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# MUSIC IN THE CHURCH

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**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF MUSIC?** I am afraid that in many churches, I mean fundamental churches for the others do not know God or what He expects, music is used to glorify the flesh. It may sound harsh, but I think it is true. I have seen too many singers and musicians who really were "performing." Frankly, I think God hates it and I personally do not want it. Too often, talent is merely being shown off and the congregation is being entertained. (Some preaching is the same). But we are not here to be entertained.

What is the purpose of our church services? Well, any right-minded view of Scripture will show you that it is to worship, and praise God and to grow in the knowledge of the Lord and His ways. This is seen in many verses of Scripture. **Psalms 66:2, "Sing forth the honor of His name: make His praise glorious." Psalms 147:7, "Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp to our God."** Contemporary music clearly does not lend itself to the worship of God for it is worldly. It glorifies the flesh!

## **MODERN TRENDS AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE.**

*Pathways*, the Alumni paper of one of the schools from which I graduated many years ago contained an article entitled: "*Let's Face The Music,*" by Alfred Lunde, chairman of the music department at Philadelphia College of Bible. Like most schools, it has drifted with the new evangelical tide. One of the first places churches and Christian institutions go bad is in the realm of music. Frankly, in my opinion, it has long been on the skids like many other once fundamental schools. The article contains many of the false justifications we have often heard for adopting worldly means to communicate the Gospel. He says if the music effectively communicates spiritual truth, if the song is composed so as to enhance the text, and the performer (that's the key, performer) draws attention to the Lord, *the style must be accepted as legitimate.* In other words, whatever the style, it is acceptable as long as there is some spiritual truth (according to whom?). We remember Billy Graham, many years ago, when he turned from Biblical separation to ecumenical evangelism. He said he wasn't changing the message only the method. Anyone one who even casually observes his messages cannot help but see the message has changed! It is inevitable!

**CAN YOU WORSHIP GOD WITH WORLDLY MUSIC?** Can you worship God with worldly "anything?" God says, **"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." I John 2:15, 16.** Without commending or condemning, Mr. Lunde in *Pathways* says that churches today are trying to reach people by having more than one type of service. They have both a "traditional" and a "contemporary" service. Others use a "buster" service using a rock band, and strobe lights to reach the MTV crowd and some have "pop" style music.

This is one of the errors of new evangelicalism. Dr. Ockenga said we are no longer going to separate from the old-line denominations (which certainly are worldly and unbelieving), but we are going to infiltrate them. Another one of their basic philosophies is to meet worldly rationalism on its own ground and prove that Christianity is reasonable. No wonder many so-called Christian colleges teach evolution along with creationism, etc. Youth for Christ, Youth With A Mission, etc. use all sorts of worldly things to entice people, but what have they produced but a bunch of worldly "religious" young people? I am reminded of David's innovation in moving the ark when he put it on a new cart with disastrous results. David later did it the "old fashioned" way, God's way, and said that the earlier tragedy was **"Because we sought Him not after due order."** You cannot truly worship God through a worldly medium. The message and the method are intrinsically linked together! If God forbid His people to yoke and ox and an ass together, I can't see how it is possible to yoke worship and praise to God with the trappings of the world! It is not our job to please everybody. It is not our calling to present God's truth in such a way that every worldling will be saved! The plain truth is many are not going to be saved. **"Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat: Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."** Matt. 7:13,14. Why can't God's people learn that **"It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord."** Zech. 4:6. One of our problems is the church is too much like the world.

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**THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS.** Now anyone in religious circles who knows anything, realizes that from the beginning this was a Jesuit philosophy. They used it in their strenuous efforts to destroy the Reformation and have used it to their ungodly advantage ever since. Because it *seems* to work, it has been widely adopted. The truth is it doesn't work, especially for the people of God because it is a flawed philosophy. Yet multitudes of so called Christians, and indeed some who are ill-informed Christians, promote it because it *gets results*. But the results are never truly of God for He cannot operate on that ideology. In fact, because so many believers have fallen into this error, we have a terribly watered-down version of Christianity. You can always find justification to do something...but that doesn't make it right. Go back to the ark on a cart. Building a new cart is simple and easier than going to get four priests who then have to make a couple of staffs and carry it quite a distance. Let's just hurry up and get it back where it belongs. But God wasn't in a hurry! The Scriptures declare: **"Wisdom is justified of her children."** That is, when somebody wants to believe or do something, they will surely find a way to justify it. And I have seen many even justify it by misusing the Bible. All I can say is God help them!

Many have taken the position that music is basically neutral. The only thing that is important is the lyrics. If the words are good, that is all that matters. You can use any kind of music to convey the message. To the unspiritual, this seems like a valid conclusion but it is absurd. Just look at any crowd, church or world, and see what the music does to body movement, etc. The wild foot stamping, clapping, dancing around the church, etc., shows that it is the music and not the lyrics which are uppermost. When it gets to rock and popular music, one can hardly hear the words anyway; it is the beat that captivates people. Furthermore, you have an unequal yoke. Rock music, etc., didn't originate with God or His people. It came right out of the world and indeed is inspired of hell! An interesting consideration is that when so called Christian rock and pop artists become a little popular, they invariably turn to secular music. Which only proves they are not interested in getting God's message out but in making a lot of money. The truth is, they have only gone where they belong!

## **BEST OF BOTH WORLDS - IS IT POSSIBLE?**

Well, some think that it is possible. Mr. Lunde thinks so. He mentions "heavy metal" groups like Whitewater and The Altar Boys and said, "I have spent many hours listening to recordings and attending concerts presented by these groups...in the end it was a humbling experience to see God using some of these groups..." He then suggests "...that a balance or blend of styles may give us *the best of both worlds*." The truth, as we have shown, is you can't have both worlds! His philosophy will lead to further and further departure from God. *Moody Monthly* (Moody has been in the new evangelical camp for 40 years) printed an article saying rock stars such as Bruce Springsteen, Michael Jackson, and Billy Joel "*frequently record uplifting, if not spiritually insightful songs*." I have a flyer from Gordon College picturing a man in top hat, tails and a spotlight on him saying, "*On With The Show*." It advertises a *show* at Gordon featuring numbers from *Music Man*, *Gigi*, etc. Tickets were \$10. Jerry Falwell, who once denounced rock music, says he is a convert to rap music saying, "I'm for it." Rap group DC Talk was founded at his university. The truth is, these things are not of God, no matter who does it. I believe it makes God sick!

## **WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DOES GOD WANT? I**

earlier quoted from the Old Testament. We read in **Col.3:16**, "**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...in psalms, hymns and *spiritual* songs.**" There is no way rock or popular music can be considered spiritual. The next verse (17) says, "**And whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...**" You cannot do the world's music in the name of the Lord Jesus! What's the real problem? Why do *Christians* want to be so worldly? Is it that they are not really saved? Possibly they are most interested in drawing a crowd. Whatever it is, it is a sure sign of carnality and worldliness. Oh, that they might repent!

## **LET'S FACE IT!**

Lunde's article was entitled, "*Let's Face The Music*." I say, "**Let's face the facts!**" The truth is you can't wed true Christian churches and institutions to the world! You may *seem* successful for a time. "**There is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death.**" Never forget this: "**Be sure your sin will find you out.**"

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**CORNERSTONE BAPTIST CHURCH**

**P.O. Box 438, Belmont, MA 02478**

**Rolland C. Starr, Pastor**