



The World's Time is Running Out

THE CHALLENGER

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PROCLAIMING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

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COUNTING THE COST OF COMPROMISE – MUSIC IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

“Controversies in HOW TO WORSHIP GOD”

Most people believe there is a God who has sovereignty and dominion over all. He is good and just. He is to be feared, loved, invoked, trusted and praised. He is to be served by people with all their heart, souls, and strength. He is to be worshipped. The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is appointed by Himself in accordance with His own will. We worship God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through our mediator, Jesus Christ.

Prayers, giving of thanks, meditating on the scriptures, instructing and edifying one another by means of psalms and spiritual songs, observation of [New Testament ordinances] believers baptism and communion are all parts of divine worship to be performed with faith, obedience, reverence and godly fear. Worship needs to be done in spirit and in truth. Personal quiet time with God, the family altar nightly, prayer meetings and church assemblies are also means of worship.

God wants us to worship Him with our finances, giving of our tithes and offerings to support the local churches and to participate in the needs of others, and serving the community in which we live.

How do methods of worshipping God differ, and why? Many members of the local churches in America have questioned the reasoning behind the trend to be more physical in their worship. The reasons for this are not clear, however there are some facts that are historical and may throw light on the dangers of physical worship.

The first act of worship was from Abraham when he offered his only son, Isaac. Another physical method of worship was circumcision. Fear of the Lord and sacrifice to God were other modalities of worship. Occasionally, singing and using trumpets continued until the burnt offering was finished.

Seldom was worship in the Old Testament accompanied by dancing. This was exclusively carried out in the streets and in processions, but not inside the Tabernacle. Also, musical instruments and the music to which they danced were completely different from now.

It is clear from these excerpts in the Old Testament that there were

methods of worship that are not used now and may be considered inappropriate. What if we were to ask church goers to be circumcised, sacrifice birds or animals – or worse, the pagan human sacrifice? Not everything will edify and improve our status or bring us closer to God. The all-or-none rule may be the best method to achieve balance, rather than being selective to do what we like and shy away from what we do not like.

Religions differ in the way in which they worship their god. Many are spiritual while others are more physical, but the majority uses a mixture. Some have rituals to prepare for prayers that are repeated, and involve the washing of hands and feet. Others kneel a number of times for each prayer, usually praying in a certain direction toward their temples.

In the New Testament, worship actually included bowing down, kneeling, and lifting up of holy hands. Other methods were confession to God, prayer, service, using spiritual gifts, and building places of worship. It is most important to worship in spirit and in truth, offering the body as a vessel of honor, a holy sacrifice acceptable to God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Frequently, worship progresses to a more physical type where worshippers stand up, shout, and carry different musical instruments. They may make very loud repetitious

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noises, and jump to the left, right; and up, down, bend forward or backward, and some even in a whirling way without any specific direction. Physical worship has progressed to inflicting bodily harm with the wrong concept that this will please whom they worship.

All physical needs of a person go through the same sequence: look at food or sexual addiction. The earlier a person is involved in these, the more he or she needs to be satisfied. Then, what is normal becomes less interesting to them, so they seek the abnormal, the rare, and the bizarre – and become perverted. We see this scenario in drugs. Many drugs produce addiction. They start with little effect and then the same dose will not produce the original effect, so more doses are necessary and addiction will progress. Furthermore, the same drug will lose its effect and the person will change to harder drugs to be satisfied. The more physical you get the less satisfaction you have, making you look for more excitement. In other words, the thrill you get will not be enough to satisfy you, and your goal changes from worshipping God, to enjoying the physical excitement. Most of the same happens in all physical functions. That is why we need to worship God in spirit.

Over the last two decades, a few groups in America started a concentrated effort to change the music played in their churches. The motive for this is known only to them. This has progressed to a type of music very similar to the world – music you can hear on any radio or television station – or even night clubs, bars, or worldly concerts. The same music and instruments are being used, but now godly words are substituted or added. As a result, many churches using this format have attracted people to attend, merely to be entertained! They feel the beat, the rhythm of the drums, tambourines, bass guitars, keyboard, etc., but do not pay attention to the service or the message. When worldly music is the only attraction for people to go to church, it is merely another way to win them to the world – not to Christ.

I believe that life is made up of many kinds of experiences. Human experience, of course, is infinitely diversified, and no two people have exactly the same experience. But there are many kinds of experiences which people have in common, and music is one of them. It is inevitable and immediately accessible and can be a valuable source of numerous benefits or evils to mankind. To appreciate music, you acquire the ability to listen intelligently and have the freedom to choose what style of music you listen to. Although people have different aptitudes in their musical perceptiveness, no one should be pushed to listen to a specific type of music. It is quite possible to enjoy music in the flesh and receive pleasure from it. But, what does it do to your spirit?

We read in the Old Testament about the different musical instruments being used at that time. They were made mostly of fir wood and were predominantly strings, bringing soothing music – and not like much of the instruments used today. Some churches are trying to expand on this type of music and worship without recognizing that they are creating sensuous listening for the audience. People are obtaining pleasure from an awareness of the sheer beauty of the sound. These sounds can be enjoyed by themselves without the listener having any understanding of the words. There is always the imminent danger of the emotional pull and the natural inclination of the listener to let his mind wander without any barriers. This prevents him from appreciating any godly words of the songs.

Music is capable of producing sublime experiences in the listener. Some

may be concerned with his own reaction to the music, with the emotions and moods that the music arouses in him, rather than the awesomeness of the words – and the God-ward direction – of the songs. The misnomer, Contemporary Christian Music, has a lot of sensuality in it. Sliding and sagging pitches in a singer's performance gives a sensuous impression to the hearers. Sound has the ability to suggest erotic movements – detrimental to anyone, but particularly young people. There is an unceasing focus on man's personal experience in the lyrics of many songs, motivating glorification of the subjective experience as the desired legitimate expression.

High volume, frequently played in local churches in America, sometimes consume the listener and totally block out the internal communication of his personal conscience and of the spirit. It is not right to use carnal music to present a holy message!

We forget that sympathetic vibration requires everyone around the music to react to it: either in harmony with it, or be repelled by it. When we allow ourselves to listen to music, our entire being must either respond sympathetically with it, or one must hinder its effectiveness by rejecting it. Therefore, we will not be affected by the content of the song. The question is asked: Why should worshippers be challenged in that awkward situation?

Worshipping God must be carried out in purity, holiness, and in spirit. Worldly music will tempt, damage or weaken Christians. We must not expose them to potential stumbling blocks. But, once started, like the Grand Slalom ski race in the Olympics, they will not be able to stop; and their fall will be quite painful.

As I look at the progression of music in the local churches in America, now being much louder, and with more drums, excessive repetition and a dominant beat in practically

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Personal Word from the Editor



Welcome to the year 2012! Last year flew by at record speed: I didn't know that I have ever been as busy. Was it because there was more work to do or because I was getting older... or both? The debate rages on, unanswered for now. Thank you for your interest in this ministry and for your prayers and support. I trust that you are gaining confidence that we have no personal agenda with respect to the ministry – only what the Lord wants and says through His Word. Believers can come from varied backgrounds and be used of the Lord to distribute His truth, which never changes nor compromises. Some of

you have endeared yourselves to us and we are very grateful. We have attempted to endear ourselves to you through the Word, realizing the precious years many of you put in with Pastor and Mrs. Porter. What limitations we have are committed to the Lord to handle in His time and in His way. Isaiah 26:3 says, *“Thou wilt keep [guard] him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”* He is in control and we are to be good stewards of whatever He has given us to do, and whatever He has given us to work with. Amen?

Our only article this month deals with the subject of music. A sacred cow to some! Not all music, but primarily the music listened to and on display in many local churches professing to be Bible believing. Again, another sacred cow to some! It was not written by a pastor or a professor at a seminary of any kind. It was written by a layman who happens to be a medical doctor as well as a person who has received the Lord Jesus Christ by personal faith alone to be their Savior from sin. It was written by someone with a genuine passion for the truth of God's Word and the spiritual betterment of those who are saved. The author is from Egypt and is familiar with what has and is going on in that country. The doctor is personally familiar with persecution from Islam and the Muslim Brotherhood machine. The entire family grew up with it every day of their lives. Some family members still reside there at great cost to their lives. This article isn't about the deception perpetrated on people in this country by propaganda mills which call themselves the media. However, if we who are not involved in the media can find out truths about what is going on and who is involved, surely they can too – but they choose to be silent concerning the truth there – and in many other places and events. Nothing new under the sun, is there? Having grown up outside of the United States, this individual sees music from an objective point of view, in accordance to what the Bible teaches and how music is to be practiced. One cannot debate the issue of contemporary 'Christian' music without compromising and eventually rejecting two critical areas:

The written word of God with respect to the flesh (Gal.5:17; I John 2:15-17), and

The written word of God with respect to music and its power to sway people one way or the other – the carnal or the spiritual, but not to both at the same time (I Sam.16:18,23; Eph.5:19-20; Col.3:15).

One last question: What would be the detriment to the local church or to the ministry, or to you, if all of the contemporary music scene were not used or adhered to? If your answer is only experientially based – know that one day we all must answer in relationship to the revealed written Word of God.

Have a great month in Christ wherever you are in your walk with the Lord.

Spiritual Farming

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” Galatians 6:7-9

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every song produced, compared to what it used to be, it troubles me that the Madison Avenue technique of giving small doses at a time, which created tolerance in the people, was ever used at all. The damage may be beyond repair.

Recently, we have been inundated by music that has been sung too close to the microphone, so that the breathing and sighing of the singer can be heard. This invades the privacy of the hearer and suggests personal intimacy with the singer. Other singers manipulate the melody line of the song with sliding and sagging pitches and free floating rhythms. This adds to the intimacy of the message, as does suggestive movements that appeal to the lust of the flesh.

When the concert ended at Woodstock, in Rome, New York, the audience set the place on fire and burnt it completely to the ground. Most of the comments were that it was the music that aroused the rage in them and induced that destructive behavior in their soul. And so, they reacted by burning the place down.

God teaches us balance, not only in our mind, will, and emotions, but also in relation to our body, soul, and spirit. As we strive for holiness in the Christian life, we must recognize that we have to give the Holy Spirit complete control of our being. Feelings, emotions and experiences must be submissive to God's Word. The will has to do with decisions, and to make Godly, sound decisions, we must use the mind of Christ in us.

Let us manifest in our local churches in America, the mind of Christ, so that we can be renewed and stand steadfast on biblical principles, rather than the mindless emotions and experiences that so permeate the "spiritual" scene of our day.

*By: medical doctor:
name withheld by
request for security reasons
Article written, 1998*

LETTERS FROM PO BOX 5900

"I just want to extend my gratitude and thanks for providing me with your publication. May our Lord continue to bless you and your family, and this ministry – richly and abundantly, like He always does." - California

"I would like to thank everyone at 'The Challenger' for working so hard on putting out the monthly issues. I really enjoy them and they are very informative. It has definitely helped me in my walk with our Father in heaven. May God bless you in every way." - Virginia

"I am fed by the messages when I read them and share them with other believers... Hopefully my parents and I can begin sharing some of the meat and potatoes that you provide. They are not saved yet, so I aim to live out my life in Christ, being an example of the love of Jesus Christ to them. Our God is and always will be faithful to His Word and His promises. Thank you for your faithful service to God in providing scriptural Christian material. God has your reward awaiting you in heaven." - California

Dwight Porter, D.D., Founder
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"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:58

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