extremism and compromise. Extremists hold to one of two stances: either they reject any change and adhere to their traditional heritage of classical, gospel or liturgical music, or they revert totally to contemporary music reflective of the current culture. Those who advocate compromise sometimes adopt an overly simplistic “middle of the road” position that attempts to balance the extremes by randomly juxtaposing elements of both, or by melding the two into a bland, noncommittal hybrid that ultimately pleases no one. These strategies are usually the result of the inability or unwillingness to live with tension, which is identified with the destructiveness of unresolved conflict.

This attitude, however, may be in error. The Christian faith is full of tensions, between the law and grace, between judgment and mercy, between the divinity and humanity of Jesus, between free will and the sovereignty of God, and between the “already” and the “not yet,” to name but a few. It is as simplistic and counterproductive to attempt to resolve these tensions by advocating an insipid, trite, “one size fits all” theology, as it is arbitrary and presumptuous to recognize only one end of the continuum as the ultimate truth of God. In the theology and practice of worship, as in all these areas, Christians must learn to live with dynamic tensions. To do so is not only possible, it is preferable, for it is only in honestly wrestling and interacting with a spectrum of truth that is beyond our current finite comprehension that we keep our faith alive and active, that we keep our theology humble and faithful, and that we keep our practice relevant and honouring to God. All this is particularly true in the contentious area of worship music styles and practices.

There are a number of tensions involved in selecting music for inclusion in Christian worship. These include: whether music should be viewed as art or as function, the immanence and transcendence of the God we worship, the emotional and the rational components of the music, the expression of both joy and lament, the issue of participation versus performance, the cultural or the countercultural approach, the inclusion of traditional versus contemporary content, the appeal to believers or seekers, the primacy of worship or evangelism, and finally, whether worship services should be inclusive of people with diverse tastes and ages or homogenous gatherings of like-minded people. No simplistic decision or banal compromise is desirable when the advantages and disadvantages of the opposing points of view are considered.

Music as Art versus Music as Function

If music in the church is primarily an art form by which we glorify God by offering him our culture's highest and best, then some would say that we should play and sing nothing except Bach, Handel and Benjamin Britten. If music is one way by which we express our love of God to him and communicate it to the seekers among us in the musical vernacular that is most naturally expressive and effective, then others would say that we should sing well-loved gospel songs by Fanny Crosby and the Wesleys, or the soft rock praise songs of Matt Redman or Brian Doerksen.

Proponents of music as art in the church, such as Calvin Johansson, hold that only the very best is good enough for God. They argue that if we are made in the image of a creator God, then creativity involves "*that which breaks new ground imaginatively and with integrity*. To be 'creative,' then, means to originate with artistic excellence. Such a definition is derived from looking at God's creation as a model" (Johansson 1998: 18, his italics). Donald Hustad affirms, "church music *should include the best-possible human expression of what a culture perceives to be God's revelation to humankind*" (Hustad 1993: 27-28, his italics). Our finite creaturely humility does not presuppose that we should produce shoddy music designed only for commercial purposes and mass appeal. Certainly, if, as Harold Best believes (Best 1993: 149), worship is our offering to God, then we should never offer a blemished sacrifice of praise (Deut. 15:21; Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:5). If,

as Johansson believes, the music that we offer to God speaks loudly and clearly of the image we have of our God (Johansson 1998: 37-38), then our witness to God can be compromised by music that is mediocre, since it would portray a mediocre God (Johansson 1998: 38, 75).

The issue here is not a simplistic matter of quality in which the classics are preferred over the contemporary. True, the chorales, masses and oratorios of the great composers represent some of the highest expressions of musical art, having withstood the critical filtering of both time and taste. John Frame believes that a quality continuum does exist: “Some music is certainly better, aesthetically speaking, than other music, and some hymn texts are better than other texts. Generally speaking, the music of J.S. Bach is better than that of Lowell Mason, and the texts of Isaac Watts are superior to those of Philip Bliss” (Frame 1997: 107). There *are* standards; however, each musical style must be judged by its own standards. Best believes that the “seeking out of quality must take place *within* musical categories, not between them” (Best 1993: 92, his italics). Although there is no “universal aesthetic” that can be applied to all types of music, the opposite extreme is also untrue:

The final absurdity of this would be the creation of a maze of discreet, personalized, self-constructed aesthetics, each one intended to justify each thing done: This is mine; it is unique; it is different; it is separate; therefore it is good. This may be nothing other than intellectual or subcultural narcissism disguised as aesthetics (Best 1993: 93).

There are standards other than the reification of the current musical fad or of individual personal opinion. Even so, quality, as judged by standards of musical excellence, is not possessed solely by art music; although there is much that is inferior in the field of contemporary and popular Christian music, there is also much that is average, and some that is excellent—perhaps even some that is great art in its own right.

Proponents of music as function, however, believe that the value of worship music is context dependent, not intrinsic: “Things in the creation that might be less desirable in one context become highly desirable, or better-than, in another. *In other words, better-than-ness may not be hierarchical but functional*” (Best 1993; 105, his italics). No matter how excellent a Bach chorale, if it does not allow or encourage a congregation to worship God in spirit and truth because the music is beyond its present experience, or it does not communicate because it is

outside of the believer's musical vernacular, or it creates a distraction from achieving the worship goal, then it may not be the best music to use. If "music as art" itself is the ultimate goal, then music can even become idolatry, in which the musical art form is worshipped for its own sake, not created and presented as an offering to God or a means of praising God.

According to Donald P. Hustad, "Good church music glorifies God and edifies human beings in the context of the ministries of the church; in that sense it is uniquely functional" (Hustad 1993: 24). He identifies a number of specific functions of music in Christian worship: communication between God and persons, proclamation and narration of God's acts, education of God's people, consolation of the human spirit and unification of the church community (Hustad 1993: 24-25). He would say that the music, however valuable it is as an independent art form, is not its own justification in the context of the church.

This does not mean, however, that what is commonly deemed "art music" cannot be meaningfully included in a contemporary church setting. Recently, the "Lacrymosa" from Mozart's *Requiem* was included in a Good Friday service at a local church which normally uses contemporary songs, in order to expand and enrich the congregation's means of worshipping God. The reaction that the minister of music received from the congregation was very positive. Even the response from the youth was encouraging; they demonstrated interest and a desire to hear more music in that style. The successful use of this musical work reinforced the minister's belief that worship leaders should not limit themselves stylistically to the lowest common denominator. It can be a mistake to underestimate a congregation's ability to learn and grow in their worship experiences.

Music is a type of symbolic language, and, as with any language, if the listener or speaker does not grasp an unfamiliar or specialized vocabulary and syntax, frustration rather than communication occurs. On the other hand, if the language is shallow or simplistic, there is no depth of understanding and potential for growth. However, with encouragement and exposure, a new musical dialect or language can be learned that can enrich the worshipper's communication with and encounter with God. Stagnancy and complacency are never desirable, least of all in our interaction with our Creator. There are situations, however, when familiarity and comfort are of paramount importance, and an accessible, vernacular musical experience is preferable. The

worship leader must live with this tension, be sensitive to the congregation and circumstances, and discern when and if each is appropriate.

Immanence versus Transcendence

Our perceptions of God, and the way we perceive our relationship to him, also affect the type of music we use in worship. Some believers sense the immanence of God—Emmanuel, God incarnate, God with us—and they sing songs about relationship, love, and forgiveness (“What a Friend We Have in Jesus,” “I Am a Friend of God”). The focus is on the believer’s response to him. Others see God as transcendent, as exalted and totally other, and their worship includes songs of praise declaring his holiness and greatness (“Immortal, Invisible, God only Wise,” “Majesty”). The focus is on the character and worthiness of God himself.

Many Protestants and evangelicals tend to focus on the immanence of God, perhaps in reaction to pre-Reformation sacerdotalism, in which the congregation was in a real sense cut off from the celebration of the mass—and the implied presence of God—by rood screens, priestly intermediaries and the language barrier created by the use of Latin. The focus of Protestant evangelicals on a “personal relationship with Jesus” has also stressed his nearness and approachability. There is great value in this attitude; our God is a relational God who has graciously chosen to dwell among his people, in the Tabernacle, in the Temple, in the person of Christ who is God incarnate, and now in individual believers and the corporate church through God the Holy Spirit. If we do not want Christianity to deteriorate into an abstract theism, where God is no more than what Sally Morganthaler calls “a concept or cozy feeling” (Morganthaler 1999: 98), then we must encounter the living God in our daily struggles, decisions and celebrations. If worship is an intimate encounter with God, then our worship music should express or facilitate that encounter.

God is omnipresent, and Jesus has promised us, “surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Mt. 28:20). His “manifest presence” can be experienced in a special way, as we worship together (Morganthaler 1999: 97), but the use of music to “conjure up” the presence of God or manipulate him into hearing us is tantamount to magic. John Witvliet points out that “God’s presence is to be received as a gift,

that it cannot be engineered, produced, or embodied automatically” (Witvliet 2004: 168). He makes reference to a significant observation by Thomas Long: “In short, if one desires an intimate encounter with the holy at every service, then go to the Temple of the Baal. Yahweh, the true and living God, sometimes withdraws from present experience. In sum, God does not always move us, and everything that moves us is not God” (Witvliet 2004: 32). God cannot be manipulated.

In fact, those who stress the transcendence of God feel that we have taken the immanence of God too far when we diminish the exalted holiness and otherness of God and reduce him to a tolerant buddy, an overly indulgent parent or a permissive therapist who is there only to meet our felt needs and rubber-stamp our self-devised plan for personal fulfillment, what Robert Webber refers to as “the narcissistic preoccupation with worship as self-gratification” (Webber 2004b: 88). Long points out why overemphasizing this aspect of relationship is mistaken: “To be sure, there are ‘direct encounters with God’ narrated in the Bible, but they are not all about the intimate, self-affirming values of warmth and gentleness. Some of these encounters leave human beings hiding their faces before the holy presence, trembling in awe and wonder before the *mysterium tremendum*” (Long 2001: 31). If so, we need to replace “In the Garden” with “Indescribable” a little more often, for Yahweh is the sovereign creator and sustainer of the universe.

We have also overemphasized the immanence of God when we reduce worship services simply to programs for equipping, discipling, and ethical teaching. Although these are commendable goals, they are not the essence of worship. Gary Burge suggests, “We have reduced our worship service to intellectual exhortations and ethics...many worshippers come looking for more than fellowship, exposition, and exhortation. They seek an experience of the ‘holy’. They are looking for awe and reverence, mystery and transcendence” (Burge 2004: 150-151). The music, songs and hymns that we use must reflect this aspect of God, for a one-sided picture of God is an invalid picture.

Of course, it is also possible to emphasize the majesty and holiness of God at the expense of his immanence, to the point that God becomes remote and irrelevant to our daily lives and unconcerned with our individual personhood. If God becomes only a distant, abstract power (however great and awesome that power may be), a power that needs to be placated by rote and ritual, worshipped only by formulaic liturgies and pristine chants, then we do our God a major injustice, for it was he

who “became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (Jn. 1:14), in order to identify with us, meet us where we are, and minister to our very human needs. As a loving parent accepts the best efforts of a young child without pointing out their inadequacies, so God graciously accepts our best efforts at heartfelt praise without criticizing the poetic quality of the lyrics and the elegance of the orchestration.

It is essential to keep both the immanence and transcendence of God in a dynamic tension, for it is possible for the pendulum to swing too far in either direction. As Don Williams writes, “The holiness of God as the divine King balances intimacy with God as the embracing Father. The love of Christ balances love for Christ” (Williams 2004: 149). Scripture reminds us that “God [is] the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see” (1 Tim. 6:15-16). We are also told, however, that “we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence” (Heb. 4:15-16) through Jesus Christ. We need to sing both “I am a Friend of God” and “Majesty” with heartfelt sincerity.

Emotional versus Rational

Our society is still, to a large extent, influenced by the Enlightenment worldview that emphasizes reason and objectivity. Developments in scientific knowledge and biblical criticism have caused some people to emphasize the intellectual aspects of Christianity. Others, however, have reacted against the mechanization of the industrial and technological revolutions by stressing, as did the Romantics, the personal and emotional aspects of their faith. I have been in Anglican liturgical services where worshippers listen with undemonstrative but genuine approval to a choir singing a complex anthem by Byrd or Gibbons to the glory of God, and also in Pentecostal services where the tears of worshippers flow in a deep emotional response to love songs such as “I Love You Lord” addressed directly to their Saviour. How is the authenticity and worth of each type of response to be evaluated?

Those who focus on the rational in worship believe that there must be substance to our devotion. After all, in both the Old and New Testaments, believers constantly remember and recite the great acts of God

in history as the logical basis of their reverence, and they recall the attributes of God that call forth their praise (e.g. Acts 2–3; Deut. 11:1–7). In his famous statement on “the spiritual act of worship,” Paul encourages believers to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:1–2). Johansson points out the tendency of evangelicals to downplay the value of the intellect, but asserts that

an encounter with God is always accompanied by intellectual activity. People must involve mind in order to believe; without it they cannot come to God, or think of him, or understand the word. If intellectual activity is omitted, or even slighted, a distorted picture of God’s revelation results (Johansson 1998: 91).

Worship must have content; it is a reasonable response to who the true and living God is and what he does.

The modern thinker often distrusts emotion, which can be influenced by factors as diverse as infatuation and indigestion, whereas reason is based on fact and evidence. Emotion has also traditionally been viewed as the province of the “weaker” female, and this has doubtless been a factor in promoting a more restrained, rational and “dignified” worship style in male-dominated church hierarchies. Emotion has also been connected with the sensual, “the flesh,” and condemned as unspiritual. Although church history is full of exceptions, such as the ecstatic worship of some saints, the trend in public worship in most mainline Protestant denominations has been toward the intellectual, with hymns and anthems leading up to and thematically supporting the ministry of the word in the expository sermon.

A reaction against this trend is seen in the worship of those who perceive worship as a personal encounter with God, not just an intellectual assent to his lordship. Hosea condemns the use of empty formulaic ritual in worship (Hos. 6:6; cf. Mt. 9:13), and Paul passionately prays that we may “grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge” (Eph. 3:18–19). The Bible is full of references to emotion in the context of our relationship to God, especially love, joy and gratitude. The worshipper is enjoined, “Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deut. 6:5). As Johansson explains, “The emotions form a significant avenue of expression of praise and worship to the Creator. Religion cannot neglect human emotion. God is a feeling God—through Christ he seeks impassioned followers” (Johansson 1998: 93). It is only right and natural that this

love should find expression in the worship songs of the church, and that we should not only sing about the love of God, but also sing love songs to God. In so doing, worship develops and intensifies from an abstract attribution of worth to an intimate personal encounter.

Avoiding the emotional in worship is often done, however, out of distrust of this personal subjectivity and the potential for manipulation, of both God and worshipper, which it entails. Worship should not be undertaken exploitively: “Let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our ‘God is a consuming fire’” (Heb. 12:28-29). There are two errors here which must be avoided. First, emotion, and emotional musical worship, cannot be used to control God, who gives us his presence as a gift. Singing a chorus over and over again with more and more intense emotional fervour will not force him to appear, and God is not “more” present in a highly charged emotional environment. Second, neither should emotional music be used to manipulate worshippers. Best warns, “Incipient idolatry comes from the idea that art and music possess the capability, by their presence and use, to shape behaviours” (Best 1993: 48), because we attribute power over us to a created thing, rather than God. It can also be idolatrous in placing the self at the centre of worship, as Johansson explains, “In using emotionalistic music in worship, worshippers stimulate themselves... The extreme subjectivity that results shows God to be a mere tool for the satisfaction of the people’s cravings for pleasure” (Johansson 1998: 98). This is a far cry from using music as an expression or mediation of genuine emotion, of love for a loving God.

Joe Horness demonstrates concern for those “trying to find the next emotional fix for their congregation... In an absence of substance, we are doing our best to buoy up the sagging emotion, but everything is feeling a bit the same. The problem is that true worship cannot be sustained on emotion alone” (Horness 2004: 201). The solution to the dilemma is not to resort to one extreme or the other, but to maintain a healthy tension between the intellect and the emotion. Jesus himself instructs us, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Mt. 22:37-38). When the Samaritan woman becomes sidetracked in the externals of worship, Jesus responds, “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:24). In both situations he

teaches a form of worship that balances heart and mind, spirit and truth, emotion and reason. Paul states, “So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind” (1 Cor. 14:15-16). Humans are both rational and emotional beings, created by God both to think and to feel, and both of those aspects of their humanity must be developed and given expression, without being abused or manipulated.

Joy versus Lament

Christ has overcome the world; he has conquered sin and death; he has given us the victory. The word “praise” has become almost interchangeable with “worship” and our songs express this. They are upbeat, positive and encouraging, and affirm that we have moved from death to life. No one wants to go to church to be depressed. Or do they? Morgenthaler affirms, “There is a widespread, almost insatiable craving for vulnerability and *authenticity*” (Morgenthaler 1999: 110, her italics). Many people do not want to pretend that their lives are one long litany of unsullied perfection and joy; they struggle, fail, hurt, mourn and hope, and are looking for a venue where these emotions can be expressed and validated. Should we sing only songs such as “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” or “He Has Made Me Glad” in praise, or include “Be Still My Soul” or “We Come to Your Throne with Weeping,” in lament?

Those who focus on praise in worship feel that it is important to acknowledge and celebrate the power and goodness of God in the lives of believers. We are “more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Rom. 8:37), and in order to experience this in our lives, we must appropriate it by faith, for “faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Heb. 11:1). The Bible even teaches that when we experience difficulties and pain, we should be joyful (2 Cor. 8:2; Jas 1:2). All of this is true, and it is one of the glorious paradoxes of Christianity that believers can sing praises in the midst of suffering. Joyfulness is particularly characteristic of contemporary Christian music. Frame quotes Mike Futato’s rationale for this: “We sing happy songs, not out of denial of suffering or wickedness, but out of gratitude for God’s blessings in the past, and out of faith, expecting the fulfillment of God’s promises in the future” (Frame 1997: 87). To celebrate

with songs of praise is the natural outcome of God's goodness to us, and has resulted in some of the great hymns and songs of the faith.

In Psalms, the biblical songbook, we find paeans of praise to God: "Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness" (150:1-2). Believers may even think that to express frustration, anger, doubt or weakness would be to call into question their faith, or worse, God's faithful provision for his children. They do not wish to be accused of practicing "Eeyore Christianity" or woe-is-me theology. The ultimate exaggeration of this belief is found in the "prosperity gospel," which teaches that God wants all believers to be healthy and wealthy, if only they can muster up enough faith to appropriate these blessings. And yet, the book of Psalms itself gives the lie to this misconception, for Psalms is full of the laments of even those who exhibit great faith—in fact there are considerably more laments than praise songs.

Even as we celebrate the victory of Christ over sin and death, we live with the tension between the already and the not yet as we live with the reality of human suffering in our daily lives. Morganthaler comments, "It is no accident that lament and vulnerability go hand in hand. No one would want a whole service of it, but worship that is real makes room for all the colors of the emotional spectrum, not just those that are rapturous and effervescent" (Morganthaler 1999: 113). The church should be the ultimately safe place where people can work through their brokenness and receive healing, but that healing will never occur until brokenness is first acknowledged.

Charlie Peacock, a musical performer, writer and producer, roundly criticizes the idea that Christian music should focus only on the "helpful," "nice" and "positive." Reacting to a comment that Christian music gives a "nice message" to the general consumer, Peacock sarcastically remarks:

Certainly the martyr Stephen found his complete trust in Jesus helpful while he was being stoned to death by those who opposed his message. And I suppose you could say that he was nice or friendly to those who opposed him, since he cried out these words to Jesus right before he died: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60). But is "nice" all we would say about his faith? Likewise, would we describe the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ with adjectives like these? As participants in the Story that God is telling on this earth, we should

make and distribute music that elicits broader and deeper responses than “positive” and “nice” (Peacock 2004: 120).

We trivialize and misrepresent the gospel story, “a complex, bloody, beautiful, redemptive, truthful Story” (Peacock 2004: 120), when we attempt to eliminate from it the reality of pain, suffering, brokenness and failure and set up standards of perpetual cheerfulness that are impossible to maintain and therefore are doomed to become superficial or hypocritical. We trivialize the suffering of the disenfranchised and the persecuted when we fail to cry with the Psalmist, “My soul is in anguish. How long, O LORD, how long?” (6:3). This is not, however, to say that we must wallow in defeatism; the complex, bloody story is also a story of hope, as the rare modern lament, “We Come to Your Throne with Weeping” indicates in its final words. The song traverses sorrow, shame, mourning and desperation, but ultimately arrives at forgiveness. Through the prophet Isaiah, God promises,

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior (Isa. 43:2-3).

We need to acknowledge and lament the reality of our suffering and sinfulness before we can acknowledge and praise the greatness of the God who leads us through and beyond them. Both types of response to God, to his holiness and perfection, and also to his mercy and forgiveness, are essential; it is up to the discerning worship leader to sense when, and in what proportion, they are appropriate.

Participation versus Performance

Sincerely enthusiastic congregational singing is valued by many as the voice of the church offering praise and thanks to God. In his book *Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer promotes the virtues of participatory praise:

It is the Christ-hymn, new every morning, that the family fellowship strikes up at the beginning of the day, the hymn that is sung by the whole church of God on earth and in heaven, and in which we are summoned to join. God has prepared for Himself one great song of praise throughout eternity, and those who enter the community of God join in this song (Bonhoeffer 1954: 57).

In other church settings, however, believers adopt a more passive, receptive stance toward music that is performed for them. This occurs when some large cathedral or urban churches utilize choirs of more trained and competent voices to present complex art music. A performance approach to worship music is also growing in many smaller churches, however, due to the development of the electronic media, audio-visual technology and the influence of the commercial music industry. Some churches prefer to sing “We’re Marching to Zion” or “The Bond of Love” as a congregation while others enjoy watching musically-talented church members perform choral works like those by John Rutter or solos that require huge vocal range or skill, like those sung by Sandi Patty or Steve Green.

The current generation of Christians, having been raised in a culture of television, radio, CDs and personal listening devices, has slipped into the habit of living life vicariously. We no longer gather around the piano for an informal sing-along, but just slide a CD or DVD into the player. Our “sophisticated” tastes have come to expect and be satisfied only with polished symphony orchestras, high-profile singing idols and technological bells and whistles. We are dissatisfied with our own often imperfect attempts to make music and want to be “ministered to,” if not by professionals, at least by the more competent and gifted in our congregation. It is certainly true that all Christians are not equally musical or gifted in the same areas. How many hearts and souls have been deeply moved by a sophisticated performance of “I Know that My Redeemer Liveth” at an Easter service, who could never begin to sing such a demanding work themselves? Indeed, many great pieces of music were never intended to be sung by a group at all, but rather by soloists. Meditating on the words of a song performed by others can be a significant spiritual exercise, as much as reflecting on the words of a book written by a Christian author of acknowledged wisdom and insight. The value of listening to beautiful music itself, apart from the lyrics, should not be underestimated. We are created in the image of a creator God, as creative beings ourselves, and the exercise of our creative gifts can bring glory to God as well as edification and pleasure to others.

Performance of sacred music certainly has a valuable place in the worship service. Problems ensue, however, when performance dominates the music at the expense of participation. Morganthaler warns, “We are not producing worshippers in this country. Rather, we are

producing a generation of spectators, religious onlookers lacking, in many cases, any memory of a true encounter with God” (Morganthaler 1999: 17, cf. 117). This can occur when the participants are given inadequate opportunities to express their own worship. A classic example of this occurred at a large urban cathedral during an ordination service, at the point when the new priests traditionally recite the creed as ordained clergy for the first time. When the boys’ choir, as wonderful as it is, performed a setting of the creed on behalf of the ordinands, however, many thought that the whole intent of that part of the service had been undermined. This was to have been the expression of faith of the new priests themselves, and yet they had to listen rather than participate. A similar tone of frustration surfaced at a Christmas Eve service at a large Toronto church that I attended with friends. Almost the entire service was performed—albeit very capably and innovatively—by the choir, in spite of the willingness and desire of the congregation to sing praise to Christ for his incarnation by singing the perhaps overworked, but nevertheless heartfelt, traditional carols. My friends felt that they had been denied the opportunity to worship and had been reduced to audience members at a concert. As Williams succinctly states, “Worship is not a spectator sport. It is a dialogue for participants with the living God. It’s main goal is relationship” (Williams 2004: 126).

The problem of performance is not limited to technically-advanced art music, but also occurs in contemporary worship. As Paul Westermeyer points out:

We practice congregational silent singing every time we set up the leaders of worship as a self-contained unit so that the people and their singing become irrelevant. It can happen with organs and choirs, amplified vocalists and bands, synthesizers and other electronic equipment, in any style or in any place—wherever the sonic environment is made to feel complete without the congregation (Westermeyer 1998: 194).

Musically-gifted members of the congregation sometimes want to emulate their CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) media idols by performing music in a way that draws attention to themselves rather than to the God who is the focus of our worship. Long advises caution, however:

The service is a metaphor pointing to its referent. When the chancel is a stage, however, and the music is performed by musicians gripping hand-held mikes, and the interspersing of talk and music and skit moves with the rapid and seamless pacing of “Saturday Night Live” then the

referent here is unmistakable, too. This is not a retelling of the biblical narrative; it's the recapitulation of prime time (Long 2001: 10).

The applause that often follows such music often reinforces the performer–audience dichotomy, and although it can also be a genuine expression of praise in itself, the line between praise of God and praise of performer sometimes becomes blurred. Performance also dominates and participatory worship becomes difficult when amplifiers and speakers simply drown out the unamplified voices of believers. There is little point in singing when you cannot even hear your own voice, or those of your neighbours, lifted in praise anyway. Also, the tendency of today's technological society to celebrate and perpetuate every special musical performance by constant flash photography only serves to distract from an atmosphere of worship, and to focus attention on the performers, rather than on their Creator.

Performance, whether traditional or contemporary, is also problematic when it becomes mere entertainment. This occurs when music offers more in terms of pleasure and gratification of self than it does in praise and glorification of God, and Johansson reminds us that “churchgoers are often unable to differentiate between good feelings and worship” (Johansson 1998: 98). As daily consumers of popular media culture, we have learned to be egocentric in our selection, selfish in our evaluation, impatient for gratification and eager for novelty. Frame observes:

We are used to sitting in chairs, watching and hearing people do and say clever, witty, pleasant, incredible, fun, interesting things. 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 (Frame 1997: 59).

There is real concern that these attitudes will carry over into the church and undermine the selflessness and commitment that our faith requires. Some worship leaders have recommended moving the choir or worship team from the “stage” at the front to the back of the sanctuary, or a rear balcony, so they are invisible to the congregation and are less likely to usurp God as the focus of attention.

There is nothing inherently wrong in experiencing pleasure in listening to and singing worship music, for God “richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment” (1 Tim. 6:17); asceticism and self-flagellation are not biblical values. Harold Best effectively concludes,

however, “when the only and continuing object is to divert; when shallowness of content is the only allowable possibility; when easy entrance into, trivial engagement with, and easy exit from an experience dominate the whole of perceptual engagement, then we can truly say that entertainment is an evil” (Best 1993: 136). Pleasure must not become the criterion for successful worship, and we must not be more concerned with receiving pleasure than offering praise.

There should be a place for both participation and performance in the worship of the church, but the tension between the two must be thoughtfully maintained. To eliminate performance might be to exclude meaningful opportunities for experiencing new forms and styles of music, or for modeling musical excellence. To minimize participation would be to deny worshippers their duty and right to praise the living God with their own hearts and voices. Worship leaders must be discerning about the balance between the two in each individual situation.

Cultural versus Countercultural and Traditional versus Contemporary

Attendance at Sunday services is declining and Christianity is, to a large extent, becoming marginalized, as it was in its original first-century context when the early church endeavoured to reach out to the surrounding pagan culture with the gospel. Today, great concern has once again developed about how to make our message and worship more relevant to our current, twenty-first-century culture. Many churches have moved towards contemporary music that is reflective of the current social context, in an attempt to make visitors more comfortable and to speak in a musical language that they can understand. Other churches contend that this is nothing less than capitulating to secular culture, and prefer to maintain their tradition of sacred musical lyrics and styles in order to differentiate their message and their morals from the world around them. The tension here is not as simple as the choice between traditional hymns and contemporary praise songs, it is also a more complex issue of musical styles, as represented by Chris Tomlin’s contemporary soft-rock version of “O Worship the King” in which the traditional words are expanded and set to new music and instrumentation.

One aspect of the traditional/contemporary conflict is the lyrics of worship music. Traditionalists point to the rich, poetic, theological

character of hymns such as “Jesus Thy Blood and Righteousness” and contrast them with the simplistic, repetitive words of praise songs such as “Alleluia,” which they believe promote shallowness and immaturity. As Northrop Frye, a noted literary critic, states:

The operation of thinking is the practice of articulating ideas until they are in the right words... The vast majority of the things that we hear today are prejudices and clichés, simply verbal formulas that have no thought behind them but are put up as a pretence of thinking. It is not until we realize that these things conceal meaning, rather than reveal it, that we can begin to develop our own powers of articulateness (Frye 1993: 9).

If contemporary worship songs are full of simplistic verbal formulas and clichés, it would be difficult to worship God with our minds as well as our hearts. In addition, our understanding of God, and our ability to articulate his goodness and grace, would suffer.

There is a significant difference, however, between simple and simplistic; profound truths can be simply and powerfully stated. The sheer density of theological ideas in some traditional hymns, and the abstract literary techniques used in their composition, would place them out of the conceptual range of many people, especially the young, the new immigrant and the new believer, who have not yet developed fluency in “Christianese.” Focusing on one or two well-stated ideas at a time could actually promote depth of understanding. Also, many contemporary thinkers dispute Frye’s assertion that understanding is primarily verbal for all people. Morgenthaler cites Howard Gardner’s work on multiple intelligences and states: “Yet, when one considers that North America moved into a print-plus-image-and-sound world in the latter part of the twentieth century and is fast moving to an image-plus-sound-and-print world, confining literacy to ink on a page smacks of cultural arrogance” (Morgenthaler 2004: 93). Not everyone responds equally well to complex verbal statements.

Musical style is the other aspect of the traditional/contemporary dispute. There are those who believe that to introduce contemporary culture into the church is to give a toe-hold to the devil, start down the slippery slope and be unequally yoked with unbelievers. It is incipient syncretism. Although not condemning all of culture and its artifacts, Johansson clearly disapproves of incorporating popular music into the church:

The church needs musicians with the gumption to adopt and stick to musical standards that are theistically based, recognizing that the culture's traits that will be evident in its dominant music (currently pop music of various styles and types) may not be biblically grounded. Today extreme relativism, hedonism, pluralism, materialism, and amorality are the prime characteristics of the dominant western world-view. They are incongruent with Christianity. Consequently church musicians should not legitimize and propagate such values by using music based on those values (Johansson 1998: 14).

He believes that although the music itself may be value-neutral, its association with un-Christian cultural values taints it and disqualifies it from use in the church. As Robert H. Mitchell remarks, "Christian values do not lie in music itself but rather in the attitudes which attend its creation and hearing" (Mitchell 1993: 42).

Albert Blackwell, in his book *The Sacred in Music*, expresses the belief that some musical forms are inappropriate for Christianity. He criticizes grunge, gansta rap and neo-Nazi music, not only for their immoral lyrics, which could conceivably be changed to Christian ones, but also for "deliberately assaultive and abusive" music that uses "strident electronic distortion until voices and ears alike are raw" (Blackwell 1999: 174). Some of the harsher and louder qualities of rock music affect some listeners in a negative way; although some popular worship songs are composed in a soft-rock style, others, such as those of the Christian band "Stryper," are extreme in their use of musical textures. It is difficult to see how such music, even if it is popular with a modern demographic, could be separated from its negative cultural associations and used to worship a compassionate and holy God. Harold Best also criticizes much popular music, from rock to rap to New Age, for its inferior quality, calling it "single process" music in which "tempo, dynamics, beat, volume, timbre, texture, and structure are basically static and unvaried" (Best 1993: 124). Such music, he believes, "should be considered aesthetically suspect and creatively below par, even among the most tolerant pluralists" (Best 1993: 125). Critics of Contemporary Christian Music point out that Christ himself was countercultural in his approach and attitudes, and the church should be also.

Such an approach, however, overlooks the obvious fact that all music is a product of culture, past or present, and that previous historical cultures were as deeply flawed as our modern Western one. Even the Israelite culture that produced the Psalms, the ultimate book of

praise songs and the only one to achieve canonical status (something even Bach and Isaac Watts have failed to do), was constantly corrupted by syncretism, apostasy and sin. In fact, Psalm 29 is known to be based on a pagan Canaanite song (Hustad 1993: 135). The tendency to use what is familiar and popular—the musical vernacular—and sanctify it for holy purposes, has powerful precedents throughout church history, even though the story that Martin Luther used tavern songs as the basis for his hymns is probably apocryphal (Westermeyer 1998: 148). John Frame holds that many CCM worship songs, such as “Great is the Lord” and “Be Exalted, O God,” represent a

deeply Christian spirit that has in these cases transformed the pop genre into something far better. In the original context of the 1960s Jesus Movement, these songs were profoundly *counter-cultural*. They took a style of music that had been used to express nihilistic philosophy and self-indulgence and turned it into praise of the God of Scripture (Frame 1997: 58)

and they did it in a style that was meaningful and familiar to the people around them.

The separation of musical styles into sacred and secular is dependent more on the lyrics and location than the music itself. Hustad points out that, as society and culture evolves, the church must seek new means of communication that are meaningful and relevant to people it seeks to draw and serve. These are not created “*ex nihilo*” but are often taken from within the surrounding culture and “even from commercial entertainment music... In theological terms, one might say that this process demonstrates the church’s willingness to be forever incarnational, to identify with ‘the world’ and to transform it for Christ” (Hustad 1993: 210). Although success should never be the final measure of God’s approval, and pragmatism is not a substitute for purity, the popularity of contemporary music styles has resulted in growth for many churches that use it, and doubtless many lives committed to Christ indirectly because of it.

The dynamic tension between the contemporary and the traditional, between the cultural and the countercultural, will and should continue. If we exclusively use music derived from contemporary culture, “the churchly styles—not just the stuffy, academic music, but the splendid heritage of two thousand years—are suddenly suspect” (Best 1993: 165). The church universal did not come into existence ten years, or ten days, or ten minutes ago, but is composed of the body of believers of

all times, places and cultures, including the past, and their contribution should be valued. If we exclusively use traditional hymns and classical forms, however, we risk failing to identify with and communicate to those of our own time and place. We must give modern believers a way of expressing their worship that is relevant to their culture, always being careful to transform, rather than be absorbed by, this culture.

Believer versus Seeker and Worship versus Evangelism

The choice of music used in a service will also depend on whether the church sees its function as worship or evangelism. If the congregation is composed of a group of like-minded believers who have gathered together to worship the God that they all serve, the music is likely to take on a different quality and focus than if the congregation has a missional emphasis that focuses on outreach to the seekers in its midst. A believer-emphasis service may include “Jesus the Very Thought of Thee” or “My Tribute,” which express a close relationship with, and gratitude to, God, whereas a seeker service may use “Just As I Am” in the model of the old evangelistic services of Billy Graham, or may simply incorporate vaguely spiritual contemporary songs, such as “Wind Beneath My Wings,” from the current culture that contain no explicitly Christian lyrics but serve to create a familiar context for the unchurched.

One of the primary purposes of the church is to reach out to unbelievers with the good news of the gospel. If music is to touch non-Christian visitors and have an evangelistic impact, many believe that the music chosen should not be densely packed with exclusive language and advanced theological concepts. How meaningful is it to include phrases such as “washed in the blood of the Lamb” or “full atonement, can it be” to an unchurched and secular listener? Such lyrics not only exceed the comprehension of many seekers, and fail to communicate the essence of the gospel, but can also serve to intimidate and alienate anyone who is not part of the “in group.” Therefore, some seeker services, such as the ground-breaking Willow Creek seeker service,

take place in a highly controlled, programmed atmosphere where seekers are expertly insulated from spiritual activity they can neither comprehend nor tolerate. No one in the theatre seats audibly participates or responds in any way, except perhaps to join in singing one song or to offer applause. Gifted professionals and laypeople present the claims of

Christ in multifaceted splendor. But worship is not one of those facets (Morganthaler 1999: 45-46).

Willow Creek holds completely separate worship services for believers during the week. Its seeker services are extremely well attended, and seem to be having a positive impact on the community.

It is true that the Great Commission forbids the corporate church from indulging merely in sanctified navel-gazing, or even in elitist “in camera” communion with God. As Miroslav Volf suggests, “worship can never be an event taking place simply between the naked soul and its God. It must always include active striving to bring the eschatological new creation to bear on this world through proclamation of the good news, nurture of the community of faith, and socioeconomic action” (Volf 2004: 36). Our worship must have both a vertical and a horizontal component that not only edifies our fellow believers but also reaches out to influence our social context.

There are others who believe, however, that to consciously make church services into contrived evangelistic outreach to seekers is to miss the point. They hold that the best outreach of all is to simply “be the church” in an authentic way that speaks of the intrinsic value of Christianity. Webber condemns the “reductionism in worship that heralds popular chorus music as the new sacrament of God’s presence; regards Scripture reading, intercessory prayer, and communion as offensive to the seeker; and makes the sermon a presentation of Christianity 101. Worship and evangelism are confused” (Webber 2004b: 92). Welcoming non-believers into our worship, and communicating effectively to them, does not necessarily imply “dumbing down” the message of the gospel. Similarly, Frame writes, “The point is not that the church should compromise its gospel to please unchurched visitors. It should proclaim the fullness of God’s Word with the utmost clarity, forcefulness, and offensiveness” (Frame 1997: 21). Jesus himself, although he was sensitive to the needs of inquirers, and communicated to them in terms they could understand, relevant to their situation, never compromised his integrity or watered down his message. Paul followed this model. He instructs,

But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, “God is really among you!” (1 Cor. 15:24-25).

Perhaps those who offer seeker services should be less concerned about giving offence and more concerned about being authentic.

Our public worship, therefore, is not to be based on the concept of communication by means of a private, unlisted number that gives us a privileged connection to God, but more on an old-fashioned party line, or modern conference call, which others are permitted to listen to or even participate in. Barry Liesch states, "In general, we should expect evangelism to be the by-product of a believer's worship service" (Liesch 2001: 165). When non-believers see the church at worship and in action, outreach occurs and souls are saved; evangelism should be the natural outflow of worship, not a separate process altogether. Welcoming and being sensitive to seekers is commendable, condescending or capitulating to seekers is counter-productive. Discerning worship leaders must understand the difference as they live out the tension between worship and evangelism.

Conclusion

When worship leaders find themselves and their congregations unable to live with tension, either extremism or compromise often results. Extremists may be traditionalists, who maintain the style of liturgical worship that has served them for years, or possibly centuries, and refuse to include any modern components. They may be part of the emergent church movement, which is attempting to redefine the church along radical post-modern guidelines, living on the cutting edge of what is new in worship. They may also be extreme fundamentalists or separatists, unwilling to compromise in any way with secular culture. The problem with these approaches is that they often segregate congregations along boundaries of age, socio-economic status or ethnic background.

Those who advocate simplistic compromise or tokenism may include a traditional church that throws in an occasional praise song or guitar to ward off the complaints of the younger members. They may include a contemporary, youthful, suburban church that apathetically sings a traditional hymn in each service. They may be characterized by a church that indulges in "flavour of the week" services, based either on a desperate attempt to find out what "works" and what people "like," or on the personal tastes of rotating song leaders. The problem with these

approaches is that someone is usually disgruntled or dissatisfied, and the worship has no clear focus or purpose.

The solution may be to set up what amounts to two churches within a church—such as contemporary and traditional services, or seeker services and worship services—with little or no contact with each other, or churches may split off and form new congregations that meet the needs of their members. James F. White believes that it is “a bit romantic and quaint” (White 2004: 71) to expect different age groups to worship together, even within families. He predicts a liturgical leader who “will coordinate the numerous services of worship offered each week by different groups within the congregation” (White 2004; 73). Even so, this approach does little to address other tensions such as those between performance and participation, or between the emotional and the rational. The church cannot continuously subdivide into discrete, homogenous groups ultimately consisting of two or three like-minded believers with similar tastes and continue to preach a message of love and unity.

The issue of homogenous as opposed to heterogeneous groups is actually just one other tension that the church must learn to live with. There are some individual situations in which homogenous subgroups can work and interact effectively within the larger church context; there are other situations where cross-generational and cross-cultural diversity within a single congregation is to be preferred. Much depends on the context and purpose of the group. The only certainty is that absolute consistency and agreement will never be achieved, for, as Hamilton points out, “the God who created this world did so with exuberant extravagance, his unchanging purpose often hidden in a tumbling cascade of variety” (Hamilton 2004: 84). This should be cause for celebration, not merely consternation.

But what approach must a worship leader and congregation use in order to successfully maintain these tensions in dynamic balance rather than in enervating stress? There is no simplistic answer, but the starting point for arriving at the answer is in the nature of worship itself, defined above as “an encounter between God and his people, in which God graciously initiates the relationship, and the people respond with praise, thanks, and love.” There is nothing here, or in any of the other definitions of worship cited, about personal preference, about meeting selfish needs or about feeling good. Worship is not about us; it is about our response to the true and living God as he reveals himself to us.

Søren Kierkegaard originated the idea that in worship, the congregation is not the audience; they are the performers. The worship team members are not the performers; they are the promoters. God is the ultimate audience (Liesch 2001: 123-125). When we purchase a ticket to a concert we have the right to base our choice of performer and music on our personal tastes and preferences, whether that be Renaissance motets or acid rock. We have the right to criticize the performance, and evaluate whether we got our money's worth. We have the right to sit passively and expect to be entertained. Depending on our mood and personality, we have the right to have our expectations realized, whether that involves being intellectually challenged by a complex work brilliantly performed, or experiencing emotional catharsis brought on by a deeply moving and evocative work. We even have the right to leave at the intermission if we are disappointed. If Kierkegaard is right, however, this all changes when it comes to worship.

If Yahweh, the true and living God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, is the audience, and we are the performers, then we must approach worship with infinitely more humility and reverence. God initiates the conversation in this encounter. If he makes us aware of our sinfulness, we should lament, and if he reveals to us his majesty and goodness, we should offer praise and thanksgiving. If he speaks to us and says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4), we have no right to sulk or sigh if we prefer contemporary songs and other believers like traditional hymns. If we are told, "Sing to the LORD, you saints of his; praise his holy name" (Ps 30:4), we have no right to sit and expect others to entertain us or make us "feel good." If we are to tell of his greatness to unbelievers, then we must welcome outsiders into the context of our praise, and speak the truth to them in love.

If we accept this paradigm of worship, then we will be far more able and willing to compromise in the positive sense: to keep these tensions in dynamic, constructive balance. We will be more able to celebrate the diversity of our fellow-believers and to integrate their modes of worship with our own, without resorting to divisiveness and exclusiveness, extremism or simplistic solutions. This does not mean that our worship will be perfect; we are amateurs. The word "amateur" derives, however, from the Latin word *amare*, which means "to love."

In the introduction to his book, Long recalls a disastrous breakfast that he and his brother prepared in love for his mother when they were young children. He remarks, “even when Christian worship is at its best, it is much like that Mother’s Day breakfast. It is always the work of amateurs, people who do this for love, kids in the kitchen over-cooking the prayers, half-baking the sermons, and crashing and stumbling through the responses on the way to an act of adoration” (Long 2001: vii). If our worship is characterized by sincerity, selflessness, and love, our Heavenly Father will graciously and lovingly accept it.

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Songwriter and Copyright Information

Song/Hymn	Writer	Music (Traditional hymn tune name included where possible.)	Copyright (PD = Public Domain)
What a Friend We Have in Jesus	Joseph M. Scriven	Charles C. Converse ("Erie")	Words 1855 Music 1868; PD
I Am a Friend of God	Israel Houghton, Michael Gungor	Israel Houghton, Michael Gungor	2003 Integrity's Praise! Music
Immortal, Invisible God Only Wise	Walter Chalmers Smith	John Roberts ("St. Denio")	Words 1876 Music 1839; PD
Majesty	Jack W. Hayford	Jack W. Hayford	1981 Rocksmith Music
In the Garden	C. Austin Miles	C. Austin Miles	1913; PD
Indescribable	Laura Story and Jesse Reeves	Laura Story	2004 worshiptogether. com songs / Six Steps Music / Gleaning Publishing
I Love You Lord	Laurie Klein	Laurie Klein	1978, 1980 House of Mercy Music
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee	Henry Van Dyke	Ludwig van Beethoven	1824; PD
He Has Made Me Glad	Leona Von Brethorst	Leona Von Brethorst	1976 Maranatha Music
Be Still My Soul	Katherina von Schlegel	Jean Sibelius ("Finlandia")	Words 1752, trans. Jane L. Borthwick 1855 Music 1899; PD
We Come to Your Throne With Weeping	Jeff Deyo	Jeff Deyo	2004 Emack Music / Worship City Music
We're Marching to Zion	Isaac Watts	Robert Lowry	Words: 1707 Music: 1867; PD
The Bond of Love	Otis Skilings	Otis Skillings	1971 Lillenas
I Know that My Redeemer Liveth	Job 19:25 KJV	George Friedrich Handel (from "Messiah")	1741; PD
O Worship the King	Robert Grant	Johann Haydn ("Lyons")	1833; PD
Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness	Nikolaus von Zinsendorf	William Gardiner ("Germany")	Words 1739 Music 1815; PD
Alleluia	Jerry Sinclair	Jerry Sinclair	1972, renewed 2000, Manna Music
Great Is the Lord	Michael W. Smith, Deborah D. Smith	Michael W. Smith, Deborah D. Smith	1982 Meadowgreen Music Company
Be Exalted, O God	Brent Chambers	Brent Chambers	1977 Scripture In Song
Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee	Latin, 12 th century, trans. Edward Caswall	John B. Dykes ("St. Agnes")	Words: 1849 Music: 1866; PD
My Tribute	Andrae Crouch	Andrae Crouch	1971 Bud John Songs
Just As I Am	Charlotte Elliott	William Bradbury ("Woodworth")	Words 1835 Music 1849; PD
Wind Beneath My Wings	Larry Henley, Jeff Silbar	Larry Henley, Jeff Silbar	1988 Warner Brothers