

The Quarterly Journal



THE NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION OF PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

VOL. 35, NO. 3

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2015

EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

I'd Like to Teach the Church to Sing Discerning the Theological and Cultural Dynamics of Worship Music

by Gary E. Gilley
and M. Kurt Goedelman

So much that Americans say and do is defined by entertainment. Entertainment is a powerful force that permeates our society and culture.

Two thousand years ago when Herod the Great built his empire of palaces and buildings throughout Israel, Judea had more amphitheaters than Rome before the time of Nero. Herod knew that to control the arts was to control the culture.

This entertainment mindset has infiltrated the church. Even the best of churches are composed of redeemed sinners who have been shaped by the world in which they live. And although Scripture warns us not to be conformed to this world (Romans 12:2), that battle is not easily won.

This has become the defining factor within evangelicalism. Many Chris-

tians base their choice of a church on musical styles and other superficial features rather than on the basis of what the church teaches. Paul Jones wrote:

“Worship music is at the center of controversy, being one of the most divisive issues in the church, as it has been for decades. Somehow we have come to define worship services almost exclusively on the basis of musical style. ‘Contemporary,’ ‘traditional,’ ‘blended,’ or ‘classical’ worship services
(continues on page 11)



Inside this Issue:

THE BIZARRO WORLD OF CHARISMA	PAGE 2
END COMES FOR FLORIDA MEGACHURCH	PAGE 3
GIVE ME THAT HYBRID RELIGION	PAGE 4

Editorials

THE BIZARRO WORLD OF CHARISMA

More than a half-century ago, DC Comics introduced its readers to a series of imaginary stories that centered on "Bizarro World." This Bizarro World (also known as htrae — earth spelled backwards) is a cube-shaped planet where everything is transposed or the polar opposite of earth's normal expectations. For example, the financial salesmen of Bizarro World peddle their securities and commodities with the promise, "Guaranteed to lose money for you." This aberrant place is the home of Bizarro (the perfectly imperfect duplicate of Superman), Batzarro, the Yellow Lantern, and other antithetical superheroes.

Wikipedia says, "In popular culture 'Bizarro World' has come to mean a situation or setting which is weirdly inverted or opposite of expectations."

While Bizarro World has its origin and existence in the fantasy world of comics, one can't help but think — after reading their musings — if those who write for *Charisma* magazine haven't crossed over into the make-believe home of Bizarro and his companions.

Last January, *Charisma* magazine posted on its website "5 Things You Need to Know About Televangelists," an article by Bobby Schuller. Schuller is grandson to the late televangelist Robert Schuller, who rose to prominence as

pastor of a Southern California megachurch and on the church's *The Hour of Power* television broadcast. Young Schuller says he "'accidentally' became a TV evangelist two years ago after pulpit-filling for [his] grandfather's nearly empty and bankrupt Crystal Cathedral church."

Just reading the headline of Schuller's article expressed the idea that it may be a promising editorial, sounding an alarm and providing a measure of caution and concern. However, when you begin to read the article, that hope is short-lived and one can't help but wonder if the thoughts expressed are more at home in Bizarro World.

The five things that we "probably don't know about TV evangelists," Schuller tells his readers, are:

- The day of "big time TV evangelists" is coming to an end — which is good.
- TV evangelists are pastors at heart.
- Most TV evangelists struggle financially.
- Most TV pastors have a deeper theology than you think.
- A new generation of "TV evangelists" will be more creative than you expect.

Really? Like was said above, musings from Bizarro World. Perhaps *Charisma* itself may have considered Schuller's offerings a bit off-target. At the conclusion of the article, there was this post: "Unless otherwise specified, the opinions expressed are solely the author's
(continues on page 20)

PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

P.O. Box 26062 • Saint Louis, Missouri 63136-0062 • (314) 921-9800

Visit PFO's Website at: <http://www.pfo.org>

BOARD of DIRECTORS:

G. Richard Fisher Dillsburg, PA Gary E. Gilley Springfield, IL
M. Kurt Goedelman Saint Louis, MO Keith A. Morse Denver, CO
David M. Tyler Granite City, IL

BOARD of REFERENCE:

Dr. Jay E. Adams Enoree, SC Dr. Norman L. Geisler Charlotte, NC
Dr. Ron Rhodes Frisco, TX

© 2015 – PFO. All rights reserved. ISSN: 1083-6853. These articles may not be stored on web pages or Internet sites without permission. *The Quarterly Journal* is the newsletter publication of PFO. Published by Personal Freedom Outreach, P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, MO 63136. PFO's *Journal* may also be obtained on CD-ROM in Portable Document Format (.PDF) for use with Adobe® Reader® software.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version, ©1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Because of the fluid nature of the Internet, web addresses or links contained in journal articles may have changed and/or may no longer be accessible.

HINN ADMITTED TO CALIFORNIA HOSPITAL

Faith healer Benny Hinn was admitted to a hospital in Orange County, California on March 20 after experiencing “a period of fatigue and shortness of breath,” according to his ministry’s Facebook page. He was placed in the intensive care unit.

News reports suggest that Hinn’s heart problems were a result of exhaustion suffered from his “miracle healing services” held in Brazil. The crusades were held in Brazil Feb. 17-21.

“This is a challenge, but I’m getting good reports,” the 63-year-old healing evangelist told *Charisma*, “We don’t have all the answers ... as we get older, our bodies need repair.”

Hinn’s daughter, Jessica Hinn Koulianos, posted on her father’s ministry website, “By God’s grace and with the help of your prayers, we are told to expect a complete recovery. More importantly, his doctors are assuring him that within a very short time he will be on his feet ministering around the world again, just as he has for over 40 years.”

In 2002, at one of his healing services, Hinn told the audience that he had suffered for 20 years of his life with arrhythmia. During the crusade he announced, “the power of God came upon me. I’ve been healed.”

—MKG

ECCLESIASTICAL CRIME REPORTED AT \$50 BILLION

In January, the International Bulletin of Missionary Research released a two-page report by a team of researchers which included the “Status of Global Christianity” for 2015. One entry in the report is a statistic which is sadly missed by both Christian and secular news agencies: the amount of “Ecclesiastical crime.” That figure, for 2015, will be \$50 billion. And the report further indicates that in the next 10 years, that annual total is expected to double to \$100 billion.

According to a press release by the Dallas-based watch-dog group, Trinity Foundation, “The category of ‘ecclesiastical crime’ includes misappropriation of donation monies for any reason.” However, the press release

stated that “the statistics don’t break down the percentage of ecclesiastical crime committed by the most prominent televangelists.”

Ole Anthony, Trinity’s founder and president, said, “In the past, we’ve estimated that the business of televangelism rakes in \$3-5 billion annually through fraudulent promises and techniques. But because religious TV is ubiquitous now around the world, the lavish lifestyle it models and the prosperity gospel it preaches creates an atmosphere of spiritual entitlement that can overwhelm other moral considerations.”

The dollar amount for religious fraud surpasses the amount of money given for global foreign missions, which is reported to be \$45 billion. The total of ecclesiastical crime eclipsing foreign-missions giving is not a recent development. Trinity’s press release noted that “funds lost to religious fraud overtook missions giving totals 15 years ago.”

The IBMR’s report further stated that the projected annual total for 2015 of “giving to Christian causes” to be \$700 billion, with \$280 billion going to churches, while the remaining \$420 billion being given to parachurch and institutional organizations.

—MKG

END COMES FOR FLORIDA MEGACHURCH

One of Florida’s premier megachurches has a date with the wrecking ball. In February, it was announced that Cook Development in Daytona Beach had purchased the former Without Walls Central church in North Lakeland, Fla. Financial partners Doug Cook and George Anderson said they plan to raze the 155,000-square-foot, 9,600-seat sanctuary and convert a second building into an assisted-living facility. The investors are said to have paid about \$3.75 million for the 66-acre property.

The church, which held its inaugural service on Feb. 10, 1985, had a colorful history. It was initially known as Carpenter’s Home Church and evolved from the local First Assembly of God church, whose membership had grown to more than 4,000 under the leadership of Pastor Karl Strader. In the early 1980s, the church purchased a 475-acre tract of land, eventually selling all but 125 acres, and then began construction of the worship center in late 1982. It was a \$12 million project that was then the nation’s largest sanctuary.

(continues on page 22)



Give Me That Hybrid Religion

How the Hebrew Roots Movement Causes Confusion and Division in the Lives of Believers

by G. Richard Fisher

Jesus, in response to Peter's confession of faith in Him as the Messiah, told His disciples, "on this rock I will build My church" (Matthew 16:18).

When God gave manna to the Jews in the wilderness, they asked, "What is it?" (Exodus 16:15). With regard to the Hebrew Roots Movement we must also ask, "What is it?"

The Hebrew Roots Movement is difficult to define. This conglomerate of professing Christian Jews and Gentiles is far from a cohesive organization with an established agreement on beliefs and practices. It is a disparate group of men, ministries, mavericks, and Christian "rabbis," all of whom want the church to be more Jewish in character, content, and practice, although none of them can agree on the right mixture or amount of Jewishness.

Studying our Hebrew roots is not new. However, what is called the Hebrew Roots Movement (HRM) dates back only to the mid-1990s. Dean Wheelock and his wife, Susan, coined the term when they launched their *Hebrew Roots* teaching ministry in 1996.¹ Two years later, they began publishing a magazine under the same title.² The couple later received a federal trademark for the name in

2004.³ Today, the spin-offs are too numerous to count.

In 1968, Wheelock became a member of the Worldwide Church of God, the group founded by Herbert W. Armstrong.⁴ Although he has long since distanced himself from Armstrong's church, Wheelock says, "most of what I learned from that organization, I still hold to."⁵ After leaving the WWCG, Wheelock became an elder in the Church of God International, an offshoot of the Worldwide Church of God. Later, Wheelock's doctrine and practice led to his parting with the Church of God International when the group refused to re-credential him as one of their own.⁶

The HRM is not really a movement. It is a wish or an ideal that spawns an array of groups: some ankle-deep in Judaism; some neck-deep; and others in over their heads. Each leader chooses the bits and pieces of Judaism that appeal to him or her. The message appears to be that employing some Jewish practice is a deeper and more authentic form of Christianity. Which Judaism — and just how much Judaism — is entirely up to the individual or, in most cases, the leader.

THE REAL UPSIDE

We are grateful to be reminded that we need to understand our Jewish foundation and Jewish roots and to know all that we can know about first-century Jewish culture, manners, idioms, customs, and the Old Testament world. All of this helps us interpret the Bible more correctly.

Digging into the original setting of the Bible is not a new idea. The Palestinian Exploration Fund was founded in 1865 to study customs, manners, geography, and topography in the ancient Holy Land. Archaeologists explored places mentioned in the Bible. In 1890, France established the École Biblique to study the ancient biblical world. In 1900, the United States founded the American School of Oriental Research. Long before that, Martin Luther mastered Hebrew and studied the commentaries of contemporary rabbis. Adam Clarke (1762-1832) immersed himself in Hebrew and Oriental languages and created a six-volume commentary on the Bible. There is a venerable history of men studying the Jewish setting of the Bible and the Jewish roots of our faith, including men such as Albert Edersheim, David Baron, and Kenneth Bailey.

Most believers want to study the Bible's background and setting for *illumination* and *interpretation*, not *imitation*. We do not have to become Jews to study Judaism.

The study of our Hebrew roots can be pushed to unhealthy and divisive extremes and lead to error. Proverbs 25:16 reminds us that too much of a good thing, even honey, can produce undesirable and negative effects. One such effect is a lack of agreement on belief or standard practice in the HRM. Some in the HRM use rams' horns; others do not. Some use yarmulkes; some do not. Some use prayer shawls; some do not. Some have synagogues; some do not. Some are Trinitarian; others are Unitarian. Talmudic beliefs and practices are often anachronistically grafted in. With some there is the undiscerning practice of importing elements of the fourteenth-century Kabbalistic mystic Zohar into Christian praxis.

IS GOD REALLY JEWISH?

Take, for instance, the book, *The Book of Revelation: Two Brides, Two Destinies*, written by John Klein, Adam Spears, and Michael Christopher. The Foreword of this book erroneously asserts that "the entire Bible was written down by Hebrew authors inspired by a *Hebrew God*."⁷

While most in the HRM do not teach that God is a Hebrew, some do.

To assign racial identity to God is unthinkable. God, through the Holy Spirit, moved the New Testament writers to give us a Greek New Testament (2 Peter 1:21). The oldest extant manuscripts of the New Testament are written in Greek. That doesn't make the Holy Spirit (who inspired the writers of the text) Greek. Making God "a Hebrew God" is ascribing human characteristics and human limitations to the infinite God. Numbers 23:19 reminds us that, "God is not a man." God cannot and will not be compared to a human being. He asks through Isaiah, "To whom will you liken Me and make Me equal and compare Me, that we should be alike? ... Remember the former things of old, for I am God and there is no other; I am God and there is none like

me" (Isaiah 46:5,9). God is wholly other. In His essential nature and being, God is eternally unchanging (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17).

The word "Hebrew" is first used in Genesis 14:13. It is applied to Abraham. The word means to "cross over" or "come over" from the other side (of the Jordan) as Abraham did. Abraham, in obedience to God, was the first "cross-overer." The word described what Abraham did, not what he was. The word eventually was applied to the descendants of Abraham: the Jewish people. Before there were Hebrews, God could not have had a Hebrew ancestry.

God did not choose the Jewish nation because of some ethnic link. God chose the Jewish nation because He chose to do it that way (Deuteronomy 7:6-8). God is sovereign and can do whatever He wishes.

There are men in the HRM such as Michael Rood, once a minister for The Way International cult, who teaches that all of the Torah must be kept to please God. He calls his program, "A Rood Awakening." Rood dresses up in what is supposed to look like biblical attire. He claims unique knowledge of an ancient Hebrew version of the Gospel of Matthew and condemns all Christian churches and their leaders, proclaiming that they are under deception. He teaches that the only right way to address Jesus is with the name Yeshua. And that is only the beginning.⁸

The lack of uniform belief and practice in the HRM creates all kinds of confusion, division, and disunity. Those in the HRM lack any kind of mechanism of correction and get upset with those who try to offer correction. Most enable the errors with their silence. The HRM leaves open the question of which Judaism and how much. The operating principle seems to be that as long as there is some form of Judaism in any group, it is to be left alone. Those who consider themselves part of the HRM are upset with and sometimes castigate apologists more than they do their own errant brothers.

WEDDING BELLS

Another questionable teaching from Klein, Spears, and Christopher is their take on the Jewish *ketubah*. A *ketubah* is a Jewish marriage document somewhat akin to a prenuptial contract. The authors say that the document "had five parts" and that "the first five books of the Bible correspond to the five parts of the ancient Hebrew *ketubah*."⁹

The authors seem to be trying hard to be clever. The *ketubah* defined the responsibilities of the husband and made financial provision for the wife in the event of a divorce. This provided an incentive for the husband to work things out and keep the marriage together.

Although it was a good idea, the *ketubah* was not a biblical mandate and was created well after the Old Testament was completed. George Moore writes:

"Simeon ben Shatah, the restorer of the Law in the reign of Queen Alexandra, is the first in the series of pairs who stands out with a certain distinctness of character. He was the author of several ordinances (*takkanot*), perhaps the most important of which have to do with the marriage contract (*ketubah*)."¹⁰

We know that Simeon ben Shatah, the author of the *ketubah*, lived in the first century B.C. We know also that Alexandra ruled Israel from 76 to 67 B.C.¹¹ Alexandra and ben Shatah were contemporaries. Therefore, we know without doubt the time of the construction of the *ketubah*.

To attribute a *ketubah* to God and to further connect it to the Pentateuch, which was completed centuries before the *ketubah* document came into being, is seeing something that is not there. Otherwise, a variety of foolish scenarios could be suggested: If God really created the *ketubah* through Simeon ben Shatah and it applied to Moses' Law, did God have the divorce of Israel in mind because the *ketubah* allowed for divorce? Would God have to pay Israel after the divorce? What would He pay her? All

types of strange notions can be proposed when someone tries to assign parallels between Scripture and an intertestamental document.

Proving that the “five parts” to the *ketubah* correspond to the five books of Moses is just the imagination of the authors. Further invalidating their teaching is the fact that there are as many as eleven parts or main sections to the *ketubah*, not just five. This is easily verified because the details of the *ketubah* are covered in the Babylonian Talmud (Tractate Ketubot), as well as being available on various Jewish learning websites. For example, on the website Chabad.org, the main parts of the *ketubah* are described as follows: The Date and Place of the Wedding; The Groom, the Bride and the Proposal; The Groom Promised the Basic Support; Funds for the Wife, If and When the Marriage Terminates; The Bride Accepted the Proposal; And She Brings a Dowry; The Groom, in Turn, Promised an Additional Gift; And Secured the Promise with a Lien on His Property; And the Lien is Fully Valid; Then Everything Was Sealed; And the Witnesses Attested to It.¹²

So what could one attribute to the eleven parts of the *ketubah*? Nothing, because the parts are arbitrary, functional, and practical.

Klein, Spears, and Christopher also say that “the *ketubah* required seven signatures.”¹³ These seven signatures, the authors maintain, somehow stood for seven biblical characters: namely Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and Yeshua (Jesus). However, *The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion* says that the *ketubah* was “signed by two male witnesses.”¹⁴ Maurice Lamm, in his article describing the *ketubah*, also indicates only two witnesses.¹⁵ Two or three witnesses was a simple, practical Jewish requirement (Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:16) and there is nothing mysterious in the number itself. Multiple witnesses simply make a stronger case.

Klein, Spears, and Christopher are practicing extrabiblical, fanciful, and imaginative typology. Studying typology is enlightening and rewarding —

but only when done properly. It allows us to see the Old Testament from a New Testament standpoint. Types are prophecies or foreshadows of a greater reality to come. The New Testament makes clear just what people, institutions, and things are true types. When we go beyond that we enter the realm of imagination and fantasy. True types are rooted in Old Testament history, such as the priest being a picture of Jesus and the sacrificial lamb as a type of Jesus’ sacrifice. Most types are Christ-centered (Luke 24:25-44). Much of the book of Hebrews establishes Christ as the meaning and fulfillment of the Tabernacle and its system (Hebrews 9:9-11, 23-24).

First Corinthians 10:1-6 tells us that the wilderness journey was an expanded type. However, it is often true that, “Some typologists have become so bogged down in details that absurdities and puerilities have swallowed up the essential truth.”¹⁶

A type is only a type when the Bible clearly designates it as such. It goes without saying that because *ketubahs* are not found in the Old Testament, they cannot be a biblical type of anything. It is an imported idea and therefore improper. True types illustrate and uphold the unity of the two Testaments.

LIVING IN THE SHADOWS?

It can also be suggested that certain parts of the HRM and certain people within the HRM are extreme when it comes to the structure called the synagogue. There is an International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues based in Havertown, Pa. A quick search on the Internet will turn up articles — both for and against — explaining Hebrew Roots synagogues.

Although some in the HRM heartily endorse synagogues and celebrate Pentecost, they may be missing the full intent and the fulfillment of that Jewish feast. While synagogues and Pentecost wonderfully relate, this does not mean that a Christian needs to observe a Jewish Pentecost or attend a synagogue.

Jewish feast days, according to Colossians 2:16-17, are just shadows. Jesus is the substance, the meaning, and the fulfillment of those feasts. Jesus fully embodies the intent, meaning, and inner truth of the Old Testament feasts. Hebrews 8:5 also tells us that the ministries in the Tabernacle were also a *skia* — Greek for shadow. A shadow is an image cast by an object blocking light. It is an imperfect imitation, outline, or copy of someone or something. The “something” or “someone” is substantial and more important than the shadow.

Some in the HRM are keen on the menorah — a seven-branched lampstand. Any tourist to Israel can purchase one as a souvenir. As part of the Tabernacle and then later in the Temple, the oil-fed menorah or lampstand was only a shadow of Jesus. New Testament believers are to prefer the true “Light of the World” that the candelabra represented and foreshadowed. Some practices in the HRM, such as this, are sensual, formulaic, and ritualistic.

Moreover, the encounters Jesus had within the synagogue and its leaders always seemed adversarial (Matthew 23; Luke 11:43). Nowhere in the New Testament are we told to model or mimic synagogues. They are unique *Jewish* institutions.

DON’T CONFUSE ONE WITH THE OTHER

Those in the HRM try to purport that synagogues are good places to be — or at least they are to be emulated or modeled. Can we merge church and synagogue? Should we? This is both foundational and fundamental. Is it to be synagogue or church?

The origin of the synagogue is obscure, but there is almost universal agreement that they came on the scene sometime during the Babylonian captivity and the Diaspora. The earliest synagogue ruins, which date to about 225 B.C., were discovered not far from Alexandria, Egypt.¹⁷ Synagogues are functional cultural necessities, not divinely mandated. They cannot be confused with the church.

In the first-century synagogues, the Torah was read and studied. Prayers were uttered. They also became a kind of cultural center and even served as a hostel for Jewish travelers. The Jews of Jesus' day had a practice that if anyone professed Christ they were to be thrown out of the synagogue (John 9:22). Yet some in the HRM want to imitate synagogues and synagogue life and practice as if the buildings were all inspired and divine. Some in the HRM call their meeting places synagogues. This often again creates more elitism, confusion, and division. If they are trying to impress Jewish people, they are not. It would be like Jews calling their synagogues churches.

Synagogue comes from the Greek word *sunagoge*, meaning "coming together," "assembling," or "to bring together" and is used to describe a Jewish religious gathering or Jewish buildings erected for prayer and study. In Hebrew, a synagogue is called *Bet Knesset* while "church" is the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means "to be called out" or "called-out ones."

Remains of synagogues going back to Jesus' time have been unearthed in Israel. Tourists can see ancient synagogue remains at Magdala, Gamla, Capernaum, Chorizim, Baram, Jericho, Masada, and other places in Israel, as well as a complete synagogue replica in Nazareth. The foundation stones of the partially reconstructed synagogue in Capernaum are from Jesus' time, as is the Magdala synagogue.

Synagogues have their distinct architecture, designs, features, and functions. Their structure and layout are unique. They are singularly Jewish. To call a church a synagogue is like calling an orange an apple because both are round and both are fruit. Calling just any building a synagogue does not endear Orthodox Jews, but rather causes hostility by antagonizing them.

In late spring 2013, when several Israeli women approached the men's side of Jerusalem's Western Wall in

prayer shawls and phylacteries to offer prayers, the Orthodox men ran them off. One leader said that they presented "a fake front of false Judaism."¹⁸ Even though the women wore the same kind of attire as the Orthodox men, it was considered an affront and a pretense. Those in the HRM who think that they are helping bridge the gap with Jews by dressing up in Talmudic garb and calling their assemblies synagogues are mistaken. They are creating barriers, not bridges.

Synagogues were not commanded by God in Scripture, as were the feast days in Leviticus 23. Synagogues were born out of necessity. The exiles in Babylon and Persia had lost their land, their priesthood, and their Temple, so they needed meeting places for religious activities and study, as well as to create a sense of unity, continuity, and uniqueness. So synagogues were and are distinctly Jewish buildings built for religious and practical purposes. They are neutral buildings. There is nothing sacred about them even if Jewish members or rabbis try to impose that meaning on them.

IT IS A STRETCH

It seems a stretch, but Talmudic scholars point to Ezekiel 11:16 and the mention of God being a "little sanctuary" for His people and say it may suggest the emergence of the synagogues: places that are little sanctuaries for Jews because they no longer have the Temple. However, according to Jewish sources:

"No definite reference to the existence of the [synagogue] is known until long after the return from the Babylonian exile. It is possible that by the time Ezra instituted the reading of the *Torah* on Sabbath afternoon and on the second and fifth day of the week ... assemblies for worship were already in existence throughout the land. By the end of the Second Temple Period the [synagogue] was a well-established institution both in Palestine and in the Diaspora."¹⁹

We know that by the time of Jesus synagogues were a fixture all over Israel and throughout the Diaspora. Archaeologists estimate that there were hundreds of synagogues serving small villages and communities in that time.

The distinction between a church and a synagogue can be plainly seen in a place called Dura-Europos in Syria. In that city archaeologists discovered the ruins of a synagogue from the mid-200s A.D. The wall paintings had 58 scenes from the Old Testament. Across town and from the exact same period, a Christian house church was discovered and unearthed. Its interior paintings were from the stories in the New Testament. A scroll was found with Christian prayers and another scroll with a Greek harmony of the Gospels. There is absolutely no confusing of the two buildings.

One important point about the destroyed Temple and the synagogue is made by Jewish believer Alfred Ederheim:

"Thus elaborate in every particular was the system which regulated the admission, the services, and the privileges of the officiating priesthood. Yet it has all vanished, not leaving behind it in the synagogue even a single trace of its complicated and perfect arrangements. These 'old things are passed away,' because they were only 'a shadow of good things to come.' But 'the substance is of Christ' and 'He abideth an High Priest forever.' ... to declare sacrifices of the essence of Judaism would have been to pronounce modern Judaism an impossibility. But thereby also the synagogue has given sentence against itself and by disowning sacrifices has placed itself outside the pale of the Old Testament."²⁰

A CHURCH IS A CHURCH

As we look into the book of Acts, we do not find the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem called Messianic Jews, nor do we find any mention of a "Messi-

anic Movement” or “Hebrew Roots Movement.” It is clear that early Hebrew Christians never insisted on synagogue attendance. Those in synagogues opposed Jesus and His new followers. Jews converted to Christ were called “Nazoreans, Ebionites, or simply Israelites,” while Gentile converts were called “Christians.”²¹ Their assemblies were called churches. As we have seen in Matthew 16:18, the Lord Jesus declared to the apostles, “on this rock I will build My church” (emphasis added). He did not say, “on this rock I will build My synagogue.”

There is no question that many of the churches in the New Testament era had a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. When Paul wrote to these mixed assemblies, he addressed them as “the church” (1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians, 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1). The reason for this can be seen in his letter to the Ephesians, where he explained that when Jews and Gentiles turn to Christ and become Christians, they become “one new man” reconciled to God “in one body” and are “built together” (Ephesians 2:15-16, 22). This makes Jews and Gentiles in Christ “fellow heirs of the same body” (Ephesians 3:6). Christ does not have two bodies.

The Temple system had degrees of exclusivity. Jews and Gentiles were kept apart by a literal separation fence called the *soreg*. It had a warning posted that Gentiles trespassing to the Jewish side would suffer death. One of these inscriptions was discovered in 1870 and another similar inscription in 1935. “The former is now at Istanbul, and the latter is in the Rockefeller Museum at Jerusalem.”²² Paul said that the middle wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles, “has been broken down” (Ephesians 2:14). If the HRM is trying to reconstruct it, it is in danger of becoming the HSM: the Hebrew Soreg Movement.

Elwood McQuaid explains:

“Today’s church is a body of twin remnants of Jews and Gentiles. It is not a Gentile institution; and when a Jewish person

becomes a believer in Jesus, he or she does not become a Gentile. Nor, for that matter, is it an extension of Judaism. Gentiles are not transformed into Jews, nor do they become a new branch or extension of Judaism. The church is unique. ... This union of grace explains a long-standing enigma: How would God bless the Gentiles through the Jewish people, as He promised in His Word? The answer is, “The Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel.”²³

Jesus gave His life to found the church (Ephesians 5:25), not to perpetuate synagogues. Jesus shed His blood to purchase the church (Acts 20:28), not to purchase synagogues. On the day of Pentecost multitudes of Jews in Jerusalem were saved and Luke records that “the Lord added to the church daily those that were being saved” (Acts 2:47, emphasis added). It absolutely does not say, “added to the synagogues.” In fact, Jesus clearly taught that the synagogues and those in them would be an antagonist to the church and would persecute those attached to the church (Luke 12:8-12).

The Apostle Paul, the quintessential Jew, was converted to Christ. He did not then establish synagogues. He established churches. His passion was “strengthening the churches” (Acts 15:41). In the book of Acts, he hotly debated those in the synagogue and was often rejected. His relationship to the synagogue was always strained and adversarial.

The saved Jews in Jerusalem were addressed as the church (Acts 11:22) and were as much the church as were the Gentiles of Antioch (Acts 13:1). The church then is made up of saved Jews and Gentiles and all of them together are described by different figures of speech.

The church is called a “holy temple” in Ephesians 2:21 and a bride in 2 Corinthians 11:2. Someone has humorously noted that Christ has one bride; He is not a bigamist. The

church is described by other figures of speech such as a body, a building, a flock, a priesthood, and branches. All of these figures present different aspects of the life and practice of the New Testament church and every one of these designations is a profitable study. That is why Paul can address the oneness of Jews and Gentiles in the church and say, “that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel” (Ephesians 3:6).

Paul is saying clearly all through the third chapter of Ephesians, “that the distinction between Jew and Gentile has been removed; both are brought into the Church on equal ground.”²⁴

It is important to note that saved Jews in and around Jerusalem *did not meet in synagogues, but rather in the Temple while it stood and in house churches*, according to Acts 2:44-47; 5:42; 16:12-15; 20:7-8. The Apostle Paul, at one point, encountered so much opposition in the synagogue at Ephesus that he had to step away from witnessing there and use a lecture hall for two years (Acts 19:8-10). As he presented Christ in the synagogues, he helped build the church and felt at home in churches.

Later in time, according to both church sources and Roman sources, the church met in buildings of various types. The gap between the two only widened. The clear distinction between the two institutions was never questioned; not until recent times. It is hard to understand why those in the HRM want to go to synagogues or establish them and not churches.

A passage of Scripture used repeatedly by many HRM exponents is James 2:2. They maintain that this passage is a blanket acceptance of synagogues because it uses the Greek word *sunagoga*, which is translated “assembly” (KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV) or “meeting” (NIV) in English. However, the book of James is one of the earliest-written of all the Epistles. It may have been written as early as

A.D. 45. And it was written to Hebrew Christians in various locations (James 1:1) who were in a time of transition out of Judaism and into the fullness in Christ.

Some of those new believers may still have been frequenting synagogues as they had always done. So James addresses a significant weakness and a major flaw in the synagogues in verses 1-10. That weakness was favoritism to the rich and neglecting or excluding the weak and impoverished. Rather than affirming synagogues, it appears that James is passing judgment by pointing out a major flaw and danger. It certainly is not an endorsement as some have taught, but rather the opposite.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY WITH LOAVES, NOT CAKE

In conjunction with all of this we must look at Pentecost, a Jewish feast day commanded by God in Leviticus 23. Some commentators refer to Pentecost in Acts 2 as the day the church was born. There is no unanimous agreement among theologians and religious writers as to the exact beginning of the New Testament church. Some expositors who are part of the hyper-dispensationalist camp run the gamut from starting the church in Acts 9 and various other points in Acts all the way to Acts 28.

Most Protestants and Evangelicals consider Pentecost (Acts 2) as the day of the church's birth and for good reasons. If Jesus predicted that He would build the church (Matthew 16:18) it could not have begun before that event at Caesarea Philippi and Peter's confession. There was no Old Testament church. Because Jesus said, "I will build," it had to be some time in the future.

It is clear from Acts 20:28 and the command to the elders of the Ephesian church that they were to "shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." That tells us the church was then in existence. That also tells us that the church could not come into being as a fully functioning entity until after the

death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. It could not have existed historically until His blood was shed for its purchase and Jesus became the triumphant Lord of the church. Ephesians 4 says that after the ascension, the Lord ascended so that He might equip the church with gifted men (Ephesians 4:9-11). Without these gifted apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, the church could not be fully established, encouraged, enlarged, or equipped.

The coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost is vitally linked to the church's beginning. The church could not have been empowered for ministry or equipped for service without the events of Pentecost. After Jesus' ascension, the Holy Spirit came to launch and equip the church. Pentecost was the start-up day and Peter referred to it as "the beginning" (Acts 11:15).

Peter clearly links the giving of the Holy Spirit to Gentiles (Cornelius and his household) in Acts 10 with Acts 2 and then calls that prior event "the beginning" (Greek root: *arche*, meaning "first" or "at the first"). After this "beginning" in Acts 2, converts to Christ are said to be joined to the church.

It appears that God designed Pentecost to be important to the birth of the church. Scripture makes it clear and the events bear out that it was God's design. The fulfillment of Matthew 16:18 had begun. The foundation had been laid and the building phase was under way (1 Corinthians 3:9-11).

Just as the Fourth of July in the United States is also referred to as Independence Day, Pentecost is known by different names. Because it was associated with harvest and has agricultural origins, it is referred to as the "Day of the First Fruits" — in Hebrew *Yom ha-Bikkurim* (Numbers 28:26). It is also called *Shavuot* or *Shabuot*, meaning "weeks."

The Hellenistic Jews of Egypt designated it Pentecost, meaning "fifty," because it was held 50 days after the second day of Passover. One more

designation attributed by the Jews was that it was the season of the giving of the Torah. The feast is observed in May or June.

Louis Goldberg explains the connections and parallels of the church's birth at Pentecost and the theme of the harvest:

"[We] note that the New Testament presents Messiah Jesus as the firstfruits of the redeemed. It goes even further and speaks of the events that happened at Pentecost as a firstfruits representing the Church. In its turn the Church itself, as a sort of firstfruits taken from among men of all nations and tongues (Acts 15:14), is a pledge of a fuller harvest to be gathered in dispensation of the fullness of the times."²⁵

In Leviticus 23, we see the components and practices of Pentecost spelled out. There was a grain offering in verse 16 showing the theme of harvest. Pentecost day in Acts 2 brought a harvest of "3,000 souls" into the church (v. 41). This harvest of 3,000 brings to mind the 3,000 slain for worshipping the golden calf in the wilderness at the giving of the Law (Exodus 32:28). Israel's beginnings had so many negatives where the church's beginning had so many positives.

The second major component of the Pentecost observance was waving publicly before God the two loaves of bread baked with leaven (Leviticus 23:17). On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, the church was formed and embraced both the nation of Israel and the Gentiles. The two "loaves" could have prophetically and symbolically represented these two groups. The leaven could have represented the sin nature that is in all of us even after salvation. Passover could have no leaven because it represented the sinless Christ. This seems more than coincidental. So all of this to say that Pentecost found its complete fulfillment with the Holy Spirit bringing the church to birth. The "harvest" of two "loaves," that is,

two distinct groups brought into one body, make the prophetic and typological picture complete.

Christ did not die to bring the church into being so it could then become a synagogue. Learning about Old Testament feasts and their fulfillment in Christ is helpful and necessary. Taking these feasts as a license to Judaize or take us back under the Law and its rituals goes beyond the pale. "Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, *we are no longer under a tutor*. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:24-26, emphasis added).

We can learn a lot about ourselves by learning about our childhood. That does not mean that we should start acting like children or try to become children all over again. One does not follow the other.

THE NEW GOLEM

Within Judaism there is a medieval legend of the Golem or monster. It is the thing of horror movies and nightmares. It is somewhat similar to Mary Shelley's story of Frankenstein. Golem means a shapeless mass. Somehow, as the Jewish legend goes, a mechanical monster (some say a clay monster) was infused with life by its creator and master. The creature became dangerous and was to be feared.

In the Middle Ages the Golem took different forms, depending on the European country and the particular spin of the rabbis. To children the Golem was the ultimate bogey-man. It was a horrible fictional mix without real identity; human, but not really human. It had a component of real life but another component of unreality, imagination, and darkness that produced much uncertainty and confusion.

Jews historically were antithetical thinkers. That is they thought in terms of opposites and contrasts (light and darkness, good and evil, righteousness and unrighteousness, truth and lies, the wise and the fool, heaven and hell, and so forth) and they preferred

something to be one thing or the other, but not an artificial mix like a Golem.

The Hebrew Roots Movement confuses both Jewish people and those in the church. The movement becomes something of a hybrid that is neither Judaism nor Christianity. It has synagogues that are not synagogues, rabbis that are not rabbis, and anachronistically mixes Talmudic traditions with New Testament concepts and words, thus creating a new religious Golem. It has both sides very confused. Its elitism is illusory. Its pretended insights and superiority are often imaginary. It creates more heat than light.

A FINAL THOUGHT

More than a decade ago Stan Telchin of Jews for Jesus ministry expressed deep concern over the direction of Messianic Judaism. The emergence of the HRM since then demonstrated his foresight:

"As the years passed, some in the movement felt that the congregations should be 'more Jewish,' and the way they chose to express their 'Jewishness' was to change from being Messianic 'congregations' to becoming Messianic 'synagogues.' Now, if you have a synagogue, you have to have a rabbi. And then you have to decide what kind of synagogue you want to be — Orthodox? Conservative? Reform? Some in the movement created a form of worship such as never existed before — a mixture of Orthodox form and lifestyle with faith in Messiah Jesus — and modeled this form for other congregations. As they did so, more and more Hebrew was incorporated into the service, though few Jews in the United States and almost no Gentiles understood Hebrew. Then the movement decided to call itself 'Messianic Judaism' with the not-so-subtle emphasis on the word *Judaism*. Over the decades more and more rabbinic form and practices were brought into many of the congregations. This

emphasis has brought considerable confusion, pain, discomfort and division into the lives of both Jewish and Gentile believers. It also has divided the Church. For these and many other reasons, I agree with David Stern, who wrote, 'The American Messianic Jewish movement at present faces a crisis — a crisis of faith.'"²⁶

Telchin also concludes:

"I do not believe God's Word supports Messianic Judaism. I agree with William Varner, who states, 'I do not believe that Messianic Judaism and Messianic synagogues have a biblical, theological, historical or pragmatic justification.'"²⁷

It is with regret and sadness that it can be stated without qualification that those within the Hebrew Roots Movement have a truncated and skewed message.

Endnotes:

1. Dean and Susan Wheelock, "Exploring the Hebrew Roots of Faith," Hebrew Roots website. Document accessed at: <http://hebrewroots.net>.
2. Dean Wheelock, "How I found Hebrew Roots." YouTube video accessed at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TOJ7B0YJe8.
3. Numerous encyclopedic and research sources, such as Wikipedia and Watchman Fellowship, state that the Wheelocks received their Federal trademark in 1994. However, according to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, Susan Aleene Wheelock filed for trademark of the name on Jan. 27, 2003. It was officially registered as a trademark on Nov. 2, 2004. On Nov. 13, 2014, the registration was renewed.
4. "How I found Hebrew Roots," op. cit.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Michael Christopher in John Klein and Adam Spears with Michael Christopher, *Lost in Translation Series — The Book of Revelation: Two Brides, Two Destinies*. Bend, Ore.: Covenant Research Institute, 2012, Vol. 3, pg. xii, emphasis added.
8. See further, John Juedes, "Found a Book, But Lost the Gospel — A Review of Michael Rood's 'A Rood Awakening' and 'Raiders of the Lost Book,'" article dated: 2005. Document accessed at: www.empirenet.com/~messiah7/sp1_RoodAwakEvalua.htm.

9. John Klein and Adam Spears with Michael Christopher, *Lost in Translation Series — Rediscovering the Hebrew Roots of Our Faith*. Bend Ore.: Covenant Research Institute, 2007, Vol. 1, pg. 66.
10. George Moore, *Judaism*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997, Vol. 1, pg. 47, italics in original.
11. Merrill Unger, *Archaeology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975, pg. 50.
12. Maurice Lamm, "The Marriage Contract (Ketubah)," from Chabad.org website. Document accessed at: www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/465168/jewish/The-Marriage-Contract-Ketubah.htm. Elsewhere, Lamm lists these same eleven major headings for the *ketubah*. For example, see "The Ketubah Text" and "The Ketubah Text (Part 2)" from My Jewish Learning website (www.myjewishlearning.com). In all of the above documents, there are also detailed text and sub-sections under each main part.
13. *Lost in Translation Series — Rediscovering the Hebrew Roots of Our Faith*, op. cit., pg. 67.
14. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky and Geoffrey Wigoder, *The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965, pg. 226.
15. "The Marriage Contract (Ketubah)," op. cit.
16. Wick Broomall in Everett Harrison, Editor, *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1960, "Type, Typology," pg. 534.
17. Michael Grant, *The Jews in the Roman World*. New York: Sterling Publishing, 1995, pg. 23.
18. Maayana Miskin, "MK Slams Women of the Wall: 'Fake Judaism,'" *Arutz Sheva* 7, May 1, 2013. Also, Jeremy Sharon, "MKs slam colleagues who joined Women of the Wall," *The Jerusalem Post*, March 12, 2013.
19. *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Religion*, op. cit., pg. 369.
20. Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple - Its Ministry and Services*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972, pp. 103-104, 106.
21. Bargil Pixner, *Paths of the Messiah*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010, pg. 125.
22. Gonzalo Báez-Camargo, *Archaeological Commentary On The Bible*. New York: Doubleday, 1979, pg. 246.
23. Elwood McQuaid, "Imperishable Remnants," *Israel My Glory* magazine, May-June, 2009, pg. 9.
24. T. Ernest Wilson, *Mystery Doctrines of the New Testament*. Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux Brothers, 1975, pg. 25.
25. Louis Goldberg, *Our Jewish Friends*. Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux Brothers, 1986, pp. 49-50.
26. Stan Telchin, *Messianic Judaism Is Not Christianity*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Chosen Books, 2004, pp. 18-19, italic in original.
27. *Ibid.*, pg. 25.



TEACH THE CHURCH TO SING

(continued from page 1)

receive their labels from the type of music included and that music's accoutrements, which can run the gamut from liturgical robes and pipe organs to flip-flops and digital drum sets."¹

Growing churches, says Christian A. Schwarz, an expert in the church-growth industry, are characterized by inspiring worship. He writes:

"People who attend inspiring worship services unanimously declare that the church service is — for some Christians this is almost a heretical word — 'fun.'"²

Fun — that is, the level of entertainment — has become the criterion by which people choose a church. Many are content to sacrifice doctrine for a good time or good music. Many will endure heresy if they think the experience is pleasant or if they believe they have felt "the presence of God" — even if that feeling is generated by mood-altering methods closer to mass hysteria than worship. Indeed, it is altogether likely that some allow

themselves to be manipulated because they enjoy "Christianity Lite."

Jones warns of other dangers:

"When music in church becomes entertainment, it is objectified as 'an event.' It turns into something to watch, a spectacle. Such events are detached from the immediacy of something in which we are actively involved. ... Worship can become something done *for* us instead of being done *by* us. This disconnection is exacerbated by the music-suffused society in which we live (with music as a mindless backdrop for almost every other activity — shopping, dining, transportation, sports, and so on). We become desensitized to music in public settings, as something in which we are involved neither as listeners nor as 'doers.'"³

Some believers speculate that entertainment-as-worship is a fad that will pass. But if so, it will leave behind a spiritual landscape full of discouraged and bewildered believers who will not know where to turn. Over a decade ago, some were already flying the coop. Donald G. Bloesch reported in a *Christianity Today* article outlining

the early signs of a backlash to the popular seeker-sensitive services:

"Evangelical Protestantism is in trouble today as an increasing number of business and professional people are searching for a new church. The complaint I hear most often is that people can no longer sense the sacred either in the preaching or in the liturgy. ... Worship has become performance rather than praise. The praise choruses that have preempted the great hymns of the church do not hide the fact that our worship is essentially a spectacle that appeals to the senses rather than an act of obeisance to the mighty God who is both holiness and love. Contemporary worship is far more egocentric than theocentric. The aim is less to give glory to God than to satisfy the longings of the human heart. Even when we sing God's praises, the focus is on fulfilling and satisfying the human desire for wholeness and serenity."⁴

THE NATURE OF WORSHIP

Much of the confusion in all of these matters comes because we do

not understand the nature of worship. John 4:23 tells us that we are to worship God “in spirit and truth.” John MacArthur writes, “The phrase suggests, first of all, that true worship involves the intellect as much as the emotions. It underscores the truth that worship is to be focused on God, not on the worshiper.”⁵

Our worship should be centered on God as we praise Him, through word, song, and prayer, and as we edify the saints through the teaching of the Scriptures so that they are enabled to live lives honoring to Him. To so honor and worship God, all that we do must emerge from truth. Most would agree with that — at least in theory — when it comes to preaching and teaching the Scriptures, for this is clearly taught in the Word (1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 2-4; Acts 2:42; Titus 1:9; Colossians 1:25).

is a response to divine *truth*. It is passionate because it arises out of our love for God.”⁶

When the church gathers for worship, its biblical mandate is not to amuse and entertain or to cater to the cry for fulfillment, but to honor God in spirit and in truth. Once it is established that God must be central to our worship, we then must examine what we do in worship. Here our practice must be in line with our biblical understanding of God and the church.

HOW SHALL WE THEN SING?

Far too often, music’s role in modern worship is as a mood-setter. With the right music and talented musicians it is possible to create almost any mood. Whether that is its ultimate purpose is another matter.

Word of God. ... 3. Good hymns have words of beauty, dignity, reverence, and simplicity. ... 4. Good hymns are adult in word and tone. ... 5. Good hymns display precision and finesse of poetic technique and expression. ... 6. Good hymns turn the heart heavenward.”⁸


And other criterion for good hymns could be added to Clarkson’s list. One such example is that hymns must be easily sung in a choral setting. Too many times, the worship leader will hear a song on the radio that he really likes. It has a beautiful melody sung by a talented singer, but the intervals and range are difficult for the average church-goer to sing. Because of this, even for the slightly-better-than-average church hymn singer, they have to abandon singing in the middle of a song.

We must keep in mind that the music itself can be a distraction when it interferes with the singing of the hymn. Often music theory teachers will use old hymns as examples, as the intervals of these hymns are always in short steps. (In other words, you don’t see a lot of going from A to E and back down to G below the A. It is A-B-C-E-C; intervals such as this.)

One of the few passages of Scripture that delivers insight on the theme of music in the setting of the church is from Paul’s letter to the Colossians:

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16; see also the parallel verse, Ephesians 5:19).

When many Christians come to church they want to be made to feel a certain way, but the central role of music in the New Testament church is to be a partner with the teaching of the Word of God. While music is a unique way to praise God in worship, the ultimate evaluation of that music in the Christian setting should be whether or not it has aided in the process of helping the Word of Christ to richly dwell within us. Just as the



Music often gets a pass. We have no more right to sing heresy than we do to preach heresy.

Music often gets a pass. We have no more right to sing heresy than we do to preach heresy. MacArthur is on the money when he writes:

“Music may sometimes move us by the sheer beauty of its sound, but such sentiment is not worship. Music by itself, apart from the truth contained in the lyrics, is not even a legitimate springboard for real worship. Similarly, a poignant story may be touching or stirring, but unless the message it conveys is set in the context of biblical truth, any emotions it may stir are of no use in prompting genuine worship. Aroused passions are not necessarily evidence that true worship is taking place. Genuine worship

Hymn writer Edith Margaret Clarkson calls our attention to the fact “that the words of a hymn are of the utmost importance.”⁷ She elaborates:

“What, then, constitutes a good hymn text? [Issac] Watts and [Charles] Wesley set the norm long ago, and their standards have never been surpassed. Today’s hymns must be in our own language, idiom, and metaphor, but our main thrust will not be substantially different from theirs. I suggest that good hymns have six general characteristics. 1. *Good hymns are God-centered, not man-centered — looking upwards, not inwards.* ... 2. *Good hymns are doctrinal in content and theologically sound, rooted solidly in the*

authority and truth of Scripture should dominate our preaching and teaching, so should it dominate our singing.

MUSIC AS TEACHING

More specifically, music serves the role of teaching and admonishing. Christian music is at its best when it teaches sound doctrine. Many of the great hymns — and some contemporary songs — are steeped in theology that reinforces the truths of the Word. Conversely, music has often been used within the church to teach and promote a wide range of heresies and aberrant doctrines.

Fourth-century heretic Arius used music to spread his false teaching that Jesus was a created being and not fully God. While the church councils, such as Nicene in A.D. 325, condemned Arianism, it continued to be popular among the masses for decades because Arius' teachings were placed to music and sung by the congregations.

Of course, much Christian music, both ancient and modern, teaches very little in the way of biblical truth. Contemporary Christian music, in particular, is long on inspiration and short on instruction. Most of the popular choruses that are making the rounds today are simple lyrics of praise that, when at their best, pinpoint a single truth which is repeated in one form or another throughout the song.

One such chorus continuously repeats the phrase: "I exalt Thee, O Lord." That is well and good, for He is worthy of exaltation. But the chorus says nothing about why He is exalted, nor does it give any instruction concerning the worthiness of God.

Another chorus encourages us, based on Psalm 103, to: "Bless the Lord, O my soul ... For He has done great things" (a chorus which is repeated again and again). Yet the remaining 21 verses of Psalm 103 tell the reader why our souls should bless the Lord. Leonard Payton writes:

"What those great things are is left to the imagination, not the

plain teaching of Scripture. The problem is that true, biblical gratitude must have its basis in objective facts or doctrine. If it doesn't, it is mere sentimentality."⁹

Modern praise choruses do have a place in our worship services, but that place could be likened to the place of dessert at a meal. Dessert must not be the main feature of our daily diet or we will suffer grave consequences. To us, a few praise choruses go a long way. To make them the mainstay of a church's musical diet is to fatten the church on sweets when it needs a substantial helping of healthy food.

LESSONS FROM THE PAST MASTERS

Martin Luther said, "Music is the handmaiden of theology." His enemies, recognizing the truth of Luther's words, lamented, "Our people are singing their way into Luther's theology."¹⁰ *Christian History* magazine reports that Charles Wesley's hymns included verses from every book in the Bible except Nahum and Philemon.¹¹ He viewed his hymns as a primer in theology and a guide for public worship and private devotion. Philip Doddridge, an important hymn writer in the eighteenth century, "wrote hymns primarily as summaries to his sermons."¹²

By contrast, much contemporary Christian music bypasses the mind and aims directly at the emotions. When the purpose of music is to elicit an emotional response devoid of biblical truth and with disregard to aiding in the process of the Word of Christ dwelling in us richly, the net result is a romanticized Christian faith. Hearts can be moved by the skillful use of melodies and rhythm no matter what message a given song is conveying.

For example, we might feel goose bumps hearing an excellent performance of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." But the lyrics of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" were written by Julia Ward Howe, a liberal Unitarian who believed in the fatherhood of God over all mankind. Her hymn has nothing to do with the

spreading of the Gospel, or the return of Christ, but rather with the eventual dominion of humanistic "truth" over the entire world. It became a famous patriotic song, but is hardly a hymn that teaches biblical truth.¹³ We may enjoy the beauty and passion of the song, but its theology is not helping the word of Christ to dwell richly within us, and thus it's not a proper hymn for the church.

BUT IT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE HERESY WHEN I SING IT

Many modern choruses teach faulty theology as well. And sadly these songs are embraced and sung by both evangelical and fundamentalist churches during their worship services. The chorus, "Majesty," by pentecostal pastor Jack Hayford is an example. Speaking to the origin of his song, Hayford tells us:

"For years I have been convinced that the provisions of Christ for the believer not only include our forgiveness for sin; but provide restoration to a royal relationship with God as sons and daughters born into the family through His Majesty, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Within that relationship, as people of The Kingdom, I felt the Bible disclosed a new dimension of *dominion* over 'all the works of the devil' bequeathed to us as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ."¹⁴

The critical truth which escapes those otherwise discerning pastors and song leaders who love to sing "Majesty" in their worship services is that Hayford's chorus proclaims, "Majesty, Kingdom authority, Flow from His throne, Unto His own, His anthem raise." Those words, repeated numerous times in the song, describe the false "Kingdom Now" theology that maintains believers are able to exercise "kingdom authority" or "dominion" over sickness and the devil in our present day.

Hayford says that "there is a *kingdom* to be taken, and there is a *force* to be exerted, and the People of the Highest are the ones to do both."¹⁵ It propagates what Hayford, the Vine-

yard movement, and the Word-Faith pundits believe, but not what Scripture teaches.

Hayford's view is that worship today is to be redefined, unwrapped, and unsealed. This reformation in worship, he tells us, is as powerful as the Protestant Reformation of old. Yet his description and condemnation of present-day worship should cause us to pause with great concern. He offers us this curious characterization:

"The historic approach to the doctrine of worship has focused so much on God, in an effort to verify His glory and underscore man's unworthiness, that an unwitting surrender to 'works' in worship has resulted. For example, the honest quest 'to worthily worship God as He deserves to be worshiped,' easily becomes performance-oriented and hermetically sealed to keep out simple love, warmth and emotion."¹⁶

It is biblically unjustifiable to try to berate a "doctrine of worship [that] has focused so much on God in an effort to verify His glory and underscore man's unworthiness." Our worship is always to be theocentric. David Wells rebukes Hayford when he writes, "The purpose of worship is clearly to express the greatness of God and not simply to find inward release or, still less, amusement."¹⁷

Moreover, the "performance-oriented and hermetically sealed" worship which Hayford disapproves is more at home within charismatic and pentecostal gatherings. With such a faulty depiction of godly worship, Hayford — along with his theology and his music — should not be given a hearing in any biblically minded Christian church.

Another contemporary song that has found its way into the worship services of far too many biblically sound churches is Robin Mark's "Days of Elijah." For a variety of reasons, it is remarkable how this song has earned any measure of distinction among otherwise discerning pastors and music leaders. But it

has gained respect and is readily used time and again.

First among the issues raising concern is that, according to Mark, the song was the result of inspiration:

"For me, I only know what I wrote. I felt prompted by the Holy Spirit. ... Personally I don't know — I believe I wrote what God was telling me to write and He seems to have used the song in many ways for many people."¹⁸

Mark's prompting by the Holy Spirit supposedly came about in answer to a prayer in which he "began asking God if He was really in control and what sort of days were we living in"¹⁹ as he watched the tragedies of our present day unfold. As one blogger pointed out, "Let's stop here for a moment. It's necessary to point out that just a cursory overview of Scripture shows that God is in control of everything — and He even allows bad things to take place in order to bring about His Sovereign plans."²⁰

But apparently for Mark, Scripture was not adequate for such an assurance:

"I felt in my spirit that He replied to my prayer by saying that indeed He was very much in control and that the days we were living in were special times when He would require Christians to be filled with integrity and to stand up for Him just like Elijah did, particularly with the prophets of Baal."²¹

Beyond Mark's degrading the sufficiency of Scripture and his claims of inspiration, come the theological issues with the song. First and foremost is the notion that our present days are the "Days of Elijah." And, as the song further announces, that ours are the days of Moses and Ezekiel and David. The tune may be alluring and the words exciting, but ours are not the days of any of those Bible characters. They all lived in the past.

If these are truly the days of Elijah, then it is not beyond consideration to

require of those churches who proclaim that message in song to also gather 12 stones, build an altar, place wood around the altar, take a bull and cut it in pieces, fill four water pots (three times each) and pour the water on the bull and the wood, pray, and then wait and watch for the fire of the Lord to consume the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust, and the water. It all becomes too plain to see that the thinking that presently these are the days of Elijah just does not measure up to the biblical narrative.

Mark also tells us in the song, "And these are the days of Your servant Moses." Are we to forget that 40 years' worth of the days of Moses were spent wandering in the wilderness with a bunch of grumblers and complainers?

Moreover, as claimed in the song, "Righteousness being restored" is an idea adopted from the Latter-Rain playbook which teaches the perfection and glorification of the saints on earth that will be a testimony to the world and serve to usher in Christ's Second Coming. Mark tells us:

"It is an unusual song, for sure. All of these restored things like Justice, Righteousness, Integrity, Unity, Praise and Worship and Revival are considered by many to be a herald of the last days and Christ's return."²²

Scripture speaks not of a restoration of righteousness — along with the other traits mentioned by Mark — but rather that the last days would be marked by apostasy, a falling away (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Recall that Jesus asked of His disciples, "Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

"Days of Elijah" is one of those songs that should be avoided by any biblically minded believer. But that is not the case as song writers such as Mark are allowed to mishandle Scripture and introduce heresies and half-truths into the Church. Mike Milano, in speaking to the defect of the "Days of Elijah," states:

“Today we have many false and heretical teachings in the evangelical Church. They all stem from a mishandling of the Word of God. They all are fueled by the ignorance of apathetic Christians who fail to fulfill their God-mandated responsibility to learn the Scriptures to the extent that they can readily recognize misinterpretation when they see it. Millions of people sing this song every week and have no idea that the verses are not Biblically correct. They are actually a misinterpretation of what Robin [Mark] claims he is citing. The part that bothers me the most is that he says he got this song from the Holy Spirit; so in other words, the Holy Spirit gave Robin a song that does not line up with Biblical history and worse yet; is a misinterpretation of Biblical contexts.”²³

Milano further observes:

“The song is not complex — just chalk-full [sic] of theological, historical, and narrative errors. Christians who sing this song should be familiar enough with the Bible to know this. ... I am sure that Robin Mark is a nice guy and he means well. That however does not excuse the fact that his song is Biblically incorrect and that thousands of people who sing it all over the world are so Biblically malnourished that they can’t even see that the song is Biblically incorrect. Which is more sad: the fact that a guy writes a song that doesn’t line up with the Scripture, while claiming that the Lord ‘gave it to him’ — or the fact that so many Christians don’t even catch the error?”²⁴

And can it be that it’s not just contemporary hymns that express questionable or even heretical theology? Take, for example, one of the better known and loved hymns penned by eighteenth-century hymn writer Charles Wesley. Wesley is probably best known outside the

Methodist denomination (which was founded by his brother John) for the more than 6,000 hymns which he composed:

“Charles communicates several doctrines; the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, the depravity of mankind, and humanity’s personal accountability to God. This was a vital contribution not only to Methodism, but to modern theology as a whole.”²⁵

Indeed, it can be said that Wesley made a “vital contribution” to proclaim in song the message of Christ’s work of redemption and other biblical truths. However, located in one of his hymns is a very problematic verse. “And Can It Be?” was written in 1738 to celebrate his conversion. Yet it must be underscored that the third verse is one that “contains some serious heresies.”²⁶ It is here, in the center of that stanza, in which we find the unbiblical proclamation that Jesus: “Emptied Himself of all but love.”

Those words describe what is now termed as “kenotic theology,” which attempts to define and understand the incarnation of Christ. The aim of kenotic theology, according to an online theological encyclopedia is “to solve some of the supposed paradoxes arising from Jesus having both a divine nature and a human nature. For example, how could an all knowing God become a baby, how could God be tempted, or how could Jesus (being God) not know the time of His return?”²⁷

While the beginnings of kenotic theology follow Wesley by more than a century, the implications of this false belief are still manifested in his hymn.

The kenosis theory is based upon the Greek word *ekenosen* (from the root word, *kenoo*) found in Philippians 2:6-7, and which is translated as “emptied.” In the passage Paul tells us:

“Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard

equality with God a thing to be grasped, but *emptied* Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men” (emphasis added, NASB).

Thus, on the basis of Paul’s declaration in Scripture, one could conclude that kenotic theology has a biblical foundation and those words penned by Wesley and sung by millions of believers are justified. However, it is important to know:

“All forms of classical orthodoxy either explicitly reject or reject in principle kenotic theology. This is because God must be affirmed to be changeless; any concept of the incarnation that would imply change would mean that God would cease to be God.”²⁸

Charles Hodge, the pre-eminent nineteenth-century systematic theologian, targeted the kenosis theory:

“The theory in question is inconsistent with the clear doctrine both of revealed and natural religion concerning the nature of God. He is a Spirit infinite, eternal, and immutable. Any theory, therefore, which assumes that God lays aside his omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence, and becomes as feeble, ignorant, and circumscribed as an infant, contradicts the first principle of all religion, and, if it be pardonable to say so, shocks the common sense of men.”²⁹

We must determine what Paul meant when he wrote that Jesus “emptied” Himself. Some, such as Word-Faith advocates, argue that it was His deity. Others, including more conservative theologians, say it was His glory or the use of His divine attributes. Yet, as noted above, “God must be affirmed to be changeless” and any implied “change would mean that God would cease to be God.” Simply stated:

“Jesus did not empty himself of anything. ... The text says absolutely nothing about his attributes. How did he make himself nothing? ... ‘by taking the form of a servant

[and] by becoming in the likeness of humanity."³⁰

Philippians 2 describes the hypostatic union of Christ: that He is both fully God and fully man. And what we have conveyed in this passage is a concealing or veiling of His expression (*morphe*) not His essence (deity), much like the Old Testament theophanies (Exodus 33:18-23).

That still leaves us with the question of what to do with Wesley's hymn. One writer has noted, "Many modern hymnals have solved this heresy in the hymn by changing the words to read, '*Emptied himself and came in love.*'"³¹ Yet that change — in consideration of sound doctrine and proper biblical interpretation — really does not correct "the heresy in the hymn." At the very least, that third stanza should be eliminated.

In the 1930s, a preacher named Alfred Ackley was challenged during one of his evangelistic meetings by a young Jewish man who asked, "Why should I worship a dead Jew?" A short time later he was again roused, this time by a liberal radio preacher who proclaimed that it really didn't matter if Christ was raised or not. Those encounters compelled Ackley to defend and prove that Jesus was alive. In 1933, his proof that Christ is alive came in the words of "He Lives," a song that is said to be one of the most well-liked of all Easter hymns. Yet despite its success, it is a hymn ingrained with mysticism and subjectivity.

The chorus of the hymn declares, "He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and He talks with me, Along life's narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart! You ask me how I know He lives: He lives within my heart."

With the words, "He walks with me and He talks with me," Ackley opens the door for and advances a brazen mysticism.³² Such an expression gives way to the notion that apart from Scripture one has a direct and unmediated access to God. However, God's expressed means of speaking to us is in His Word alone, not some

mystical stroll down an imaginative "life's narrow way." Tim Challies addresses well the implications of mysticism:

"God has given us his Word to guide us in all matters of faith and practice. When we commit ourselves to mysticism, we commit ourselves to looking for revelation from God and experiences of God that come from outside that Word. We reject his gift — his good, infallible, inerrant, sufficient gift — and demand more. Because God promises us no more, we quickly create our own experiences and interpret them as if they are God's revelation. Yet the Bible warns us that we can do no better than God's Word and have no right to demand anything else. The question for Evangelicals today is just this: Will God's Word be enough? Because whatever does not lead us toward God's Word will always, inevitably and ultimately lead us away."³³

Moreover, Ackley errs further as he offers, "You ask me how I know He lives: He lives within my heart." Here Ackley subjugates the Word to his *experience*. While it is true that Christ indwells the believer (Colossians 1:27; Galatians 4:6), it is not the basis for knowing that He lives. The Christian's response to: "You ask me how I know He lives," should be: "For the Bible tells me so!" Mitchell Pries reminds us:

"The resurrection is a fact. ... The evidence is so great that even the critics of many Christian historical writers can find no evidence that the event did not take place."³⁴

In his debate over Jesus' resurrection with then-atheist Anthony Flew, apologist Gary Habermas set forth in his affirmative statement ten "positive evidences that corroborate the historical and literal nature" of the resurrection. None of his "key evidences" suggested a subjective expression of "He lives within my heart."³⁵

Wikipedia contains an abbreviated entry on "He Lives." Yet even in its brevity, the entry underscores the trouble:

"The hymn discusses the experience claimed by Christians that Jesus Christ lives within their hearts. It is disliked or excluded by some conservative evangelicals, on the grounds that the appeal to experience is less reliable than the words of scripture and can lead to heresy."³⁶

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that their church is true and that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God because they have received a "burning in the bosom" — it's a "feeling" from within that they have the truth. Mormons are rightly admonished for basing truth upon experience. Ackley's hymn also seeks to establish truth by feeling. For the Christian, however, Scripture is the sole objective source of truth and the means whereby all things are measured and established (Acts 17:11).

As seen from at least three of the four above examples, some songs are well outside the realm of being able to be rescued and remedied, simply because of the errant theology which is at the very essence of the song. Yet others, like "And Can It Be?," need not be discarded, but can be salvaged by eliminating the corrupt verse. Other songs can be salvaged by modifying a single word.

The popular song, "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High," by Rick Founds is an example.³⁷ The song's main verse contains a serious theological error. It declares of the Lord that, "You came from heaven to earth, to *show* the way." The teaching that Jesus is a *way-shower* is a staple of the twisted Christology of most cults and heretical groups, especially those of the mind sciences genre and New Age thought.

For example, Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy, in her *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, proclaimed that man's unity with God comes "through

Christ Jesus the Way-shower."³⁸ However, Jesus, in John 14:6, did not say He was the way-shower, but *the way*. A way-shower and the way are not one in the same any more than a road sign and the road are the same.

One can fix Founds' song simply by replacing the word "show" with the word "be" in the main verse of the song: "You came from heaven to earth, to *be* the way." That minor change makes it biblically accurate.

STILL COMING UP SHORT ON DOCTRINE

While some choruses and contemporary Christian songs teach biblical truth and may have a place in worship, they often offer praise to God but are devoid of a doctrinal base.

David Wells analyzed 406 songs in the *Worship Songs of the Vineyard* and *Maranatha! Music Praise Chorus Book*, along with 662 hymns of a traditional hymnal, *The Covenant Hymnal*, for their doctrinal content. Songs that simply mentioned a truth, but did not elaborate on that truth were considered lacking in doctrinal content in his study.

For example, a song that repeated throughout that "Jesus is Lord," but nothing else would not be counted among those with theological content. However, the contemporary song "Meekness and Majesty" would be counted because of its development of His incarnation. This song does not simply say that Jesus is Lord, but opens, "Meekness and majesty, manhood and Deity, in perfect harmony, the Man who is God. Lord of eternity, dwells in humanity; kneels in humility and washes our feet."

Using the above criteria Wells found that 58.9% of the praise songs offer no doctrinal grounding or explanation for the praise. By contrast, in classical hymns "it was hard to find hymns that were not predicated upon and did not develop some aspects of doctrine."³⁹

If we are evaluating Christian hymns by how they aid in the process of the Word of Christ dwelling in us richly, then they should be steeped in

scriptural truth. If we analyze Christian music by comparing it with the Psalms, the biblical hymn book, we would come to the same conclusion. The Psalms are not a collection of simple themes sung in repetitive fashion. They are, instead, full of doctrinal elaboration. They developed marvelous themes in great detail. Take Psalm 36 for example. In it David contrasts the evil schemes of wicked men (verses 1-4) with the loving-kindness of God (verses 5-12). Today we might write and sing a song that simply repeats the truth of God's loving-kindness.

In 1956, Hugh Mitchell wrote:

"Thy loving kindness is better than life, Thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee, thus will I bless Thee, I will lift up my hands unto Thy name."⁴⁰

By contrast, however, the psalmist wrote of the manifold extent of not only His loving-kindness, but of God's faithfulness, righteousness, and even judgments. He developed word pictures of the abundance, delights, life, and light found in our Lord. Then he warns himself and his readers of the traps that are along life's highways that just might spring upon the unsuspecting child of God. What a marvelous example the Psalms demonstrate for us with regard to proper use of music in our worship of God.

MUSIC AS ADMONISHMENT

Christian music should also admonish (Colossians 3:16). The Greek word for "admonish" (*noutheteo*) means "to put in mind" and is used of "instruction" and of "warning."⁴¹ A proper role of the church's music is to go beyond teaching to the application of that instruction. Music should point out danger, call us to attention, and advise us on how to make proper choices.

Most Christian music, whether a hymn or chorus, is sadly weak in this regard, but not so the Jewish "hymnal" — the book of Psalms. Psalms is loaded with this type of admonish-

ment. Perhaps a return to a steady diet of singing the Psalms — as is still practiced in some Christian circles — would be a wise move for those interested in allowing music to fulfill its biblical purpose. We would quickly add that the Psalms are limited to Old Testament truth and thus alone could not provide a balanced musical diet for the New Testament saint.

Colossians 3:16 tells us that we are to be teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. This passage has been explained a number of ways, but perhaps the most helpful was to learn that the Septuagint (LXX, the Greek translation of the Old Testament used often and quoted by Jesus and the apostles) labeled the 150 Psalms alternatively as "Psalms" or "Hymns" or "Spiritual Songs."⁴² This is almost beyond question the backdrop of Paul's statement in Colossians. If so, a thorough study of how the Psalms teach and admonish might be the best undertaking that Christian music leaders could do. At the very least we will discover that the Psalms not only major in praising God, but do so in the context of truth in a messy world.

The Psalms deal with almost every circumstance in life, but do so through the lens of God and His marvelous works. Leonard Payton reminds us:

"Whatever else Paul's admonition means, even a loose reading indicates that our worship music must regularly touch the entire superstructure of Christian doctrine."⁴³

If this is true then we must examine not only what our music says and teaches, but also what it does *not* say. If songs played over Christian radio are any indication, it would appear that the prominent theme in Christian music at the present time is that of God as a "felt-need" provider. If we are lonely, sad, hurting, disappointed, or empty, come to Jesus who will comfort and fix what hurts.

Depending on how it is presented, there is truth in what these songs convey. Christ does comfort us and

meet our true needs, especially our need for righteousness. He calls us to the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16). So there is nothing wrong with singing of God's helping hand in times of pain and concern. But there is something wrong with doing so at the expense of other essential doctrines. God is more than a comforter.

The Scriptures teach more than a handful of themes. The whole counsel of God needs to be explored not only in our preaching but in our singing as well. Some of these themes will not play well with modern audiences; they didn't play well with ancient ones either. When the author of Hebrews wanted to explain the Melchizedekian priesthood of Christ to his readers, he knew he had a problem: they had grown dull of hearing and could no longer digest solid theology (Hebrews 5:11-14). So, after a lengthy admonishment (5:11-6:20), he plowed ahead anyway (chapters 7-10). They would have surely rather read a treatise on how God would make them feel better than about the life and significance of Melchizedek, but what they needed was an understanding of Melchizedek.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

If we are serious about our Christian music being more than entertainment, there are numerous things we could do, recognizing, of course, that we will probably be swimming upstream against the fads of the moment. After all, many Christians have listened to hours of Christian radio, have attended Christian concerts, have been playing CDs recorded by professional Christian artists, and they are coming to church services expecting all of this to be duplicated on Sunday morning.

We must be aware of and never succumb to the errors to which many a church has fallen victim. Paul Jones outlines key mistakes often made by pastors when he warns that "it is easy to accept pragmatic musical ideas around us — the example of what has

worked for megachurches, what is suggested by church-growth 'experts,' or what an influential elder or wealthy member insists on."⁴⁴ He further cautions:

"In hopes of bringing increased vitality to church, contemporary services are added, with psalms and hymns often demoted or excluded from worship. This flawed approach comes from the mistaken belief that growth in church attendance on the basis of popular musical style ensures spiritual growth. Another mistaken notion is that worship music's purpose is to attract the unsaved, and then the teaching ministry will take care of the rest. A third is that such changes are necessary 'for the young people.' Such errors are rampant. At the root of these errors is the idea that worship music is predominantly a tool for evangelism."⁴⁵

So how can the faithful pastor and his congregation avoid these errors?

First, we could evaluate all the music we sing in our churches. We need to determine if it teaches solid theology, that it admonishes us to correct living, that it worships God in truth, and that it aids in the process of allowing the Word to dwell in us richly. The latter phrase means that by study, meditation, and application of the Word, it richly becomes at home in our lives. It has become a part of us. Jones writes:

"We must measure our worship practices by the Word of God. Scriptural models and values should inform our thinking, traditions, and practices in worship. Therefore, if we discover that any of these are in conflict with biblical teaching or principles, we must change. To make such a discovery, or to confirm that our musical worship is biblical, we must read and study the Bible."⁴⁶

And Leonard Payton adds the helpful suggestion that we ask ourselves the following questions each Sunday:

"Did the music ministry today cause the word of Christ to dwell

in us richly? Did we teach and admonish one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs? Did we sing with gratitude in our hearts to God for Christ's finished work on the cross?"⁴⁷

Payton's recommendation would be a worthy exercise.

Second, we must train our churches concerning this whole area of entertainment. Appetites can be developed. We must not cave in to the world's way of thinking. Entertainment has its place, but that place is not center stage in the life and worship of Christ's church. The fact that churches that have mastered the art of entertainment are growing by leaps and bounds should elicit repulsion, not imitation, from those who understand the Scriptures.

Third, we could study with great profit the Psalms to discover how music is to be used to accomplish its biblically mandated goal.

Fourth, we need to teach our children good Christian music within the context of the church. They have the rest of their week to listen to whatever music they and/or their parents choose, but when they come to worship God corporately we must expose them to psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs that will aid in the Word of Christ dwelling in them richly. They may not immediately like the tunes or the lyrics, but in so doing they will learn this great body of music in our churches.

CONCLUSION

Passion and emotionalism are often and easily confused in the modern church. The Christian life runs the full range of emotions: joy, peace, delight, love, sorrow, grief, concern, etc. Ours is a faith not only of the head but also of the heart. As a result it is right and proper to desire spiritual experience. The problem is that many Christians cannot tell the difference between enthusiasm for God and manipulation of the moment. Entertainment can look strangely like worship; fun can masquerade as joy; fleshly excitement can be perceived as divine encounter.

Part of our problem today is that out of the free-love (that is, drugs and sex) revolution of the 1960s has sprung an insatiable desire for experience. Experience has mounted the throne and barks out orders to a doting constituency that has lost patience in a world that does not make sense. If we cannot understand life, if in fact life makes no sense, at least we can enjoy ourselves. If it feels good, it may not be right, but it is better than nothing.

This attitude — called postmodernism by those who like to coin phrases — has also crept into the church. Christians want an experience that makes them feel good. So dominating has this desire become that truth has increasingly taken a back seat to a good time.

We should be ever mindful that the Word — not experience — is our authority. True delight in God should emerge from biblical truth. Next we should take a good look at the Psalms. There we find the writers absolutely in love with and excited about God. Psalm 36:7-9, for example, reads:

“How precious is Your loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures. For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.”

Here is a man (David) finding great joy in his Lord. He is not wrapped up in the side issues; he is not drumming up feelings; he is not being whipped into a mood. He is simply reflecting on his God and his heart can hardly contain what it views. This is the spiritual experience we should crave.

Endnotes:

1. Paul S. Jones, *What is Worship Music?* Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 2010, pp. 5-6.
2. Christian A. Schwarz, *The ABC's of Natural Church Development*. St. Charles, Ill.: Churchsmart Resources, 2001, pp. 14.
3. *What is Worship Music?*, op. cit., pp. 20,

- 21, italics in original.
4. Donald G. Bloesch, “Whatever Happened to God?,” *Christianity Today*, Feb. 5, 2001, pg. 54.
5. John MacArthur in John H. Armstrong, general editor, *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, pg. 176.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 182-183, italic in original.
7. Edith Margaret Clarkson, “What is a Hymn?,” *Reformed Worship* magazine, June 1987. Document accessed at: www.reformedworship.org/article/june-1987/what-hymn.
8. *Ibid.*, italics in original.
9. Leonard Payton in *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*, op. cit., pg. 194.
10. Paul Anderson, “Balancing Form and Freedom,” *Leadership* (Journal), Spring 1986, Vol. 7, No. 2, pg. 32.
11. Timothy Dudley-Smith, “Why Wesley Still Dominates Our Hymnbook,” *Christian History* magazine, Issue 31, pg. 11.
12. “Other Important Hymn Writers” in *ibid.*, pg. 23.
13. See further, Kenneth W. Osbeck, *101 Hymn Stories*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1982, pp. 35-36.
14. Jack W. Hayford, “The Birth of MAJESTY,” from Jack Hayford’s website, italic in original. Document accessed at: www.jackhayford.com/pages/article_birth_of_majesty.html.
15. Jack Hayford, *Worship His Majesty*. Venture, Calif.: Regal Books, 2000, pg. 21, italics in original.
16. *Ibid.*, pg. 22.
17. David F. Wells, *Losing Our Virtue*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998, pg. 40.
18. Robin Mark, “The Story Behind Days of Elijah,” from the FAQ section of Mark’s website. Document accessed at: <http://robinmark.com/the-story-behind-days-of-elijah/>.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Mike Milano, “‘Worship Songs’ And Their Lyrics,” blog posted June 8, 2011. Document accessed at: <http://milanosmusings.blogspot.com/2011/06/worship-songs-and-their-lyrics.html>.
21. “The Story Behind Days of Elijah,” op. cit.
22. *Ibid.*
23. “‘Worship Songs’ And Their Lyrics,” op. cit.
24. *Ibid.*
25. “Charles Wesley” from Wikipedia. Document accessed at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Wesley.
26. Caleb Phelps, “3 Hymns That Teach Bad Theology,” Fanning the Flame website, posted Aug. 5, 2014. Document accessed at: www.fanningflames.org/blog/3-hymns-that-teach-bad-theology.
27. “Kenosis” from Theopedia. Document accessed at: www.theopedia.com/Kenosis.
28. S.M. Smith in Walter A. Elwell, editor,

- Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1984, pg. 601.
29. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999, Vol. II, pg. 439.
30. Rodney J. Decker, “Philippians 2:5-11, The Kenosis,” italics and brackets in original. Document accessed at: <http://ntrsources.com/blog/documents/kenosis.pdf>.
31. “3 Hymns That Teach Bad Theology,” op. cit., italics in original.
32. Another hymn, “In the Garden” written by C. Austin Miles, expresses the same mystical thought in its chorus which says: “And He walks with me, and He talks with me, And He tells me I am His own.”
33. Tim Challies, “The Boundaries of Evangelicalism,” online article posted May 08, 2013. Document accessed at: www.challies.com/articles/the-boundaries-of-evangelicalism.
34. Mitchell Peter Pries, *A Physician Looks at the Resurrection*. Summerland, Calif.: Harbor House (West) Publishers, 1994, pg. 5.
35. Terry L. Miethe, editor, *Did Jesus Rise From the Dead?* San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1989, pp. 21-22.
36. “He Lives” from Wikipedia. Document accessed at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/He_Lives.
37. Some apologists would rather dismiss Founds and his song. For example, David Cloud writes, “RICK FOUNDS, author of *Lord, I Lift Your Name on High*, is radically ecumenical. His popular song is described as a ‘little four-chord flock-rocker’ that ‘hurdles denominational barriers effortlessly’ (*Worship Leader Magazine*, March/April 1998). It was one of the theme songs of the ecumenical Promise Keepers movement.” (David Cloud, “Replacing Hymns with Contemporary Praise Music” from Way of Life Literature, Inc. website. Document accessed at: www.wayoflife.org/index_files/replacing_hymns_with_cpm.html).
38. Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. Boston: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1971, pg. 497, lines 14-15.
39. *Losing Our Virtue*, op. cit., pg. 44.
40. Hugh Mitchell, “Thy Loving Kindness,” New Spring/Brentwood-Benson Music Publishing, Inc., 1956.
41. See further, W.E. Vine, *The Expanded Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1984, pp. 22-23.
42. Leonard Payton in *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*, op. cit., pg. 191.
43. *Ibid.*, pg. 194.
44. *What is Worship Music?*, op. cit., pg. 24.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.
46. *Ibid.*, pg. 37.
47. Leonard Payton in *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*, op. cit., pg. 203.



and do not necessarily reflect the views of Charisma Media.” Yet this raises the question if Schuller’s editorial does not reflect the views of Charisma Media, why publish it? They must bear at least a measure of acceptance and responsibility in its publication. The views expressed in the editorials and articles in *The Quarterly Journal* reflect the views of Personal Freedom Outreach. There is no hiding behind such a disclaimer for us.

Schuller offers his initial proposition that because of the evolution of media to such things as social media, online broadcasts, and podcasts, televangelists “won’t have the profile the previous generation of TV preachers had.” Fact is, those “big time TV evangelists” won’t come to an end because of new media outlets, but rather will employ (and are already employing) those formats to create a broader visibility and bigger religious empire. What a positive — and good — event it would be if big time evangelists came to an end. But sadly, that’s nowhere even close to being a reality.

Schuller next tries to tell us that televangelists are “pastors at heart.” Again, not so. Not even close.

In the biblical sense, a pastor is one who works long, hard, and with great diligence to rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15). He does so in order to feed and protect the flock of God that has been entrusted to his care. He desires to see them mature in their faith and to grow in the process of biblical sanctification. He’s never the one — like the televangelist — who ensnares his people with heretofore unknown revelation or esoteric insights of Scripture, and then labels “immature” those who would question such teaching.

The biblical pastor is the one who labors overtime to pray for and work with the couple whose marriage has gone sour. He’s never the one who offers a quick fix to a marriage in trouble by “binding the spirit of divorce in the name of Jesus” or holding his hands to a television camera as a “point of contact” and offers a glib prayer.

The biblical pastor is the one who counsels, consoles, and serves the parents of a child stricken with leukemia as they struggle with the sadness, suffering, and expense of caring for their child. He’s never the one who titillates the multitudes for hours at his jam-packed healing service where he brazenly promises, “Everyone can be healed tonight!” only to retreat back to his excessively plush hotel suite as the couple agonizingly leaves the crusade with their child in the same helpless condition.

The biblical pastor is the one who makes repeated hospital visits and performs the funerals of our departed loved ones. Televangelists do none of this for their television flock. Please don’t try to tell us that “TV evangelists are pastors at heart.”

Third, Schuller tells us that televangelists “struggle financially.” With such a proclamation, there is no doubt that Schuller has his feet firmly planted in Bizarro World. If televangelists struggle financially it is only because of their own greed and exorbitant lifestyles and then not having the money available to continue to finance their overindulgences.

Jet planes, multimillion-dollar homes (“parsonages”), luxurious automobiles, designer clothes, and the best of accommodations while traveling are all part and parcel of the key players amongst the televangelists. With this troupe, enough is never enough. They live high on the hog, while their supporters struggle from paycheck to paycheck, often with great sacrifice as they think they are “sowing a seed” that has been promised to be returned to them a hundred-fold. Recent news reports indicate that T.D. Jakes has an estimated net worth of \$150 million; Joel Osteen has an estimated net worth of \$55 million; and Benny Hinn has an estimated net worth of \$42 million. The list of millionaire television preachers, including Creflo Dollar, Kenneth Copeland, and Joyce Meyer goes on. And we are told to believe that these men and women struggle financially? Televangelists, with their insatiable desires and pursuit of material pleasure and shameless indulgences, bring reproach and scorn onto the Gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 2:10; 2 Timothy 3:15). For example, last March, Creflo Dollar was seeking \$65 million in donations (200,000 people to give at least \$300 each) to purchase a private jet. His campaign was abandoned following a ferocious backlash.

Fourth, Schuller informs us that, “Most TV pastors have a deeper theology than you think.” How ironic! Especially in light of the fact that most disparage doctrine and belittle the apologists and believers who hold it dear. I guess Schuller would have us forget TBN founder Paul Crouch’s foul and disgusting diatribe aimed at Bereans:

“And I want to say to all you Scribes, Pharisees, heresy hunters; all of you that are going around picking little bits of doctrinal error out of everybody’s eyes and dividing the body of Christ and arguing over splinters and doctrinal hairs and dissipating and wasting all of our time when the world’s going to hell. I say get out of God’s way, quit blocking God’s bridges or God’s going to shoot you if I don’t. I mean this is in my spirit, folks. I’m tired of Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites blocking God’s bridges when the harvest is perishing out there and God’s calling the body to come together. *Let Him sort out all this doctrinal doo-doo. I don’t care about it. I don’t care any more*” (Praise the Lord show, “Praise-a-Thon,” Trinity Broadcasting Network, April 2, 1991, emphasis added).

Schuller says that his colleagues “have incredible knowledge of church history, doctrine and the Bible but just can’t find a way to make the ideas work well on TV.” So he maintains that their “message just has to be simple, encouraging and yes, in some cases, *entertaining*”

(italics in original). Somehow, it seems that the televangelists are able “to make ideas work well on TV” when it comes to their doctrine of giving and a proclamation of their novel and esoteric revelations, but “can’t find a way” when it comes to the essential doctrines of the Christian faith. Despite what Schuller maintains, televangelists are vanguards in the erosion and evasion of sound biblical doctrine.

Finally, Schuller writes, “A new generation of ‘TV evangelists’ will be more creative than you expect.” Let’s hope this last one is fictitious as well because, if true, it means an even grimmer outlook for the church. Heretofore, televangelists have been more than “creative” in the propagation of aberrant and heretical teaching as well as their ability to “fleece the flock.”

Very few, even within pentecostal and charismatic camps, are familiar with the name James Eugene Ewing. Ewing was a former tent-revival preacher who employed a massive direct-mail operation not only for himself, but for countless other televangelists including Oral Roberts and Rex Humbard. The Dallas-based watch-dog group, The Trinity Foundation, designates Ewing as “God’s Ghostwriter” and the Rapture Ready website labels him as “The Most Evil Man You’ve Never Heard Of.” Ewing is the man responsible for developing the “seed-faith” principle that sent Oral Roberts and his ministry to the fund-raising forefront and which has been copied and cultivated by many other televangelists.

Heaven help us if this new generation of televangelists is more creative than the last.

Schuller’s column — and others like it which appear in *Charisma* — seems to come to us from Bizarro World, where up is down, down is up, bad is good, good is bad (see Isaiah 5:20). In all this there is a mish-mash of confusing signals being sent to the magazine’s readership. Sadly, *Charisma* isn’t helping believers to be Bereans. It is the antithesis of cultivating biblical and doctrinal awareness. It is not surprising, therefore, that Schuller is able to personally add to the inconsistency with his editorial.

—MKG

WHY PEOPLE ARE SUCKERS FOR RELIGIOUS SCAMS

Paul wrote that there will be those who by trickery and cunning craftiness lie in wait to deceive us (Ephesians 4:14). The apostle also warned us that if we do not take heed, we will be unstable and thrown about by every false doctrine that comes down the pike.

In the 1936 Three Stooges film, “Disorder in the Court,” Curly is on the witness stand in court and told

by the defense attorney to “Drop the vernacular! ... Talk so the jury can understand.” Curly’s immediate response is, “Is everybody dumb?” Curly’s question seems pertinent today.

We as humans are not dumb and, in fact, have built-in fraud detectors, but too often people’s detectors are broken, disabled, or malfunctioning. As such, a consistent topic of television news reports and magazine articles is how scam artists target their prey and the con games of which to be aware.

Even with repeated attempts to expose these deceivers and their schemes, so many scammers get around our fraud detectors. We need to understand how this happens.

One thing we need to be aware of is the real power of written — and then mailed — appeals. So many televangelists, faith healers, and self-proclaimed “prophets” and “apostles” use mass-marketing mail as a tried-and-true, scientifically studied way of fundraising. The official-looking correspondence is said to come right from “the man” himself. There is even a computer generated “personal” signature.

We tend to believe these letters have the same authority as mail from government organizations or doctors’ offices. After all, the “healer” or “apostle” professes to have an inside track with God and possesses great spiritual powers and insights; chosen by God and with a special anointing.

The return envelope beckons and may be addressed directly to “Mr. Big” himself, though in reality it will be opened and emptied by a minimum-wage employee or an unpaid volunteer. All these tactics and tricks are designed to get around our fraud detectors. Remember: Ephesians describes the operation by deceivers as “the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting” (4:14).

Many of those letters will be full of promises of hundred-fold or thousand-fold returns. Any little amount we send back is overshadowed by the enormity of the claimed return. Secular con men call this telling the tale. We become the mark and swallow the tall tale in one gulp. It is a spiritual lottery that we always lose, even if we believe we have won. Once greed kicks in, we are finished. Discernment is dulled. Our scam detectors are silenced and greed is the lever used by the taker. All the letter writing is a form of theater staged with heavy illusion.

The expectation of getting money, healing, or whatever in return triggers greed in many people. One con artist put it this way: “There are two types of people who can always be conned — the needy and the greedy.”

In a Feb. 15, 2012, article in Israel’s *Haaretz News* titled, “I think, therefore I scam,” writer and social activist Jacob Burak reports that researchers sent out 10,000

fraudulent appeal letters that would trigger the greed in its recipients. They automatically and correctly predicted that 10-20% would respond.

We know very well that cults isolate people and that the isolation has an intended purpose. It is always to disable the person's fraud detection. People with limited information or a controlled information flow are more prone to deception and control. They are more vulnerable to hoaxes and skewing of reality. This is because "genuine" reality — not the imagined kind — can only be formed in a large social network. Social connections of friends and family help us create a true understanding of life and self. That is why the book of Proverbs encourages taking advice and twice speaks of safety in a multitude of counselors (Proverbs 11:14; 15:22).

The Internet has compounded the problem as it can help isolate certain personalities, especially those who feed on cult or conspiratorial types of information. Their "counselors" consist of a restricted and restricting information flow. This is a sure route to a disarmed fraud detector.

Burak, though a secular writer, agrees with David Maurer, author of the 1940 book, *The Big Con*, when he says, "You can't cheat an honest man" (cited in the *Haaretz News* article mentioned above). Additionally, the con artist who said the needy and the greedy will always fall prey to his schemes also revealed that the one kind of person he could never cheat was a content one.

Honest and content people are not greedy and therefore very hard to fool. "Is everybody dumb?" Not everybody, but quite a few. Perhaps now we can understand a bit more as to why.

—GRF

NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

In the early years, the church had services led by many pentecostal and charismatic icons, including Oral Roberts, Jimmy Swaggart, Rex Humbard, and Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker. Tammy Faye Bakker's second husband, Roe Messner, whom she married in October 1993, headed up construction of the Carpenter's Home Church.

The church hosted revivals by T.D. Jakes and Rodney Howard-Browne. Howard-Browne, who called himself a "Holy Ghost bartender," conducted an extended revival at the church and gave rise to what was known as the "Holy Laughter" movement. In the early years, the church also was a leading venue for concerts by many Christian musicians and singers, including Amy Grant, Sandi Patty, Carmen, Michael W. Smith, and DC Talk.

In 1988, the congregation was giving nearly \$5 million in offerings and the church, its school, and retirement home had a combined budget of \$50 million, according to an article in the church's hometown newspaper, *The Ledger*.

Yet all was not glitz and glamour for the church. *The Ledger* reported that, "Within a few years of opening, Carpenter's Home would soon attract negative publicity, and the church was a source of tragic news before it even opened. A 19-year-old church member helping to install sound equipment in the sanctuary fell to his death in January 1985."

It was further disclosed that the church's construction by Messner's firm was plagued with "significant flaws that had a lasting impact." One of those defects was "a poorly designed drainage system," which led to leaks in the building that were never fully corrected.

Internal strife also took its toll. "In 1989, the regional leadership of the Assemblies of God denomination placed Strader on an 18-month probation for 'errors in judgment, teaching, practice and personal relationship.' News reports said some members objected to charismatic elements in services, such as spontaneous dancing, singing and an emphasis on prophecy," *The Ledger* revealed. That conflict led to a church split, which resulted in attendance declining to less than 3,000.

In June 2005, the Tampa-based Without Walls International Church, pastored by Paula and Randy White, agreed to purchase Carpenter's Home Church. At that time it was reported that Strader's flock had "dwindled to 1,500." It was sold for about \$8 million. On Sept. 11, 2005, it was renamed and dedicated as Without Walls Central. The Whites offered little in the way of a stabilizing factor for the church. In August 2007, the couple announced they were divorcing and that same year they were among six ministries that were the target of a Senate probe led by Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa.

In October 2012, Evangelical Christian Credit Union began foreclosure proceedings on both the Tampa and North Lakeland properties. In March 2014, Without Walls filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. More recently, the church announced that it had settled its debts and was moving to a new location in Tampa.

After acquiring the North Lakeland property in 2005 and operating it as a satellite church, Without Walls never was able to restore the success of Carpenter's Home Church's early years. Attendance diminished as two of its ministers left to begin new churches of their own. In August 2011, the church discontinued holding worship services. And in March 2013, Lakeland Electric disconnected electrical service because of \$32,000 in unpaid bills. The church sat vacant for more than three years until being purchased by the pair of investors.

—MKG

DOCUMENTARY REVEALS SCIENTOLOGY'S MISDEEDS

Lawrence Wright's non-fiction book, *Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief*, has been adapted to the movie screen. In late January, the greatly anticipated documentary, directed by Academy Award winner Alex Gibney, had its premiere at the annual Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. According to *USA Today*, the film "did not disappoint." The film is said to have received a standing ovation at its Sundance premiere.

Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief opened in limited theatrical release in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco in early March prior to its March 29 premiere on the pay television channel HBO.

The documentary, according to numerous news reports, asserts that Scientology subjected some members to hard labor and tortured other members in a prison called "the hole;" harassed those who left the church; forced family members of those who left the group to cut off all contact; and that the church intentionally broke up Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman's marriage.

Cruise, along with fellow actor, John Travolta, both members of Scientology, gave the organization "celebrity glitter, which drove the church's growth in the '80s and '90s." The *USA Today* article said the film alleges that high-profile member Travolta "won't leave the church out of fear that his personal life will be exposed." The

church is reported to have collected detailed information on members as they undergo "auditing," a confessional process said to remove emotional barriers of past experiences.

The documentary maintains that there are fewer than 50,000 members worldwide. However, it claims that the church has more than \$1 billion in assets.

Immediately following the Sundance premiere, Scientology disputed the film's claims, saying the accusations were stale and discredited from "admitted perjurers, admitted liars and professional anti-Scientists whose living depends on the filing of false claims." According to an online report from *Business Insider*, "The Church of Scientology published a full-page ad in The New York Times earlier this month [March] accusing the film of reporting false claims about the controversial religion."

The news website *Salon* stated in an interview with Wright that, "Scientology officials declined all invitations to tell their side of the story. Instead, the church's only response has been to issue blanket denials of virtually every allegation attested to by former members." The movie itself disclosed prior to its final credits that Cruise and Kidman also both refused to be interviewed for the film.

News reports reveal that prior to the film's release, HBO had 160 lawyers examine the documentary's content.

—MKG

PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH — STATEMENT OF BELIEF

- I. THE BIBLE AS THE DIVINELY INSPIRED, INERRANT WORD OF GOD: IT IS IN ITS ENTIRETY THE SOLE AUTHORITY FOR ALL MATTERS OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF AND PRACTICE.
- II. THE ONE TRUE GOD. IN THE ONE TRUE GOD THERE EXIST THREE PERSONS, BEING: THE FATHER, THE SON JESUS CHRIST, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- III. JESUS CHRIST: HIS DEITY, HUMANITY, VIRGIN BIRTH, SINLESSNESS, DEATH AND BODILY RESURRECTION; WHO WILL PERSONALLY AND VISIBLY RETURN AGAIN TO EARTH.
- IV. THE PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- V. THE EXISTENCE AND PERSONALITY OF SATAN, HIS TOTAL OPPOSITION TO GOD, AND HIS POWER OVER THE UNREGENERATE.
- VI. THE COMPLETE AND TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF ALL MEN WHICH MAKES THEM HOPELESSLY LOST WITHOUT THE NEW BIRTH OBTAINABLE THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.
- VII. THE FINAL ESTATE OF MAN: FOR THE SAVED, EVERLASTING LIFE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD AND FOR THE UNSAVED, EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF.
- VIII. THE GOSPEL BY WHICH WE ARE SAVED BEING SUMMED IN THE DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.
- IX. THE CHURCH BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST, UNITED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, CONSISTING OF THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR. A LOCAL CHURCH IS AN ORGANIZED ASSEMBLY OF BELIEVERS UNITED FOR THE PURPOSE OF CARRYING OUT THE GREAT COMMISSION OF CHRIST.
- X. THE GREAT COMMISSION OF CHRIST BEING TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO ALL MEN, BAPTIZING AND DISCIPLING THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED.



Books in Review

SINGING AND MAKING MUSIC

by Paul S. Jones

P&R Publishing, 315 pages, \$16.99

In far too many of its functions, the church of the twenty-first century has embodied the postmodern, pragmatic culture of our day. One clear witness to this is in church worship music. Thankfully, there is Paul Jones who sounds the alarm and presents razor-sharp discernment and theological understanding in his *Singing and Making Music*. The volume is a collection of more than thirty easily digested essays (or chapters) which speak to a variety of issues in church music today.

How serious are the problems? Jones tells us, "If there has ever been an age so myopically transfixed on its own importance and a people so quick to dismiss its spiritual heritage, that age is ours and the people are evangelical Protestants" (pg. 120). Elsewhere he paints a more grievous landscape: "Upon examination one finds that in today's church, our value systems, musical and otherwise, reflect society's primary philosophy (what 'works' — *pragmatism*), its object of attention (ourselves — *narcissism*), its occupation (our own amusement or pleasure — *hedonism*), and its basis of belief (our opinions — *relativism*). ... The postmodern church, like the rest of Western culture, is self-consumed and is largely uninterested in the rich heritage of church music imparted to us from saints of previous generations" (pg. 191, italics in original).

Jones is well-trained and comes with great experience to address and offer counsel on the subject. He holds several degrees in music, including a Doctor of Music degree in choral conducting from Indiana University. Since 1997, he has served as Organ and Music Director at the historic Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia (the church pastored by Donald Grey Barnhouse from 1927-1960 and James Montgomery Boice from 1968-2000). Prior to Boice's death in 2000, Jones collaborated with him on several hymns, a few of which are found in the book. Those examples demonstrate how to draw from the richness and truth of Scripture to create inspiring and doctrinally sound hymns.

Those collaborations also demonstrate Jones' belief that "hymns are not antiques or artifacts ... hymns are still being written today" (pg. 192). Regretfully, he informs us that, "The average college freshman today, who has attended church all his life, is acquainted with twenty hymns or fewer; some know none at all" (pg. 190).

Jones' conviction is that church music should honor and exalt God, not entertain the congregation, and that church worship should glorify God, not satisfy the worshiper (pg. x). While the book is not an inventory of good and bad hymns, it provides the tools for a Christian to discern which is which. And Jones reminds us that not all hymns in our hymnals are good (pg. 110).

In line with his strict biblical criterion for hymns and songs, Jones takes a negative view of contemporary Christian music. Much of the pragmatism, relativism, narcissism, and pop culture that has invaded the church "has come into play through the Contemporary Christian Music movement" (pp. 199-200). CCM's philosophy is "consumerism." Jones writes, "In consumerism, value is attributed to music simply because it is purchased. Music that sells is thus music with value and relevance" (pg. 200).

Jones also says "no" to other trends that are prevalent in our churches: no clapping for performers, no to the use of prerecorded music, and no to digital instruments and synthesizers. His arguments are rational and full of biblical wisdom.

Some of the essays will be a bit technical for the non-musician reader, such as one about hermeneutical composer Heinrich Schütz. And others, such as the basic steps in replacing a church organ with a better one will probably be non-applicable to most. However, reader beware! Hidden within these essays that one might skip contain rich nuggets of biblical wisdom, historical facts, and practical methodology.

There's not much missing from this book. But if one could detect an omission it would probably be the absence of a glossary of musical terms which would have greatly aided the non-musician reading this book. Jones does, on occasion, define the musical terms he employs.

This book will challenge the Christian to rethink and reevaluate the purpose, reasons, and methods of church music. It is a volume that deserves our diligent study and application.

—MKG

Editor's Note: The publications featured in PFO's *Books in Review* section are available from **Personal Freedom Outreach** (P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, Missouri 63136). Please add \$2.50 to the price listed for shipping and handling. Due to occasional price changes by the publishers, the retail amounts listed are subject to change without notice. These publications are also available to those who help to financially support the work of PFO. Please see our funds appeal flyer for details.