

Appendix I: Some thoughts for discussion

David Peterson, *Engaging with God*, 221.

Those who regularly measure the value of what takes place in church in terms of its impact on their own spiritual growth and development need to recover Paul's perspective. Nevertheless, if the focus of the meeting is on the edification of the church, this should enable God's people individually to engage with him afresh and to offer themselves to him in the way that he requires and himself makes possible through the Holy Spirit. Thus, the 'vertical' and the 'horizontal' dimensions of what takes place should not be artificially separated. One part of the meeting cannot be 'the worship time' (e.g. prayer and praise) and another part 'the edification time' (e.g. preaching), since Paul's teaching encourages us to view the same activities from both points of view.

- Do you think your church meetings tend more towards the vertical or the horizontal aspects?
- There are a lot of things going on in our gathered worship! Do you think a single song can self consciously facilitate all these aspects equally all the time?
- Should the majority of our songs use 'I' or 'We' as the voice? What do the Psalms use?

Rob Smith, 'Pleasing all the people all the time and other myths', in Sally McCall and Rosalie Milne (eds) *The Church Musicians' Handbook* (Matthias, 1999), pp 22-23.

Musical taste is a second major problem area because most people unconsciously (or consciously) think that their musical taste is superior to that of others, and therefore believe it ought to be catered for. However, the fact is that our likes and dislikes are usually very subjective, despite the pseudo-Christian rationalisations we sometimes find for advocating their superiority. Having said that, I am reasonably convinced that certain styles of music are conducive to church use- but I suspect this conviction is affected by my culture.

- Does the style of music matter at all?
- Can you remember a time when you were sitting in the pews and were really moved by the singing? Why?
- As musicians how can we practically lead our congregation in singing?
- How do you deal with a massive contemporary/traditional divide between parishioners?
- Do you see leading music at church a teaching role?
If so, on what issues should we hold our ground? What do we let through to the keeper?
- John Coltrane used to say he "prayed" with his sax. Does church music have to have words?

Augustine, *Confessiones IX, vi, 14* in James McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 154.

I wept at your [God's] hymns and canticles, deeply moved by the voices of your sweetly singing church. Those voices flowed into my ears, and the truth was poured out in my heart, whence a feeling of piety surged up and my tears ran down. And these things were good for me.

Augustine, *Confessiones X, xxxiii, 49-50* in McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 154.

the gratification of my flesh – to which I ought not to surrender my mind to be enervated – frequently leads my astray ... when it happens to me that the song moves me more than the thing which is sung, I confess that I have sinned blamefully and then prefer not to hear the singer...

- What is the place of emotion in church music?
- Should we focus on higher, more rational contemplation of spiritual things?

Athanasius, *Epistula ad Marcellinum 29, PG XXVII, 40-1* in McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 53.

[recitation of the Psalms] is not done from a desire for pleasing sound, but is a manifestation of harmony among the thoughts of the soul.

- Is Athanasius right? Or is music a good thing in itself?

Martin Luther, cited in William T. Flynn, 'Liturgical Music', in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (ed. Geoffrey Wainwright; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 780.

For their sake [simple laymen] we must read, sing, preach, write and compose, and if it would help the matter along, I would have all the bells pealing, and all the organs playing, and let everything chime that has a clapper.

- Are there any limits at all to the style of worship music?
- How important is it to teach people through our music?

John Wesley, 'To A Friend, On Public Worship', in *The Works of the Rev John Wesley: Tracts and Letters on Various Subjects* (1st ed.; New York: J & J Harper, 1827), 233

[The Methodists] sing praise to God ... with the spirit, and with the understanding also: not in the miserable, scandalous doggerel of Hopkins and Sternhold [i.e. the English Psalter], but in psalms and hymns which are both sense and poetry. ... well-composed and well-adapted tunes [sung] not by a handful of wild unawakened striplings, but by a whole serious congregation ... all standing before God, and praising him lustily and with a good courage

- Is the goal of music to stir up emotion or to help people express how they already feel?
- At what point does powerful music risk becoming emotional manipulation?
- Wesley has a big emphasis on congregational singing. Do our modern styles of music share that value?

Darlene Zschech, *Extravagant Worship* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002), 27, 34-35

Although music is a wonderful expression of worship, it is not in itself the *essence* of it. The core of worship is when one's heart and soul, and all that is within, adores and connects with the Spirit of God.

...

Extravagant worship grabs God's attention ... Throughout the stories in the Bible, whenever someone demonstrated extravagant worship, God reacted with extravagant blessing. It's cause and effect. Extravagant worship brings extravagant results.

- Do you agree with Zschech's definition of worship?
- How is it that un-extravagant sinners can come before a holy God?
- Why do we bother making our music 'good' – i.e. of a high artistic standard?

Bob Kauflin, *Worship Matters*, 166-67

To lead worship in a way that makes God seem dull is a sin. But it's not creativity and production values that will help us. It's helping people clearly apprehend the character and works of God ... When we fail to demonstrate delight and satisfaction in God, we're not only dishonoring God, we're disobeying him. More than anyone else on earth, Christians have a reason to celebrate.

- Is boring music a sin?

Bob Kauflin, Worship Matters, 171

God created our bodies to glorify him (1 Corinthians 6:20)... Some Christians are simply unaware that physical responsiveness to God in worship is encouraged and modeled throughout Scripture... The crucial question is this: Is there any physical expression of worship that God has given us in Scripture that I've never displayed? And if so, why?

...

Expressiveness has its limitations. Our highest priority when we gather with the church is not our own personal expressiveness but the privilege of serving others... If I had no other choices, I'd rather be sitting in the midst of a quiet congregation singing rich, doctrinal truths than jumping around with a lively congregation belting out shallow, man-centered songs... But God never intended for us to have to choose. We're to pursue theological depth *and* passionate expression.

- Think about the church culture you come from. Why do you think people express themselves in the way they do?
- Body language speaks. What do you think your church culture communicates to outsiders?

Rory Noland, Heart of the Artist, 66

My fellow artists, what's your motivation for creating or performing? Is it to glory God or yourself? Jeremiah's words are just as pertinent to us artists today as they were to the people of Israel: "Should you then seek great things for yourself? Seek them not" (Jer. 45:5) If we're truly ministering in the name of Jesus, our motivation - what we are seeking - should be Christ Jesus and His glory, not our own ... True ministry is about Jesus and whether His message is getting across. That needs to be our motivation. ... If you acknowledge that your talent comes from God and give Him the glory, it's OK to walk onstage and be confident that you can do what He's calling you to do. It's OK to be confident if your confidence is in Him.

- Is it ever possible to have pure motivations for serving God?
- If I am confident singing on stage does that mean I'm not humble?
- What do you feel when someone tells you the music was awesome tonight? What do you say to them?

Rory Noland, Heart of the Artist, 124

We shouldn't ignore negative feedback, but to blow it out of proportion isn't right either... You make a little mistake and keep replaying it in your mind, crucifying yourself over and over for it. It's a loss of perspective... For the perfectionist, one thing gone wrong means everything's going wrong.

- How do you respond to negative feedback? Does your church have a culture of loving, caring, constructive feedback?
- Are you a perfectionist?