

O Timothy

"Keep that which is committed to thy trust..."

A Monthly Newsletter for Spiritual Protection and Edification

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"Melody is the emphasis of Scripture when it comes to the music itself. Melody is the simple tune, the most basic element of music. It is what we sing in our own hearts. We can't sing harmony and chords. God's Word is teaching us to keep the music simple so that the music doesn't distract from the message of the words. There should be a good singable melody and the rest of the music should never overwhelm the melody." Page 12.

Digging in the Walls: A month's worth of news items, republished from Friday Church News Notes. **Page 15.**



CONGREGATIONAL SINGING ACCORDING TO EPHESIANS AND COLOSSIANS

By David Cloud

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:18-19).

"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).

In Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3, we have the Holy Spirit's instructions for congregational singing. The pronouns are plural. This is a description of congregational singing as God intends it.

Here, we see a congregation of spiritual and biblical depth building itself up through the singing of sacred music. We see congregational singing as an essential part of the ministry described in Ephesians 4:14, "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of



every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:16).

This is not a church in which the congregational singing is a mere ritual that is hurried through. It is not a church that sings mindlessly without understanding the purpose of the song service.

It is a church of born again people who are filled with God's Word and who are singing from the heart to God and to one another, singing with understanding, singing with clear biblical purpose.

Recently, after a congregation had sung "Beulah Land," I got up to preach and asked how many knew the meaning of "beulah." Only two people raised their hands. I've done this type of thing often in various churches, with similar results.

In the passages in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3, we have a divinely-inspired educational course for congregational singing. This type of singing does not happen automatically. The entire church must be educated. The passages are addressed to the assembly as a whole. The lessons must first be understood by the church leaders and music people, then the whole congregation must be instructed, from the youngest to the oldest. And the education must be given to each generation. It is a never-ending task. Every church is potentially only one generation away from apostasy.

In these last days, the vast majority of churches have moved far away from the pattern set in Ephesians and Colossians. Spiritual revival is to repent of going astray and to return to God's Word. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works..." (Re. 2:5).

MAJOR LESSONS

1. The singing is congregational singing.
2. The singing is by a certain kind of congregation.
3. The singing is of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

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4. The singing is to teach and admonish one another.
5. The singing is to the Lord.
6. The singing is from the heart.

I. The singing is congregational singing.

The pronouns are plural ("yourselves," "you," "your").

We aren't saying that solos and duets, etc., are wrong, if they are spiritual and edifying rather than carnal and entertaining, but the emphasis in these passages is on the congregation singing to God and to itself, so that is where the churches must put the emphasis.

To "speak to yourselves" and "to teach and admonish one another" refers to a function of the church as a body (Eph. 4:16) and the church as a holy priesthood (1 Pe. 2:5). It has been said that the song service is preparation for the preaching, but that is the "revivalist" viewpoint (e.g., D.L. Moody, Billy Sunday). Paul teaches that the congregational singing is to be an important teaching ministry *in itself*.

"Speaking to yourselves" includes speaking to oneself. Before I instruct, encourage, exhort, and reprove others, I must do so to myself. Otherwise, I am a hypocrite. So to speak to yourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs involves speaking to myself the great truths of Scripture. In many of the Psalms, the psalmist exhorts himself in the Word of God. He exhorts himself to hope in God (Ps. 42-43; 62:5), to bless the Lord (Ps. 103:1-2, 22; 104:1, 35), to return unto his rest (Ps. 116:7), to praise the Lord (Ps. 146:1). "On this precedent build those hymns in which every member of the congregation summons himself to faithfulness and worship, as in 'Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven' (based on Psalm 103), 'Be Still, My Soul,' 'Come, My Soul, Thy Suit Prepare,' 'Rise, My Soul, to Watch and Pray,' 'Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness,' and 'Arise, My Soul, Arise'" ("Audience," *A Biblical Model of Congregational Singing*, congsing.org).

To "teach and admonish one another" requires an emphasis on the message of the lyrics. **Nothing must detract from the message and from its proper impact in the hearers' hearts and minds.**

Congregational singing is not about me; it is not about my choices and my pleasure (whether or not I want to participate). It is about God and His will and pleasure. It is about ministering to the brethren. Every member should participate and participate enthusiastically unto the Lord. It is a matter of dying to self and submitting to authority. It is a matter of love for Christ and my fellow man.

Congregational singing is one way that the older generation teaches the younger. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them

diligently unto thy children..." (De. 6:6-7). "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts" (Ps. 145:4).

Consider the example of Rocky Springs Church (location unknown): "On Sunday mornings, we enter a sanctuary of white cinderblocks trimmed out in honey-colored oak with a floor thinly carpeted in medium blue, and we sit in wood pews that are as dark as the rest of the space is light. When the time comes to sing, old men, ladies, boys and girls stand up while the pianist plays a few bars of the tune so that we can all remember how it goes. We then all sing. A little girl at the end of the pew, barely old enough to read, struggles (without a hint of embarrassment) with some of the words but, as she knows the 'Alleluia, Amen' bit well, she sings it as loud as she can toward the back of the old fellow sitting in front of her. Though his hearing is bad, he hears her just fine and finds himself consciously agreeing with what she is singing. **He will tell you that he isn't much of a singer, but you would never believe it from his lively participation—he has something to sing about and he knows we all need to hear it.** Indeed, Rocky Springs makes no boast about being musical. If a critic, overhearing us, declared fully half our number unable to carry a tune, it would not trouble us. We can hear the tuneful just as well as the tuneless and are as glad for the exhortation and teaching that both offer. When we sing a hymn familiar to all, the oak trim seems to rattle in sympathetic vibration. During such songs, many do not even look at the hymnal. They look up or at each other, **as if they were having a conversation with God and everyone in the room all at once. As the whole congregation sings, each understands the other and all are teaching, taught, exhorting and exhorted. And God is glorified**" (www.congsing.org/introduction.html).

Nothing should detract from the command to teach and admonish one another.

"Congregational singing is an essential aspect of corporate worship. My church focuses on the reading of Scripture and congregational singing from the Psalter prior to the preaching of the Word. There is no special music, and the offertory is accompanied by the congregational singing. In this manner, the focus remains on singing God's praises in worship as a corporate body. If the focus is on other aspects of music, such as a band up front, or a particularly gifted pianist doing fancy offertories, or a particularly beautiful voice showcased every few Sundays for special music, this can take away from the purpose of the worship service. The purpose of worship is to blend our voices in one song to the Lord, with pure hearts and without distraction if possible. Congregational singing, particularly with a limited but helpful accompaniment, encourages this purpose more than any other worship approach I've experienced. Such a focus provides less opportunities for 'performances' by individuals, thereby necessitating musical and vocal enrichment outside the realm of corporate worship,

if one is interested in personal development and opportunities. This is not a bad thing, for I believe every true Christian would agree that the corporate worship setting is not the place for individual enrichment and opportunity, but rather for the corporate worship of almighty God" (Lauren Masters, "The Human Voice as a Musical Instrument," *Kardia Music Journal*, Vol. 2, Iss. 1, 2022).

II. The singing is by a certain kind of congregation.

In these passages, we see that a certain kind of congregation is necessary to sing after the manner that God instructs.

1. It is a Spirit-filled congregation (Eph. 5:18).

God begins with the spiritual condition of the church and of the individual singers. Sound congregational singing requires a spiritual house made up of living stones (1 Pe. 2:5).

Spirit filled means not controlled by anything other than the Spirit (not alcohol, not drugs, not the flesh, not the works of darkness) (Eph. 5:11)

Spirit filled is to yield to the Spirit's control, to mind the things of the Spirit (Ro. 8:5), to be led by the Spirit (Ro. 8:14), to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16).

Spirit filled is to be spiritually alive rather than sleeping (Eph. 5:14).

Spirit filled is not spiritually careless and foolish (Eph. 5:15-17).

2. It is a Scripture-filled congregation ("Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom," Col. 3:16).

This describes the right kind of church. It is a church that has a regenerate membership that is truly filled with God's Word.

The Word of Christ is to dwell in "**you**" (plural) richly. The whole church, and every member of the church, must be indwelt with Scripture. This describes every member being saved, every member being filled with God's Word, every member becoming an effectual Bible student, the fathers and mothers being effectual Bible students so that the children are being educated in God's Word in the homes (2 Ti. 3:15).

The Word of Christ is to "**dwell**." The Word of God must "**dwell in you**." "Dwell" is *enoikéo*, This is *enoikéo*, to inhabit, from *en* (in) and *oikéo* (dwell). "The word *oikos* means 'a home.' *Oikéo* means 'to live in a home.' The exhortation is to the effect that the Christian is to so yield himself to the Word that there is a certain at-homeness of the Word in his being. The Word should be able to feel at home in his heart" (Wuest).

Each believer must "**let it dwell**." It is a choice. I can fill my

life with Scripture. I can read it. I can learn how to study it and understand it. I can delight in it and meditate on it day and night (Ps. 1:2). I can test everything by it and thereby exercise my spiritual senses (Heb. 5:14). I can live it out. Or I can neglect it. Even in a church that is preaching and teaching God's Word effectually, the individual members must "let it dwell." They must receive the Word and they must receive it into every part of their lives.

The Word of Christ is to dwell "**richly**." This is *plousios*, "richly, abundantly, largely" (CWSB), "connected with *ploutos*, riches" (Vines). It is translated "abundantly" (Tit. 3:6; 2 Pe. 1:11). This does not describe believers who have a 15 minute daily Bible reading but who are largely ignorant of God's Word.

The Word of Christ dwelling richly describes a believer that is saturated with God's Word, who is an effectual Bible student, who reads and studies it, who knows how to rightly interpret it, who memorizes it and meditates on it day and night, who tests everything by the authority of God's Word so as to know right from wrong, good from bad, so as to do God's will. For the Word of Christ to dwell richly in a congregation requires that the church not merely have a Bible School, but that it be a Bible School. It requires that every member learn how to be an effectual Bible student, from the youngest to the oldest. It requires that fathers and mothers learn to be effectual Bible students so that their children are being educated in God's Word in the homes (2 Ti. 3:15). It requires that the youth be seriously disciplined in God's Word and not merely entertained with Christianized fun.

The Word of Christ dwelling richly describes theological depth. We must aim for more than just theological soundness. We want richness of truth that will edify deeply and broadly. The lyrics must be examined carefully to make sure that we are not singing heresy and also that we are not singing vapid, emotional, sweet nothings.

For example, the lyrics to many of the popular **Southern Gospel** songs are very weak, doctrinally.

Many of the Stamps-Baxter hymns were typically characterized by biblical shallowness, if not outright heresy. They are emotional, feel-good songs that are easy to "showboat," meaning they are designed to show off vocal techniques and jazzy rhythms, but the message is extremely shallow. They don't deal with essential doctrines such as repentance, conversion, confession, holiness, obedience, and separation from the world. Even the gospel is presented in a vague fashion. The songs are not solidly Bible based. They are often man-centered, focusing on man's needs.

Consider "I'll Fly Away." The words "I'll fly away" are repeated 24 times in the short song.

The lyrics to popular newer songs like "He Knows My Name" and "The Broken Ones" could be sung by unconverted church members with "blessing" but no conviction.

"He Knows My Name" by the McRaes

He counts the stars one and all
 He knows how much sand is on the shore
 He sees every sparrow that falls
 He made the mountain and the seas
 He's in control of everything
 Of all creatures great and small
CHORUS
 He knows my name
 Every step that I take
 Every move that I make
 Every tear that I cry
 And He knows my name
 When I'm overwhelmed by the pain
 And can't see the light of day
 I know I'll be just fine
 Cause He knows my name
 I don't know what tomorrow will bring
 I can't tell you what's in store
 I don't know a lot of things
 I don't have all the answers to the questions of life
 But I know in whom I believe
CHORUS
 He knew who I was when he carried the cross
 He knew that I would fail him but he took the loss
CHORUS
 Every step that I take
 Every move that I make
 Every tear that I cry
 And he knows my name

When the shallow lyrics to this song are sung to sensual music with sensual voice techniques, it is a recipe for emotional "blessing," but it is seriously lacking in biblical substance. In fact, "He knew I would fail him but he took the loss" is not a sound gospel message. Christ didn't take a loss; He took my sin.

Southern Gospel doesn't encourage a careful examination of lyrics, but the Bible does.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Th. 5:21).

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).

"Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. 14:26).

“The simple believeth every word: but the prudent *man* looketh well to his going” (Pr. 14:15).

It is the message of the song that edifies and sanctifies, not jazzy music and sensual chord sequences and sensual vocal techniques, so the lyrics must be examined carefully to make sure that we are not singing heresy and that we are not singing vapid, emotional, sweet nothings.

Consider “**The Broken Ones**” by Jerry Salley, J.B. Rudd, and Vip Vipperman:

Maggie came home one day with a raggedy, Raggedy Ann.

She said “Mama, look what I found in the neighbors garbage can.”

It had a missing left arm, and a right button eye hanging by a thread

She carried it gently up to her room and laid it on her bed with her other dolls.

Chorus:

She loves the broken ones, the ones that need a little patchin' up

She see's the diamond in the rough and makes it shine like new

It really doesn't take that much, a willing heart and a tender touch

If everybody loved like she does, there'd be a lot less broken ones.

Twenty years later in a shelter on Eighteenth Avenue

A seventeen year old girl shows up all black and blue with needle tracks in her left arm, almost too weak to stand,

She says, "I'm lost and I need help", as Maggie takes her hand

And says, "Come on in!"

Bridge:

If you call her an angel, she'd be quick to say to you

She's just doing what the one who died for her would do

Love the broken ones, the ones that need a little patchin' up

See the diamond in the rough and make it shine like new

It really doesn't take that much, a willing heart and a tender touch

If everybody loved like He does, there'd be a lot less broken ones

If everybody loved like He does, there's be a lot less broke ones.

Again, this has no biblical substance. One can read any theology into the song. It is so weak that it fits liberal social gospel theology, faith-works theology, even Catholic or Mormon or Jehovah's Witness theology.

Even some of the popular Southern Gospel songs that have a fairly biblical message are made shallow by the distracting music which overwhelms the message with an entertainment emphasis or is confused by an unscriptural element being thrown into the lyrics.

Consider the song “**My God is Real**,” sung by countless Southern Gospel groups.

The lyrics include a repetition of these words: “He’s real, I can feel him deep within. ... My Lord He’s real, I can feel him in my soul.”

This is the Pentecostal, Holiness, Stamps Baxter heresy that says I can and should feel God. Where does the Bible support this? Where does it teach that the believer can feel God? Where does the Bible tell us how this is done? In light of the Bible’s frequent warnings about the danger of spiritual delusion, how would you know that it is God you are feeling and not a spirit of deception?

This song encourages the great error of living the Christian life by one’s emotions, which is extremely unstable and spiritually and emotionally dangerous.

A comment left on the YouTube rendition illustrates the emotional approach to Christian music: “Love the Florida Boys singing this beautiful song. This song has got some power in it. That it makes the hair rise on my arms.”

We are to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good,” and only that which is good, and this song does not pass the standard of God’s infallible Word.

Another example of the shallowness of popular Southern Gospel songs is “**Just a Little Talk**” by Cleavant Derricks and sung by countless Southern Gospel groups. Here are some of the lyrics:

I once was lost in sin, but Jesus took me in

And then a little light from heaven fills my soul.

He bathed my heart in love, and He wrote my name above

And just a little talk with Jesus makes me whole.

(Now let us) have a little talk with Jesus

(Let us) tell Him all about our troubles

(He will) hear our faintest cry

(He will) answer by and by

(When you) feel a little prayer wheel turning

(And you) will know a little fire is burnin'

(You will) find a little talk with Jesus makes it right.

There is no clear gospel or salvation message here. “I once was lost in sin, but Jesus took me in” is so vague that any false gospel can fit there.

And what does “feel a little prayer wheel turning” mean? Buddhists have prayer wheels, and I’ve seen them used all over Asia. Did Derricks visit the Far East before writing this strange song? This aside, the emphasis of the song is on feeling.

The reason it is popular is its jazzy tune and the fact that it lends itself to vocal “showboating.”

Another example is “**Step into the Water**” by Kirk Talley, who was singing with the Cathedrals when he wrote the song in about 1979.

It's time we, the people, stand up for what is right.

It's time we squared our shoulders back and raised our swords to fight.

For the Bible is my weapon and the Spirit is my shield.

The Church needs more of its members to be workers in the field.

There is victory for the Christian who walks the narrow way.

There has been a prize appointed for the soul who does not stray.

Though I want to live for Jesus, and be all that I can be. So, that I can rest with Him forever, live eternally.

CHORUS

Step into the water

Wade out a little bit deeper

Wet your feet in the water of His love

Step into the water

Wade out a little bit deeper

Come join angels singing praise to the Lamb of God

“Step into the Water” has some biblical lyrics, but the heart of the song is the jazzy chorus, which is the reason for its popularity. It is almost impossible to sing it without dancing and “showboating,” which is the essence of a Southern Gospel hit.

The concept of stepping into the water and wading out a little bit deeper has no biblical support. The only New Testament image of stepping into the water is that of baptism, and baptism is a picture of salvation. Deep water is nowhere used as a picture of the Christian life in Scripture. The problem is worse than that, though. “Step into the Water” preaches a false gospel, which might come from the influence of Talley’s early years in Free Will Baptist churches that teach the doctrine of “conditional security” or “holding out faithful.” The song teaches that by living for Jesus one can rest with Him forever. That is salvation by faith plus works.

The vagueness and lack of doctrinal clarity that permeates so many of the popular Southern Gospel songs is why many worldly people love Southern Gospel. It “speaks to them,” but it does not convict, save, sanctify, and separate them. You can see this in the mixed multitudes at Southern Gospel concerts and conventions. You can see it in comments left on the YouTube editions of songs such as “He Knows My Name” and “The Broken Ones,” which are left mostly by women who are being emotionally impacted, but not necessarily spiritually changed.

Consider the song “**Send the Rain**” that was used at the Burlington Tent Revival (Burlington, NC, 2016).

“Regarding the Burlington Revival: This video clip is of the July 22 revival meeting which has been touted as the most successful meeting of the entire revival. There were a supposed 100 people saved that day. It is one of Burlington Revival’s most viewed clips on YouTube. And I can’t tell you how many times I’ve heard pastors reference this specific meeting where all these people got saved in one night. ... the link I gave above has a timestamp that starts at 39:30. As this time they begin singing a song which they sing until the 1 hour mark. They sing this song over and over again for 20 minutes until everyone is worked up and in their emotions. People ‘get saved’ during this time, but this song gives no mention of the Gospel whatsoever. The song they sing is called ‘Send the Rain’ which is written by Aaron Butler of the Christian Rock band Ol’ Skool. You can visit their biography [here](http://www.unsigned.com/olskool) - www.unsigned.com/olskool. I’d like to point out a quote they made from this biography regarding their own music: ‘*Our music has a lot of roots in southern gospel, but with a touch of rock. We like to call it Southern Rock Gospel.*’” (from a reader, Aug. 26, 2016).

Amazingly, “Send the Rain” promotes Pentecostal Latter Rain heresy. Note the following lyrics:

“Send the rain/ Send the fire/ Send the wind/ Send the Holy Ghost in power/ Send the rain.”

The independent Baptist leaders of the Burlington meeting either did not recognize this heresy or didn’t care that they were singing false teaching, so long as it “stirs people up” and gets them to the altar. (See [The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements](#), available from [Way of Life Literature](#), for a study on latter rain theology.)

CCM and contemporary Southern Gospel singers like doctrinally weak lyrics because they want a broad ministry.

This is also why we don’t want an exclusive diet of **Revivalist Songs**. These were written in the revivalist era c. 1850-1940 and were geared for a mixed-multitude, interdenominational evangelistic forum, such as the the crusades of Charles Finney, D.L. Moody, and Billy Sunday. The message and theology tend to be pretty basic in order to facilitate ease of learning and interdenominational ministry. All of the prominent evangelists of that era were interdenominational, and the songs and hymns were designed for that context so that “controversial” doctrines were downplayed.

The revivalist emphasis was promoted through the influence of the Sword of the Lord’s *Soul Stirring Songs*. John R. Rice conducted interdenominational city-wide evangelistic crusades earlier in his career.

Revivalist songs often lack theological depth. Examples are “Tell Me the Old Old Story,” “There’ll Be No Dark Valley,” “Throw out the Life Line,” “Wonderful Words of Life,” “I Need Thee Every Hour,” “The Cleansing Fountain,” “Faith Is

the Victory,” and “Trusting Jesus.” Other examples are some of those popularized by Torrey’s song leader, Charles Alexander: “What a Wonderful Savior,” “When We All Get to Heaven,” “Showers of Blessing,” “A New Name Written Down in Glory,” and “God Will Take Care of You.”

In such songs, there is some good doctrine, some exhortation and edification, but the message tends to be simplistic and repetitive. There is not a lot of theological depth whereby the minds and hearts of the people are challenged and seriously built up. Revivalist songs tend to be light and frothy, more like a theological snack than a solid meal, more milk than meat.

Consider “**What Can Wash Away My Sin**” by Robert Lowry.

1 What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain:
O precious is the flow
that makes me white as snow;
no other fount I know;
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

2 For my pardon this I see:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
For my cleansing this my plea:
nothing but the blood of Jesus. [Refrain]

3 Nothing can for sin atone:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
Naught of good that I have done:
nothing but the blood of Jesus. [Refrain]

4 This is all my hope and peace:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
This is all my righteousness:
nothing but the blood of Jesus. [Refrain]

There is nothing doctrinally wrong with this song. The blood of Christ and its power is an essential theme, of course, but the song is simplistic, superficial, and repetitive. Those who have grown up on this type of hymn think it is solid and substantive, but that is because they have been weaned on a shallow diet. I understand this, because I grew up with the revivalist hymns and have heard them sung in the hundreds of churches where I have preached.

This is typical of many of the revivalist songs.

Fed an exclusive diet of this type of hymn, a church tends to remain on a simplistic, shallow level. The congregation tends to stop thinking about the words, because of the lack of depth and the familiarity created by constant repetition

of a small selection of songs. These songs don’t produce much growth. They don’t tend to spiritual adulthood.

Revivalist songs also tend to focus on evangelism. Examples are “The Light of the World” and “Wonderful Words of Life” and “Whosoever Heareth” by Philip Bliss, “Have You Any Room for Jesus?” by Daniel Whittle, “Come Every Soul by Sin Oppressed” by John Stockton. A church should definitely sing about evangelism, but it should do so on purpose at the right time and not just as a ritual and tradition.

We will hasten to add that music from the revivalist era featured many beautiful and doctrinally solid songs and hymns (e.g., Fanny Crosby’s “All the Way My Saviour Leads Me,” Francis Havergal’s “Take My Life and Let It Be,” Edward Mote’s “My Hope Is Built,” D.W. Whittle’s “Moment by Moment,” Lina Sandell’s “Day by Day,” and Wade Robinson’s “Love with Everlasting Love”).

Not all of the songs and hymns from the revivalist era were written for the revivalist context. Fanny Crosby, for example, wrote spiritual poemzzs which were put to music by various tunesmiths. She wasn’t writing her poems for interdenominational evangelistic crusades.

We are not advocating the total rejection of revivalist songs and hymns. There are great many excellent hymns in these hymnbooks, and not every song and hymn we sing needs to be a theological bombshell. There is a place for some songs with a lighter, upbeat message. We are urging churches to be educated about the context and purpose of each hymn and to choose each one with wisdom and care. We need to think more seriously and do everything in the song service with clear biblical purpose, instead of being in the rut of near mindless tradition. The church’s music people need to be well educated in this business and choose songs with good theological content and spiritual depth and mostly avoid those that are shallow or merely sentimental. We need far more spiritual meat and potatoes hymns and far less cotton candy and donuts.

And we need to continually expand the repertoire of hymns for the church’s spiritual progress. This is challenging and edifying and keeps the congregation from getting into a rut, which is so very easy to do. We list many resources for this endeavor in the section on “Expanding the Church’s Hymn Repertoire.”

The word “richly” in Colossians 3:16 also indicates beauty and excellence. “This word [‘richly’] in Greek, *plousios*, similar to its English equivalent, always bears both quantitative and qualitative denotations. That which is rich is both abundant and excellent. In our congregational singing the word of Christ is to dwell not just in abundance but with eloquence. And some of that eloquence is achieved poetically, or so the biblical

models demonstrate: 1 Chronicles 16, for example, or the many psalms known to have been sung in the Temple, or the instances of corporate song in Revelation. The best English-language hymns will employ the devices of English poetry—meter, rhythm, sound, rhyme, imagery, and structured organization of ideas—to communicate the glory of God’s name as clearly and as memorably as possible” (“Message,” *The Biblical Model of Congregational Singing*, congsing.org).

3. It is a wise congregation (“in all wisdom,” Col. 3:16).

The Word of God must produce spiritual wisdom in our lives. It is not a matter of rote learning and rote memorizing. It is not a matter of hearing a lot of Bible preaching. It is not reading the Bible as a ritual. It is not a matter of knowledge and intellect only. The Word of God must get down into every part of our lives and conform us to God’s perfect will. It must produce godly Christian living in the home, at the schoolhouse, on the job, etc.

III. The singing is of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs describe a wide variety of singing material. This clearly refutes the idea held by some that we should sing *only* hymns.

We have God’s authorization to write new hymns and songs. And if we can write new hymns and songs, we can paraphrase the psalms, which is actually necessary for putting them into a singable format.

1. The churches are to sing the PSALMS.

Psalms are the Psalms in our Bibles. There are 150 psalms that deal with every facet of God’s character and every situation in human life. Psalms is infinite in teaching. It is a whole world of revelation. William Law said, “Singing psalms awakes all that is good and holy within you, calling your spirits to their proper duty, setting you in your best posture toward heaven, and tuning all the powers of your soul to worship and adoration.” John Berridge, in the preface to his hymnbook, wrote, “The book of Psalms seems intended as a model for Hymns; and after this model I have copied as nearly as I could. Here we find instruction, exhortation, caution, and Christian experience, blended with prayer and praise. The thoughts are easy and free, flowing from the heart, and the language simple and plain, yet neat and elegant. And nothing, sure, can be more unsuitable than humble prayer uttered in pompous expressions.”

Since the largest book in the Bible is a songbook, we see the importance of sacred music before God.

The name of the book in Hebrew is *te'hillim* (songs of praises). The individual psalms are called *miz'mor*, meaning melody of

praise. *Psalmos* (*Psalms*) is what the book is called in the New Testament (Lu. 20:42; 24:44; Ac. 1:20; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Jas. 5:13). *Psalmos* is from *psallo*, which refers to touching or plucking the strings of a harp.

The Psalms were sung by Israel (Ps. 95:2; 105:2). David invented special musical instruments for singing the Psalms (2 Ch. 7:6). In the temple, the psalms were sung by the Levites as we see in the separate study on Old Testament temple singing. The psalms were also doubtless sung by individuals and in homes and on many occasions. Psalms were sung during Passover. It is stated in the Talmud that the Hallel (Ps. 113-118) were sung in the morning service of the synagogue during Jewish holidays, the new moon, and during the Passover meal. The songs of degrees (Ps. 120-134) were sung on the 15 steps leading from the Women’s Court to the Court of Israel. Internal evidence from the songs of degrees indicate that they might have been sung by pilgrims on their approach to the temple during the festivals (Ps. 122:1; 132:7).

The Psalms were sung by Protestants and by old Baptists.

See the report “[Singing the Psalms](https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/singing_the_psalms.php),”

https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/singing_the_psalms.php

2. The churches are to sing HYMNS.

“Hymns” is a transliteration of the Greek *humnos* and “denotes a song of praise addressed to God.” In the verb form (*humnéo*) it is translated “sing praises” (Ac. 16:25; Heb. 2:12). In the context of Col. 3:16 and Eph. 5:19, “hymns” refer to worship hymns that are written by men and women other than the psalmists.

3. The churches are to sing SPIRITUAL SONGS.

“Spiritual songs” are also songs written by men and women other than the psalmists. The Greek word for song (*ode*) refers to songs in general, but it is qualified by the word “spiritual.”

The emphasis is on “*spiritual*.” This is a far-reaching doctrine. The Greek word for song (*ode*) refers to songs in general, but it is qualified by the word “spiritual.” This is the Greek *pneumatikós*, which means of the Spirit. It is connected with being filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

That which is spiritual is Spirit-led, Spirit-controlled. Spiritual is the opposite of carnal and fleshly. Note how that “spiritual” is contrasted with “carnal” in 1 Co. 3:1 -- “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal.” Paul is saying that we are to sing songs that are of the Spirit of God, songs that are holy and sacred, songs that are set apart for God, songs that are not carnal and fleshly, songs that are different in quality from the songs of the world, songs that are of a heavenly flavor rather than a worldly.

Thus, we have God's authorization to write new hymns and songs. And if we can write new hymns and songs, we can paraphrase the psalms, which is actually necessary for putting them into a singable format. Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs describe a wide variety of singing material. This clearly refutes the idea held by some that we should sing *only* hymns.

This describes a variety of songs. We aren't limited to the Psalms themselves.

IV. The singing is to teach and admonish one another.

"speaking to yourselves" (Eph. 5:19); "teaching and admonishing one another" Col. 3:16).

The emphasis is on the congregation singing as a body. The song service is a "one another" ministry; it is the body building itself up. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19). Congregational singing is the exercise of Eph. 4:16, "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

"**Teach**" is *didásko*, the common Greek word for teaching and instructing in all of its aspects.

"**Admonish**" is *nouthetéo*, "from *nous* (mind) and *tithemi* (to place)," but it is not merely to bring to remembrance; it is to warn and exhort. Of the eight times it is used in the New Testament, it is translated "warn" four times (Ac. 20:31; 1 Co. 4:14; Col. 1:28; 1 Th. 5:14) and "admonish" four times (Ro. 15:14; Col. 3:16; 1 Th. 5:12; 2 Th. 3:15).

This requires choosing the type of songs and hymns that facilitate teaching and admonishing. It requires songs and hymns of spiritual and doctrinal depth.

Everything in the church services is to edify. This is the theme of 1 Corinthians 14. "... that the church may receive edifying ... seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church ... Let all things be done unto edifying" (vv. 5, 12, 26).

There is no place for entertainment in the house of God. Many churches today mix the secular with the spiritual, such as singing secular carols at Christmas (i.e., "Jingle Bells" and "Deck the Halls"), but this is not scriptural, as there is no spiritual edification and God is not glorified.

Consider some things that can hinder the ministry of "speaking to yourselves":

First, the ministry of "speaking to yourselves" is hindered if the people are nominal and lukewarm and aren't truly

walking with Christ and obeying God's Word. In this situation, the words are sung as a mere religious ritual, because the people aren't living the reality of the lyrics. If such people sing, "Who is on the Lord's side?" they are singing empty words, because they themselves aren't on the Lord's side! If they sing, "Throw out the lifeline," they are singing empty words, because they aren't busy in evangelism and therefore can't truly exhort one another to throw out the lifeline.

Second, the ministry of "speaking to yourselves" is hindered if the people don't understand what they should be doing and if they don't engage in it enthusiastically from the heart. It is the song leader's job to educate and exhort and encourage the people for this ministry. The congregational singing should be prophesying in the sense of 1 Co. 14:3, "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort." We see in 1 Ch. 25:3 that God's people can prophesy through sacred music. "... who prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the LORD." This might be referenced in 1 Co. 14:23-25, where we see all of the members of the church prophesying.

Third, the ministry of "speaking to yourselves" can be hindered by choosing songs with a corrupt theological message. If the congregation is singing heresy, that is the opposite of teaching and admonishing one another with truth. We deal with this in the section "Test for the Congregation's Music."

Fourth, the ministry of "speaking to yourselves" can be hindered by choosing songs with a shallow theological message. We deal with this in the section "Test for the Congregation's Music."

The point is that the church's music people must be careful to choose songs with good theological content and spiritual depth rather than those that are shallow or merely sentimental. We need more spiritual meat and potatoes hymns and less Rice Krispies and donuts.

Fifth, the ministry of "speaking to yourselves" can be hindered if the congregants cannot hear one another sing. "Speaking to yourselves" requires that the voices of the congregation be heard clearly. Nothing should overwhelm the voices, whether it is a leader singing into a mic or musical instruments that are played too loudly.

Sometimes we sing a cappella to better facilitate teaching and admonishing one another. For that, the leader does not sing into the mic, so that his voice blends with the congregation rather than predominates. Ideally, the church should design its auditorium to facilitate "speaking to yourselves." I have been in many churches in which the voices are swallowed up by poor acoustics. A church cannot always obtain a facility with good acoustics for congregational singing, but it can aim for

this and can sometimes take steps toward this end, such as lowering the ceiling.

Sixth, the ministry of “speaking to yourselves” can be hindered if the music is so fast that the congregants cannot readily grasp the message. Some songs should be sung in a lively manner, but none should be sung so fast that the message is de-emphasized. Teaching and admonishing one another requires slowing down in order to understand and savor the message and speak that message to one another. Even the most lively revival songs in the heyday of the revivalist evangelistic movement were not sung very fast compared to how they are often sung today. Consider the following samples from Homer Rodeheaver, Charles Alexander, and Ira Sankey, three of the most prominent evangelistic song leaders of that era:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAgun-X58kE>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZamoSNDsiQ>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbcWklq12nk>

V. The singing is to the Lord.

“singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19); “singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

Congregational singing should be true worship directed to God. “Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song” (Ps. 33:3); “O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth” (Ps. 96:1); “O sing unto the LORD” (Ps. 98:1); “Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm” (Ps. 98:4-5); “Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, *and* his praise in the congregation of saints” (Ps. 149:1); “Sing unto the LORD a new song, *and* his praise from the end of the earth” (Isa. 42:10).

Everything is to be “to the Lord.” Even when teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, we are to be singing to the Lord. It is for His glory.

“It is noteworthy how frequently worshippers teach and admonish one another in the Bible. If references to God in the third person indicate that somebody other than God is being addressed, then, in the Psalms, for example, verses addressed to beings other than God figure just as prominently as do verses addressed to God himself. The psalmists move fluidly back and forth between addressing him and referring to him in the third person, and between addressing him and addressing fellow creatures. This suggests that they intend to sing to both simultaneously, for otherwise the transitions would be jarring. In fact, as 1 Corinthians 14 makes clear, worshippers can address God and man simultaneously. It is not always clear which psalms were intended for corporate worship, but in a sample of those that were clearly so intended (Ps. 30 because

of its superscription; Ps. 96, 105, and 106 because of the quotations in 1 Chr. 16; Ps. 100, 106, 107, 118, and 136 because of their refrain, “for his steadfast love endures forever”; and Ps. 104–106, 111–113, 115–117, 135, and 146–150 because of their refrain, “Hallelujah!”) only 6% of verses are addressed directly to God (22 out of 369), whereas 93% are addressed to others: 45% addressed directly to others and 48% addressed implicitly to them through third-person references to God. Only 1% of the verses are addressed to the self” (“Audience,” *A Biblical Model of Congregational Singing*, congsing.org).

“The Lord” is Jesus Christ. He is Lord of lords. He made me; He owns me; He loves me; He redeemed me; He cares for me. I owe Him everything; every blessing I have ever enjoyed came from His hand; my sole purpose is to live for His pleasure and glory. Congregational singing is an opportunity for God’s people to express thanksgiving to their Saviour God.

“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Ro. 11:36)

“he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things” (Ac. 17:25)

“in him we live, and move, and have our being” (Ac. 17:28)

“by him were all things created ... And he is before all things, and by him all things consist” (Col. 1:16-17)

Singing “to the Lord” means the minds of God’s people are to be focused purposefully on the Lord. Each member has a responsibility not to let his mind drift to lesser things.

In our main weekly service, we begin with a time of private, quiet prayer for the purpose of preparing our minds for the service.

VI. The singing is from the heart.

“singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19); “singing with grace in your hearts” (Col. 3:16)

The focus is on the heart. “**Heart**” is singular in Eph. 5:19 and plural in Col. 3:16. This means that the hearts of the congregation as a whole are to be engaged in the singing, and the heart of each individual is to be engaged. Both mouth and heart are to be engaged. The singing is not unthinking and unfeeling. It is not a religious ritual, not mere duty, not habit or tradition, not just mindless loud singing like a boisterous child.

“**Grace in your hearts**” means the singers must be born again, which is the only way to experience God’s grace. A church with a regenerate church membership is the only type of church that can obey these injunctions. To sing with grace in

your hearts is to sing with a pure heart that is cleansed by confession (1 Jo. 1:9). It is to sing by understanding God's grace (Ps. 47:7; 1 Co. 14:15). The congregation must be biblically educated, and the better educated they are, the better they can sing with grace in the heart. To sing with grace in the heart is to sing with awareness of God's grace and thanksgiving for God's grace. It is to sing in communion with the God of grace. It is to stir oneself up to be engaged fully in the singing and not allow oneself to be lifeless, dull. It is to lift up one's soul to God (Ps. 25:1). It is to stir up one's soul to bless the Lord (Ps. 103:1-2). It is to instruct one's soul to hope in God (Ps. 42:5, 6, 11).

TEST FOR CONGREGATIONAL SONGS AND HYMNS

The passages in Ephesians 5:18-19 and Colossians 3:16 also contain principles by which congregations can analyze their songs and hymns.

1. The songs must be spiritual.

"Spiritual songs" (Col. 3:16) are songs written by men and women other than the psalmists. The Greek word for song (*ode*) refers to songs in general, but it is qualified by the word "spiritual."

The emphasis is on "**spiritual**." This is a far-reaching doctrine. The Greek word for song (*ode*) refers to songs in general, but it is qualified by the word "spiritual." This is the Greek *pneumatikós*, which means of the Spirit. It is connected with being filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

That which is spiritual is Spirit-led, Spirit-controlled. **Spiritual is the opposite of carnal and fleshly and worldly.** Note how that "spiritual" is contrasted with "carnal" in 1 Co. 3:1 -- "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal."

Paul is saying that we are to sing songs that are of the Spirit of God, songs that are holy and sacred, songs that are set apart for God, songs that are not carnal and fleshly and worldly, songs that are different in quality from the songs of the world, songs that are of a heavenly flavor rather than a worldly.

2. The songs must be in accordance with God's Word.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly, teaching and admonishing one another..." (Col. 3:16).

We must sing the Word of Christ. The songs must be filled with God's Word. The songs must be doctrinally sound and perfectly conformable to Scripture. "Godly music is word-enriched and loaded with sound doctrine. Godly music packages Bible doctrines in memorable format" (Chris Starr).

God's people must weigh every song and hymn by the absolute standard of God's Word. Just because a song is in a good hymnbook doesn't mean that it is sound. Just because it has a pleasant tune and people like it doesn't mean that it is acceptable.

For example, the chorus "Spirit of the Living God" is a prayer addressed to the Spirit, which we never see in Scripture. We are taught to pray to the Father (Mt. 6:9). And the idea of the Spirit falling fresh on me isn't Scriptural. He doesn't fall on God's people; He indwells them.

"The Battle Hymn of the Republic" teaches the liberal social gospel. The author, Julia Ward Howe, was a Unitarian universalist who rejected Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

She interpreted the Union armies of the American North as the coming of Christ. The "watch-fires" of the Union army camps are the altar of God, and "the burnish'd rows of steel" bayonets are the gospel. "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations" teaches the post-millennial heresy that the preaching of the gospel will bring in Christ's kingdom by "conquering evil" and "shattering the spear and sword."

Some popular hymns are written from the perspective of Holiness perfectionist doctrine. This refers to a "second blessing" experience of perfect holiness or "entire sanctification."

Consider Charles Wesley's hymn "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling." It says, "Let us find that second rest; take away our bent to sinning..." That is the Methodist doctrine of perfectionism.

Phoebe Palmer's "The Cleansing Wave" teaches entire holiness. "The cleansing stream I see! I see! I plunge, and oh, it cleanseth me! ... I see the new creation rise, I hear the speaking blood; it speaks, POLLUTED NATURE DIED, sinks 'neath the cleansing flood. I rise to walk in Heavn's own light, ABOVE THE WORLD AND SIN..."

This song is not talking about positional sanctification. It is talking about perfect holiness in this present life. Palmer was an influential Methodist evangelist who claimed to have experienced "entire sanctification" in 1837. She preached in churches, conferences, and camp meetings. She preached in the United Kingdom for several years beginning in 1859, and in 1864 she began publishing the monthly magazine *The Guide to Holiness*. Her book *The Way of Holiness* was widely read.

Charles P. Jones' "Come unto Me" (1908) teaches entire sanctification. It says, "Have you by temptation often conquered been, has a sense of weakness brought distress within? CHRIST WILL SANCTIFY YOU, IF YOU'LL CLAIM HIS BEST; in the Holy Spirit, He will give you rest."

Fanny Crosby was a Methodist who believed in perfectionist theology. Though most of her hymns do not teach perfectionism, “Blessed Assurance” does. Fanny attended John Street Methodist Church in New York City, where Phoebe Knapp also attended. Phoebe was the daughter of the aforementioned perfectionist preacher Phoebe Palmer. Best friends, Fanny and Phoebe Knapp wrote “Blessed Assurance” together. One day in her room at the Savoy Hotel, Phoebe played a tune for Fanny on her personal pipe organ and asked, “What does this tune say?” Fanny replied, “Why, that says blessed assurance, Jesus is mine,” and she wrote the words to the hymn right then and there (“Phoebe Palmer Knapp: Rich, Beautiful, Charitable,” June 2007, Christianity.com). “Blessed Assurance” teaches perfectionism. “PERFECT SUBMISSION, PERFECT DELIGHT, visions of rapture now burst on my sight ... PERFECT submission, ALL is at rest, I in my Savior am happy and blest, watching and waiting, looking above, filled with his goodness, lost in his love.” No believer in this present life experiences perfect submission, perfect delight, and perfect rest. That is the promise of perfectionist doctrine, but it isn’t scriptural and can lead to discouragement and even shipwreck.

Charles Gabriel’s “Pentecostal Power” (1912) teaches Methodist holiness doctrine. “With cleansing, purifying flame,, descend on us today ... All self consume, all sin destroy, ... Thy promise we believe, and will not let thee go until the blessing we receive.” This refers to the “second blessing” of perfect holiness.

Other popular hymns are written from the perspective of the Keswick doctrine. This is an emphasis on a second blessing or a crisis experience that transports the believer above the struggles of the “normal Christian life” into a state of higher holiness. It is called “higher life,” “deeper life,” “exchanged life,” “the abiding life,” “the abundant life,” “full surrender,” “the rest of faith,” “the life of faith,” “walking in revival,” “constant peace,” “the overflowing cup.” It has been described as “let go and let God.” The essence of the Keswick experience is to come to a place of complete surrender to, and rest in, Christ so that the daily struggle with the flesh is over. It is to be dead to sin and alive to Christ *both* positionally and practically. It is an experience subsequent to and different from justification and is obtained only by those who pursue it.

Consider the influential book *Calvary Road* by Roy Hession. It describes an experience called “walking in revival,” “walking in the way of the cross,” and “the highway life” that is achieved by focusing one’s attention on Calvary. It contains many excellent teachings on dying to self, surrender to God, humility, and sensitivity to sin. But there is an overriding emphasis that one can walk in a *near perfect spiritual revival experience* that is described as a “life that will fill us and overflow through us,” “constant peace,” “walking along the Highway, with hearts overflowing,” “cups overflowing.”

Hession said that when he first came to this understanding and experience it “was like beginning my Christian life all over again.” “I recounted my struggles with self and acknowledged the new relationship with Jesus which I had entered by faith. ... In the light of our own recent experience of Christ, we preached a two-fold message: *full salvation for the Christian quite as much as an initial salvation for the non-Christian*. ... If consecration is thorough and complete, it need not be repeated. ‘Reconsecration’ is the language of piecemeal surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ” (Hession, *My Calvary Road*). Thus Hession taught that it is necessary for the believer to enter into a “second experience” of Christ, a “full salvation,” and that if one achieves this experience he will be completely and permanently surrendered and have a daily “overflowing cup” Christian life.

Frances Ridley Havergal has been called “Keswick’s hymnist.” She claimed to have come to the deeper life experience in 1873. Her beautiful hymn “Like a River Glorious” reflects deeper life theology. It speaks of “perfect peace” and being hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand, where “NOT A SURGE of worry, NOT A SHADE of care, not a blast of hurry touch the spirit there.”

A great deal of Contemporary Christian Music contains ecumenical and charismatic doctrine, me-centered doctrine, or it presents a vague message that lacks doctrinal clarity and strength. We have documented this in [The Satanic Attack on Sacred Music](https://www.wayoflife.org/publications/books/satanic_attack_on_sacred_music), which is a course consisting of a video series and textbook,

https://www.wayoflife.org/publications/books/satanic_attack_on_sacred_music.php

3. The songs must have a melody that is easy to sing.

Melody is the emphasis of Scripture when it comes to the music itself. Melody is the simple tune, the most basic element of music. It is what we sing in our own hearts. We can’t sing harmony and chords. God’s Word is teaching us to keep the music simple so that the music doesn’t distract from the message of the words. There should be a good singable melody and the rest of the music should never overwhelm the melody. When we use instruments, they should be used in such a way that they don’t overwhelm or contradict or otherwise interfere with the message of the words. Isaac Watts’ Psalter, with its five meters, is an example of singing hymns to simple melodies.

4. The songs must be worshipful.

To sing “to the Lord” is worship (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Everything in the church services must be for the Lord, including all of its music. In Revelation 1-3, we see that Christ walks in the midst of the churches. He holds the messengers in His hand. He sees everything and weighs everything. He is

the creator and owner of the church. He said, “I will build MY church...” (Mt. 16:18). He can spew a church out of His mouth (Re. 3:15-16) and remove a church’s candlestick so that it is no longer Christ’s church (Re. 2:5).

Every song and hymn that is sung must honor the Lord and please Him.

5. The songs must teach and admonish (Col. 3:16).

The songs and hymns must be theologically sound and biblically substantive so that the saints can minister to one another. The songs must not be mindless and shallow. They must be convicting, not silly, not entertainment.

See IV. The singing is to teach and admonish one another.

HINDRANCES TO BIBLICAL CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

It might be profitable to summarize some of the things that hinder or even ruin the biblical ministry of congregational singing.

First, the ministry of biblical congregational singing can be corrupted if the people are nominal and lukewarm and aren’t walking with Christ and obeying God’s Word. As we have seen, scriptural congregational begins with a congregation that is filled with God’s Spirit and God’s Word. If not, the songs are sung as a mere religious ritual, because the people aren’t living the reality of the lyrics. If such people sing, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” they are singing empty words, because they themselves aren’t on the Lord’s side! If they sing, “Throw out the lifeline,” they are singing empty words, because they aren’t busy in evangelism and therefore can’t honestly exhort one another to throw out the lifeline.

Second, the ministry of biblical congregational singing can be corrupted if the people don’t understand what they should be doing and if they don’t engage in it enthusiastically from the heart. It is the job of the church’s leaders and teachers to educate and exhort and encourage the people for this ministry. The congregational singing should be prophesying in the sense of 1 Co. 14:3, “But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort.” We see in 1 Ch. 25:3, that God’s people can prophesy through sacred music. This might be referenced in 1 Co. 14:23-25, where we see all of the members prophesying.

Third, the ministry of biblical congregational singing can be corrupted by a sing-along style. A sing-along style is an emphasis on singing along with a leader. The attention of the singers is on the leader and on singing, not on singing to one another and singing to the Lord.

Fourth, the biblical ministry of congregational singing can be corrupted by choosing songs with false theological message. If the congregation is singing heresy, that is the opposite of teaching and admonishing one another with truth. We deal more with this under the section on “Let the Word of Christ dwell in your richly.”

Fifth, the ministry of biblical congregational singing can be corrupted by songs with a shallow theological message. Again, we deal with this under the section on “Let the Word of Christ dwell in your richly.”

Sixth, the ministry of biblical congregational singing can be corrupted if the tunes are too complex. “The purpose of tunes in traditional Protestant singing is to enable large numbers of ordinary believers to communicate ‘the word of Christ’ to God and to each other. AZMON’s [the tune to Charles Wesley’s ‘Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing’] catchy melody and straightforward rhythms make it easy for congregants to carry the tune without external support, and thus it facilitates the traditional purpose of Protestant singing ... [T]he tune must be simple and easy to sing if it is to fulfil its purpose: to help everybody communicate biblical realities in words” (Paul Munson and Joshua Drake, “Introduction,” *The Biblical Model of Congregational Singing*, congsing.org).

Seventh, the ministry of biblical congregational singing can be corrupted if the congregants cannot hear one another sing. “Speaking to yourselves” requires that the voices of the congregation be heard clearly. Nothing should overwhelm the voices, whether it is a leader singing into a mic or musical instruments that are played too loudly. Sometimes we sing a cappella to better facilitate teaching and admonishing one another. For that, the leader does not sing into the mic, so that his voice blends with the congregation rather than predominates. Ideally, the church should design its auditorium to facilitate “speaking to yourselves.” I have been in many churches in which the voices are swallowed up by poor acoustics. A church cannot always obtain a facility with good acoustics for congregational singing, but it can aim for this and can sometimes take steps toward this end, such as lowering the ceiling.

Eighth, the ministry of biblical congregational singing can be corrupted by too much focus on special music: solos, quartets, choirs, and instrumentals. These are not inherently wrong or unscriptural. A soloist or choir can speak to the church body in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The problem is that the church body is a silent and inactive participant in this, and it easily becomes entertainment or something to be endured, depending on the quality. It is essential that the church analyze these things continually to avoid slipping into error or carnality. It is essential that the church maintain the highest spiritual standards for any and all singers and musicians. They must be saved, Spirit-filled people (Eph. 5:18), filled with God’s Word (Col. 3:16), people who sing to God from a right heart (Eph. 5:19). They must be

educated about the biblical purpose of singing in the church so that they understand what they should and should not be doing. Everything must be done in the fear of God and in accordance with His Word.

Following are some suggestions for keeping special music within Scriptural boundaries:

(1) The church must be careful to use only spiritual people as singers and musicians. Carnal, worldly people cannot produce spiritual music. The principle of 1 Timothy 3:10 should be employed, which is that people should first prove themselves, then be allowed to minister. Many churches have the idea that carnal people should be given the opportunity to minister so that perhaps they will become spiritual. That is not the way of God's Word.

(2) Be wise and hyper-careful about the choice of special music. It has been observed that contemporary music first gets a foothold in a church by way of specials. All special music should be approved by those who are well educated in discerning sacred from traditional music.

(3) Put the emphasis on the message. The singers and musicians must be careful not to draw attention to themselves by sensual or flashy dress styles or by any other means. There should be no hint of a performance style, such as holding microphones, swaying, etc. There must not be sensual vocal techniques such as sipping and sliding and breathiness.

(4) Let the congregation sing along with the singers/musicians. This takes away from a performance style and returns the emphasis to singing to one another. We use soloists and trios and quartets to introduce new songs to the congregation. The special singers sing the new song, then the congregation joins in with them to learn it. This turns what could be a performance into a church body ministry, which is the emphasis of Scripture.

(5) Don't use music without words. The playing of a hymn's melody does not edify spiritually without the words. Biblical edifying comes by the understanding, not by the mystical emotion produced by music itself. "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Co. 14:15). Since all things are to be done unto edifying (1 Co. 14:26), it is important to emphasize the words at all times. If a musician is playing a special without singers, it is a good practice to encourage the congregation to turn to the song in the hymnal and to meditate on the words.

(6) A singing group or choir must be careful to enunciate every word so that it can be understood by the congregation. Many times I have been unable to hear the words of a special distinctly enough to get the message. It is impossible to edify the church body and to teach and admonish one another if the

words of a song are not clearly heard and understood. If the special is in the hymnal, the people can be encouraged to follow along and meditate on the words, or the words could be projected onto a screen for the same purpose.

Ninth, the ministry of biblical congregational singing can be corrupted if the music is so fast that the congregants cannot readily grasp the message. Some songs should be sung in a lively manner, but none should be sung too fast for the message to be de-emphasized. Teaching and admonishing one another requires slowing down in order to understand and savor the message and speak that message to one another. Even the most lively revival songs in the heyday of the revivalist evangelistic movement were not sung very fast. Consider the following samples from Homer Rodeheaver, Charles Alexander, and Ira Sankey, three of the most prominent evangelistic song leaders of that era:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAgun-X58kE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZamoSNDsiQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbcWklq12nk>

Tenth, the ministry of biblical congregational singing can be corrupted by worldly music. There should be no element of the world in church music. It is to be "spiritual," which is the opposite of fleshly and worldly. Spiritual music will never fit in a nightclub and nightclub music will never fit in a sacred music context. See *The Satanic Attack on Sacred Music*, "[The Language of Music Styles](#)" [[Part 2](#)]
https://www.wayoflife.org/publications/books/satanic_attack_on_sacred_music.php

Eleventh, the ministry of biblical congregational singing can be corrupted by worldly singing styles. These include scooping and sliding, improvisation, breathiness, and vocal fry. All of these are styles of singing developed by the world for worldly music to satisfy the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 Jo. 2:15-17). See *The Satanic Attack on Sacred Music*,
https://www.wayoflife.org/publications/books/satanic_attack_on_sacred_music.php

Twelfth, the ministry of biblical congregational singing can be corrupted by a contemporary style of presentation. Not only do contemporary churches ape the world's music, they copy the world's manner of presentation. The focus and attention is on the musicians and singers and the stage. The auditorium is darkened and spotlights are employed. The images of the musicians and singers are projected onto large screens. Often video clips and photos and various artworks are employed. Even if solid sacred hymns were projected on the screens and sung to traditional sacred music, the attention of the congregants would be distracted from the biblical business of meditating on the message of the lyrics for personal edification, for admonishing and teaching one another, and singing to the Lord.

DIGGING IN THE WALLS

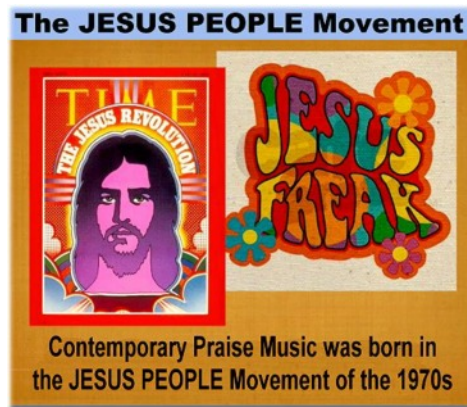
God commanded the prophet Ezekiel to dig in the walls of Israel's temple and observe the evils being done in secret by apostate religious leaders of that day. "Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall ... And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw. ..." (Ezek. 8:7-10).

Ezekiel was then instructed to preach against the errors of the leaders and to tell the people the things he had witnessed.

"Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man. ... Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the Lord had shewed me" (Ezek. 11:4,25).

The hour in which we live is very similar to that of Ezekiel's day. Many of those who profess to be the people of God are apostate. It was prophesied in the New Testament Scriptures that such would be the case in the closing hours of our age. This will culminate in the brief worldwide rule of an utterly apostate Harlot "church" (2 Tim. 3-4; 1 Tim. 4; 2 Pet. 2-3; Jude; Rev. 17).

As in Ezekiel's day much of the apostasy of our hour is hidden from the view of the average Christian. We intend by God's grace to "dig in the walls" of modern ecumenism and to expose and cry out against the things we find. In this section we also report on secular events which are relevant to Christians. May God give us ears to hear, minds to understand, and hearts to obey. Is the truth of God not worthy of defense?



WHY ADAPTED CCM IS DANGEROUS (Friday Church News Notes, January 27, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - I received the following question recently: "The main question that continues to arise in regards to using adapted CCM (especially from an acapella sense) is along this line, 'If the words are doctrinally sound and I am singing in an honest effort to worship, what is wrong with it?'" We deal with this matter extensively in [The Satanic Attack on Sacred Music](#) video series, especially in the session on "[CCM a Bridge to Dangerous Waters](#)." [Part 2] [Part 3] https://www.wayoflife.org/s3/satanic_attack_on_sacred_music.php

AWANA GOES WOKE (Friday Church News Notes, January 27, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "Awana," thirtypiecesofsilver.org, Nov. 2, 2022: "AWANA ... since 2021 has increasingly featured and been dominated by social justice/woke, LGBTQ inclusion activist evangelical speakers. Based on its 2022 and 2023 discipleship events and speakers, Awana is in the polluted stream of Tim Keller's WOKE organization The Gospel Coalition (TGC), Neo-Calvinist leader's Together 4 The Gospel (T4G), along with the now disgraced former leader of the ERLC, Russell Moore. Clearly Third Way politics and activist / inclusion/BLM [Black Lives Matter]/ CRT [Critical Race Theory] narratives are flooding Awana. ... Note about the

speakers at Awana's Child Discipleship Forum, Sept. 2022: SAM ALLBERRY is an activist same-sex attracted /homosexual priest from the Church of England and co-founder of 'Living Out' a controversial LGBTQ inclusion movement which has sought to 'Audit Churches for LGBTQ Inclusion.' ANDY CROUCH is a former editor of left-swerving *Christianity Today* who used his position there to promote the LGBTQ activist 'Revoice' movement and now serves on Revoice Board /Council. REBECCA MCLAUGHLIN is in the TGC [The Gospel Coalition] speaker promoting the APA/ SOGI [American Psychological Association's Sexual Orientation Gender Identity] based same-sex attraction narrative. ... Awana's 2023 Child Discipleship Forum promises a racially woke rapper and more. Speakers include SHAI LINNE, a rapper and writer and TGC regular. He was disciplined at TGC /T4G leader Mark Dever's Capitol Hill Baptist Church. Shai is a racial activist using vintage critical race theory narratives ... Linne's own words advocating Black Lives Matter (BLM) reflect his Critical Race Theory worldview in his reflections on the death of George Floyd which launched the BLM riots and Marxist-styled protest of 2020. ... Mark Markins [new CEO of Awana] appears to be desperately eager to turn Awana from the tried and true and treasure focus of teaching Bible verses to our children and grandchildren, which is viewed by him and others inside Awana as 'looking back to the ways of the past and the methods of the good ole days.' Markins warns churches and parents that this 'looking back' is wrong and is failing their children and [we should rather be]



‘looking ahead and charting a course to the future.’ Clearly by ‘Charting a New Course,’ Markins and Awana leadership mean your children need LGBTQ Church Inclusion ... BLM advocate rap with Critical Race Theory driven narratives on race by Shai Linne which are loose with the facts and heavy on systemic racism worldview.”

CRITICIZE ISLAM AT YOUR OWN RISK IN EUROPE (Friday Church News Notes, January 27, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “Criticize Islam,” *Arutz Sheva*, Jan. 9, 2023: “I’ve often heard of coincidences, but I’ve never seen one. Instead I saw that a few weeks ago the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg convicted the French journalist Eric Zemmour of insulting Islam. Zemmour goes around with a larger escort than many French ministers. And now I see that French Muslims are taking Michel Houellebecq to court for his critical sentences of Islam. These political trials on Islam began in 2002, when a Paris court examined a complaint against Houellebecq, who in his novel ‘Platform’ had defined Islam as ‘the stupidest religion’. ... Oriana Fallaci also ended up on trial that year for her book ‘Rage and Pride’. ... When she died in 2007, Oriana Fallaci was still on trial in Bergamo, Italy. ... Since 2014, the Council of Europe has organized the ‘European Day against Islamophobia’. After the Second World War and the horrors of Nazism and Stalinism, a fundamental principle of Western democracies was that people could be put on trial, but not ideas and opinions. Europe is today allowing dangerous



Eric Zemmour

Islamist and ‘human rights’ groups to restrict the boundaries of our freedom of expression, exactly as in the Soviet show trials.”

DESTRUCTION OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION THROUGH ABORTION (Friday Church News Notes, January 27, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) -

According to a report by the New York City Department of Health, 59.8 percent of African-American pregnancies in 2009 ended in abortion. A whopping 60% of black babies in “Christian” America are murdered in the womb! To understand this massacre, it is necessary to understand the eugenics movement, a philosophy that flourished prior to World War II and is based on Darwinian natural selection. Founded by Charles Darwin’s cousin, Francis Galton, eugenics was built upon the idea that the white race is superior and should be kept pure from intermixture with other “races.” In Germany, the eugenics movement was called “race hygiene.” Founder Alfred Ploetz said that his ideas about eugenics were drawn from Darwinism, and he praised Darwin’s disciple Ernst Haeckel as a key influence (Richard Wiekart, *From Darwin to Hitler*, p. 15). Henry Fairfield Osborn, head of the American Museum of Natural History and president of the Second International Congress of Eugenics in 1921, praised the work of German racists Jon Mioen and Hermann Lundborg for giving men “a new appreciation of the spiritual, moral and physical value of the Nordic [white] race” (Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak*, p. 244). Eugenics sought to purify the human race by culling it of the “inferior” through birth control, abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia. Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger referred to “inferior” humans as “weeds,” complaining that “nature eliminates the weeds, but we turn them into parasites and allow them to reproduce” (Black, *War Against the Weak*, p. 133). Sanger called large families “immoral.” She was on the



cutting edge of the modern Culture of Death. In her book *Woman and the New Race*, she said, “The most merciful thing that the large family does to one of its infant members is to kill it.” Eugenics went out of popularity after Hitler took the program to its logical conclusion, but the Darwinian eugenics philosophy is alive and well and has spread throughout society. This philosophy has resulted in the elimination of multitudes of people, and black babies have suffered more than those of any other group. If it isn’t racist to destroy a class of people through birth control and abortion, I don’t know what racism would be.

PASTOR PREACHES AGAINST “MODERATE DRINKING” (Friday Church News Notes, January 27, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following statement is by Bruce Lackey, who pastored Lakewood Baptist Church of Harrison, Tennessee, in the 1970s: “How is alcoholic wine deceptive? In the very way that people are advocating today, by saying that drinking a little bit will not hurt. Everyone admits that drinking too much is bad. Even the liquor companies tell us not to drink and drive, but they insist that a small amount is all right. However, that is the very thing that is deceptive. Who knows how little



to drink? Experts tell us that each person is different. It takes an ounce to affect one, while more is necessary for another. The same person will react to alcohol differently in different situations, depending on the amount of food he has had, among other things. So the idea that 'a little bit won't hurt' is deceptive, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise!" "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). For more about this subject, see "[Christian Drinking Is a Bellwether Issue](https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/christian_drinking_is_a_bellwether_issue.php),"

https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/christian_drinking_is_a_bellwether_issue.php

MEN OF INTEMPERATE MINDS CANNOT BE FREE (Friday Church News Notes, February 3, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from Edmund Burke, "A Letter to a Member of the National Assembly," 1791. This statement identifies America's fundamental problem, and it cannot be solved by politics: "What is liberty without wisdom and without virtue? It is the greatest of all possible evils; for it is folly, vice, and madness, without restraint. Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites; in proportion as they are disposed to listen to the counsels of the wise and good in preference to the flattery of knaves. ... It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

BRIAN AND BOBBIE HOUSTON: PROSPERITY GOSPEL BUSTED (Friday Church News Notes, February 3, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - For decades, Brian and Bobbie Houston were the co-pastors of the multi-million dollar Hillsong empire based in Australia. They preached a Word-Faith prosperity doctrine. In 2002, the church took in \$10 million in tithes alone, not to speak of the sale of music and materials. The Houstons had a \$4.5 million mansion in Sydney and two beach apartments valued at over \$3



million. In September 2021, Brian stepped down from his role on Hillsong boards after being charged by police with concealing child sex offenses ("Hillsong's Brian Houston," *Christian Headlines*, Sept. 17, 2021). The charges pertain to Brian's alleged knowledge of his father's abuse of a boy in the 1970s. Earlier, Brian told a court that his father, head of Australia Assemblies of God, was "a serial pedophile." In March 2022, Brian stepped down as global senior pastor after the church sent a letter to its members exposing him for "inappropriate behavior" with two women. The Houstons have sold their beach apartments and mansion and are selling their clothes online. Perhaps Brian needs to re-read his 2003 book *You Need More Money* that teaches the way to prosperity through giving and "kingdom living." Houston says, "If you believe in Jesus, He will reward you here as well [as in heaven]" ("The Lord's Profits," *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 30, 2003). That same year, when asked by a *Sydney Morning Herald* reporter why the church is so successful, Brian Houston replied, "We are scratching people where they are itching" ("The Lord's Profits," *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 30, 2003). That is right out of 2 Timothy 4:3, which is a warning of apostasy. It describes people who itch for a new kind of Christianity and heaps of preachers who will scratch this illicit itch. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears."

THIRD STATE ENACTS UNIVERSAL SCHOOL CHOICE (Friday Church News Notes, February

3, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - School choice is the only program that can have a significant impact in reducing the power of the mainstream public school system, and school choice is growing. At the same time, the government remains in ultimate control of the money in these schemes, which always spells danger at some point. The best thing Bible-believing parents can do, in our estimation, is to home school or church school and don't take a dime from the government. God has promised to take care of those who trust Him. The following is excerpted from "Iowa latest government-school domino to fall," *Fox News*, Jan. 26, 2023: "**Arizona's** then-Gov. Doug Ducey signed into law the biggest school choice victory in U.S. history last year. All Arizona families can now take their children's state-funded education dollars to the education providers of their choosing. Little did he know, Gov. Ducey ignited a school choice revolution among red states. On Monday, the Republican-controlled **Iowa** Legislature passed an expansive school choice proposal championed by the governor. Gov. Kim Reynolds--who is the leader of the Republican Governor's Association and has fought for education freedom for years--signed the bill Tuesday. Much like Arizona's policy, Iowa's education savings account bill allows families to take their children's state-funded K-12 education dollars --about \$7,600 per student--to the education providers of their choosing. ... This victory makes Iowa the third state to enact a universal school choice policy. The bill passed the GOP-led Senate by a vote of 31 to 18. The House passed the bill 55 to 45. ... **West Virginia** also has



GOD'S COLORFUL WORLD (Friday Church News Notes, January 27, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Scientists estimate that there are 10 million colors in the world that are distinguishable by man's eye. There are seven core colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. These are the colors of the rainbow. Every color is a variation of these. "The way to figure out how many colors exist in the world is to start with how many shades of light the human eye can actually see. According to researchers, the answer is 1,000 shades of light. Within those shades, we can detect 100 different levels of red-green shades. We can also see 100 levels of yellow-blue shades. It works out to about *10 million colors* in the world that the human eye can see. ... we're only talking about colors that humans can actually see. It's possible that the total number of colors that *aren't* perceived by the human eye is infinite" (Jacob Olesen, "How Many Colors," Color-Meanings.com). Computer RGB displays can produce 16,777,216 colors. If we look in God's Word, we can go beyond science. There we learn that color is a creation of God. "I *am* the LORD that maketh all *things*" (Isaiah 44:24). Color is part of the wonder that God incorporated into man's environment. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down



from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). God did not put man into a dull grey world, and He didn't limit the number of colors to a few basics. Color is a function of light reflection and the human eye's perception and interpretation of it with the complex equipment God has given him. Color is a testimony to the glory of God for those who have "eyes to see." It testifies of God's power, wisdom, love, beauty, and other aspects of His infinite character.

its foot on the accelerator. In 2021, Republicans passed an education savings account program initially available to all families who had children who wished to switch out of public schools. Like Iowa, West Virginia's law allows the program to automatically expand over time--with full universality achieved in just a few years. 2021 was dubbed 'the year of school choice,' but 2023 may give it a run for its money. ... Red [Republican] states are now engaging in friendly competition to empower all families with school choice this session. ... Ultimately, it will lead to empowering more American families with the freedom to choose the education that works best for their children." [Utah, Texas, Nebraska, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Indiana, Ohio, and Florida are moving rapidly toward universal school choice.]

SANCTUARY INSANITY (Friday Church News Notes, February 3, 2023,

www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "Camp of the Ain'ts," *PowerLine*, Jan. 26, 2023: "In her *New York Post* column Miranda Devine reports on 'The migrant mess ... ruining NYC's midtown.' She identifies previously elite midtown hotels that are now housing illegal aliens at taxpayer expense: 'The city is putting illegals up indefinitely in Midtown's former luxury hotels, providing three free hot meals a day, baby formula, free clothing, free legal services, free health care and free education. The cost is reportedly close



to \$100,000 per room. But as it's human nature not to appreciate what you are given for free rather than what you have worked for, some recipients of taxpayer largesse are biting the hand that feeds them. Take the Row Hotel. The new residents have been turning up their noses at the free food, with the result that almost a ton of perfectly good meals reportedly have been thrown out daily. A hotel worker earlier this month provided *The Post* with photos of trash bags full of untouched sandwiches and bagels that he said migrants refused to eat. Instead, they cook meals more to their liking on hot plates in their rooms, creating a serious fire hazard in the historic building. ... [New York Mayor Eric] Adams doesn't appear to have any solutions apart from mildly complaining that he's not getting enough money from the federal government. He estimates the Big Apple will need \$2 billion extra and it could bankrupt New York City. For two years, the Biden administration has been secretly flying illegals into New York and

busing them all over the city and the tristate area. ... With more than 250,000 illegal migrants crossing the southern border each month, plus another estimated 70,000 'gotaways' who slip past the Border Patrol, cities all over the country have been inundated, but New York bears a larger burden than most because of the sanctuary status that Adams still trumpets.”

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION AT 30 YEAR HIGH

(Friday Church News Notes, February 3, 2023, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “Christian Persecution,” *Christian Headlines*, Jan. 18, 2023: “Christians around the world are facing the worst levels of persecution for their faith since persecution watchdog Open Doors began recording such acts nearly 30 years ago. Open Doors’ new 2023 World Watch List, released this week, showed that in 50 countries around the globe, Christians are facing record levels of persecution for their beliefs. North Korea returned to the top spot on the list amid a jump in arrests of Christians under the country’s ‘anti-reactionary thought’ law. This law defines a range of behaviors considered illegal, such as listening to foreign radio and distributing ‘impure’ foreign recordings or other media. The ban includes the Bible. ... Wybo Nicolai, a former Open Doors global field director who launched the World Watch List in 1993, said the high level of persecution has nearly doubled since that first list. ... The top 10 on the 2023 list are North Korea, followed by Somalia, Yemen, Eritrea, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Sudan.”

FAMOUS MISSIONARY PREACHES AGAINST

“MODERATE DRINKING” (Friday Church News Notes, February 3, 2023, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is a wise statement from *John G. Paton: Missionary to the New Hebrides*, 1891: “From observation, at an early age I became convinced that mere Temperance Societies were a failure, and



that Total Abstinence, by the grace of God, was the only sure preventive as well as remedy. What was temperance in one man was drunkenness in another; and all the drunkards came, not from those who practised total abstinence, but from those who practised or tried to practise temperance. I had seen temperance men drinking wine in the presence of others who drank to excess, and never could see how they felt themselves clear of blame; and I had known Ministers and others, once strong temperance advocates, fall through this so-called moderation, and become drunkards. **Therefore it has all my life appeared to me beyond dispute, in reference to intoxicants of every kind, that the only rational temperance is Total Abstinence from them as beverages, and the use of them exclusively as drugs, and then only with extreme caution, as they are deceptive and deleterious poisons of the most debasing and demoralizing kind.**” For more about this subject, see “[Christian Drinking Is a Bellwether Issue](https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/christian_drinking_is_a_bellwether_issue.php),”

https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/christian_drinking_is_a_bellwether_issue.php

GOD’S MERCY MEASURED IN LIGHT YEARS (Friday Church News Notes, February 3, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - “For thy mercy is great above the heavens” (Psalm 108:4). The heavens are immeasurable even with modern technology. Our cozy “little” Milky Way

galaxy is 100,000 light years across. One light year is the distance that light travels in one year: 186,000 miles per second, 6 trillion miles a year. Traveling at 18,000 miles per hour, which was the speed of the Space Shuttle, it would take 37,000 years to travel just one light year, so to travel across our own “little” galaxy would take about 37,000,000,000 years. Our sun is one of about 100 billion stars in our galaxy. The nearest galaxy to our Milky Way is Andromeda, which is 2.2 million light years away. Modern science estimates that the currently observable universe is at least 93 billion light years across. Using the Hubble telescope and the European Space Agency’s infrared space observatory and other high-tech equipment, astronomers have estimated that there are 400 billion galaxies. Assuming there are 100 billion stars in each, that would be 40 billion trillion stars. But this is only a vague estimate, as man, even with his vaunted modern science, cannot count the stars of the universe, even the “near universe.” Abel 2029, the nearest cluster of galaxies to ours, is one billion light years away (and about 6 million light years across). To illustrate how high one billion lights years is, let’s assume that the thickness of a piece of paper equals the distance to our sun, which is 93 million miles. That would mean that the distance to Abel 2029 would equal a stack of paper 71 feet (23 meters) high, and the distance to the edge of the known universe would equal a stack of paper one million miles high! How great, indeed, is God’s mercy! The redeemed will praise God for His mercy forever.

HILLSONG APPOINTS NEW “GLOBAL SENIOR PASTORS”

(Friday Church News Notes, February 10, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The multi-million dollar Hillsong empire has appointed another husband-wife team--Philip and Lucinda Dooley--as the new “global senior pastors.” This follows the dismissal of former global senior pastors Brian and Bobbie Houston. In March 2022, Brian stepped down after the church sent a letter to its members



Philip and Lucinda Dooley

exposing him for “inappropriate behavior” with two women. Hillsong churches have been inundated with moral scandals. In 2021, Hillsong Dallas was shut down due to the worldliness of its leaders, husband-wife “pastor team” Reed and Jess Bogard, who were “using church money to fund their lavish lifestyle” (“Hillsong Caving in on Itself,” *Reformation Charlotte*, Apr. 12, 2001). On March 25, 2022, *The Christian Post* reported that “an internal investigation commissioned by Hillsong Global showed that the married father of three [Bogard] was accused of rape by a junior female staffer with whom he had a months-long affair while serving at Hillsong NYC years earlier.” In November 2020, Carl Lentz was fired as pastor of Hillsong New York City after having an affair with a Muslim fashion designer. In 2019, Yelp identified Hillsong Los Angeles as one of the top ten “gay friendly churches” in the city. In 2017, Lentz and pop star Justin Bieber were photographed in New Zealand drinking heavily and partying in a tavern. Lentz had baptized Bieber in the bathtub of a pro-basketball player. In February 2016, former Hillsong pastor Pasquale “Pat” Mesiti pleaded guilty to assaulting his second wife and was awaiting sentencing (*Christian Headlines*, Feb. 29, 2016). In May 2016, Hillsong New York City hosted a Hillsong Women’s Conference that featured, among other things, scantily-dressed ‘cheerleaders,’ an Elvis impersonator, and a “naked cowboy” wearing only a cowboy hat, boots, and a guitar. According to the *New York Times* for October 17, 2014, a homosexual couple, Josh Canfield and

Reed Kelly, sing in choirs at Hillsong New York City, and Canfield is a volunteer choir leader. In a 2014 interview with *Christianity Today*, Laura Lentz, Hillsong NYC co-pastor, said, “It’s not our place to tell anyone how they should live, it’s--that’s their journey” (“Hillsong New York Pastor Carl Lentz,” *Christian Today*, June 6, 2014).

DID JESUS SAY ANYTHING ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY?

(Friday Church News Notes, February 10, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - In a 2014 interview with *Christianity Today*, Carl Lentz, who was then co-pastor of Hillsong New York City with his wife Laura, said, “I am still waiting for someone to show me the quote where Jesus addressed it [homosexuality] on the record in front of people” (“Hillsong New York Pastor Carl Lentz,” *Christian Today*, June 6, 2014). Perhaps we can help him out with his query. What Jesus did say in regard to homosexuality was three things. **First, Jesus exalted the law of Moses as God’s holy law.** “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be

called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:17-19). The law of Moses that Jesus exalted as God’s holy law says, “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it *is* abomination” (Leviticus 18:22). **Second, Jesus limited marriage to one man and one woman as in the beginning of creation** (Matthew 19:3-9). This completely destroys the biblical legitimacy of “same-sex marriage.” **Third, Jesus said that His Spirit would lead the apostles into all truth** (John 16:13). The canon of Spirit-taught truth is the New Testament Scriptures, where we find the strongest statement against homosexuality in the entire Bible (Romans 1:24-28). To separate the authority of the Gospels from the authority of the apostolic Epistles is rank heresy, for we are told that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Obviously Jesus left no room for homosexual Christianity and “same sex marriage,” and His teaching on this was very public. The Hillsong churches are so “culturally relevant” that they are traitors to the truth of God’s Word, yet their music is influencing large numbers of Baptists and biblical fundamentalists. When asked by a reporter why Hillsong is so successful, Brian Houston of Hillsong Sydney replied, “We are scratching people where they are itching” (“The Lord’s Profits,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 30, 2003). That is right out of 2 Timothy 4:3, which is a warning of apostasy. It describes people who itch for a new kind of Christianity, and heaps of preachers who will scratch this illicit itch. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.” That describes Hillsong to a “T.”



MURDERER IDENTIFIES AS “INFANT” IN BRITISH PRISON

(Friday Church News Notes, February 10, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - It is difficult to know who is nuttier in this case, the “infant” or the British government. The following is excerpted from “Killer now identifies as an infant,”

Daily Mirror, Jan. 28, 2023: “A killer who transitioned from male to female while in prison has demanded that guards hold her hand while outside her cell because she identifies as an infant. Sophie Eastwood, 36, was named Daniel when she was jailed for life in 2004 after using shoelaces as a garrote to strangle her cellmate. Eastwood, who has lived as a woman in Her Majesty’s prisons for the past four years, has been described as ‘attention-seeking’ and ‘manipulative’ by sources inside the jail. The murderer has now told chiefs at Polmont prison in Brightons, Scotland, that she identifies as a tot, and should be allowed to wear diapers and have her meals pureed like baby food. Prison bosses are taking Eastwood’s requests seriously and have already supplied her with a dummy [a pacifier], sources tell the *Daily Record*.”

CHINESE PRISON CAMP HORROR (Friday Church News Notes, February 10, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “Uyghurs detail Chinese prison camp horror stories,” *Christian Post*, Feb. 3, 2023: “Two Uyghurs who fled from China detailed their family members’ experiences in concentration camps and called on the United States government to take stronger action against the Chinese Communist Party at the third annual International Religious Freedom Summit. ... Many discussions focused on the plight of Uyghurs, a predominantly Muslim ethnic group primarily residing in the far-western Chinese province of Xinjiang. **Uyghurs are targets of harsh treatment by the Chinese Communist Party, which views the ethnic group as inferior to the dominant Han Chinese. Hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs have found themselves subject to forced labor and torture in the concentration camps to get them to pledge loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party.** ... Jewher Ilham ... hasn’t heard from her imprisoned father in six years. ... In a 2019 interview with CP, Ilham revealed that her father was set to teach at Indiana University in the U.S. in 2013 when Chinese authorities



detained him before he could board a flight to the U.S. ... While Ilham hasn’t heard from her father in six years and doesn’t know if he is alive or dead, she provided an account of what she learned at the beginning of his captivity. ‘The first few months actually when he was arrested, we learned that he was denied food twice, each time for 10 days. And so he lost over 40 pounds just within a few months, and all his hair turned gray.’ ... Ilham shared information she received from a former inmate who was locked up in the same prison as her father but was later released. ... The former inmate informed Ilham that her father ‘had a small TV in his room that plays Chinese propaganda 24/7 with very loud volume and strong light, the light won’t shut off. So he basically lives in an environment where it’s 24/7 bright and loud and full of noise of only about praising the Chinese Government, all this propaganda [about] how China’s great, how [the] Communist Party is great.’ Ilham suggested that the Chinese Communist Party wants to humiliate her father in retaliation for ‘his criticism over [the] Chinese government’s practices in the Uyghur region.’ ... Like Ilham, Kazzat Altay’s father is in prison for criticizing the Chinese government. Altay has resided in the U.S. for nearly two decades after fleeing the country following ‘harassment by Chinese intelligence.’ ... Based on conversations Altay’s father had with his brother about his experience in detention, he learned that ‘at night, he didn’t want to get up for the restroom because if he gets up, there’s no space for him to sleep.’ Altay cited this as an example of ‘how tight that place is’ and ‘how miserable that place is’ where ‘people were taking turns to sleep at night because [there was] not

enough space.’ He also noted that ‘the restroom was just in the corner, there was no wall, there’s no doors.’”

CHINA POSES GREATEST THREAT TO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM (Friday Church News Notes, February 17, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “2023 International Religious Summit,” *CBN News*, Feb. 1, 2023: “Thousands of world leaders, activists, lawmakers, and more are in Washington this week with the goal of shining a spotlight on those being persecuted for their faith. They’re a part of the International Religious Freedom Summit, which was created to highlight the issue of religious freedom for everyone, everywhere, all the time. With an uptick in global unrest over the last year, organizers believe religious freedom is not only a fundamental human right but also an important foreign policy issue. ‘The United States must continue to be a voice for the voiceless who are persecuted for their beliefs,’ said Rep. Mike McCaul (R-TX) during the opening session of the IRF Summit. ... Former Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, Sam Brownback, says this issue plays a significant role in current global events. ‘Take Ukraine right now. Ukrainians splitting off a Ukrainian Orthodox Church from the Russian Orthodox Church was one of the things that caused Putin to move.’ ... It’s Russia’s ally China, however, that Brownback believes poses the greatest international threat to religious freedom. ‘It’s an authoritarian regime; it’s seeking to expand their model, and



to export their technology to do it,' Brownback said."

THIEVES BANKRUPTING AMERICAN BUSINESSES (Friday Church News Notes, February 17, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - American businesses are being destroyed by theft. It is a product of the destruction of the American character by the apostasy of churches and the proliferation of humanism, and it is the product of foolish laws that coddle lawbreakers. The National Retail Federation estimates that businesses lost nearly \$95 billion in 2021 due to theft, up from \$91 billion in 2020. Walmart alone loses \$3 billion annually by theft. Organized crime theft rose 26% (“Major retail brands threaten to close stores,” Fox KTVU television, Dec. 8, 2022). The national retail chain Target lost \$400 million in just three months last year. California’s crazy laws allow individuals to steal up to \$950 worth of goods and, if caught and charged, which is rare, they are only charged with a simple misdemeanor. Thieves can go from store to store and steal \$949 in merchandise at ten places, totaling \$9,490 worth of goods, but it’s still a misdemeanor. So gangs of thieves enter stores, each individual stealing \$949 worth of goods, and they walk out of the store as if nothing happened. (In March, California authorities arrested and charged nine people with stealing \$135,000 worth of merchandise, but this is a drop in the bucket.) The security office of a San Francisco Target store said, “There’s no consequences. Literally zero consequences. ... I’ve been here since 9 AM today. I probably have already kicked out eight or nine people and I’ve recovered a thousand dollars worth of stuff alone off of that. Whether we kick them out, tell them they can’t come back, whether I put them in handcuffs and take them down to the county jail—there is no difference. Because they will not be prosecuted by the district attorney. ... There is zero consequence. And that’s why ... in the city the same couple percent of people are committing all the



car break-ins, all the robberies and all the shootings, any aggravated assaults right in town ... It's all the same exact people, and there are zero consequences. Therefore you take them to jail, they get out of jail. They do it again. It's a big circle" ("Iconic Target Store to Close," *California Globe*, Oct. 21, 2021). This same lawlessness is perpetrated in many other parts of the nation because the laws aren't being enforced. As a result, large stores and smaller retailers are closing their doors every day. Walgreens is closing 22 stores in San Francisco. Target and Walmart are closing stores. An "iconic" Target store on Mission Street closed after losing \$25,000 DAILY to shoplifting. Neighborhoods are being left without convenient shopping.

EARTH'S POPULATION REFUTES EVOLUTIONARY WORLDVIEW
(Friday Church News Notes, February 17, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from Ken Ham, "Be Fruitful and Multiply," Answers in Genesis, Nov. 21, 2022: "Earth just hit a significant milestone. For the first time ever (that we know of—no one knows what the pre-flood population was), there are now eight billion people on the planet. ... I would also like to point out that humanity's population size is actually a challenge to the evolutionary worldview. Why? Well, consider that evolutionists believe modern man has existed for over 200,000 years. And yet, as the article I linked above states, we didn't hit even a billion people until about 200 years ago. So, for tens and tens of thousands of years, humanity's size somehow just

didn't grow? Did it stay ridiculously small for an almost incomprehensible amount of time before suddenly exploding in our modern era? That doesn't make any sense, even with our medical advances! In this view, if we use conservative numbers, there should be a w h o p p i n g 10,000 people on the planet (more atoms than there are in the universe!)—and that's only going back 50,000 years in supposed human history! Go back to 200,000 years and the problem just gets worse! But consider the 8 billion number through the lens of Scripture. Humanity has only been around for about 6,000 years—and the population dropped to just eight about 4,350 years ago during the global flood. **Even using a conservative estimate for population growth, 8 billion is a very reasonable number for us to be reaching in 2022.** As always, the observational evidence confirms God's Word, not evolutionary imaginings."

THE WORLD IS READY FOR THE ANTICHRIST (Friday Church News Notes, February 17, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The world today is ready to worship the Antichrist. Multitudes have rejected the gospel and mock the things of God. "Jesus Christ" is a major swear word, and the movies are filled with blasphemy and ridicule of holy things. The vast entertainment industry overwhelmingly

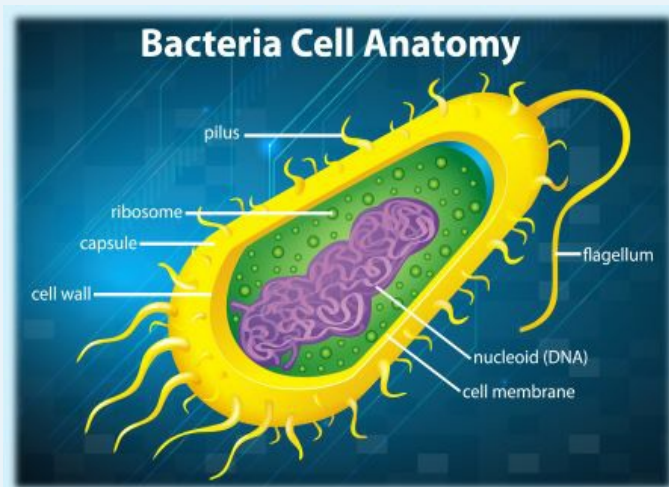


falls into this category, and as the movie stars and comedians and entertainers laugh at the things of God, the world laughs right along with them. Blasphemous, Christ-denying books and plays and movies such as *The Da Vinci Code*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *The Last Temptation of Christ* are loved by millions and given rave reviews in this world's popular media. Influential publications regularly run articles tearing

down the authority of the Bible. Millions upon millions of young people are deluded by the entertainment industry and the educational field into thinking that God is "evolutionary chance" or a mere "force" that can be harnessed for one's purposes. The world gives its most prestigious titles and awards to those who deny God's very Creatorship, such as when the 2006 Nobel Physics Prize was given to two scientists for their work

in discovering the "the blackbody form and anisotropy of the cosmic microwave background radiation (CMB)," which is alleged to be the "oldest light" in the universe and "comes from a time 380,000 years after the Big Bang." Men who believe that a massive explosion resulted in the incredible complexity and order of the universe are acclaimed as brilliant. Yes, the world is ready for the Antichrist!

BACTERIA'S EYES AND EARS (Friday Church News Notes, February 10, 2023, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is from CreationMoments.com: "Modern researchers are learning that bacteria are not a simple form of life. Rather, a bacterium is a tremendously complex creature that thinks. Scientists have discovered that bacteria actually have molecule-sized sensors. Some of these sensors act as eyes, while others act as ears. A dozen other proteins have been discovered that receive the information gathered by the bacteria's 'eyes' and 'ears.' The collected information is then processed the same way your brain gathers and makes sense of information. Bacteria have specialized senses and a brain. In fact, bacteria are better at sensing some things than you and I are. A bacterium can, for example, sense the difference between two parts and one part in 10,000. This is the same as if you could tell the difference between one jar with 9,999 pennies and another jar with 10,000 pennies! The idea that bacteria are just 'simple' forms of life comes from evolution. Growing research is showing that even one-celled creatures are not simple at all. Think of it. Every single-



celled bacterium must accomplish, within that one cell, all the tasks we accomplish using the trillions of cells in our bodies. Eating, digestion, metabolism, waste removal, reproduction--and even thinking--all take place within a single cell! **There is no such thing as a simple form of life.** Author: Paul A. Bartz. Ref: Pietsch, Paul. 1983. 'The mind of a microbe,' *Science Digest*, Oct. p. 69."

Aim of O Timothy Magazine

- Exalting the Lord Jesus Christ; His eternal perfect, and preserved Word; and the Gospel of his Grace. (2 Peter 3:1-2, 18)
- Standing for the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20:27; Jude 3)
- Challenging Christian workers to uphold the truth and resist the apostasy of our times. (1 Timothy 6:20-21)
- Exposing the spirit of error and compromise within Christendom (Hosea 4:6a; 2 Tim. 3)
- Upholding the New Testament Church (1 Tim. 6:13-14). O Timothy is a ministry of Bethel Baptist Church of London, Ontario.
- Challenging churches to fulfill the Great Commission of world evangelism (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 13-14)
- Standing for the Received Text of the Holy Scriptures, the Authorized Version in the English Language, and sound translations of the TR in the languages of the world. (Ps. 12:6-7)



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