

Say “Amen!”

Music that Ministers to Everyone

A Study of 1 Corinthians 14 by Dave Detwiler

In worship, we should not be so preoccupied with God that we ignore one another. Worship has a horizontal dimension as well as a vertical focus. It is to be God-centered, but it is also to be both edifying and evangelistic. Worship that is unedifying or unevangelistic may not properly claim to be God-centered.¹

John Frame

One of the recent and most beloved additions to our repertoire of congregational songs is *Shout to the Lord* by Australian worship director and songwriter Darlene Zschech.² The song declares that the Lord Jesus is “My comfort, my shelter, tower of refuge and strength,” with the chorus concluding that “Nothing compares to the promise I have in You.”

After singing this powerful song in church a few weeks back, I received a brief note from a young woman whose fiancé had recently been killed in a car accident. It simply read, “Thanks for the song ‘Shout to the Lord.’ I needed the message that nothing compares to the promise I have in Him.”

As a worship leader, there is no greater joy than to know that God has used the music in church to truly minister to someone. And wouldn’t it be great if this happened all the time—not only for individuals, but for the gathered community as a whole? According to 1 Corinthians 14, the focus of this article, it is not only possible but mandatory!

Sadly, however, 1 Corinthians 14 has been a source of considerable confusion and controversy for believers and churches in recent years. And yet here we find Paul saying more about corporate worship than anywhere else in his letters. Further, quietly tucked away in his forceful discussion on prophecy and tongues in the assembly are two vitally important verses about music in worship—verses that must be understood and applied in churches today if our music ministries are to be truly biblical:

So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind (1 Cor 14:15).

What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church (1 Cor 14:26).

What did Paul mean by “sing with my spirit” and “sing with my mind”? How are these two different? Are both valid in church? And what about his remark that “everyone has a hymn” when the church comes together? Is he saying that everyone wants to sing a solo, or that everyone wants to lead worship, or what? And, whichever it is, should everyone be allowed to do so (there’s a long service for you!)? What *is* clear is that the singing “must be done for the strengthening of the church,” but is this to imply that music in church is not to be focused on God?

To answer these and other crucial questions, we’ll need to do what any careful student of the Bible would do: examine the verses within the setting of 1 Corinthians and the specific context of chapter 14. This, of course, will take some time and effort, and the temptation to skip ahead to the practical application section will no doubt be strong. But stay with me! If you end up affirming my conclusions, you’ll need to know how I arrived at them—and how you can communicate them persuasively to others.

To Corinth With Love

When Paul brought the gospel to Corinth in the early 50s (Acts 18), he found himself in what has been called “one of the truly great cities of the Roman world.”³ This growing city was characterized by great religious and ethnic diversity and proved to supply fertile ground for planting a church of Jesus Christ (Acts 18:8). Paul himself stayed on in Corinth for eighteen months, “teaching them the word of God” (18:11), but other leaders, notably Apollos, also had a significant impact on the community as it grew (see Acts 19:1; 1 Cor 1:12; 3:4-6). Here was a young church that was founded and taught by some of the most gifted Christian leaders of the first century—and yet it still had serious problems (I find that fact strangely comforting!).

The letter we know as 1 Corinthians is actually the third in a series of exchanges between Paul and “the church of God in Corinth” (1:2).⁴ Here, Paul seeks to address not only the conflict within the community, but, even more, the conflict between the community and himself.

Not Exactly a Megachurch

How large was this particular Christian community? One scholar lists thirteen men and three women who may be identified with the church in Corinth (nine of which, he contends, belonged to the upper classes).⁵ Given that all were probably married and at least two were baptized along with their “entire household” (Crispus, Acts 18:8; and Stephanas, 1 Cor 1:16; 16:15), it has been suggested that the church had at least fifty members.⁶

What is far more certain is that the church, however large it was at the time, was a predominantly Gentile community. In other words, there were very few Jewish Christians among them. In his excellent commentary, Gordon Fee explains the significance of this fact:

As former pagans they brought to the Christian faith a Hellenistic worldview and attitude toward ethical behavior. Although they were the Christian church in Corinth, an inordinate amount of Corinth was yet in them, emerging in a number of attitudes and behaviors that required radical surgery without killing the patient. This is what 1 Corinthians attempts to do.⁷

What is also certain is that these new followers of Christ gathered for corporate worship in the only places readily available to them—their homes (Acts 18:7; 1 Cor 16:19).⁸ This would place a limit on the number that could gather at one time, for even in the larger homes of wealthy believers, the atrium—the large open room where the church would likely have met—could hold only about fifty people (provided the furniture and decorative urns had been moved).⁹ Given that there were likely more than fifty members in the church and that meetings were open to outsiders (see 1 Cor 14:23), there were probably several groups that met in different homes throughout the city. This probably explains the theological divisions that were plaguing the church (see 1:10-13 and 3:1-9).

Why is all of this important for us to know? It is in this specific life setting that we are granted our first glimpse of what corporate worship is all about according to Paul. More than likely, it is a far cry from the contexts in which you and I minister, and we must keep this in mind as we proceed to take a closer look at the passage.

Understanding 1 Corinthians 14

Chapter 14 concludes a larger section that began two chapters earlier with the words, “Now concerning spiritual gifts” (12:1). After underscoring both the unity and diversity of the body of Christ (chapter 12) and providing a much-needed emphasis on love as “the norm and guide for the exercise of all gifts”¹⁰ (chapter 13), Paul now seeks to correct what must have been an enormous

problem in Corinth: the unrestrained use of “tongues” (or “glossolalia,” as some refer to it) in the church gatherings.

One commentator creatively entitles chapter 14 “The Agony of the Ecstasy,” and he is right on target.¹¹ What should have been a rich time of mutual ministry and God-honoring worship had been reduced to “a virtual cacophony of individual expressions which sunder the unity of the body.”¹² Just imagine thirty or forty people gathered in your living room, with each person in his or her own little spiritual world, speaking or singing to God in different languages at the same time, and you pretty much get the picture. The situation was even worse when the Corinthians gathered for the Lord’s supper (see 11:17-34).

Such conditions were heartbreaking to Paul and an utter disaster in terms of the spiritual life and growth of the church in Corinth. And yet, as one scholar observes, were it not for this mess, we would know very little about early Christian worship:

In 1 Cor. 14 Paul has occasion to speak of singing in worship only because the Corinthian enthusiasts threaten to transform worship into chaos through their preference for glossolalia. This situation alone—similar to the problems at the eucharist [Lord’s supper]—is the reason that we learn specifics about the ‘Spirit-filled’ worship in the Pauline church.¹³

Paul’s major concern throughout the chapter is the edification or building up of the church. The Corinthians had completely lost sight of this basic dynamic, opting instead for virtuoso displays of tongues-speaking that were of benefit to no one but the performer.¹⁴ In crafting his response, Paul seeks to affirm the gift of tongues in its proper context while making it clear that prophecy—a gift they had likely been neglecting—is to be preferred in the assembly precisely because it “edifies the church” (14:4).

Prophecy is Greater than Tongues (1-5)

Paul begins the chapter by picking up where he left off at the end of chapter 12, only now he is more specific: the “greater gifts” they are to “eagerly desire” (12:31) are reduced to the singular gift of prophecy (14:1). This is pitted against the Corinthians’ clear preference for uninterpreted tongues, with the overall concern of the apostle being the strengthening of the church.

The reasons Paul gives for preferring prophecy over tongues are basic. In verses 2 through 4 he clarifies that the person speaking in a tongue

- (a) is speaking to God¹⁵
- (b) in a way that is unintelligible to everyone present, and therefore
- (c) is edifying him or herself and not the church

On the other hand, those same verses reveal that the person prophesying

- (a) is speaking to people
- (b) in a way that is intelligible to everyone present, and therefore
- (c) is edifying the church and not just him or herself¹⁶

Verse 5 then sums up the matter for Paul, as he encourages speaking in tongues (although not in church—unless it is interpreted; see verses 13, 27-28) but gives clear priority to prophecy so that, once again, “the church may be edified.” Indeed, “the love which seeks not its own advantage must prefer a gift which benefits all to one which is a delight and a help to on one but its possessor.”¹⁷

Intelligibility for the Sake of Believers (6-19)

You would think that Paul had made his point, but, surprisingly, he presses the matter of tongues even further by personalizing his argument, suggesting just how much of a problem this really was in Corinth.

“Now brothers,” Paul writes, “if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?” (verse 6; notice that he has expanded the list of gifts or activities that build up others). This rhetorical question is followed by three simple analogies that emphasize the need for clear communication: The sound or melody produced by instruments such as the harp or flute must be distinct in order to be understood and appreciated (verse 7); similarly, the trumpet call to battle must be clear enough for soldiers to understand what they must do (verse 8); and, finally, Paul reminds his readers that foreign languages make no sense to those who do not understand them (verses 10-11).

Let me digress for just a moment. In the first two analogies Paul singles out the flute, harp, and trumpet—probably for no other reason than that they were the most popular instruments or classes of instruments at that time.¹⁸ The flute and harp are even referred to as “lifeless things that make sounds,” leading some to believe that Paul had a low view of musical instruments—especially in the context of worship. However, while it is true that we have no explicit record of instruments being utilized in the worship of New Testament churches, there is no need to conclude that Paul was opposed to them on the basis of these verses. The term “lifeless things” was used to describe statues as well as instruments,¹⁹ and, in both cases, the items are obviously “lifeless” or “inanimate” in comparison with people. Paul was not taking a pot-shot at instruments; he was merely stating a fact.

Returning now to the flow of our passage, verse 9 applies the point of Paul’s three analogies: Speaking in a tongue is of no value to others precisely because it is not *intelligible*. “For this reason,” the apostle continues in verse 13, “anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says,” thus making it intelligible to everyone. “For if I pray in a

tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind in unfruitful” (verse 14). In other words, no one—including, it would seem, the one speaking—understands what is being said unless an interpretation is provided.

“So what shall I do?,” verse 15 goes on to ask, meaning “What then is the upshot of all this?” Paul is bringing his argument to a practical conclusion: “I will pray with my spirit [that is, I will continue speaking in tongues], but I will also pray with my mind [that is, I will pray with understanding for the sake of others as well]; I will sing with my spirit [that is, in tongues], but I will also sing with my mind.”

Singing with Understanding

The reference to singing catches us a bit by surprise. Is Paul simply noting a common activity in church gatherings (and one that he held dear; see Acts 16:25; Col 3:16; Eph 5:19)? Or was part of the abuse of tongues in Corinth the musical expression of these utterances? Perhaps both are in view. But whatever the case, “The inference here,” writes Ralph Martin, “is that Paul expected Christian praise to be meaningful and not simply—as it seems to have been at Corinth—the effusion of emotional, subrational outbursts.”²⁰ This is the primary significance of singing “with my mind” versus singing “with my spirit.” In other words, the concern for intelligibility that has been made throughout this chapter applies to the songs that are sung in corporate worship as well.

Is there any way for us to know what kind of songs Paul may have had in mind? The verb “sing” (*psallo*) originally meant to pluck a stringed instrument, but eventually came to refer to singing, or, more specifically, singing praise.²¹ Elsewhere in the New Testament it always refers to

singing a song of praise to God (see Rom 15:9; Eph 5:19; James 5:13), and this is obviously the case here as well. But what kind of compositions are in view?

Paul almost certainly has in mind spontaneous singing when he says, “I will sing with my spirit,” as all tongues activity—musical or otherwise—is spontaneous. But are the songs sung “with my mind” (that is, intelligibly) also understood to be spontaneous? Many commentators think so. James Dunn, for example, believes that

It is clear from 1 Cor. 14:15 that Paul recognizes a kind of *charismatic hymnody*—both a singing in tongues (here = ‘with the spirit’) and a singing with intelligible words (‘with the mind’). Since Paul in this context seems to be thinking solely of inspired utterance, whether edifying the mind (prophecy) or leaving it unfruitful (glossolalia), we must presume that both types of singing envisaged in 14:15 were spontaneous.²²

Gordon Fee agrees that “spontaneous hymns of praise were offered to God in the congregation,” but also suggests that “some may have been known beforehand,”²³ and this is reasonable speculation (possibly supported by verse 26, which we will consider shortly). It is also reasonable to suggest that these spontaneous songs—and perhaps even the prepared songs—were individual contributions offered ideally for the edification of the church. In other words, Paul is probably talking about “solos” in some sense here.

Can You Say “Amen”?

In verses 16 and 17 Paul further applies his basic point in this section, namely that intelligibility is required if others are to be edified:

Otherwise, if you say a blessing with the spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say the “Amen” to your thanksgiving, since the outsider does not know what you are saying? For you may give thanks well enough, but the other person is not built up (NRSV).

Two things are important for us to observe in these verses.

First of all, what has previously been referred to as “speaking in a tongue”, “praying in a tongue,” and “praying with my spirit” (all referring to the same phenomenon), is now described as “saying a blessing with the spirit” and “giving thanks.” This is consistent with the fact that, according to Paul, when one speaks in a tongue he or she “is speaking to God” (verse 2). Further, it suggests something of the content of the prayers and songs to be offered in worship—whether privately or in public.

Secondly, such offerings of praise and thanksgiving are meant to be clearly understood and affirmed by “outsiders.” In fact we should hear a hearty “Amen” from them!²⁴ But who are these people?

The term itself (*idiotes*, and please don’t think of “idiots” as we tend to use the word) is used elsewhere in the New Testament to designate those who are uneducated (Acts 4:13) or unskilled (2 Cor 11:6). Here it may carry the sense of “an outsider as opposed to one who ‘belongs.’”²⁵ Thus the reference could be to “one who understands neither the phenomenon of tongues nor its message without interpretation,”²⁶ and this could apply to anyone in the congregation—Christians and well as non-Christians. However, given Paul’s overall concern for the edification of the *church* in this section, he is most likely referring here to believers. Besides, “even mature Christians play the role of the uninitiated when they hear uninterpreted tongues.”²⁷

In concluding this section, Paul reveals that he is an avid tongues-speaker himself (verse 18) but clarifies that “in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue” (verse 19). Corporate worship, the apostle strongly emphasizes, is no time for uninterpreted tongues; it is a time for meaningful communication—both spoken and sung—for the sake of the believing community.

Intelligibility for the Sake of Unbelievers (20-25)

The next section of Paul's argument presents some special problems for the interpreter (for example, concerning verses 20-22, in what sense are tongues a sign for unbelievers?²⁸). For our purposes, however, it is enough to observe that in verses 23-25 Paul now emphasizes the importance of intelligibility for the sake of the visitors that may be present: "If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your mind?" (verse 23).

The Origins of Seeker-Sensitivity

As Paul reveals in this verse, church meetings were open to "outsiders" (the same word used back in verse 16) and "unbelievers," and, based on their response to prophesying in verses 24-25, both terms are probably referring to non-Christians in this case. If there is a distinction between the two, it is probably that those called "outsiders" here are, as Leon Morris suggests, "people who had not committed themselves to Christianity, but who were interested and had thus ceased to be merely 'unbelievers.'"²⁹ We have our own word for them today: *seekers*.

These people may have been guests of the one hosting the gathering, or perhaps the unbelieving spouses of some of the church members, but regardless of who or what brought them, the meeting was to be meaningful to them as well as to the believers present. Thus, as Paul writes in verse 23, if "all are speaking in tongues" (which is apparently exactly what was happening in Corinth), the non-Christians who join the gathering will conclude, "You are out of your mind!" and, in a sense, they would be right!

On the other hand, "if all prophesy" (verse 24), a seeker may be convicted and ultimately worship God, falling on his or her face proclaiming, "God is really among you!" (verse 25). This is

the potential—and certainly the preferred!—impact of corporate worship on those who visit the assembly. The key is intelligible, ordered, Spirit-inspired sharing, and this leads us to the next section of Paul’s discourse.

Order that Promotes Edification (26-38)

“What then shall we say, brothers?,” Paul asks, once again summing up the situation for his readers. “When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church” (verse 26).

Is Paul describing what *was* happening in the Corinthian church, or what *should* be happening? In favor of the former understanding, there is the glaring omission of prophecy in the list and an overall impression of a highly individualized (read selfish) approach to worship that fits the situation in Corinth quite well. However, if the Corinthians were as absorbed in the tongues phenomenon as Paul implies throughout the chapter, the list should probably be viewed as corrective rather than descriptive. “Everyone has something to contribute for the benefit of others in church,” Paul seems to be saying, “and it is not all tongues-speaking!” This is consistent with the verses that follow as well.

Songs that Strengthen the Church

What is most intriguing for us concerning the list in verse 26 is that Paul begins with “a hymn,” which perhaps indicates the importance he placed on music in worship (see Col 3:16). The word here is *psalmos* which, as you might have guessed, can refer to the Old Testament Psalms, and Luke does in fact use the word in this way (see Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20;

13:33). However, it can also refer more generally to a song of praise.³⁰ Given the context of this verse (chapter 14) and the make-up of the Corinthian church (mostly former pagans), it is highly unlikely that Paul is referring here to a Jewish Psalm.

So what kind of song *is* he referring to? He may have had in mind a previously prepared Christian song that is brought to the church either as a solo or for all to sing, or he may have been thinking of a spontaneous musical offering (as in verse 15). Either way—and we need not choose one over the other—what is abundantly clear is that the apostle is calling for songs of praise that are *intelligible* so that the church may be built up.

The remainder of this section (verses 27-38) provides the Corinthian community with practical guidelines concerning both the use of tongues and the use of prophecy in the congregation. In both cases, because “God is not a God of disorder but of peace” (verse 33), only one person should speak or sing at a time, and, in the case of tongues, there must be interpretation or else silence and a limit placed on how many speakers may contribute on any given occasion. This is not at all meant to discourage spontaneity; only to keep it within the overall context of edification.

Are Women Allowed to Sing?

The tail end of this section (verses 33b-38) is the most problematic for interpreters and it has received an enormous amount of attention.³¹ For our purposes, the troublesome statement that “women should remain silent in the churches” (verse 34) should be interpreted in light of 11:5, where Paul speaks positively of women praying and prophesying. Therefore, whatever else the meaning and implications of this passage might be, it is certainly not a wholesale restriction on women concerning their participation in corporate worship. Singing, in particular, as Ambrose

wrote in the fourth century, “is gratifying for all ages and fitting for both sexes.”³² This finds clear support in Colossians 3:16, where Paul urges the believers in Colossae to teach and admonish *one another*—women included—with various songs.³³

Concluding Exhortations (39-40)

The chapter moves to a close with a final word of encouragement from the apostle: “Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues” (verse 39). Paul does not want the Corinthians to conclude that tongues are altogether inappropriate in their gatherings; he merely wants them to give higher priority to prophecy, and to ensure that both gifts will be utilized in a way that builds up the church.

His last statement sums up the guidelines he has been giving them in the latter half of the chapter: “But all things [singing included] should be done decently and in order” (verse 40, NRSV). Once again, Paul does not mean that there is no place for spontaneity in corporate worship (the entire chapter argues otherwise). The apostle is merely reminding them one last time that contributions must be made one at a time and in a way that “speaks to [others] for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort” (verse 3).

Applying 1 Corinthians 14

What does all of this mean for us today? How can we effectively apply what Paul reveals about corporate worship in 1 Corinthians 14?

Rethinking “Church”

First of all, it must be admitted that most church services today look nothing like what Paul was calling for in this chapter. Ben Witherington is quite right when he notes that the sort of meeting the apostle was advocating in Corinth “involved the participation of most, if not all, of those present. It was not a performance of a few superstars for the benefit of the many, who were reduced to an audience.”³⁴ Robert Banks, in his eye-opening book *Paul’s Idea of Community*, adds, “Since all have something to give, there are no mere spectators in church but only active participants.”³⁵

According to Paul, church members in Corinth were either to share something for the sake of others, such as “a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation” (verse 26), or be prepared to add their “Amen!” to such offerings (verse 16)—or perhaps both. And the “outsiders and unbelievers” present, while understandably being spectators to some degree, were to be overwhelmed by what was going on and chime in themselves, declaring, “God is really among you!” (verse 25).

Why do so many of our church services today fail to be participatory in nature? The major reason is probably the size and setting of our gatherings. In Corinth, as well as everywhere else in the first few centuries of church history, meetings were held in the warm and inviting environment of private homes where, as we have noted, probably no more than about fifty people could gather at one time. Such conditions surely facilitated lively participation. As meetings grew larger and the setting became more formal (meeting in church buildings, like we do today), it must have become increasingly difficult—if not logistically impossible—to apply Paul’s picture of corporate worship in 1 Corinthians 14. Frankly, this should cause us to rethink whether such large gatherings should be seen as *central* to church life (there’s a radical thought for you!).

So what am I saying? Sell your church building and split into house churches? Not necessarily.

In my setting, for example, we have upwards of 1,500 worshipers who gather over the weekend in four services in a fairly large auditorium. If everyone came with something to share (we'll give them a couple of minutes each), services would last for a total of at least fifty hours! Our solution to this dilemma, like many other churches today, has been to emphasize and provide for a vital small group ministry meeting mostly in homes where genuine fellowship and active participation can be experienced by all of those present.

In addition, I have been doing everything I can to make our times of large group worship as participatory as possible—from giving priority to congregational singing over so-called “special music” to providing “open mics” at times where a limited number of people can share for the benefit of others.³⁶

Having said all of the above, let me add a brief word of clarification: 1 Corinthians 14 is not the last word on corporate worship in the New Testament. As D. A. Carson has rightly pointed out, “These verses do not describe *all* that should take place in every meeting of the church.”³⁷ Noticeably absent, for example, is the reading and preaching of Scripture (see 1 Tim 4:13), corporate prayer (see Acts 2:42 and 4:24), and the Lord’s supper or communion (see 1 Cor 11:17ff).

Furthermore, there is no mention of church leaders in the chapter. But, as Carson once again explains, “there were elders operating in the Pauline churches virtually from their inception [see Acts 14:23]; and we must ask what these elders were doing. We must similarly ask when and where in the church’s life those who were recognized teachers (as in [1 Cor] 12:28) discharged

their gifts.”³⁸ We obviously do not have a complete picture of worship in the early church here, and so applying the chapter must proceed in a balanced and thoughtful manner.

Some Implications for Music in Worship Today

What do we specifically learn in 1 Corinthians 14 that will help us in our music ministries today? Here are seven implications for your consideration.

1. Music in worship is an important activity in the life of the church

This is not news to you, I realize, but it is worth noting. While in this chapter Paul is primarily interested in downplaying tongues-speaking and encouraging prophecy in the assembly, it is significant that we find two references to singing in the course of his argument. Verse 26, in particular, makes it clear that certain activities other than prophecy also serve to strengthen the church, and singing a hymn is at the top of the list.

It is surprising to me—and quite disheartening—to discover that not everyone has such a high view of music in the church. A number of years ago a church leader told me quite frankly that he felt that music and singing was just “filler” until we got to the important part of the service: the sermon. This attitude is sometimes shared by regular church attenders as well. When people arrive late for one of our worship services, after the bulk of our congregational singing is over, I am occasionally asked when I’m seen out in the hallway,³⁹ “Has the preaching started yet?” No one, to my recollection, has ever exclaimed, “Oh no, we missed the singing!” (of course, those who value congregational singing probably arrived early!).

Even at the time of the Protestant Reformation, a defining period for many of our churches, the importance of music in worship was not agreed upon. Ulrich Zwingli, the most musically

gifted of all the 16th century reformers, was actually antagonistic towards the use of music in the church, eliminating singing in 1523 and destroying pipe organs in 1527.⁴⁰ Martin Luther, on the other hand, declared, “I have no use for cranks who despise music, because it is a gift of God,”⁴¹ and went on to make considerable reforms in congregational song.

Luther was obviously much more in line with Paul’s heart on this issue, and the same should be said of us. As the psalmist encourages, “Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD, let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song” (Psalm 95:1-2).

2. Music in worship is a means of blessing and thanking God

This is not exactly an eye-opener either, but it should be emphasized. In verse 15 Paul links praying with singing—both of which are understood to be directed to God—and further describes these activities as “saying a blessing” and “giving thanks” (verse 16). Therefore, heartfelt expressions of worship and gratitude should be characteristic of our singing (make sure your repertoire provides for this), and, once again, this should elicit an “Amen!” from others as they join in on the praise.

Paul Westermeyer, respected teacher and cantor, and author of *The Church Musician*, clarifies this fundamental role of music in worship:

The church’s song, especially for Protestants, is most obviously a song of praise. Many psalms—like 98, “O sing to the Lord a new song,” or 100, which calls us to “come into [God’s] presence with singing,” or 150, where instruments and “everything that breathes” are all exhorted to praise the Lord—give expression to what is implicit throughout the Bible: God is to be praised, and music is one of the chief vehicles for expressing that praise.⁴²

Luther, as Westermeyer goes on to note, gives us additional insight along these lines: “For God has cheered our hearts and minds through His dear Son, whom He gave for us to redeem us from sin, death, and the devil. He who believes this earnestly cannot be quiet about it. But he must gladly and willingly sing. . . .”⁴³ Our worship ministries should be unleashing believers to corporately bless and thank our great and gracious Lord!

3. Music in worship is also a means of edifying the church

It is doubtful whether the issue of edification could ring out any louder in this chapter. In fact, according to Paul, it is not primarily to worship God that we gather as believers (as strange as that may sound⁴⁴). Rather, as David Peterson explains in his excellent study *Engaging With God: A Biblical Theology of Worship*, “Paul’s emphasis is on coming together to participate in the edification of the church.”⁴⁵ Therefore, “It is not enough that God be praised in song,” as another scholar goes on to clarify, “it, like all the other parts of the service, must conduce to the building up of the Body of Christ.”⁴⁶

But what exactly does this mean? How do we go about singing in a way that builds up the church? First of all, taking our cue from the situation in Corinth, we must sing with others in mind and not just pursue private communion with God when we gather as a community. To put it more simply, “we should not be so preoccupied with God that we ignore one another.”⁴⁷ Such a commitment requires disciplined thinking and a servant’s heart, for we tend to be conditioned and even encouraged to “focus on God” when we sing. This, of course, is not a bad thing, but it does not adequately address our social responsibility in worship. We must not only be aware of God when we sing in church; we must also be aware of those around us and seek to encourage them as we worship together.

What are some practical ways we can do this? To begin with, let me state the obvious: when we are encouraged and expected to sing in church . . . we should SING! I am always deeply encouraged when I look out at the congregation and see so many people singing their hearts out—whether they’re on pitch or not! Such vigorous participation is not only a joy to observe, but it also encourages others around them to lift their hearts and voices to the Lord. On the other hand, when I see people flipping through the worship folder rather than singing, or just staring straight ahead with a blank look on their face and their arms folded (yes, we have those people at our church, too!), a very negative message is conveyed about the importance of participating in worship and nobody is edified.

In addition, we who lead worship in the congregation must give serious thought to the impact the music we choose will have on others. Will it be meaningful to them? Will it be helpful? Will it encourage unity and stimulate growth? Will an unrehearsed congregation be able to sing it?

We should also be conscious of the pronouns in the songs we choose for worship. There are many excellent songs written in the first person singular (“I Sing the Mighty Power of God,” “Lord, I Lift Your Name On High,” “I Believe In Jesus,” and so on) but these should be balanced with songs in the first person plural—especially during communion—to reinforce that we are indeed a *community* of worshipers (songs such as “O God, Our Help In Ages Past,” “Our God Reigns,” and “We Believe”). In addition, many songs can be easily adapted to reflect this important understanding (for example, “O For a thousand tongues to sing *our* great Redeemer’s praise . . .”). When song lyrics are projected on a screen or printed in the worship folder, such minor alterations can be carried out with little or no difficulty.

A commitment to edifying the church in our worship also means that we must find and utilize songs that accurately reflect biblical truth. As Paul explained to the Ephesian elders in Acts

20:32, it is God and “the word of his grace, which can *build you up* and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (emphasis added). Therefore, songs that are consistent with “the word of his grace” will greatly minister to our congregations. However, not every Christian song that is published is theologically sound, and it is up to the worship leader to discern this. We must remember that

One ultimate effect of repetitive singing is that people finally begin to believe what they sing, however subconsciously. This must be respected by all who choose music for corporate worship since untruths, sentimental half-truths, and questionable theological concepts can be ingrained as easily as that which is pure and holy.⁴⁸

“May my tongue sing of your word,” the psalmist prays, “for all your commands are righteous” (Psalm 119:172).

4. Music in worship must be intelligible if it is to edify others

This emphasis is also pervasive throughout the chapter. Paul declares that our singing should be edifying (verse 26) and therefore it must be intelligible, for “only speech that can be understood by others has the potential for building up or edifying the congregation.”⁴⁹ As we have already learned from the chapter, this immediately relegates all tongues-speaking and tongues-singing to a private context—unless, of course, it is interpreted. It amazes me how frequently this simple directive is ignored by various churches I have had the opportunity to visit. Ironically, as a brother in Christ who is passionate about worship, I have felt estranged rather than built up in some of these gatherings.

The concern for intelligibility, however, surely applies beyond the tongues phenomenon. For example, unless the lyrics are translated, songs sung in a foreign language such as Latin will be unintelligible to most everyone present. Even the language of some older English and American

hymns may be hard for many people to understand (consider the classic example, “Here I raise mine Ebenezer” from verse 2 of the hymn “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”). In such cases the songs should either be explained, updated, or perhaps even retired in terms of congregational use (in the recently published *Celebration Hymnal*, “Ebenezer” is nowhere to be found in the adapted hymn⁵⁰).

Does this mean that thou shouldst avoideth or changeth all songs that contain archaic language? (Sorry, I couldn’t resist!) Not necessarily. John Frame, professor of apologetics and systematic theology at Westminster Seminary (CA), and author of *Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense*, has this to say on the matter:

Now, intelligibility, to some extent, implies contemporaneity. This is not to say that everything must be perfectly up-to-date. The occasional use of archaic language can be effective communication. Archaisms, if they are not used all the time, can arrest the attention and elicit a thoughtful hearing, if only by arousing healthy curiosity about the meaning of the language. Ancient language can also convey to worshipers a sense of unity with the church of past centuries, and that is a good thing.⁵¹

Brian Doerksen, speaking for the Vineyard, affirms this last thought when he writes, “We generally do not update the words of these hymns so that we can identify with every part of the church (e.g., ‘My Jesus I Love Thee’), though the vast majority of our other lyrics are culture-current.”⁵²

Of course, the lyrics of newer songs may also prove to be difficult to comprehend in some cases, and the worship leader or soloist must be mindful of this as well. Furthermore, as Doerksen suggests above, songwriters today should avoid using archaic language and stay with language that is “culture-current” when writing contemporary songs for the church (“I Exalt Thee,” a simple but effective rendering of Psalm 97:9 composed in recent years, comes to mind). As Old Testament scholar Ronald Allen explains,

there is no biblical reason to believe that the pronouns “thou,” “thee,” and “thy” are more reverent than the words “you” and “your.” These were merely the singular forms of the pronoun “you” in current use in Elizabethan times. One could as well have said “thou” to a prostitute and “thee” to a pub-keeper as to use these words in prayer or in song to God.⁵³

One final thought: Worship leaders should be cautious of choosing music primarily on the basis of melody, style, range or “playability” (I must confess that I am easily tempted along these lines). If in the final analysis the words of a song are not clear or do not reflect biblical truth, it is not a good song for the church to sing—even if it does sound great! The bottom line is that each person in the congregation, whether by listening carefully or by joining in, is to be an active participant in the music who can add his or her “Amen!” to what is being sung. When the lyrics do not make sense, this cannot happen.

5. *Music in worship should be intelligible to unbelievers as well as believers*

While edification should be the primary concern in our singing, verses 23-25 make it clear that corporate worship is open to non-Christians, and therefore our singing—and all other aspects of our services—should be as meaningful as possible to them as well. In other words, according to Paul, our worship practices are to be *seeker sensitive*. There should be no debate about this, for, as Pastor Rick Warren clarifies, “A worship service does not have to be shallow to be seeker sensitive. The message [whether spoken or sung] doesn’t have to be compromised, just understandable.”⁵⁴

I know of at least three people in my church who have come to Christ as a direct result of God using a song to draw them to himself. One woman, in particular, wrote a note recently to encourage our worship team, telling us that she is often moved to tears during our times of worship, and requested that we sing again “the song that brought me to Christ, I think it’s called

‘We Believe.’” This song, written by Graham Kendrick, is essentially a creed set to music, with the Lord Jesus Christ as the central focus (we have adapted the simple chorus to draw out this focus even more):

We believe in God the Father, Maker of the universe
And in Christ, His Son, our Savior, come to us by virgin birth
We believe He died to save us, bore our sins, was crucified
Then from death He rose victorious, ascended to the Father’s side

Jesus, Lord of all, Lamb of God
Jesus, Lord of all, Son of God
Jesus, Lord of all, Mighty God
Jesus, Lord of all, Lord and God

We believe He sends His Spirit on His church with gifts and power
God, His word of truth affirming, sends us to the nations now
He will come again in glory, judge the living and the dead
Every knee shall bow before Him, then must every tongue confess

Jesus, Lord of all . . . ⁵⁵

I’m sure that if we had sung this song in a foreign language, the response would not have been the same. The principle is basic: unless our songs are intelligible to the seekers in our midst, there is little possibility that we will see them “worship[ing] God, exclaiming, ‘God is really among you!’” (verse 25). Practically speaking, this means that we should look at our songs through the eyes of outsiders. Are they so full of “in-house” jargon or archaic language that the visitors among us would be mostly in the dark as to what we were saying? This should be among our concerns as we choose and utilize music in worship.

Furthermore, not only should the words we sing be meaningful to everyone present in church (believers and unbelievers), but so should the music that accompanies the words—both in terms of style and instrumentation. There is considerable debate on this issue, but, on the most basic level, it must be admitted that music that is not particularly meaningful to the majority of the

people gathered can hardly be said to be the most encouraging music that could be utilized.

Frame, in his characteristically clear and irenic fashion, reminds us that

if we are to pursue the biblical goal of intelligible worship (1 Cor. 14), we should seek musical settings that speak the musical languages of our congregation and community. To do this is not to cater to human taste, but to honor God in his desire to edify people in his worship. We should not selfishly insist on using music only from our own favorite tradition. Rather, in the spirit of Christ the servant, we must be willing to sacrifice our own preferences in order to reach others with the truth. The Great Commission turns us outward, rather than inward: it calls us even in worship to reach out to those who are ignorant of Christ and of our musical traditions.⁵⁶

Obviously, this is primarily a call to utilize contemporary music in our worship—music written in the styles of the popular culture—for it probably represents the musical languages of most of the people we have been called to serve (just ask them what radio stations they listen to!).⁵⁷ Similarly, modern instrumentation such as guitars and drums will not only connect better with the majority of the people (especially boomers and busters), but also represent the talent and skill resident in our congregations. In my setting, for example, I know of over a dozen guitar players and five drummers—all eager to serve—while I am only aware of one church member who is able and willing to play the organ.

6. *Music in worship should include individual as well as group participation*

Both verse 15 and verse 26 imply that in Corinth songs were offered by individuals either as a solo or for all to sing. Likewise, in our gatherings, individuals should be given the opportunity at times to serve others through music while at other times the whole church should be encouraged to sing together.

Whether one kind of singing or the other was predominant in the Corinthian community, we simply do not know for sure. However, given Paul's emphasis on the active participation of

everyone gathered, we would do well to give the people's song clear priority over solo or ensemble performances in our worship services. Barry Liesch, speaking directly to pastors, makes this point very strongly:

The people's praise is paramount; protecting that ought to be one of your fundamental responsibilities. Most music directors would subscribe theoretically to the idea that the congregation is the first and most important choir. But if you look where they actually put their energy, you'll find it seldom goes into improving congregational response.

Don't be fooled! You can't expect to develop a strong singing church if you don't work at it and allow sufficient time for it. When we fill up the service with choir and special music to the point that we de-emphasize congregational response, we are teaching the people to be spectators.⁵⁸

Of course, we should also be careful not to err on the other side by never allowing individuals or groups to minister to the congregation through music and song. Such contributions were welcome and encouraged in Corinth, and the same should hold true for our churches as well—with one very important caveat (also evidenced in Corinth):

Our worship should never be interrupted by solo singers singing "special music"—solos that call attention to the singer and add nothing to the fabric of the liturgy. The solo singer, like the choir, has an obligation to lead the congregation in worship, directing thoughts toward God, building up the body of Christ.⁵⁹

I make it a point to (gently!) hammer this into the minds and hearts of those serving on our worship team as well. Our core identity is that of being servants, not performers.

7. Music in worship should allow for spontaneous contributions

Finally, in verse 15, Paul suggests that some of the singing offered by individuals for the benefit of others will be spontaneous—whether songs composed and sung on the spot (as was

probably the case in Corinth), or previously learned songs that come to mind in the flow of the worship (such as in Acts 4:24-31). Do we allow for such singing in our churches?

On his recent GenX worship album *You Are I AM*, songwriter and worship leader Darrell Evans provides a beautiful example of this. He shares that, “As the tears flowed, this song began spontaneously in a worship service at Open Bible Fellowship. This is my life’s prayer . . .”⁶⁰

When Your heart beats I want to feel it
When Your voice speaks I want to hear it
When Your eyes cry I want to catch the tears
I want to know You
Oh my Lord, I want to know You . . .

This is an area in which I am still learning and growing as the Spirit patiently teaches me that I am not in charge of our worship services. For example, in one of our communion services a few years back, I decided to put a couple of microphones in the congregation and encouraged people to share a word of scripture or testimony at a particular point in the service. To everyone’s surprise, a woman stood up and began to sing a song in Portugese! When she finished, she shared a brief translation and then told us how the song, sung to her when she was a child by her grandmother, had led her to trust in Christ. It was a powerful moment that I will never forget.

Of course, the thought of allowing for spontaneity in our worship services may cause the average pastor to be gripped with fear rather than excitement (and, besides, how would we end the service on time?! It’s not hard to imagine certain people getting ahold of the mic and droning on and on, or perhaps saying or singing something that is anything but edifying. However, fear is a lousy motive for planning a worship service! To be sure, “Sticking to the script is far safer,” writes Wayne Jacobson, “but in doing so we miss out on some of the greatest treasures body life has to offer.”⁶¹

We must remember—and teach our congregations—that the purpose of spontaneous participation in church is not to be trendy, informal, or “charismatic”; Rather, it is to build up the body of Christ. “When you come together,” says Paul, “everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church” (1 Cor 14:26). Amen!

(Written in 1999)

¹ John Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth: A Refreshing Study of the Principles and Practice of Biblical Worship* (Phillipsburg, PA: P & R Publishing, 1996) 8.

² Copyright 1993 Darlene Zschech/Hillsongs Australia (adm. in U. S. & Canada by Integrity’s Hosanna! Music)/ASCAP.

³ Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 5.

⁴ The apostle’s first correspondence, in which he appears to have forbidden certain activities, was largely misunderstood (see 5:9-13) and provoked a letter from the Corinthians in response (7:1). This letter—along with some inside information provided by “some from Chloe’s household” (1:11)—led Paul to write 1 Corinthians.

⁵ Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, ed. and trans. John H. Schutz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982) 94-95.

⁶ Jerome Murphy-O’Conner, *St. Paul’s Corinth: Text and Archaeology* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1983) 166.

⁷ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 4.

⁸ As Edward Foley remarks, “The only true Christian architecture of the first century was one of living stones and not of brick or mortar” (*Foundations of Christian Music: The Music of Pre-Constantinian Christianity* [Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996] 68).

⁹ Murphy-O’Conner, *St. Paul’s Corinth* 164. See also Robert Banks, *Paul’s Idea of Community*, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994) 35.

¹⁰ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth* 266.

¹¹ Ibid. 274.

¹² Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991) 279.

¹³ Martin Hengel, “The Song About Christ in Earliest Worship” in *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995) 267.

¹⁴ This is perhaps a good place to note that “Paul nowhere intimates that glossolalia is an indispensable proof of the reception of the Spirit, or that the gift of glossolalia raises those members who have received it to a higher level of Christian living. Speaking in tongues must never contribute to the exaltation or self-assertion of pious people, but only to the glory of God” (H. Haarbeck, “glossa” in *NIDNTT* 3:1080).

¹⁵ This indicates that the gift of tongues mentioned here is in fact “a distinct form of personal worship” (Ibid. 1080). Witherington sees a further implication, suggesting that this is “a clear indication that glossolalia was seen as a prayer language or as a way to talk to God, not as a human language” (*Conflict and Community in Corinth* 281). On the question of whether tongues were (or are) a “real language” or something else, see the helpful analyses of D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987) 77-88, and Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996) 221-239.

¹⁶ While it is beyond the scope of this book to consider the issue further, note the comment of Gordon Fee: “By prophecy, of course, as the full evidence of this chapter makes clear, [Paul] does not mean a prepared sermon, but the spontaneous word given to God’s people for the edification of the whole. Most contemporary churches would have to be radically reconstructed in terms of their self-understanding for such to take place” (*First Corinthians* 660).

¹⁷ Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1914) 301.

¹⁸ William Sheppard Smith, *Musical Aspects of the New Testament* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij W. Ten Have N. V., 1962) 116.

¹⁹ See BAGD 129.

²⁰ Ralph P. Martin, *The Spirit and the Congregation: Studies in 1 Corinthians 12-15* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 71.

²¹ See BAGD 891. While Louw and Nida speak of the “possible implication of instrumental accompaniment” here, they are probably relying too much on the earliest meaning of the verb (Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. [New York: United Bible Societies, 1989] 402).

²² James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975) 238. Note also the comment of Robertson and Plummer: “There is no thought here of liturgical music, it is the individual spontaneously using a special gift in the congregation” (*First Corinthians* 312).

²³ Fee, *First Corinthians* 671. Note also Martin, who is “uncertain whether Paul has in mind singing that is spontaneous or the use of a precomposed ‘hymn’” (*The Spirit and the Congregation* 70).

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- ²⁴ Fee explains that “saying the (customary) ‘Amen’ assumes the setting of corporate worship, where this word, also taken over from the Jewish synagogue, indicated wholehearted response to and endorsement of the words of another” (*First Corinthians* 672).
- ²⁵ O. Flender, “idiotes” in *NIDNTT* 2:456.
- ²⁶ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth* 283.
- ²⁷ Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) 270.
- ²⁸ See Carson, *Showing the Spirit* 108-117, where he evaluates seven different answers to this question.
- ²⁹ Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians* TNTC, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985) 191.
- ³⁰ G. Delling, “psalmos” in *TDNT* 8:499.
- ³¹ A good place to start is Carson, *Showing the Spirit* 121-131. See also the helpful discussion by Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives: Marriage and Women’s Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992) 70-100.
- ³² Quoted in James McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1987) 126.
- ³³ See Banks, *Paul’s Idea of Community* 123. For background information on the liturgical singing of women, see Johannes Quasten, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (Washington D. C.: National Association of Pastoral Musicians, 1983) 75-87.
- ³⁴ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth* 290.
- ³⁵ Banks, *Paul’s Idea of Community* 109. I would encourage you to get his creative, short (48 pages) and highly readable book, *Going to Church in the First Century* (Auburn, ME: Christian Books Publishing House, 1990). You may even want to have your staff or worship team read it together and discuss the implications.
- ³⁶ An excellent resource to help in this area is Robert Webber’s challenging book, *Worship is a Verb: Eight Principles for a Highly Participatory Worship* (Nashville: Abbott Martyn [a division of Star Song Publishing Group], 1992).
- ³⁷ Carson, *Showing the Spirit* 135.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.* 136.
- ³⁹ What am I doing out in the hallway, you might be asking?! Because I lead worship in three of our four services, and attend the first one in its entirety with my wife, I take a break during the (excellent but repeated) sermon at the other services.
- ⁴⁰ James F. White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993) 137.
- ⁴¹ Quoted in Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York: New American Library, 1950) 266.
- ⁴² Paul Westermeyer, *The Church Musician*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1997) 31.

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- ⁴³ Martin Luther, “Preface to the Baptist Hymnal, 1545,” *Luther’s Works, Volume 53, Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965) 333.
- ⁴⁴ Banks explains that “One of the most puzzling features of Paul’s understanding of *ekklesia* for his contemporaries, whether Jews or Gentiles, must have been his failure to say that a person went to church primarily to ‘worship.’ Not once in all his writings does he suggest this is the case” (*Paul’s Idea of Community* 88).
- ⁴⁵ He is quick to add, however, that “To put the focus on edification is not to suggest that the church service is the one area of the Christian life where we do not worship God! The exercise of gifts in any context may be regarded as an expression of worship, if the ministries are genuinely for the benefit of others and for the glory of God” (David Peterson, *Engaging With God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992] 219).
- ⁴⁶ Smith, *Musical Aspects of the New Testament* 175.
- ⁴⁷ Referring back to the quote at the very beginning of this chapter.
- ⁴⁸ Kathryn L. Nichols, “Music and Musician in the Service of the Church” in *The Biblical Foundations of Christian Worship*, vol. 1 of The Complete Library of Christian Worship, ed. Robert E. Webber (Nashville: Star Song Publishing Group, 1993) 97.
- ⁴⁹ Peterson, *Engaging With God* 211.
- ⁵⁰ *The Celebration Hymnal: Songs and Hymns for Worship* (Word Music / Integrity Music, 1997) 11.
- ⁵¹ John Frame, *Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1997) 19.
- ⁵² In “Music and the Arts Among the Contemporary Churches,” *Music and the Arts in Christian Worship, Book One*, vol. 4 of The Complete Library of Christian Worship, ed. Robert E. Webber (Nashville: Star Song Publishing, 1994) 76.
- ⁵³ Ronald B. Allen, “Those archaic words we often still ‘fain’ to sing,” *Worship Leader* 3.3 (May/June 1994) 6.
- ⁵⁴ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995) 244.
- ⁵⁵ Copyright 1986 Make Way Music/Thank You Music. Admin. By Maranatha! Music.
- ⁵⁶ John M. Frame, *Worship in Spirit and Truth* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1996) 140-141.
- ⁵⁷ There are some excellent resources that can help you wrestle through this issue further, and they include: Frame, *Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense*; Sally Morgenthaler, *Worship Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), especially chapter 9; and the following three essays: “Singing the Song of Popular Culture in Worship” by Dori Erwin Collins; “Popular Culture and Congregational Song” by Milburn Price; and “The Issue of Contemporary Christian Music in Worship” by Michael Burgess, Jr., all of which are found in *Music and the Arts in Christian Worship, Book One*, vol. 4 of The Complete Library of Christian Worship, ed. Robert E. Webber (Nashville: Star Song Publishing Group, 1994).
- ⁵⁸ Barry Liesch, *The New Worship: Straight Talk on Music and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996) 100.
- ⁵⁹ Trudi Huisman Huizenga, “The Place of the Vocal Solo in Worship” in *Music and the Arts in Christian Worship, Book One* 473.

⁶⁰ From the album notes. The song is copyright 1997 by Integrity's Hosanna! Music/ASCAP.

⁶¹ Wayne Jacobsen, "Unscripted Worship: The High Risks, Higher Rewards of Spontaneity," *Leadership* (Spring 1999), 57.