

***BIBLICAL MUSIC
IN A
CONTEMPORARY
WORLD***

by

Ken Lynch

(Foreword by Phil Gingery)

Evangelist Ken Lynch
1810 Edgmont Ave.
Chester, PA 19013-5306
(610) 876-1984

*This book is affectionately
Dedicated
to
Mrs. Armie D'Archangelo
for her many years of
faithful service in the ministry of music
at Bible Baptist Church
(pianist, choir, soloist, and elementary
music teacher)
and
to her late husband,
Leo D'Archangelo,
who was a great soul-winner and our
Assistant Pastor, and who was always an
encouragement to me in my ministry of music.
Leo entered the presence of his Saviour
during the writing of this book.*

FOREWORD

While much has been written on the subject of music and the Bible, our age has proved there is still more to learn. Despite the accessibility of multiple scholarly resources, devotional presentations, music publishers, and skillful instructors, many fundamental churches languish in ignorance when it comes to the importance and management of the ministry of music. Perhaps it is the misconception that the music ministry is merely a fringe element or luxury in true worship that causes some pastors to minimize its necessity. For others, it may be the misconception of music's purpose or even an errant view of ministry in general leading to a pragmatic church marketing philosophy. Some may have reacted against the ministry of music because of the arrogance and misdeeds of unfaithful musicians. Still others may have simply never considered God's Word in this context.

Evangelist Ken Lynch fills a unique niche in our current climate. He is a preacher of the Gospel and a friend to pastors seeking God's moving in men's hearts. He loves the Bible and is a capable and faithful exegete. But he is also a skillful

musician who has trained his talents and developed his sensibilities over years of practice and service. His expertise does not exist in the vacuum of western society for his ministry has taken him around the world. He is discerning not merely on the basis of cultural relevance but further on the foundation of God's Word and the Creator's revealed character.

While some might take offense at Mr. Lynch's polemic against Contemporary Christian Music and its pervading influence in God's church today, no one can accuse him of abusing Scripture or of lacking a desire for God's ultimate will. The reader will be confronted with Bible principles and caused to make decisions. His presentation is fresh and free of "the same old stuff and stories". All should benefit from this rehearsing of God's truth on music and its practical application to ministry.

Phil Gingery, *Minister of Music*
Bible Baptist Church, West Chester, PA

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PART ONE: PHILOSOPHICAL

Chapter One

THE PLACE OF MUSIC

God Himself lays such importance on the ministry of music that He placed more than five hundred references to it within the pages of Scripture. The first mention of music is found in Genesis, the "Book of Beginnings." Genesis 4:21 mentions Jubal as the "*father of all such as handle the harp and organ.*" The term "organ" had to do in a general way with any wind blown reed instrument, in contrast to the modern pipe organ in which the air is mechanically produced and blown through the pipes. The last mention of music in the Bible occurs in Revelation 18:22, where, once again, musical instruments are named. Sandwiched between these two references are literally hundreds of other references to music.

In Job 38:7 we are told that there was music in Heaven when God laid the foundations of the earth and "*the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy!*" Music played a major role in the coronation of kings as

in the case of Joash recorded in II Kings 11:14. And music will do so again in the future at the appearance of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords for His saints when "*the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout* [lit. "a cry of excitement"], *with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.*" What a great day that is going to be! That event be followed still later with the "*new song*" sung by the four beasts and the twenty-four elders; a song of worship and adoration of the One Who alone is worthy!

One entire book of the Bible is, in essence, a hymnbook. That book, of course, is the book of the Psalms. In both Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, the singing of *psalms* and hymns and spiritual songs is mentioned. Interestingly, the Scriptures record that, just prior to our Lord Jesus Christ's leaving the upper room with His disciples and beginning the long journey to the Garden of Gethsamane where He would agonize in prayer and finally be betrayed, "*they had sung an hymn*" (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26). The word translated "hymn" in the Authorized Version comes from a Greek word "*humneo.*" In a general way the word means "*a religious ode; by implication to celebrate (God) in song*" (Strong's Concordance 5214). Strong's goes on to suggest that the word comes from a simpler (but

obsolete) form that refers to "one of the Psalms". It is very likely, therefore, that it was one of the Psalms that our Lord sang with His disciples just hours before His arrest and ultimate crucifixion.

Many of the Psalms are directed to "*the chief musician*" (Example: Psalms 4,5,6,8,9,) while others suggest a type of musical accompaniment (Example: Psalms 54,55,61).

The Bible speaks of King David's appointing a large group of men over "*the service of song in the house of the Lord after that the ark had rest. And they ministered before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing, until Solomon had built the house of the Lord in Jerusalem: and then they waited on their office according to their order" (I Chronicles 6:31,32). It is important to notice that the Bible here speaks of music as *both* a "service" and a "ministry." The musical traditions established by David to worship God were continued during the reign of his son, Solomon. In fact, music played a major role at the dedication of Solomon's Temple (see II Chronicles 5:12-14).*

According to I Chronicles 9:33 the ministry of music was indeed a fulltime ministry for those who "*were employed in that work day and night.*"

Nehemiah 10:38-39 clearly teaches that one of the serious faults of the people of God prior to the great revival in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 8) was the neglect of those who served in what was supposed to have been a fulltime ministry in the temple. Those included, in addition to the priests and porters, the singers.

When the kingdom of Judah was invaded by the children of Ammon and Moab, Jehoshaphat *"appointed **singers** unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness And when they began to **sing** and to **praise**, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab and mount Seir"* (II Chronicles 20:21,22).

Music is also mentioned in the New Testament where one Apostolic writer (whom many believe to have been Paul) declares, *"in the midst of the church will I **sing** praise unto thee"* (Hebrews 2:12). The Apostle Paul speaks of *"**singing and making melody** in your heart to the Lord"* (Ephesians 5:19) as well as *"**singing with grace** in your hearts to the Lord"* (Colossians 3:16). In each of these instances, the music was a part of the gathering together of believers as a body, as a church.

It is not difficult to recognize the important place of music in the worship of God in both the Old and New Testaments. Music still plays a vital role in the worship of God in the local church today. In fact, second only to the primacy of preaching, the most important ministry the local church has is its music ministry! Martin Luther once wrote that *"music is a gift from God and not from men. It puts the devil to flight and renders man cheerful. It makes him forget anger, immodesty, and every vice. To it I assign the highest place after theology."* It is the musical prelude, the congregational singing, the offertories and special music by the choir or soloist that are noticed by the visitor long before the preaching begins. And it is such music that is not infrequently used by the Holy Spirit to soften and prepare hearts to receive the preached Word. Many a heart has reached its final brokenness over sin through the quiet music at the invitation. It is indeed sad that, in so many cases, the music ministry has been sadly, and unscripturally, either neglected or abused. Perhaps the thoughts of one of America's greatest gospel musicians will help to further enlighten us on the vital place of music in the ministry.

Charles M. Alexander was the great song leader and chorister for the R.A. Torrey and Wilbur J.

Chapman meetings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sometimes he would direct a choir of more than three thousand singers. He loved music and loved to share the importance of music taught throughout the Bible. The following quotation is from his biography written by his beloved wife.

"Charles Alexander loved to trace the holy use of joyful music through all God's dealings with those who have trusted Him in every age of the world's history. He loved to read and tell how David appointed 'singers with instruments of music' under the leadership of Chenaniah, who 'instructed about the song because he was skilful'; of how they 'lifted up the voice with joy,' as they, with all Israel, accompanied the Ark of God homewards from the house of Obed-edom. He loved to picture the dedication of the new Temple by Solomon, when the 'trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord'; the re-dedication under Josiah, when 'the singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their place'; the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, rebuilt by the faithful efforts of Nehemiah and Ezra, which was celebrated with 'gladness, both with thanksgivings and with singing,' when the singers sang so loudly, and the rejoicing of men, women and

children was so exuberant, that 'the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.'

"In the New Testament, he read with delight of the songs of the angels at Bethlehem, announcing the arrival of the Son of God on the earth; of the 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs' which rose from the gatherings of the first believers, from the time they knew that their Lord was risen from the dead; of the songs of unconquerable faith which echoed through the old prison at Philippi in the darkness of midnight; of the revelation of the 'new song' which will make the vaults of Heaven ring throughout eternity. But, most of all, he loved to read of the close of that long, tender conversation between our Lord and His disciples on the eve of the crucifixion, when, before descending the stairs from the upper room in Jerusalem, and making their way in the moonlight to the garden of Gethsamane on the slopes of Olivet, they sang a hymn together!"¹

It is time that the Biblical ministries of today, regardless of size, begin to recognize the important place of the musical ministry to the

¹ Alexander, Helen C. *Charles M. Alexander: A Romance of Song and Soulwinning*, Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1995.

vitality and life of the church. While many churches are able to finance a fulltime Minister of Music, most cannot. However, just because a particular church is not able to have a fulltime Minister of Music is no reason for having a sloppy, sleazy, or shoddy music program in the church. Each local church, no matter how small, should develop the best musical ministry possible for the glory of God. And if no one is qualified to conduct such a ministry, the church family should make the need of a good-quality music program, and the need of a good Music Director, a matter of **urgent, fervent, and continued prayer**. Next to the preaching of God's eternal Word, there is no more powerful ministry in the church than that of the music to touch lives and prepare hearts.

Chapter Two

THE POWER OF MUSIC

Many "professing" Christians today will deny that music has any power to influence anyone in any way. They say that music is amoral, i.e. it is morally neutral. Frankly, nothing could be further from the truth than that. Just look at people, (young people in particular) and watch their bodies wiggle and twitch as they listen to their boom boxes. Is it an honest statement to say that music does not move us? Why, then, all the bodily movement, especially to rock music? Listen to what one rock musician had to say in this matter: "Rock should be rock in every conceivable way," says legendary rocker Lou Reed. "It should have *heart*, it should have a *beat*, and [it should] *move you.*"²

If music has no power to influence people, why do the defenders of the rock culture (whether "Christian" or other makes no difference) become so enraged when someone comes along and challenges the validity of their music? Nay, my

² USAWeekend, September 1-3, 1995, p. 4.

friend, music *does* have an influence on us, and a great and powerful one at that. In fact, Arthur Jacobs, in his book entitled The New Penguin Dictionary of Music on p. 345, defines the term "rock 'n roll" as "**bodily movement of response.**" Another book, The Billboard Book of Rhythm, says, "*the beat* is what primarily ties music to **human movement.**"³

Speaking of the power of music, author Robert Palmer writes, "I do continue to believe in the **transformative power of rock and roll . . .** not so much in the words of songs or the stances of the stars, but **in the music itself [sic] in the sound, and, above all the BEAT**".⁴

Mickey Hart, an unsaved, secular, professional rock and roll drummer for more than twenty years, wrote a book in 1990 entitled Drumming at the Edge of Magic in which he makes the following statement on pages 28 and 30. "Everywhere you look on planet earth people are using drums [rhythm] to **alter consciousness**" [p. 28]. "I've discovered the **extraordinary power of music, particularly percussion, to influence**

³ Savage, Steve. *The Billboard Book of Rhythm*, NY, NY: Watson-Guption Publishers, 1986, p. 31.

⁴ Palmer, Robert. *Rock and Roll: An Unruly History*, NY, NY: Crown Publishing, 1995, p.12.

[both] **the human mind and body**" (p. 30). On page 228 he continues, "In West Africa, it is said that every drum has its rhythm and every rhythm its dance. In America the novel African-American rhythms quickly inspired new dances. The Charleston, Lindy, Jitterbug, Black Bottom - all emerged from the early experiences of audiences whose **bodies were responding to this music for the first time.**"⁵

All of the above statements are from the pens of men from the unsaved, secular rock culture who are at least honest enough to tell us how their own music has the power to effect people's lives in a dramatic way.

I want to briefly examine with you both the ungodly as well as the godly power of music. Before I do, it is both important and interesting to pause and note (no pun intended) the comparison between man and music. Both man and music are trichotomous, i.e. having three parts. Man is comprised of spirit, soul and body. Music, on the other hand, is made up of melody, harmony and rhythm. Each part of music primarily affects a different part of man and influences his response

⁵ Hart, Mickey. *Drumming at the Edge of Magic*, San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1990

in that area, whether spiritual, intellectual or physical, as can be noted in the following comparison chart.

| | | |
|----------------|---|---------------|
| MELODY | → | SPIRIT |
| HARMONY | → | SOUL |
| RHYTHM | → | BODY |

The "*spirit*" is man's spiritual side or his "God-consciousness." The "*soul*" is man's intellect, his ability to reason and think in a logical fashion. And, of course, the "*body*" refers to the biological, or physical, part of man. Each one of these unique parts of man's being is, in a special way, affected by one of the different parts of music's "anatomy."

The three parts of music are melody, harmony, and rhythm. "*Melody*" is the primary structure in music, sometimes called the "tune." It is what makes music. It is the tune that we whistle, hum, or sing, while working, playing, or relaxing. "*Harmony*" is what I have come to call the "intellectual side of music" as it forms the logical

chord progression and supports the melody. "**Rhythm**" is what we might call the "musical skeleton". It is what everything else hangs on. But skeletons, without the flesh and muscle, are not very attractive. Rhythm is, in a way, like a foundation that supports the rest of the structure. However, it must be remembered that a foundation by itself without the rest of the building is, like a skeleton, a pretty poor sight and fairly useless.

1) **Spirit and Melody**

It is the melody that primarily influences the spiritual side of man. One does not have to be a trained musician, having studied theory or composition, in order to be able to appreciate and enjoy music. While some people have a natural ability to harmonize, the average person, without musical training, identifies almost exclusively with the melody, or tune. In fact, most people hear nothing but the tune of a song. It is the melody that carries the message of the song. In fact, even without lyrics, the melody conveys its own message. That is one reason it is important for the music to be well matched to the lyrical content. The other parts of music simply undergird the melodic line filling in the richness and fullness of the music making it sound complete.

2) Soul and Harmony

As I mentioned above, harmony is the intellectual side of music; therefore it is only natural that harmony most notably affects the intellectual side of man, his soul or his reason. While the untrained ear hears only the melody, the trained ear hears much more. In fact, I think it is safe to say that when once one has studied music, particularly theory and some composition, he can *never* again hear only the melody. A trained musician, when he hears a tune, *also* hears what we call chord progression and harmony: what chord belongs where and what notes should fill in the alto, tenor, or bass line. Harmony is simple musical logic. That is why I refer to harmony as the intellectual side of music. However, harmony, taken by itself, does not provide very pleasant listening material. Have you ever sat during a choir rehearsal while the altos, tenors, or basses have had to go over and over their parts? Wasn't it a thrilling and exuberating experience? You quickly learn that it is only when *all* the parts are put together that the music begins to make sense. Even the melody, as important as it is, when taken alone, tends to seem incomplete.

3) **Body and Rhythm**

It does not take a lot of intelligence to figure out that the body responds, first and foremost, to rhythm. All you have to do is observe. Watch people as they listen to music. While the band plays a Sousa March, watch as most, if not all, the people tap their feet in time with the rhythm. Watch closely as a toddler, standing in front of a TV, begins to twitch his little body to the music (mostly rock) being played during the commercial. I refer you once again to one of the previous quotations where it was stated that it is "the beat [rhythm] that primarily ties music to human movement."

It must be reinforced that in the Kingdom of Music, Mr. Melody is to be the reigning monarch with both Mr. Harmony and Mr. Rhythm serving as faithful, loyal, and supportive subjects. When either Mr. Harmony (though he is much more likely to be content in his position of servant) or Mr. Rhythm decide to begin a musical "coup" and attempt to dethrone King Melody, musical anarchy, chaos, and confusion result.

Tom Allen writes, "One of the elements of rebellion in rock music is the **disorderly insistence that rhythm be the main attraction.**"

Rock-n-Roll is a form of music which gives preference to **rhythm over BOTH melody and harmony thus *throwing off* the ESSENTIAL BALANCE intended for all musical styles.**⁶

Allen's comment is especially interesting in view of the fact that his book is a *defense* of so-called "Christian" rock. Even he admits that music with a rock beat is not properly balanced. Even what has passed for "soft rock"⁷ still has the insistent beat in the background although allowing the melody to be heard.

Music, in order to be healthy and not destructive, **must be balanced.** As a healthy body must have a balanced system, so, too, must music. That is illustrated in the following chart.

- **No rhythm (pulse) = DEAD**
- **Too much (or too little) rhythm (pulse) = SICK**
- **Balanced rhythm (pulse) = HEALTHY**

⁶ Allen, Tom. *Rock-n-Roll: the Bible and the Mind*. Beaverlodge, Alberta: Horizon House Publishers, 1982, pp. 23, 24.

⁷ "soft rock" has been defined as a style of music where the backbeat, while not as prominent as in other rock forms, is still noticeably present, but where the melody can also be heard as opposed to "heavy metal" where there is almost no discernable melodic line; at least not that can be heard easily.

With regard to the above, I often hear people say in a challenging way, "But the Bible doesn't tell us what kind of music God likes or doesn't like. It doesn't say there is anything wrong with the rock beat!" Let me offer a challenge in return. First, the Bible *does* tell us what kind of music is pleasing to God. Second, while it is true that the Bible does not mention rock per se, there *are* verses that *do* address the flesh (or body) and its appetites. Remember the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 7:18, "*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth NO GOOD THING.*" Just a few verses later in Romans 8:8, Paul again reminds us emphatically that "*they that are in [living for and controlled by] the flesh CANNOT PLEASE GOD.*" Consider the following.

1) The Body (or Flesh)

- Romans 12:2 -- "And **be not conformed to this world.**"
- Romans 13:14 -- "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make not provision for the flesh,** to fulfill the lusts thereof."
- I Corinthians 9:27 -- "But I **keep under my body and bring it into subjection ...**"

- I Peter 2:11 -- "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, **abstain from fleshly lusts**, which war against the soul."

Music that emphasizes rhythm over the other two elements of music is a style that appeals primarily to the flesh or the body. That which appeals to the flesh is not that with which God is pleased. These quoted Scriptures give four simple, straightforward statements or commands for the believer.

Four Commands of Scripture

1) "Be not conformed to this world."

The word conformed means *"to fashion or shape one thing so that it looks like or resembles another."* When one so-called "Christian" rock group comes along and says, "we can rock as well or better than the best of the secular bands,"⁸ what is that but conformity to the world? It is saying that "we can look like the world, dress like the world, sing like, act like, sound like, the world and still call ourselves Christian." Now, if God says (and that is what the Bible is, the Word

⁸ Rez Band. *Cornerstone Magazine*, Vol. 11, Issue 62, p. 38.

of God) I am **not** to conform to (i.e. allow myself to be fashioned or shaped so that I look like or resemble) the world and *I do*, have I not sinned? Absolutely! Sin is **doing** what God says I am not to do and **not doing** what God says I am to do. Sin is also **being** what God says I am not to be, and **not being** what God says I am to be.

2) "Make not provision for the flesh."

When I use a musical style that is designed to appeal to the flesh I, again, violate another Biblical command which tells me **not** to make provision for the flesh. The Bible tells me that "in my flesh dwelleth no good thing." The flesh is not the believer's friend and will never lead him closer to God. The flesh always leads away from God in its quest to have its own appetites and desires satisfied! If my music is fleshly, then it will lead me further from God, not closer to Him, and closer to the world. It is really not a debatable question as to whether or not rock music ("sacred" or "secular") is fleshly (sensual). Every honest secular rock "artist" openly admits the sensual nature of rock, and they exploit it to its fullest extent. The very term "*Rock 'n Roll*" is a term meaning immoral sex. According to the Rolling Stones Encyclopedia of Rock and Roll, under the term "*rock and roll*", defines it as "*a*

blues euphonism for sexual intercourse." In all honesty, folks, the *only* people who will argue this point are professing Christians who publish, promote, and perform what *they* call "Christian Rock." Actually, in order to defend that which is clearly wrong, they *must* take a position that no one else does and say that "music is neutral; it does not affect you; it has no message of its own; it is the words that make it Christian or non-Christian, etc." The world openly admits the sexual overtones of its immoral music.

3) "I keep under my body."

This command simply means that, by the grace of God, I do not let my body get out of control. That means, musically, that any style of music that lessens inhibitions and encourages the loosening of moral restraints is wrong, therefore sinful, and must be let go.

4) "Abstain from fleshly lusts."

This command of God means simply to "stay away from." Don't see how close you can get to sin without falling into its clutches, but, as the Apostle Paul challenged Timothy, "*Flee youthful lusts*" (II Timothy 2:22). Paul also reminded Timothy of the need for purity in his life when he

said, "Neither be partaker of other men's sins: **keep thyself pure**" (I Timothy 5:22).

These Scriptures are not confusing or difficult to understand. They simply need to be obeyed and put into practice. In the next chapter we will examine briefly the ungodly effects music can have in our lives.

The Kind of Music God *Does* Like

Now to the second challenge, that "*the Bible doesn't tell us what kind of music God does like.*" Well now, if you look carefully at the verses in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3 I think you will find that the Bible ***does indeed*** suggest to us what kind of music pleases God.

Ephesians 5:19 -- "*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and **making melody** in your heart to the Lord.*"

Colossians 3:16 -- "*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.*"

We will come back to these verses later in our study for they are full of rich blessing and meaning to the spirit-filled child of God. For the moment, though, please notice, *first*, the phrase "*in your heart[s]*" which occurs in both verses; and *second*, that which is to *be* in the heart, specifically *melody* (Eph. 5:19) and *grace* (Col. 3:16). Let's look at each word individually.

"Melody"

The word *melody* is only found four times in the Authorized Version of the English Bible (Isaiah 23:16; 51:3; Amos 5:23; Ephesians 5:19). According to Strong's Concordance, in each instance it is used with the idea of singing to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument. Naturally, being a violinist myself, the idea of a stringed instrument is extremely pleasant! Seriously though, some might be quick to point out that the passage in Isaiah 23 is the "melody of a harlot." Is there, therefore, any significant difference in the music of the world and the music of the Lord? It is quite true that the Isaiah 23 passage does speak of the harlot's melody. However a closer look at the context will settle the question for us. The whole chapter deals with God's judgment on the wicked city of Tyre. In the preceding verse (Isaiah 23:15) we are told that

Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years and that after that, she will "*sing as an harlot.*" The next verse goes on to say, "*Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered.*" Harlotry is a moral sin that is condemned throughout the Bible. So in the context, there is nothing holy about the harlot who is singing, be it Tyre or anyone else. Contextually, then, we have here an example of *sensual* music as opposed to *spiritual* music. Even when melody is King it can still be used in a sensual way as is exemplified in this passage about the harlot's melody.

By way of contrast, in Isaiah 51:3, it is the LORD Who comforts Zion in the end times. That blessing is evidenced in part in that "*joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.*" In the one passage we have a sleazy harlot singing her sensual songs of allurement to weak and beggarly men, void of character, who are about to be led to the slaughterhouse of sin, sex, and free love. In the other, we have a thrice-holy God, Who, after a period of judgment, is lovingly restoring His people to their land. It is, indeed, a time of "*thanksgiving with the voice of melody!*"

In the Ephesians 5 passage, we again have the presence of a holy God before Whom His people have met to worship with sacred song. I assure you, my friend; a holy God can only be truly worshipped Biblically with that which is holy. The sensual music of the world is not fit for a holy God, and does not fit the Biblical admonition, "*But as **he** which has called you is **holy**, so **be ye holy** in all manner of conversation; because it is written, **Be ye holy; for I am holy.**"*" (I Peter 1:15-16).

"Grace"

Colossians 3:16 speaks of "*singing with **grace** in your hearts to the Lord*". The word for "grace" is used many times in Scripture. According to the concordance which I have used extensively in this study, the word refers to "***the divine influence upon the heart*** [hence, Ephesians 2:8, 'For by grace are ye saved...'] ***and its reflection in life***" (Strong's #5485). Very interesting, to say the least. Grace begins with God Almighty's influencing me. In fact, my salvation, from His producing conviction in my heart to my calling upon Him (**at His invitation to do so!** Romans 10:13), resulting in my conversion from sin, was all of His doing and none of mine! It was His influence on me! Now as a result of that

conversion, it is only natural that there be some reflection of His grace exemplified in my life. The Scriptures go so far as to say that "*if any man be **in Christ**, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*" (II Corinthians 5:17). In other words, *if* I am truly in Christ, my life is going to be different as a result. I will not have the same desires, appetites for sin, cravings for the things of the world, etc. that I had before I was saved. And that is true for *every* true believer. One of the reflections of His grace in my life is found in, not only *what* I sing, but *how* I sing. When I recall how great He has been to me, how can I ever be satisfied with anything that, in even the slightest degree, would displease Him? And, yet, that is exactly what the modern CCM⁹ does. It uses the same unholy music that the world sensually uses, in its own deliberate and immoral way, to try to worship a holy God. That approach simply does not work.

⁹ CCM is a term adopted by the publishers, promoters and performers of "Christian" rock to describe their worldly style of music. Basically CCM is nothing more than the rock of the world with supposedly "Christian" lyrics.

Chapter Three

THE UNGODLY POWER OF MUSIC

We have already looked at the power of music in general and noted that it is a powerful force indeed. Much more could have been said, but space will not permit. At this point I would like to have you look with me at some examples of both *the ungodly power of music* and, then later, *the godly power of music* in our lives.

LIFE Magazine's December, 1992, issue was devoted to the celebration of forty years of rock and roll. In one of the feature articles, in a look back at the world's first rock concert in Cleveland, Ohio, the writer says, "This [rock] music was the **music of the body, and the music of the body was only a short space from the music of the soul.**" The editorial said, "**Rock feeds on passion.**"¹⁰

Dr. Allen Bloom, in his classic best seller The Closing of the American Mind wrote, "Rock

¹⁰ LIFE Magazine, December, 1992, p. 4.

music has *one appeal only*, a barbaric appeal, to **sexual desire.**"¹¹

Does the world recognize the sensuality of its own music? Indeed, it does. Do many Christians? Sadly, no. I fear that "Contemporary Christian Music" places far greater emphasis on contemporary than Christian. And, to be perfectly honest about it, the vast majority of young people who listen to CCM *also* listen to a steady diet of regular, or secular, rock. In a survey conducted by myself in several Christian schools, 63% of those responding indicated that they listened to CCM on a regular basis. *Of that number, 97%* indicated that they *ALSO* listened to secular rock on a regular basis. Why? Simply put, because CCM and secular rock are essentially the same musically. Only the lyrical content changes. But, even without lyrics, the music conveys its own message.

The Bible also speaks of sensual music. Recall the words of the prophet in Isaiah 23:15,16 where we read, "*And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of*

¹¹ Bloom, Allen. *The Closing of the American Mind*, New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1987, p. 73.

*seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot. Take an harp, go about the city, **thou harlot** that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered."*

By way of contrast, the believer in the New Testament is told to sing "psalms and hymns and **spiritual** [as opposed to carnal or fleshly] songs." The music should enhance, not detract from, the message of the song. On the subject of syncopation, Charles Alexander said that, "*when properly employed, it [syncopation]¹² is not only effective in musical expression, but often helps to bring out the force of the words, which, after all, is the main purpose of religious music. The 'coon-songs', which often pass in England for the music of the colored people of the South, and the modern use of 'rag-time' [which was quite in vogue at that time] often cause a similar rhythm to be applied to Gospel songs, and this introduces a cheapness and levity that destroys all beauty in the song."¹³*

¹² Syncopation is the emphasis on the second and fourth beats of the measure instead of the traditional first and third beats. It is sometimes called the backbeat, the upbeat, the rock beat etc. According to the Billboard Book of Rhythm, by its nature it has a built-in tension.

¹³ Alexander, Helen C. Charles M. Alexander: A Romance of Song & Soulwinning, Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1995, p. 199.

Perhaps the classic reference to the ungodly effects of music in the Old Testament is found in Exodus 32. The setting finds Moses and Joshua on Mount Sinai where God has been giving Moses the Law, the Ten Commandments. The two of them were gone for a total of forty days. During that time, the people began to wonder just what had become of them. The people went to Aaron and talked him into making an idol in the form of a golden calf. This calf would then become their "god" that was given credit for bringing them out of Egypt. Like every idol everywhere, it replaced the real God, the living and true God. It was an act of sacrilege, indeed of blasphemy, against the God of Heaven!

In Exodus 32:7 and 8, God revealed to Moses the wicked idolatry of His people under the leadership of Aaron, and even spoke of destroying the people in His righteous anger. As Moses and Joshua began their journey down the mountain toward the stinking camp of Israel, where the "people of God" were shouting and dancing in a demonic sort of sensual orgy, Joshua said to Moses, "*There is the noise of war in the camp!*" Perhaps he was thinking that the camp had been invaded. Remember that Joshua was a military man, so it was only natural for him to respond that way when he heard the confusion that was

going on. Moses responded by saying, *"It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery [or having the victory], neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome [or defeated]: but the noise of them that sing do I hear"* (vs. 17-18).

There are three significant things that need to be observed in this tragic chapter. Go back to verses 1, 4, and 8 and notice first, **IDOLATRY**: *"Up, make us gods"* (v.1); *"They have made a molten calf, and have worshipped it"* (v.8).

Then look at verse 25 where the Bible says *"that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame...)"* There you find **IMMODESTY**. Any careful observation will clearly show that there is a connection between idolatry and immodesty or nakedness. Rock concerts, even so-called "Christian" ones, are frequently accompanied by various stages of undress and immodesty. One so-called "Christian" rock festival in Florida boasted about the hot pants and halter-tops as the youth listened(?) to their favorite "Christian" pop artist. The writer telling of the event went on to actually describe the scene as *"sexually charged!"*¹⁴

¹⁴ Rabey, Steve. *The Heart of Rock and Roll*, Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1986, p. 101.

Then in verse 6, you find open **IMMORALITY**, for the Scriptures record that the people rose up early in the morning to offer sacrifices after which they "*sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.*" The word translated "*play*" here in the A.V. is the same word that is translated "*sporting*" in Genesis 26:8. There Isaac is said to have been "*sporting with Rebekah his wife*" and implies the intimate relationship between husband and wife. As the word is used in Exodus 32:6, Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies suggests it to mean "wantonness," meaning licentiousness or immorality.

Now it must be made clear that the music did not *cause* the people to sin in these ways. It *did*, however, set an atmosphere where it became easier to give in to sin. Author Steve Lawhead, a staunch defender of CCM, makes an interesting statement when he writes, "No, rock music cannot take you anywhere you do not want to go. However, it [rock music] *can make it easier for you to go where you do want to go, but know you shouldn't.*"¹⁵ In other words, rock music, by admission of its own endorsers, *does, in fact,*

¹⁵ Lawhead, Steve. Rock Reconsidered, Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1981, p. 70.

contribute to the spiritual and moral declension of those that are taken in by it.

I have in my files the testimonials of many Christian teens whose lives were ruined, both spiritually and morally, through the influence of CCM. Did the rock music (secular or sacred doesn't really matter much) **cause** the moral and spiritual ruin of these teens? No, but it was a **contributing** factor. Incidentally, you don't have to understand music in order to sense what is right and what is wrong. Jesus Christ told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would guide them [and us] into all truth (cf. John 16:13). A truly godly, Spirit-filled and controlled believer will naturally develop that sense of spiritual discernment between what pleases God and what displeases Him according to Hebrews 5:11-14. Check it out for yourself:

"Of whom [Melchisedec] we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God [the simple things of Scripture]; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a

babe [spiritually, though perhaps saved for many years]. *But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use [i.e. continual or habitual use] have their [spiritual] senses exercised to discern both [or between] good and evil."*

In other words, one of the things the above passage clearly teaches us is that one of the natural results, or by-products, of spiritual maturity (that is what the writer means by the phrase "*of full age*") is a sense of spiritual discernment between what is right and what is wrong; between what pleases God and what displeases God; between what I should do and what I should not do. Yes, it really is that simple.

In our next section, we will look at some of the godly effects of music on the listener. Thankfully, all the news is not bad news, so read on.

Chapter Four

THE GODLY POWER OF MUSIC

As the wrong kind of music can have an ungodly effect on our lives, so the right kind of music can have a godly effect on and in our lives. Charles M. Alexander " *realized, to an unusual degree, the rivalry of Satan in the matter of music, which God had ordained for praise of Himself, and, which, when perverted to other uses, may ruin, rather than upbuild, human character. Because of this strange fact, earnest Christians have at times refrained from music altogether, lest it lead them away from God*" (Charles M. Alexander: A Romance of Song and Soulwinning, p. 62).

Satan has always been the great counterfeiter. He has always attempted to duplicate the work of God in his sinister trap of trying to deceive the saints and damn the sinner. It is a sad thing when sincere Christians, in an honest effort to please their Lord, go to the extreme of discounting almost entirely one of the things that pleases God most: God-honoring, Christ-exalting, Biblical music! No, we don't have to dig in the garbage can of the world's music. Why would a child of

God want to do that anyway when there is such godly music with which to praise our Lord? Yes, music can have a godly and positive effect on one whose heart is tuned to the things of God.

In First Samuel 16 we read of David and Saul. David was yet a lad while Saul was the mighty warrior king. But King Saul had a problem. He rebelled against the clear Word of God, thus rebelling against the Will of God.¹⁶ His sin was that of offering a sacrifice which was not his place to offer, in addition to his presumption in taking things into his own hands and not waiting on God's timing. Years later David, the king, would write, "*Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass . . . Rest in the Lord, and **wait patiently** for him*" (Psalm 37:5,7). "**Be still**, and know that I am God . . ." (Psalm 46:10).

As a result of Saul's sin, and his stubborn refusal to repent, coupled with his continued rebellion, God took the Holy Spirit from him and afflicted him with what the Bible calls an "*evil spirit from the Lord.*" That is not to be taken that Saul now

¹⁶ Remember that the Word of God constitutes the Will of God; and the Will of God *never* contradicts the Word of God.

had demons within him; rather it refers to a "spirit of melancholy."

In verse 23, we find recorded the effects of David's music on Saul. There are three things of importance in the verse, namely, that all three parts of the trichotomous nature of man were affected.

1) The Physical Effect -- "Saul was re-freshed." The word literally means "to breathe freely; to revive." Saul, after a depressing, and probably an exhausting, period of melancholy, was physically revived.

2) The Mental Effect -- "Saul . . . was well." Here the word translated "well" means "to make good; to cheer" and it had to do with his mental state of mind. There is a great deal of evidence being gathered that indicates beyond any doubt the positive mental and emotional effects the right kind of music can have on people with various diseases. On the other hand, music with heavy beat and excessive volume can have the opposite effect.

3) The Spiritual Effect -- "The evil spirit departed." That phrase needs little comment. Saul was physically, mentally, and spiritually

refreshed and encouraged by David's godly music.

Allow me just two other examples of the godly effects of music.

Psalm 40:3,4 -- *"And he hath put a **new song** in my mouth, even praise to our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Blessed is that man that maketh the LORD his trust."*

Notice the "**new song**." [Not the old song of the old life with the old man of sin, but a new song in a new man.] "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: *old things are passed away; behold* [take notice, something is different], *all things are become new*" (II Corinthians 5:17). "*...Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him*" (Colossians 3:9-10). As it was true in David's life, so it is to be true in our lives as "new creatures in Christ".

Notice next the words "many shall *see it*." See what? You don't "see" music; you hear it. I believe what people saw was a tremendous change in David's life as a result of his faith in

God and his conversion back in verses one and two. Do people really see a change in your life as a result of your "Christian experience and conversion"? If not, is it possible that you are not yet "in Christ"? If there is indeed no change, that you are yet lost in your sins is exactly what the Bible suggests.

Finally, take note of the word "*fear.*" This comes from the Hebrew word "*yare*" which means "*to be afraid, to stand in awe*" (Nelson's Expository Dictionary of O.T. Words). The idea here is to have a reverential awe, a fear of the Lord that is the beginning of wisdom as we recognize just Who God is and who we are in comparison with Him. That alone should humble us and cause us to "fear Him." There is also a sense in which the fear of the Lord involves a certain sense of terror, especially for the one who is not yet saved by grace through faith in the finished work of His Son, Jesus Christ! And yet, when we trust Him, and believe what He said about our desperate need of salvation, we no longer experience His wrath and condemnation but His love, mercy, and grace in salvation. Where do you stand with Him today?

Chapter Five

THE PROBLEM OF CCM vs. SEPARATION

We now come to a more difficult aspect of the ministry of music, and that is the area of Biblical separation. Specifically, I am dealing here with the problems with CCM as it relates to the doctrine of separation. There is probably not a fundamental church in America today that has not, at one time or another, had to deal with the problem of CCM.¹⁷ Since the mid-1970s the problem has reached epidemic proportions. CCM has invaded virtually *every* area of Christian experience, from individual lives to colleges, from churches to mission agencies and fields. It has reached literally around the world and has, at last, returned to its African roots.¹⁸ There are, no doubt, other areas of music to which must be applied the Biblical teaching on separation as

¹⁷ For a more extensive study of CCM see the author's book Gospel Music: Blessing or Blight, or his eight-part video series by the same title.

¹⁸ The author has had to face and deal with the problems of CCM in nearly every country he has visited on various mission trips, including Africa, where it all basically began.

well. However, I will limit our study here to the particular problem of CCM. Too many people have the mistaken idea that separation is always a negative, that which I separate *from*. Remember, please, that Biblical separation is *not* primarily a negative, but a positive. The whole doctrine and practice of separation, Biblically, is rooted in the holiness of God.¹⁹ Before I can (or will) be separated "*from*" I must first be separated "*unto*." I would like to take the subject and divide it into three areas: first, the Purpose of Biblical Separation; then, the Practice of Biblical Separation; and, finally, the Power of the Scriptures regarding Biblical Separation. Obviously, our study will not be exhaustive, but I trust it will be helpful. Be sure to make special note of the Scriptures, for they are our final authority.

I. The Purpose of Biblical Separation

It is important to keep in mind the great, but often much overlooked, and greatly under-emphasized doctrine of the holiness of God. We hear much of such divine attributes as God's grace, mercy, longsuffering, and love. And *none* of those wonderful attributes should be neglected for even

¹⁹ See the book by Dr. Fred Moritz entitled *Be Ye Holy*, Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1994.

a minute! But these important truths should not be mentioned and taught to the exclusion of His *other* attributes such as His righteousness, justice, and holiness.

What is meant by the "holiness of God" is His purity, His infinite perfection. There is nothing and there is no one more perfect than God. He is, if you please, the essence of eternal perfection personified. In the book of Isaiah alone, there are some thirty references to God the Father as "*the Holy One of Israel.*"

Having understood the importance of being separated *unto* the Lord, it follows then that, in order to please my Lord, it is essential that I separate *from* *all* that displeases Him or is contrary to His Word.

The doctrine of Biblical separation is not shrouded in a cloud of theological mystery deep within the hidden pages of Scripture. It is as plain and as clear as any of the major doctrines such as the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture, the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, to name but a few. The first mention of separation is found in the fourth verse of the Bible; Genesis 1:4. In fact, it is this doctrine of separation which, historically, has really defined and described

Biblical fundamentalism. There are many denominations and fellowships (Examples: NAE, CBA, etc.) that still, to one degree or another, hold to what *they* call the basic doctrines but who, at the same time, decry and denounce fundamentalism. Yet these same people continue to work with such groups as the NCC (National Council of Churches) and ecumenical evangelism. The fundamentalist is condemned for his separation from the liberal while the neo-evangelical basks in his infiltration into the liberal camp and co-operation with those who deny any (in some cases many) part of Biblical teaching and doctrine. The basic difference between a fundamentalist and a new evangelical is simple. Both claim to believe the Bible. However, the fundamentalist not only believes what the Bible says but also makes the Bible a test of fellowship and co-operation while, on the other hand, the new evangelical does not. He may *say* he believes the Bible, but he refuses to make it a test of fellowship and co-operation.

Allow me to present a few basic Scriptures to show you what I mean.

1) **Genesis 1:4** -- *"And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness."*

- 2) **Leviticus 20:24b** -- *"I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people."*
- 3) **Leviticus 20:26** -- *"And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people that ye should be mine."*

ALL of the highlighted words in the above verses come from the *same* Hebrew word. In Genesis 1 God says that it was good to have the light differentiated from the darkness. That is true in the spiritual realm as well as the physical. The most dangerous parts of the day are dawn when the darkness fights giving way to the light, and dusk, when light finally succumbs to the darkness. Likewise, the most confusing and destructive time, spiritually, is the compromise between the "light of truth" and the "darkness of error."

In that sense then, the **primary purpose of Biblical separation is to maintain a difference between light and darkness, both physically and spiritually.**

God further states in the two verses in Leviticus 20 that it was He, God, who did the separating of

His people from the other people, that they should be (a) *"holy unto Me"*, and (b) *"that ye should be mine."*

It is interesting to be reminded that God commands His children, in the matter of separation, to *"touch not the unclean thing"* (II Corinthians 6:17). The beloved disciple, John, emphatically states that *"God is light, and in him is NO darkness at all"* (I John 1:5). Contrast that statement with the words of Jesus in John 3:19, *"And this is the condemnation, that light [that is He Who said "I am the light of the world"] is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil [they still loved their sin]."*

II. The Practice of Biblical Separation

"Practice" is what we do with what we know. It is the daily outworking of that which we know is true intellectually. If a believer really does love the Lord, such love will be evidenced by the way he (or she) lives; in his (or her) "manner of conversation" (or lifestyle). With respect to this study, such love for the Lord will be evidenced by the kind of music that permeates the life within and pours forth to others. In a very real sense, music is only a barometer of one's inner

spiritual life. It has been said that music is only a symptom. That is true for the Bible says "...as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Proverbs 23:7); "keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23); "...out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). If one's heart is right with God, his music will be right as well. A truly sensitive, spirit-filled believer should have a keen awareness of those things that are not right with God. The Lord Jesus said, "***If you love me, keep my commandments***" (John 14:15). And in verse 23, he continued, "***If a man love me, he will keep my words.***" A worldly Christian's life will be evidenced by worldly music. It's as simple as that. However, it must not be supposed that good music is necessarily evidence of a Spirit-filled Christian as there are many other factors in life to be considered as well. Here we are only considering the area of music. While it may be only one evidence, it *is* still an evidence.

III. The Power of the Scriptures re. Biblical Separation

There are a number of Scriptures that could be taken into consideration here, but neither time nor space will permit more than a few choice ones. Now, while none of the Scriptures given below

deal with music per se, there are basic principles here that apply as much to music as they do to other areas of life. Consider them carefully.

- A) **Leviticus 10:8-11** -- *"The LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations: And that ye may **put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean.**"*
- B) **Leviticus 11:44-47** -- *"For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be **holy; for I am holy** For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be **holy, for I am holy.** This is the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth: to make **a difference between the unclean and the clean...."***
- C) **Leviticus 20:25,26** -- *"Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean ...**which I have separated from you as unclean. And ye shall be holy unto me: for I***

the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people that ye should be mine"

What you find in these verses is a principle of always maintaining a distinction between the holy and unholy and between the clean and the unclean. That principle goes far beyond mere Old Testament dietary laws as is shown by Paul's statement in II Corinthians to "touch not the *unclean* thing."

D) Ezekiel 44:23 cf. with Ezekiel 22:26 *"And they shall teach my people the **difference between the holy and profane**, and cause them to **discern between the unclean and the clean**" (44:23).*

One of the responsibilities of the spiritual leadership in the Old Testament was not only to **do**, but also to **teach** the Lord's people. This responsibility is based on the command given way back in Leviticus 10:11 where God, through Moses, commanded Aaron and his sons from generation to generation to **teach the people** the statutes (the Word) of God. They were to help the people to **discern** between what was holy and what was unholy. That is still one of the responsibilities of the man of God today: to help believers to discern. I fear that, to a large degree

today, God's people have failed to learn Biblical discernment. It is for that reason that I have taken the time to study, research, and write on subjects like this, even though it brings down the wrath of many. However, for me to do less would be to fail my Lord in my responsibility to teach others what I have learned.

Paul prays for the Philippian believers that their *"love [would] abound yet more and more in knowledge [the accumulation of facts] and in **all judgment** [or "discernment as to the use of that knowledge"]; that ye may **approve things that are excellent**..." (Philippians 1:9-10). The other side of that is learning when and how to **disapprove** of those things that are not excellent or God-honoring.*

Now in Ezekiel 22:26 you find that God is condemning the priests of Israel for, not only neglecting to teach the Word of God to others, but also for neglecting to live by that Word themselves. I am afraid that there are many similar comparisons even in "evangelical" circles, yet today.

E) Haggai 2:11-13 *"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his*

garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean."

You see, the "clean" did not make the unclean clean, nor did the "holy" make the unholy holy. The opposite was true and has always been true. It is the unholy and the unclean that defiles, not the other way around. Yet there is a mindset today that wants to justify the unholy music of the world by simply "touching" so-called "spiritual" or religious words to it. What some people don't seem to realize is that the "Christian" words do not cleanse the unholy music, but, rather, the unholy music defiles the message.

F) I Corinthians 5:6-7; Galatians 5:9

*(I Corinthians 5:6-7) "...Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? **Purge out** therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump..."*

(Galatians 5:9) "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

If I took a large glass of pure spring water, and then added but one little drop of cyanide to it, would you take a drink? You may say, "Don't be crazy man! The whole thing is deadly; it's poison! What are you trying to do, kill me?" But wait! Think of all the *hundreds* of good drops of pure spring water compared with only *one* drop of poison. Are you telling me that all of that good water has not even enough power to dilute the poison to a harmless state? The answer is obvious. Why? Because "*a little leaven leaventh the whole lump.*"

G) Romans 12:2 cf. Leviticus 18:3-5 & 20:23

(Romans 12:2) "*And be not conformed to this world...*"

(Leviticus 18:3-5) "*After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk* ["live" the way they do] *in their ordinances.*" (He goes on to talk about the importance of keeping God's laws.)

(Leviticus 20:23) "*And ye shall not walk in the manner of the nation, which I cast out before you* [the wicked and idolatrous

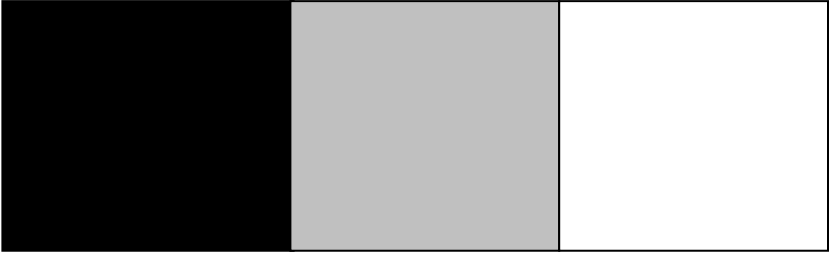
inhabitants of the land]: *for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.*"

God so despised the wicked, idolatrous ways of the former inhabitants of the land that He drove them out of the land and gave it, instead, to His people Israel. Now God reminds, yea, He commands, His people, with a solemn warning, to avoid living the way the inhabitants of the land did, and to obey God's laws and statutes instead. For that is the only way to blessing. It was so then and it is still so today.

What we are finding today is an almost blatant disregard for these principles. The attitude today is one of "Who cares?" An alarming, vast number of professing Christians (and I must emphasize "professing") do not seem to care or want to be bothered by what the Bible says. And yet they claim to be "spirit-filled." One wonders, with what "spirit" are they filled? Certainly not the **Holy** Spirit of a **holy** God, to be sure! In our long ministry of missionary-evangelism I have encountered many who have had the attitude, and even on occasion actually said words to the effect, "I know what the Bible says, **BUT ...**" Friend, if you know what the Bible says, there are not "buts!"

How Far Does Satan's Kingdom Extend?

Satan's Kingdom \Longrightarrow God's Kingdom



A

B

C

The question is often asked about something called the "gray" areas in life. Just what are they, anyway? Well, if you look at the graph above, you find that God's Kingdom (C) is one of purity, holiness and righteousness because He is holy. The antithesis, or opposite, of purity is **impurity**. The antithesis of holiness and righteousness is **unholiness** and **unrighteousness**. And that is exactly how Satan's kingdom (A) is described in the book of Ephesians: *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked [lived] according to the course of this world, according to the **prince of the power of the air** [Satan], the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience"* (Ephesians 2:1-2); *"for we wrestle not against*

*flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the **rulers of the darkness of this world** [Satan], against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). Everything that is sick and sinister, debauched and depraved, wicked and evil is a part of Satan's kingdom. His kingdom is the blackest of the black, the worst of the worst. In contrast, God's kingdom is one of righteousness, purity, goodness, and light.*

But what of the "in between," the gray area (B) where things are not so clear? Far from being black versus white, this area is sort of a dull gray. Nothing is really clear, and there is a lot of confusion, uncertainty, and lack of general order. Remember that God said, "*For if the trumpet give an **uncertain** sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (I Corinthians 14:8). And "God is not the author of **confusion**, but of peace..." (vs.14: 33). "*Let all things be done **decently and in order**" (vs. 14:40).**

It is my contention that everything in the muddled, gray area between the "Light" of God's Kingdom and the outright "Darkness" of Satan's kingdom is still Satan's realm. It is part of his sinister domain of confusion. Let all who will stand for Truth stand on the side of Him Who

declared, "*I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*" (John 8:12). Could anything be plainer than that? Remember the glass of pure spring water with only one drop of cyanide? "*A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*" The oft-questioned "gray" area is a lump which has been infected with the leaven of this world. Best to leave it alone.

In a nutshell, then, CCM is wrong, it is sin, if for no other reason, than its clear violation of the Biblical injunction to "*Come out from among them* [the world with its appetites and allurements] *and be ye separate, saith the Lord...*" (II Corinthians 6:17). When God says, "**Come out!**" all that stay "*in*" (for whatever reason) are in sin. CCM is sin because it "conforms" when God says we are *not* to conform. Quite frankly, there is absolutely *no* justification for CCM, musically, morally or Biblically.

In our next section we will deal with the people involved in the music program of the church. What kind of people should they be? Are there any specific qualifications? These and other issues will be addressed in the later chapters of this book.

PART TWO: PRACTICAL

Chapter Six

The Personnel of Music

In this chapter I want to discuss with you something about the people involved with the church music program. Like any program of the church, its strengths will be the strengths of those involved. So will its weaknesses. We will look together at four main areas.

"Saved"

In my studies over the years I have read and heard of those who feel that there is some justification for using unsaved people in various areas of the church music program. I could not disagree more. If the music program of the church is recognized as a ministry of the church, it only stands to reason that those who minister know the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour in the same way that the pastor does.

It would be ludicrous to think of having unsaved Sunday School teachers, or unsaved deacons, etc. An individual who does not know the Lord as personal Saviour does not have the same outlook

on the ministry as a saved spirit-filled believer does. By the same token, this is not to say that every professing Christian is necessarily filled with the Holy Spirit. It is sad, but true, that there have been many "jokes" (although there is nothing funny about them) about the music program being the "battleground" of the church. Others speak of what they call the "temperamental musicians, and you know how they are!"

It may be true to some extent that many musicians have a sort of temperament that others may not understand (thinking them to be somewhat eccentric), but if such people are to be used of God to glorify God through the ministry of sacred music, they must be saved, and spirit-filled! No other substitute will do.

"Surrendered to God"

The idea of surrender goes along with what has just been said. Too many people in the church today are in a state of spiritual lethargy. Some of them may have been saved for a number of years, even decades, but have never really surrendered their lives to the Lord. Salvation is one step. In fact it is the first step taken in the Christian life. Sadly for many, that is as far as they go. But,

there is another step that, in a sense, is almost as important as the first and that is the step of surrender.

The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 12:1 the following: *"I beseech you therefore, **brethren** [i.e. believers], by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy [separate from sin], acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."* Before one can surrender his life to God, he must first have a life (in Christ) to surrender.

You see, the Bible teaches that my life doesn't really belong to me anymore. The day that God saved me, He took over the ownership of my life and I now belong to Him. The Bible says, *"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are **not** your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, **which are God's**"* (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

Unless a church member is fully surrendered to the Lord, all he (or she) can do in the music ministry is perform. The church ministry is *not* a place for mere performances. We have concert halls for that purpose. The church service is a

time when believers meet to worship and serve Him, Who alone is worthy. If our performance is only self-pleasing or self-serving, it is not done for the glory of God and would be better left out.

Each church musician, whether the choir director, song leader, accompanist, choir member, soloist, instrumentalist, or other, must recognize that each has been given special talents by God to be used for God's glory. One is not in competition with another. Each is a member of a team: first, as a member of the Body of Christ and second, as part of a ministry team. Only then can there really be a spirit of unity as, together, we seek to worship and serve the Lord through music.

"Well Studied in Music"

In order for the music ministry of the church to be most effective, it is important that the musicians be as well trained in their respective areas as possible. Think with me about the following areas of musical ministry.

1) Music Director

This position is sometimes referred to as the Minister of Music. It is one of the most important positions in the entire ministry of music in the

church. His ministry is *directly under* that of the pastor. Even if the pastor of the church does not know much about music, he is still responsible for the overall spiritual atmosphere of the church and should never surrender his Biblical authority. The Music Director is under that authority. It is essential, therefore, that there be a good working relationship between the Music Director and the pastor. You will probably find the following rather amusing. I received it through my e-mail. My reason for putting it here is to demonstrate in a lighter way the potential problems than can exist between the minister and the music man if the flesh is allowed to take control.

"The Preacher vs. the Music Director"

There was once a church where the preacher and the music director were not getting along very well. As time went on the rift between them began to spill over into the worship services.

*One week the preacher preached on commitment and how we should all dedicate ourselves to the service of God. The music director chose for the closing hymn "**I Shall Not Be Moved.**"*

The next week the preacher's sermon was on tithing and the importance of gladly giving to the

work of the Lord. This time the music director selected for the closing hymn "Jesus Paid It All."

The following week the minister's sermon was about gossiping and the need for all to watch their tongues. And what song do you suppose the director chose? "I Love To Tell the Story."

With all this going on constantly, the pastor became very disgusted over the situation. The following Sunday evening he told the congregation that he was considering resigning as pastor. This time, the music director chose the hymn "Oh, Why Not Tonight?"

Well, it came to pass that the pastor did indeed resign. The next week he informed the congregation that it was Jesus who had led him there and that it was Jesus who was leading him away. At the close of the service the music director chose the hymn "What A Friend We Have In Jesus."

All kidding aside, had this been a true story, it would have, indeed, been a sad and sorry one. Such attitudes among the servants of the Lord are but a demonstration of the flesh out of control rather than being kept in subjection.

It is the responsibility of the Music Director to oversee the entire music program in the church. That does not mean that he **does** all the work, but it all comes under his jurisdiction. Generally he is both the choir director and song leader. He may or may not direct any other choirs such as a childrens' choir or youth choir. It is almost an imperative that such a person be able to read music well and have some training, even informally, in song leading and choral work. If he is not reasonably well trained, the effectiveness of his ministry will be greatly lessened. However, it is not necessary that such a position be a fulltime staff position unless the size and financial stability of the church either require or enable it.

It is also the Music Director's responsibility to arrange and co-ordinate all special music. While each person doing special music may arrange for his own accompanist, it is the Music Director's responsibility to arrange for the accompanists (such as pianist and/or organist) for the regular services as well as any special services.

2) Song Leader

As has already been mentioned, the song leading is often, but not always, done by the Music Director. Regardless of who the song leader is,

there are some important things to be noted in order to have an effective song service. Let me say at this point, how important the song service is to the rest of the service. A poor, slow, or dragging song service, interspersed with a few reluctant soft-spoken testimonies, can kill a service faster than anything I know. One reason so many are saying that they are going with the more contemporary sound is because they can't stomach the slow, boring old hymns of the faith. Some of those hymns may indeed be old, but they should never be unnecessarily slow, dull or boring. If they are, and I say this as kindly as I can, it is the fault of the one leading the service. The song leader must also guard against talking too much either before the singing begins or between verses. He must save the preaching for the pastor.

The song leader should know what he is doing and do it well. Ideally, he should have a basic knowledge of music, be able to read music (both treble and bass clefs), and be familiar with the various "beat patterns" and be able to use them effectively. If the song leader is *not* familiar with these things, he should make it a priority to learn them. There are books and materials available to help in these areas.

Planning the Song Service

The song service should never be planned in a sloppy or shoddy way. Too many a person has entered the pulpit and asked if anybody has a favorite. There is a place for taking favorites and such a service should be planned accordingly. Many an inexperienced song leader, though perhaps doing the best he can, stands behind the pulpit and starts flipping through the pages looking for something to sing. *Never* is that a way to conduct a song service! Time and effort should be put in ahead of time in planning a meaningful service of song. Remember that the purpose of the song service is *not* merely to fill time, or get a service started, or because nobody knows what else to do. When possible, it is a good idea to find out the subject matter of the pastor's message and plan the songs and hymns around that theme. In his book *Present-Day Evangelism*, J. Wilbur Chapman tells of how P.P. Bliss came to write one of his greatest gospel songs. *"Years ago when P.P. Bliss was in the midst of his greatest work he came one day into the presence of his co-laborers and said, 'The subject which has been announced for today needs a special hymn and on my knees God has given me the following:*

*"Man of sorrows, what a name,
For the Son of God who came,
Ruined sinners to reclaim!
Hallelujah, what a Saviour!"*

*"Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned he stood;
Sealed my pardon with his blood;
Hallelujah, what a Saviour!"*

*"Guilty, vile and helpless, we;
Spotless Lamb of God was he;
Full atonement! Can it be?
Hallelujah, what a Saviour!"*

*"Lifted up was he to die,
It is finished, was his cry,
Now in heaven exalted high;
Hallelujah, what a Saviour!"*

*"When he comes, our glorious king,
All his ransomed home to bring,
Then anew this song we'll sing;
Hallelujah, what a Saviour!"*

Chapman continues, *"He laid the piece of paper down before his friends and behold in the verses was a complete statement of the work of Christ from his incarnation to his coming in glory. The effect of the hymn upon the audience was something truly remarkable. It is said that they took up the refrain again and again until it*

*almost seemed as if they were part of an angel choir [raising the risen Son of God.]*²⁰

It is not difficult to see the impact a song and a song service can make in people's lives. In no way do I wish to discourage those from leading a song service just because they don't know how to read music. Sometimes a good song leader may not know how to read the notes, but he knows the song and its message and has the ability to get people to sing it well. In order to get the most out of a song service, it is important to have the best-trained, willing, and spirit-filled man available. It is the song leader's job to get the people to sing and it is the responsibility of those accompanying the singing to follow his directions. It is the song service that sets the atmosphere for the rest of the service. It is very difficult for any preacher to preach effectively and enthusiastically when, during the preliminaries, everything possible has been done to prepare the congregation for a nice Sunday morning or evening nap! The song service should create a spirit of anticipation as hearts are prepared for the preaching of God's Word.

²⁰ Chapman, Wilbur J. *Present-day Evangelism*, New York, NY: Baker & Taylor Co., 1903, pp. 193,194.

Choosing the Songs

Much care should be given to the choosing of the hymns or songs to be sung. The subject of the preacher's message can often be used as a guideline for choosing hymns along the same theme. It is also a good idea to select songs and hymns that vary in tempo.

The type of service should also be taken into consideration. For example, an evangelistic service will call for songs of a more lively, evangelistic nature whereas a morning worship service may call for a bit more formal, majestic type of hymn. Hymns basically are about God and His attributes and are most often directed to Him in adoration and worship (example: "Holy! Holy! Holy!"). On the other hand, the gospel song is more like a testimony set to music (example: "Redeemed! How I Love to Proclaim It!"). That is why hymns are more often sung as part of a worship service and gospel songs are sung as part of an evangelistic meeting.

Variety in the Song Service

Variety throughout will greatly enhance the song service and keep it from getting dull or boring.

There are several variations that can be used effectively.

- a) Have the congregation sing in full harmony, or parts (soprano, alto, tenor, bass).
- b) Have the men sing a stanza joined by the women on the chorus.
- c) Reverse the above and have the women sing a verse or chorus by themselves. One song that is extremely effective with ladies' voices is the chorus of "I Know Whom I Have Believed", especially when done in two parts.
- d) Do one verse in unison with everyone singing only the melody.
- e) Have the congregation sing a verse or chorus *a cappella*, that is, without instrumental accompaniment.
- f) Use the choral response (or echo effect). For example, the chorus of the song "Christ Returneth" can be sung as follows: (Men) "O Lord Jesus how long? (Ladies response) How long? (All) 'ere we shout the glad song"

The important thing is to keep the song service enthusiastic, fresh, and interesting. Let the people rejoice together in *their* song of praise. The song leader is just that, a leader.

3) Organist and/or Pianist

Some churches have both an organist and a pianist. Praise the Lord for those who do! Some churches have only one or the other. Still others, sadly, have neither and sing *a cappella*, that is, without instrumental accompaniment. While not impossible, it is always more difficult to establish and keep a good spirited service going without any instrumental accompaniment. The two instruments complement each other well, especially when they are played well.

It is important that each musician, respectively, practices well prior to each service where he will be assisting and plays at his best level possible for God's glory. It must be remembered that it is the song leader who is leading the service and who is to set the tempo for each song. Whether the accompanists agree or disagree with the tempo is immaterial. It is their responsibility to follow him. The temptation to set a different tempo (whether faster or slower) must always be resisted in order to have an effective song service with an even flow.

When it comes to playing the introduction for a congregational song, a general rule of thumb is for either the piano or organ (never both together)

to play the last line or last phrase of the song. The tempo should *not* slow down at the end of the introduction, but should move at the same pace at which the congregation will sing. The one playing the introduction should look at the song leader for the desired tempo.

Special care should be given to one of the most critical points in the service and that is the invitation. It is at this point that spiritual decisions are being made and the music can either help or hinder. It is the opinion of this author that during the invitation the best music is soft, reasonably slow, and prayerful music on the organ. It is much more conducive to what is taking place than music on the piano. However, a proper stop on the organ is vitally important in order to produce a prayerful, meditative atmosphere. Usually, it is best for the organist to begin playing softly as the invitation begins and continue playing until the Invitational hymn has been announced and the congregation is ready to sing.

4) Choir Members

Eight of the happiest and most delightful years of my life were spent serving a local church as Music Director. Out of an adult choir of more

than thirty members, fewer than six were either trained in music or were able to read music. But I was not to be daunted by that fact. I plunged right in and encouraged my choir to follow me, and I would lead them to musical heights they had never dreamed possible. It was not always easy but we enjoyed ourselves along the way anyway. Music does not have to be a drab, dull experience. It should be an extremely and satisfying experience. Choir practice became a highlight of my choir's lives.

It has been my experience that some of the best choir members have had virtually no musical training and, for the most part, are unable to read music. But that is part of the director's challenge. To the choir member I would simply say, first and foremost, *it is a ministry*. Whenever singing in a choir ceases to be a ministry in your heart and soul, it is time to cease being a part of that ministry.

Singing in the choir is *not* a place to "show off" your beautiful voice. It is a time and place to join your voice with other voices to make *one united voice* for the Lord. Each choir member should do his best to attend *every* rehearsal and *be there on time*. If and when possible, learn how to read

music. It will expand your musical horizons to almost unbelievable levels.

Let me also suggest, yea, plead with you, while rehearsal time can be a blessing, even fun, *please, do not waste your time, other members' time, or the director's time* by silliness and unnecessary visiting and talking that can be most distracting. Make the most of that valuable hour as you prepare together as a unit for the worship of a holy God on the next Lord's day.

5) Music Secretary

Here is an area of service not often considered necessarily as a ministry. Frankly, every "job" done in or around a Christ-honoring church should be considered ministry, even cutting the grass and fixing the plumbing. The ministry of the Music Secretary is to take care of the music library, assign music to choir members, make sure all music is collected and accounted for, and generally keep track of the music. It is not a responsibility to be taken lightly or performed carelessly. To do so can turn out to be very costly in replacing lost and/or damaged music. If you have ever been involved in purchasing choral music, you know it can be very expensive. Maintaining the music library is just good

stewardship and should be taken on by someone who is willing to do all the work (and there will be a surprising amount of it) as a ministry to the Lord.

"Willing to Sacrifice"

There will be times when the ministry of music will require sacrifice, especially during those times of the year (such as the Christmas season) when there are special programs demanding extra rehearsals. At times there may even be some Saturday rehearsals. Understand that they are a necessary part of any effective church music program and cannot be avoided. Be patient and be willing to sacrifice. You will not be the only one asked to do so. Your spirit and attitude will go a long way to ensure a Christ-honoring program that may touch some lives for many years to come.

Whenever possible, it would be good for the church to provide funding to send their musicians, particularly the director, choir/song leader and accompanists to an occasional church music workshop or seminar. There are several around the country at various times of the year. Anything that can be done to strengthen the

church's music ministry will be money well spent.

Let me offer a word to the smaller church with few people and no music budget. As I mentioned at the end of chapter one, music is the second most important ministry the church has, second only to the preached Word. There a few things you might be able to do to help.

- (1) Pray.
- (2) If there is a Bible college or school within a four-hour drive, you may be able to arrange for one or two of their students to come on weekends and help out with the music ministry.
- (3) Should there be a larger church within access to your church, you may be able to enlist some of their people to help as part of a mission outreach to your church.
- (4) Encourage the young people (including younger children) to take music lessons with a special emphasis on piano. A good piano background is a pre-requisite for playing the organ. Other instruments can be encouraged a bit later. Piano is basic and should be

encouraged first. In so doing, a church can develop some adequate accompanists in just a few short years. As long as there are children, there is continual potential.

"Copyrights"

Allow me one final thought that needs to be taken very seriously and that is the subject of copyrights. In my ministry of evangelism over the past twenty-two years, I have noticed a number of churches that have violated the copyright laws. One church had piles of music that they had borrowed from another church and then photocopied. That practice is a violation of the law. The excuse was given that the church was small and could not afford to buy music. That is no excuse and does not justify breaking the law. Someone else told me that these composers and publishers are just in it for the money. Whether that is true or not does not give one the right to disregard the law. What is wrong with the composers and publishers making money? That is their livelihood and is no different from any other legitimate line of work. The Bible says that the workman is worthy of his hire (Luke 10:7). These laws are in place to protect the authors, composers, and publishers, from others stealing their work. When a church

violates those laws they become guilty of stealing. Photocopying a page of music to avoid a bad page turn is one thing. Photocopying to avoid buying the music is quite another. Such photocopied music should be destroyed at once, without making excuses, if the blessing of God is desired.

You can always contact, via phone or letter, the person (or company) owning the copyrights for material you want to use. That information can usually be found on back of the title page. You might be surprised how easy it is to get permission, sometimes even free, just for the courtesy of asking. If a small fee is requested, do not hesitate to pay it. Your only other option is to not use it. If you do what is right, God will be pleased and will honor and bless your ministry.

Chapter Seven

The Performance of Music

Much of what will be said here has already been mentioned and so will be brief and to the point. Much explanation should not be needed for most of the thoughts.

1) Plan well in advance

Too much emphasis cannot here be laid. In far too many churches, regardless of size, little, if any, serious planning goes into the music ministry. There is an all too pervasive attitude of, "It's for the Lord, after all. Anything will do. God will understand." Will He? The *Bema* will tell. Since much thought goes into the pastor's sermons each week, so serious thought and planning should be given to the overall musical ministry.

Plan the schedule of special music at least three months in advance. Have a written calendar with each person's name on it and the date of his

ministry. Keep in touch with him as his time of ministry approaches. Note any last minute changes and have a substitute ready when possible.

2) Practice well

None of this "It's-for-the-Lord" nonsense. If you are going to participate in the music ministry of your church, then do it well, to the very best of your ability. Don't wait until Saturday evening to decide what you are going to play or sing the next day. You should know three months ahead of time, so there is no excuse for not being prepared. God gave His best for you, so give your best for Him!

3) Prepare Seriously

Take your preparation just as seriously as the pastor takes his sermon preparation. Your part in the service may be the very thing that God uses to minister to some precious soul in need. It may be your song, or even your demeanor, the smile on your face, the glow of your countenance as you sing or play from the heart, that reaches deep down into that heart and grabs its attention. It is the special music that is most often the introduction to the preacher's message. Only eternity

will reveal the effects that godly music has had in bringing countless millions into the fold of God's saving grace. Take it seriously. Don't allow yourself to become giddy and goofy if you make a mistake. Ask the Lord to use you as an instrument of His blessing and keep ever before you the purpose for which you are ministering.

4) Pray for God's Blessing

Even before you enter the service in which you will be ministering, be in a prayerful attitude. Pray for yourself as you rely on His grace to allow you to be effective. Pray for those in the service, that God will use your ministry as a way of helping prepare their hearts to receive the Word of God as it is preached. Pray for the one who will be preaching the Word in that service, whether he is the regular pastor, or a guest speaker such as a missionary or an evangelist. And, above all else, pray that Christ will be exalted and God glorified in every part of that service. And remember you are a part of that service.

I want to share with you a glowing example of how these principles, when applied, can truly enhance a service. A lay couple that we know intimately, and who are in their late seventies,

have become involved in a hymn sing ministry in the retirement village where they live. At first there was more than one song leader and each leader was responsible for choosing and leading the hymn sing in his assigned month. Attendance began to dwindle for most of the hymn sings except when our friend Dick was leading and his wife Jeannette accompanying. Attendance was high when they were involved. Why? Simply because they put into practice the principles I have tried to impress upon you as important.

They took the ministry very seriously. ***Much*** prayer and thought went into the selection of ***each*** hymn and song (usually around a common theme) that was to be used. They would practice them ***almost daily*** during the month prior to their hymn sing. It reached a point where they were asked to take, not just the occasional hymn sing, but ***all*** of them. That has become their monthly ministry. Each month's attendance has increased to the point where they need a larger place to meet. These retired people are enjoying their ministry of song among other retirees. Their enthusiastic and well-prepared song leading and accompaniment have created a real spirit of enthusiasm and expectancy each month and been a source of great blessing to many.

I want to share with you some thoughts I found in a book first published in 1923, entitled, Better Music in Our Churches.²¹ Compiled by John Walker, it is a most interesting compilation of different essays relating to the ministry of music. It is published by the Methodist Book Concern and is dedicated to Methodism's Music Ministers. This particular excerpt is from an article by Orien W. Fifer. Enjoy.

The Right Uses of Music in the Program of the Church

*"If music in the church is simply to take up time while the preacher finds his text; if it is to be a means whereby somebody shows off and advertises some vocal gymnastics for the praise of all the relatives; if it is simply to fill up gaps between the testimonies of very slow speaking saints; if it is to be a separate program from the program of the minister -- a sort of sideshow of amusement, amazement, and distraction; if it is to have no quality or purpose that is religious -- **then it has no place in the church.** Like fire, music in the church is a fine servant, but a mighty poor master. If the music runs the church*

²¹ Walker, John. Better Music in Our Churches, New York, NY: The Methodist Book Concern, 1923.

program, or if there is a wall of separation between the choir leader and the preacher, between the work of the choir and the prayer of the church, it has no place in the church" (p. 19).

*"The music in the church services should be a blending with one consistent plan of the minister. He is **ex-officio** chairman of the music committee. He may delegate the details, but he must never abdicate. **The music is, in the main, to make the message effective by helping prepare the congregation to receive it"** (p. 21).*

"A singing church is very apt to be a spiritual church" (p. 28).

*"Church music should be standardized. Ditties and jingles and jazz compositions in words or notes should be refused place in every school and sanctuary. **Cultivation of a taste for cheap music creates a cheap type of experience"** (p. 29).*

I couldn't have said it better myself. And this came from the era of the "roaring twenties"! God bring us back to Scriptural standards of music and ministry.

D.B. Towner
(famed musician and hymn writer, in 1901)

"There are two extremes which should be avoided in choosing music for evangelistic meetings: first, the frivolous light songs, and, secondly, the too staid and grave ones. There is a place for sentimental songs in evangelistic meetings. By this we mean songs with a good religious flavor, on topics calling to mind home and dear ones, for through these songs the emotions are stirred, and men are frequently made to think and finally to repent. Of course, these songs must be of a high order, and judiciously used.

"In short, what is needed in revival or evangelistic meetings are hymns that contain a message for the sinner, founded on the Word of God, worshipful hymns for believers, and hymns of thanksgiving and praise, written by men and women whose hearts are aglow with the love of God, presented by a leader who is a musician anointed by the Holy Ghost for such service. When these conditions are obtained, the music in evangelistic meetings will be a mighty power, and no one will doubt that it has the approval of Almighty God.

"When a soloist sings, he should do it with just as definite a purpose of leading someone to Christ as the preacher has when he preaches. He is not there to entertain people, but to save people, and he needs the power [of the Holy Spirit] for this work just as much as the one who preaches the Word. The same is true of the choir. They should be trained to realize that the salvation of some in the audience hangs upon the way they sing and the way in which they conduct themselves. Both the soloist and the choir should come to the meeting after very much and very definite prayer to God for His blessing upon their work." ²²

You will observe in the above quotation the emphasis laid on a qualified, Spirit-filled leader, as well as the importance of the choral and vocal musicians. The title of this book keeps it in perspective. Music is a ministry to, and through, the local church for God's glory. In the next chapter we will look at the purpose of music in the church.

²² Torrey, R.A. How To Promote and Conduct a Successful Revival; Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1901.

Chapter Eight

The Purpose of the Music Ministry

Now we come to a discussion of the purpose of the music ministry of the church and of Christian music in general. In the realm of Contemporary Christian Music, there is an almost total lack of understanding of the purpose of Christian music. CCM artists used to say that they were using their style of music (rock) as a means of winning thousands to Christ. Although that is still a rather standard defense of their unscriptural music, there are an increasing number who are beginning to be honest about the number of concerts held, the recordings sold (the CCM world has its "Dove Awards", their "platinum and gold" albums, etc.), and the profits to be made. As a case in point, *one* CCM artist, in *one* year, on *one* album made a *net profit* from the sales of that album of **9.5 million** dollars and an *additional 2.5 million* dollars profit (after expenses) from a several month concert tour promoting the album. That is a total of **11.5 million dollars in one year!**

Even a casual observation of the CCM scene will reveal a great deal of self-exaltation and idol

worship. (Ever hear of young people referring to their favorite rock star as "my idol"?) On one television program observed briefly by this author, CCM rock star Carmen came on stage followed by his line of wiggling, writhing, sensuous chorus girls to the deafening screams of the "fans" in the audience! That, my friend, is idol worship and has no place in the worship of a thrice-holy God!

Let me suggest three primary purposes of Christian music. It will be obvious that the purpose of music in the church program is the same.

I. "To Exalt God"

In the Bible we find these words, "*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do [that covers every area of my life], do ALL to the glory of God*" (I Corinthians 10:31). Everything the believer is and does is to be done for the glory of God. God must come first in our lives, before our music, our friends, our dreams, before it all: "...that in **all things** he [Christ] might have the *pre-eminence* [first place]" (Colossians 1:18).

In Matthew 5:16 the Lord Jesus clearly indicated that a Christian could actually cause an unsaved,

lost person to give God glory by the way the Christian lives. *"Let **your** light so shine before men, that they may see **your** good works, and glorify **your Father** [not their Father] which is in heaven."*

So then, very clearly, the first purpose of music is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and to glorify God. Could there possibly be any purpose, any reason, nobler than that?

II. "To Edify Believers"

The second purpose of Christian music, second only to the principle of bringing glory and honor to our Heavenly Father, is the edification of the saints. Saints are not those who have been canonized by a church, but are those who have trusted Jesus Christ as Saviour. The Bible calls them "*saints*" in such passages as Romans 1:7 and I Corinthians 1:2. Truly "Christian" music is an expression of a truly "Christian" life seeking to exalt the Saviour and minister to His people through the medium of sacred music. Take a moment to note the following Scriptures. Each makes a powerful statement about the use of music. The Bible must be our final authority and guide in all areas of life including our music.

A. He is the source of our song.

- *(Isaiah 12:2) -- Isaiah's testimony is given in this wonderful verse. He writes, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song." In verse five he continues, "Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things...."*
- In one form or another, the word "sing" is found some seventy times in the book of Psalms. In every instance, that song is directed to God.
- **(Psalm 51:14)** -- *"Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness."* (See also Psalm 89:1 and 101:1; to name but two.)

B. He is the subject of our song.

- **(Psalm 40:3)** -- *"And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God...."* Here it is quite clear that God is not only the source of our song, but the subject as well. That "new song" is one of praise to the Lord.

As you study the development of hymnody up through the early part of the twentieth century, you cannot help becoming aware of the various attributes of God that have been masterfully woven throughout the lyrical content of the verse. Unfortunately, to a large degree, that is not true of vast amounts of modern so-called Christian music. Today there is much froth, both musically and doctrinally, and little substance.

- **(Colossians 3:16)** -- *"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."*

Please notice that this verse, and therefore its admonition, is given *to believers*. God says that music is to teach. One of the main things God intended for Christian music to accomplish was the edification (or building up) of His saints. Observe the teaching ministry of sacred song. The word "*teach*" means "to impart knowledge". Sacred music should teach about God and His attributes. An example would be "Holy! Holy! Holy!" -- a great hymn that teaches about the holiness of God.

But there is also the admonition in sacred song. The word "*admonish*" means "to warn". A good example is the song, "Is Your All on the Altar?" -- in particular the phrase "*you can never be blessed or have peace and sweet rest until all on the altar is laid.*" -- a great song that teaches the importance of full surrender to God.

C. He is the spirit of our song.

- **(Ephesians 5:18,19)** -- "*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*"

The Apostle Paul is not making a case for drinking in moderation. He is rather using wine as an example of that which intoxicates and therefore controls. He is simply warning against allowing oneself to be controlled, in the way alcohol controls when one is drunk, by *anything* save the Holy Spirit. Paul goes on to emphasize the fact that ***Spirit-filled living results in Spirit-filled singing!*** The Spirit-filled life just as naturally bursts out into song as the song flows from a song sparrow in the evening. That is one reason

that I believe that the way a congregation sings and participates in the song service is a gauge of their spiritual temperature. What we are spiritually is reflected in the way we sing. It cannot be otherwise.

III. "To Evangelize the Lost"

Since I have already covered this area in an earlier section, a brief review will here suffice. In Psalm 40:1-3, David talks about his conviction over sin (vs.1); his conversion from sin (vs.2a); his consecration to God (vs.2b); the new chorus God gave him to sing (vs.3a); and the ultimate conversion of others as a result (vs.3b). We have already noted that what the lost saw in David's life was not his music but the change in his life that resulted from his conversion.

Uncountable are the stories of Christians who were influenced to take Christ as their Saviour through the ministry of sacred song. Perhaps at a funeral, or perhaps at a revival meeting. In some cases, it was a song that floated out onto the streets of a busy city as a poor sinner strolled by completely indifferent to the things of God, until his heart's chord was struck by some message expressed in sweet song.

Every great revival in history has been accompanied by great music. The R.A. Torreys and Wilbur Chapmans have all had their Charles Alexanders. The Billy Sundays have had their Homer Rodeheavers; and the D.L. Moodys their Ira Sankeys.

While good, godly Christian music can have a dynamic effect in reaching the lost for Christ, the sensual, carnal music of today only leads precious souls further from the Master. The sensual songs of the flesh will never for one moment produce even the slightest spark of conviction for sin. And without conviction for sin, there can never be conversion from sin. However it must all be kept in perspective. The *primary* purpose of Christian music is to exalt Christ and glorify God. It is also divinely designed to edify the believer through teaching and admonishing. And lastly, although not a primary factor, it has proven helpful in winning the lost to Christ.

Conclusion

We have covered a lot of material in this brief study. Let me close by once more stressing the importance of music in the overall ministry of the church. The musical ministry

should not be taken lightly or used carelessly. Those involved in it need to recognize it as a solemn responsibility before God. May God deliver us from ever being guilty of cheapening or smearing the Truth of God's Word and the integrity of His ministry with the cheap, carnal music of the world. Let's not grovel in the gutters of sensual music in order to try to win someone to Christ here and there. Let's proclaim a pure message; with pure motives and pure music. By the grace of God, let's lift poor sinners *out* of the gutters of sin (just as God lifted you and me out of the horrible pit and the mire of sin) and bring them to a *higher plane of Christian experience* for the glory of God! If this little book helps some on to that end, it will not have gone forth in vain.

*May our Lord richly bless you all as you seek
to faithfully serve Him!*

"WESLEY'S DIRECTIONS FOR CONGREGATIONAL SINGING"

(Published in *Sacred Melody* in 1761. Quoted from *Lightwood's Hymn-tunes and Their Story*.)

1. Learn these tunes before you learn any others; afterward learn as many as you can.
2. Sing them exactly as they are printed here, without altering or mending them at all; and if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can.
3. Sing *all*. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weariness hinder you. If it is a cross for you, take it up, and you will find it a blessing.
4. Sing *lustily*²³ and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice

²³ "Characterized by life, spirit, vigor or health; robust or hearty."
(New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language)

now, than when you sung the songs of *Satan*.

5. Sing *modestly*. Do not brawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony; but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound.
6. Sing in *time*. Whatever time is sung be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it; but attend close to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can; and take care not to sing *too slow*. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from among us, and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.
7. Above all, sing *spiritually*. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing *Him* more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord

will approve of here, and reward you when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

Author's note: The church today would do well to take these directions and begin to apply them. A rejoicing people will be a singing people. We are commanded in Scripture to "rejoice in the Lord always." May God give us a song *in* our hearts so we can sing *with* our hearts! Then let us lift our voices together and sing unto Him who, alone, is worthy! Amen.

APPENDIX I

Recommended Reading

The following list of books is given because of the help that can be gleaned from them. Their inclusion here is not intended to be a blanket endorsement of everything in the book. Take what is beneficial to you and your particular needs and use it for the glory of God.

1. Alexander, Helen C. *Charles M. Alexander: A Romance of Song and Soulwinning*, Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1995. (Originally published 1920)
2. Cloud, David. *Contemporary Christian Music Under the Spotlight*, Oak Harbor, WA: Way of Life Literature, 1998.
3. Fisher, Tim. *The Battle for Christian Music*, Greenville, SC: Sacred Music Services, 1992.
4. Garlock, Frank. *The Language of Music*, Greenville, SC: Majesty Music, 1992
5. Lehman, Glenn. *You Can Lead Singing*, Leola, PA: Good Books, 1995.
6. Lovelace & Rice. *Music and Worship in the Church*, Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1960.

7. Orr, N. Lee. *The Church Music Handbook*, Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991.
8. Osbeck, Kenneth. *The Ministry of Music*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961.
9. Scovill, Don. *Song Leading and Church Music*, Lattimore, NC: Ambassador Baptist College.
10. Spence, H.T. *Confronting Contemporary Christian Music*, Dunn, NC: Companion Press, 1997.
11. Sydnor, James R. *The Hymn and Congregational Singing*, Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1960.
12. Terry, Lindsay. *How to Build an Evangelistic Church Music Program*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1974.
13. Thayer, Lynn. *The Church Music Handbook*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971.
14. Walker, John Mann. *Better Music in Our Churches*, New York, NY: The Methodist Book Concern, 1923.
15. Wolf, Garen. *Music of the Bible*, Salem, OH: Schmul Publishing Co., Inc., 1996.

APPENDIX II

"Code of Ministry"

(Used by the author in his choral ministry)

The following "Code of Ministry" is something that I found to be invaluable in helping the music ministry of the church in which I was serving to reach its fullest capacity. It emphasized the ministry of music and the responsibilities that went with the ministry. In this way, each participant knew, in writing, what was expected of him thus avoiding potential problems. There will always be those who want to sing on Sunday morning in the public ministry who don't attend rehearsals. That must be avoided at all costs if the ministry of music is to be done "decently and in order." When our code was implemented with the approval of the Pastor and Deacons, our attendance and morale went way up, and we were able to develop a consistently high quality music program that proved to be a blessing to many. A code of ministry should *never* be considered "legalistic". Legalism is the result of making such standards a means of salvation. There need to be some standards for those who will be

involved in public ministry for the sake of the Lord's testimony as well as that of the church. But such standards are not legalism. Feel free to make any changes or adjustments in order to meet your particular needs.

"Code of Ministry for
Choir & Related Ministries"

1. Choir membership is to be considered a privilege and a ministry, not merely a job or task (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Those who demonstrate by their attitude that it is not a ministry will be asked to cease their activity in this ministry (I Corinthians 10:31).
2. All choir members are expected to be faithful in attending ALL rehearsals as well as services (I Corinthians 4:2). Absences caused by work, illness, or some emergency, are understandable. In such cases the choir director should be notified before rehearsal time to enable him to plan the rehearsal most effectively that the ministry may be done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40).
3. Only those attending rehearsals will be permitted to participate in the choral ministry of singing at services.
4. In accord with the Scriptural teaching found in I Corinthians 11:14, and to be in good taste, men's

hair should not cover the ears or hang down on the collar.

5. During all services in which the choir participates men are to wear a dress shirt and tie and, in the colder months, a jacket as well.
6. Ladies participating in the choral ministry should wear their skirts or dresses at least to the middle of the kneecap, at rehearsals as well as services. While no one can Scripturally legislate the length of dress at regular services and gatherings of the church, it is hoped that those concerned would not demonstrate a double standard by wearing less than suitable attire when not officially ministering.
7. In accord with Article XIII, Section 5 of the church By-laws, all those participating in the ministry of music who are not members of this church shall be given a copy of the church Objectives, Doctrinal Statement, and Separation Stand, to be read and signed (if in agreement) as they will necessarily be public representatives of this church while ministering (Amos 3:3). This applies to guest musicians as well.
8. In accord with I Thessalonians 5:12-13, the direction, supervision, and instructions of the choir director are to be considered his responsibility and are to be followed. However, he will be more than willing to hear and consider all suggestions brought to him. This should be done apart from rehearsal time. Griping and complaining is not

consistent with a Spirit-filled life and will not be tolerated.

9. All special music must be referred to and cleared by the Minister of Music or the pastor *before* being presented publicly.
10. I am in agreement with this code of ministry and will seek to carry it out to the glory of God by His grace as a faithful servant of the Lord (I Corinthians 4:2; 10:31; Colossians 1:18b).
11. I further understand, and agree, that the choir director, Minister of Music, or pastor have the right Biblically to approach me to counsel, reprove, or admonish me if and when I fail to uphold this code of ministry. After discussing the matter thoroughly, I will accept the counsel and advice given, or will voluntarily agree to cease my ministry in the choir and related activities.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX III

A WORD ABOUT THE USE OF PRE-RECORDED MUSIC

In an effort to combat the use of the wrong kind of music, more and more churches are banning the use of any pre-recorded music tapes for any purpose. While their goals and intentions are admirable, banning the use of all pre-recorded music does not, in the final analysis, deal with the problem, but only skirts the issue. It should be noted that, when possible, "live" accompaniment is always best for a variety of reasons. Such accompaniment, however, is not always possible. There are times when *no capable* accompanist is available, even for congregational singing. While accompaniment is not absolutely essential for congregational singing, when done well, it can greatly enhance the singing. To help the smaller church fill that need there are several recordings of hymns and gospel songs with piano and/or organ accompaniment available. These recordings can be pre-programmed to be played in the order in which they will be sung as well as with number of stanzas to be sung.

In settings where accompaniment is not available, special music, whether vocal or instrumental, is very often awkward and incomplete. There are other times when a special speaker, such as a musical evangelist, will need accompaniment. Often such a musician will bring with him his own background accompaniment via pre-recordings. In churches where such accompaniments (even non-commercial ones) are banned he is left at a distinct disadvantage. The musical ministry, therefore, which was to be helped by such restrictions, is actually greatly hindered. There are times when there *is* a legitimate use of such pre-recorded background music. May I offer the following thoughts for prayerful consideration?

1. Know the person(s) who will be using such tapes and his reason for desiring to do so. As mentioned above, banning pre-recorded background music does not guarantee that the music used will meet Biblical standards. Musicians who use compromising music will do so with a piano as quickly as with a pre-recorded background tape. I have heard groups singing *a cappella* (without any accompaniment) music that was definitely unacceptable. That is why it is important to know the musician. That is also why banning

all pre-recorded music avoids dealing with the real issue and that is the music itself.

2. If deemed necessary, either the pastor or the music director should make the effort to check each background tape before it is used in a public performance. Any godly musician who truly seeks to honor the Lord with his music will be glad to comply with such efforts to protect the flock from the wrong kind of music.
3. Remember the special needs of visiting musicians. In a normal church setting, it is best to avoid the use of pre-recorded music in favor of using church musicians. Guest musicians, however, do not always have printed music and need accompanists who are able to play without music and who are able to transpose from one key to another. At times the printed accompaniments they *do* bring are beyond the abilities of the local church musicians. It should also be noted that performing with a different accompanist every week, especially for an instrumentalist, is extremely difficult and can actually hinder the musical presentation. Rather than helping, such restrictions regarding the use of pre-recorded music become a hindrance. There is

an old saying, "Don't throw out the baby with the bathwater." Pre-recorded music, when used properly and tastefully, can prove to be a real enhancement to the ministry of music. Often the same pre-recorded backgrounds visiting musicians would like to use are the same backgrounds used on the musical recordings that are made available for purchase by the people of the church. Those same backgrounds could be just as much a blessing when used in a live presentation.

4. As a matter of consistency, churches that strongly oppose pre-recorded accompaniment music should refrain from the use of pre-recorded music either before or between services.
5. The guest musician must remember that he is a guest in the church. All church policies should be graciously respected without criticism. Even though a particular church policy might make it more difficult for his ministry of music, he should graciously make whatever sacrifice is necessary to comply with the church policy. A kind, non-challenging discussion about the matter with the pastor before the service may prove helpful. Although these kinds of music

policies may be an over-reaction to the compromise of CCM, it must be remembered that they have been put in place to protect the flock. I, for one, appreciate the fact that pastors are even concerned about the kind of music they allow in their churches. Hopefully we can help some of them to see a better balance enabling all of us who desire to exalt our dear Lord with godly music to do so with the means that have been afforded us.

May the Lord bless each of you who read this book and who are serving the Lord in the ministry of Biblical music in a contemporary world.

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About the Author

Evangelist Ken Lynch was born in 1946 and led to the Lord by his mother when he was 15 years old. He was raised in Chester, Pennsylvania graduating from Chester High School in 1964. He attended and graduated from the Bob Jones University Institute of Christian Service in 1969. At that time he became a staff member of an independent, fundamental Baptist church not far from his childhood home. During his eight-year tenure he served in various capacities such as Youth Sponsor, Sunday School Superintendent, and full-time Minister of Music and Evangelism.

During his years as Music Director, he led all the congregational singing and conducted a thirty-five voice Senior Choir as well as the teen choir. He has also been used as song leader at various times in conferences across the country.

In the fall of 1977, the Lord led Ken and his family to leave that ministry and embark on what has become a worldwide ministry of missionary-evangelism. In his services he plays a variety of unusual musical instruments such as the electronic Theremin (played

without touching it), Vibraharp, Musical Glasses, Violin, Clavinova (a digital piano/organ), and the Bandura (a 14-stringed instrument from the Philippines). He has also produced a number of musical recordings, several videos (including a 3 tape, eight lecture series exposing CCM), books, choral music and a collection of both piano solos and violin arrangements.

In addition to solid Bible preaching, the ministry also includes special children's meetings with his wife, Barb. Since 1977 they have conducted more than 800 crusades in nearly every state and numerous foreign countries.

He takes an uncompromising stand on Biblical separation and is a Biblical Fundamentalist at heart. He has a profound respect for the Authority of the Bible as God's Holy and Eternal Word. His special burden is for the smaller church, which is not able to have as many revival and evangelistic meetings as the larger church can.

The Lynches have twin daughters, Jennifer and Joanna, and currently make their home in Chester, PA.

Write for more information.

Evangelist Ken Lynch
1810 Edgmont Ave.
Chester, PA 19013-5306
(610) 876-1984

Other Book Titles:

Gospel Music: Blessing or Blight? (45 pages)

The Evangelist: His Life & Ministry to the
Church and World (200 pages)

Soul Stirring Sermons: Evangelistic Voices
from the Past and Present (240 pages)
(Sermons, photos, and biographical sketches
of seventeen different evangelists from the
past and present)



