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DESCRIPTION

Artistic Theologian (ISSN 2324-7282) is an evangelical theological journal published annually at www.ArtisticTheologian.com by the School of Church Music and Worship at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. It focuses on issues of worship, church music, aesthetics, and culture for Christian musicians, pastors, church music students, and worship leaders.

ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

Articles for the journal should be about 5,000 to 15,000 words and should be submitted to the Editor. Articles follow Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018) for proper stylistic format. They should be submitted electronically as an email attachment using Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx extensions) or Rich Text Format (.rtf extension). Additional style guidelines are available on our website.

BOOK REVIEW SUBMISSIONS

Book reviews for the journal should be between 700 and 900 words and should be submitted to the Editor.

Artistic Theologian is indexed in the *ATLA Religion Database* and the *Christian Periodical Index*.

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Editorial
Scripture-Shaped Worship
Scott Aniol[1]

What would it mean for our worship to be truly shaped by Scripture? Christians are people of the book. Conservative Evangelical Christians, in particular, demand that their beliefs and lives be governed by Scripture. God's inspired Word is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16–17). Therefore, for Christ-honoring sanctification to take place, the lives of Christians must be governed and saturated by the living and active Word of God. And for this same reason, corporate worship must also be governed and saturated by the Word; since public worship both *reveals* belief and *forms* belief, it must be shaped by Scripture.

This emphasis upon biblical authority over our corporate worship applies in at least four areas: First, the elements of our worship must be regulated by the Word of God. The sufficient Word has given those ordinary means of grace that, through their regular use, will shape believers to live as disciples who observe everything Jesus taught: reading the Word (1 Tim 4:13), preaching the Word (2 Tim 4:2), singing the Word (Col 3:16, Eph 5:19), prayer (1 Tim 2:1), giving (1 Cor 16:2), baptism (Matt 28:19), and the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:23–32). The regular, disciplined use of these means of grace progressively forms believers into the image of Jesus Christ; these Spirit-ordained elements are the means through which Christians "work out [their] own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in [them], both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil 2:12–13).

Second, the content of our worship elements must be regulated by the Word of God. Paul said to preach *the Word*. He said that when we sing, we must "let *the Word* of Christ dwell richly within

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us." Even our prayers to God should be saturated with Scripture. Put simply, in corporate worship we read the Word, sing the Word, preach the Word, pray the Word, and act out the Word. Our worship is born of, built on, fueled by, governed by, filled with, and sanctified by the truth of God's Word.

Third, the forms of our worship should be regulated by the Word of God. We must remember that the Bible is not simply a static collection of theological propositions. Rather, Scripture is a collection of God-inspired literary forms that express his truth, and all of Scripture, including its aesthetic aspects, carry the weight of divine authority. Therefore, as we choose artistic forms of expression in our modern cultural context, we must be sure that the way in which those forms communicate truth corresponds to the way in which Scripture itself aesthetically communicates truth.

Fourth, the order of our worship should be regulated by the Word of God. If the primary purpose of corporate worship is the edification of believers—God forming us into mature disciple-worshipers, then even the structure of our services should follow what God has given to us in Scripture. God made clear this purpose when he instituted corporate worship assemblies in the OT, establishing a structural pattern that continues also into the NT. God often calls these assemblies of worship "memorials," meaning more than just a passive remembrance of something, but actually a reenactment of God's works in history for his people such that the worshipers are shaped over and over again by what God has done. Beginning at Mt. Sinai (Exod 19–24), God instituted a particular order of what the OT frequently calls the "solemn assemblies" of Israel. This order reflects what I like to call a "theo-logic," in which through the order of what they do as they assemble, God's people reenact God's atoning work on their behalf. For sake of time, I will just summarize this structure:

God reveals himself and calls his people to worship.

God's people acknowledge and confess their need for forgiveness.

God provides atonement.

God speaks his Word.

God's people respond with commitment.

God hosts a celebratory feast.

This same theo-logic characterized the progression of sacrifices within the tabernacle assemblies and the dedication of Solomon's temple (2 Chron 15–17). In each case, the structure of the worship assemblies follows a theo-logical order in which the worshipers reenact the covenant relationship they have with God through the atonement he provided, culminating with a feast that celebrates the fellowship they enjoy with God because of what he has done for them.

While the particular rituals present in Hebrew worship pass away for the NT church, the book of Hebrews tells us that these OT rituals were "a copy and shadow of heavenly things" (8:5). Thus while the shadows fade away, the theo-logic of corporate worship remains the same: we are reenacting God's atoning work on our behalf when we gather for corporate worship. Significantly, Hebrews teaches that when we gather for services of worship, through Christ we are actually joining with the real worship taking place in the heavenly Jerusalem of which those Old Testament rituals were a mere shadow. And so it is important to recognize that the two records we have in Scripture of heavenly worship also follow the same theo-logic modeled in the OT. When Isaiah was given a vision of heavenly worship in Isaiah 6, the order of what happens mirrors the same theo-logic as that given to Israel for its worship. Likewise, when John is given a similar vision of heavenly worship, the order of what happens is the same. From creation to consummation, the corporate worship of God's people is a memorial—a reenactment—of the "theo-logic" of true worship: God's call for his people to commune with him through the sacrifice of atonement that he has provided, listening to his Word, responding with praise and obedience, and culminating with a beautiful picture of perfect communion with God in the form of a feast. This reenactment in a corporate worship service of God's work for us is what will progressively edify us over time to live out our relationship with God through Christ as his mature disciple-worshipers.

This kind of Scripture-formed, life-transforming worship is what we strive to impart to our students at Southwestern Baptist

Theological Seminary, and each of the articles in this volume of our journal reflects this concern. Whether you are a pastor, a professor, or a student, we trust that these will help you as you strive to conform your church's worship to the living and powerful Word of God.

Worship on the Cart of Experience
Joseph R. Crider[1]

David again assembled all the choice men in Israel, 30,000. [2] He and all his troops set out to bring the ark of God from Baale-judah. The ark is called by the Name, the name of Yahweh of Hosts who dwells between the cherubim. [3] They set the ark of God on a new cart and transported it from Abinadab's house, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the cart [4] and brought it with the ark of God from Abinadab's house on the hill. Ahio walked in front of the ark. [5] David and the whole house of Israel were celebrating before the Lord with all kinds of fir wood instruments, lyres, harps, tambourines, sistrums, and cymbals. [6] When they came to Nacon's threshing floor, Uzzah reached out to the ark of God and took hold of it because the oxen had stumbled. [7] Then the Lord's anger burned against Uzzah, and God struck him dead on the spot for his irreverence, and he died there next to the ark of God. [8] David was angry because of the Lord's outburst against Uzzah, so he named that place an Outburst Against Uzzah, as it is today. [9] David feared the Lord that day and said, "How can the ark of the Lord ever come to me?" [10] So he was not willing to move the ark of the Lord to the city of David; instead, he took it to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. (2 Sam 6:1–10 CSB)

David, a worship leader after God's own heart, had a 30,000-man choir, all the instruments of the ancient world, an authentically responsive congregation consisting of the "whole house of Israel," and yet one of the greatest worship experiences of the biblical era ended in tragedy. Uzzah died.

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For me, the story of Uzzah is like a flashing yellow caution light on the road I travel as a worship leader. The Uzzah story cautions me over and over again that worship facilitated on the cart of what seems to "work" (pragmatism), rather than according to the unwavering truths of the Word of God, will ultimately harm the people worshiping under my direction. Uzzah serves as a metaphor for those we lead, and David a picture of those who direct and lead the corporate gathering.

Not only are David and Uzzah metaphors, but the story itself presents a powerful lesson for those who lead the weekly corporate gathering. Under the supervision of David the worship leader, Uzzah walked alongside the ark of God, which had been placed on a cart in the fashion of the Philistines. And that single act (placing the ark on an ox cart rather than on the shoulders of the priests) clearly disregarded God's instruction for ark transport and resulted in Uzzah's death. The great Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon wrote in a sermon he preached in 1860 "that the death of Uzzah was the punishment upon the whole people for having neglected to observe the minute laws of God in every particular. . . . Now this is the pattern for a Christian—the book of God which lies before me."

Pastors and worship leaders who sculpt and facilitate weekly worship will be held accountable for the spiritual health of their congregations, and the story of David and Uzzah on the road to Jerusalem should resonate as clearly today as it did the day Uzzah died. I would like to share a bit about my own journey on the road of worship leading to provide a context for some of my concerns. One of those concerns is the pragmatic "experiential nature" of some evangelical worship, so I will discuss briefly the concept of pragmatism in worship or "worship experience," and when I say "experience" I realize that we could dive into that word and the concepts associated with it on a phenomenological level, but that is not my goal in this paper. I am using the term as a practitioner, and therefore I am delimiting the scope of the term more to the worship leader's actions in facilitating congregational responses in worship.

Next, I would like to share just three of many potholes that our worship carts might stumble into and out of in our modern worship culture. And lastly, I would like to offer some suggestions for fostering some spiritual CPR on the Uzzah's in our churches as we

realize more and more how spiritually formational worship is among our people.

Just as David joyously and sincerely attempted to cart the ark of God to Jerusalem, for years as a worship leader, I ardently desired to bring people into the presence of God through an *experience*. In much of North American evangelicalism, worship leaders seem to prioritize creating a corporate worship *experience*. But in producing an experience, where is the focus? On the *people*.[2] I am not saying to disregard our congregations—that is not my point. My concern is that focusing on "the way people feel" during worship is derailing true biblical worship.

When corporate worship is designed first as an *experience* or a production, with all the requisite accoutrements (intelligent lighting, the newest songs, an organist with a DMA in performance, a carefully staged platform, perfect acoustics for an a cappella choir, or fog machines), the focus of the service may be functionally directed *to and for* the people in the pews.[3] Unfortunately, when that happens, worship turns into a time when people focus more on themselves and what makes them feel good rather than on the One who invited them in the first place. As a worship leader, I did not realize that for a long time, I was chasing after pragmatism. I was incessantly asking the question, "What is working?"

The concept of *experience* in worship is central to any kind of worship, especially Christian worship, but as a worship leader, I actively searched for different triggers to generate experiences for our people that kept them happy and engaged during our gatherings. In the end, focusing on designing and producing pragmatic experiences clouded my realization that I could actually trust completely in the all-satisfying power and authority of the Word of God. Why did Uzzah die? Because David neglected the Scriptures. Why are many of the people in our churches spiritually dead? Because the Scriptures are missing from our gatherings.

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[2] I frequently remind myself and my students that people are the ministry, not the music. However, corporate worship cannot be first focused on the worshiper.

[3] I am not saying that Christian worship is not an experience. It is indeed! As a worship leader, I was simply confused between a corporate worship experience that seemed to work (people being engaged), and who or what they were actually engaging with.

Several years ago, a businessman shared a book with our pastoral staff called *The Experience Economy*. The subtitle of the book revealed the key insight espoused by authors Joseph Pine and James Gilmore: *Work Is Theatre and Every Business a Stage*.[4] The primary idea in the book is that people don't simply want to buy a particular product or service, they want an experience, and the better the experience, the more loyal the customer.

In contrast, Henry Blackaby's Bible study titled *Experiencing God* was making a significant impact on our church, and it proved to be a powerful force in helping people develop in their *relationship* with God. But therein lies the significant difference in event-based pragmatism and an authentic engagement with the living God as Blackaby defines it. We worship leaders may have a tendency to think and plan more for a pragmatic production (experience) rather than facilitating a Bible-saturated dialogue between God and his people built on the *relationship* they have with him through Jesus Christ, like Blackaby encourages.

To be transparent, as a worship leader, I had developed some significant skills in creating moods and moments with music and lights and videos—all of which can be wonderful tools in worship services; however, I have realized it is entirely possible to worship the actual experience of worshiping rather than the One to whom our worship is due. David designed a worship event of epic proportion to draw people back to God.

But, as can happen in the best-orchestrated worship services, the unexpected struck: the cart hit a pothole, causing the ark to lurch sideways. Uzzah instinctively reached out to secure the ark and— God killed him. David tried worshiping the holy God of Hosts by copying the practice of the Philistines, and God's anger left a corpse beside the cart.

Like David, we worship leaders may imitate the Philistines' mode of worship—even though we do it to bring people into the presence of God. Now, speaking of imitating, let's be honest, worship leaders (myself included) consciously or even unconsciously imitate other leaders. We steal phrases, mannerisms, and even vocal inflections as we sing and as we speak. But the reality of biblically based

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[4] B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre & Every Business a Stage* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999), 98–99.

engagement with God is that *self-actuated worship is no more possible than self-actuated salvation*. Jonathan Edwards said, "We contribute nothing to our salvation except the sin that made it necessary." Worship leaders and worshipers may need to be reminded that we bring nothing to worship except a realization that *by grace, Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit is the only one who makes worship possible*, and our worship is a response to him and his Word. As missionary and worship theologian Ron Man so beautifully expresses, "God accepts and delights in our worship, not because of our efforts or our artistry or even our spirituality, but because of the Son's continual offering of worship in our place and on our behalf."[5] Therefore, worship leaders are set wonderfully free when they realize that corporate worship is not something they need to carry on their backs or "conjure up" like a high school pep rally. Authentic, biblically guided Christian worship will never be initiated because of a majestic organ sound, a hot band, a 200-voice choir, or an enthusiastic worship leader. Using the right groove or the most ethereal synth pad or just the right loop does not initiate getting people's "worship on."

David's focus was getting the ark to Jerusalem, the center of Jewish worship, and beginning a revival for Israel. David was so focused on the goal, he did not realize the method of carrying the ark was equally critical. What worked for the Philistines was not appropriate for God's people. It was not until Uzzah died that David finally asked the right question, "How can the ark of God ever come to me?" (2 Sam 6:9).

The problem with today's worship services is not whether there is one guitarist on a dark stage or a fully robed choir. When we fail to worship God the way He prescribes, we too unthinkingly commit the unthinkable: We use the secular wagon of pragmatic experience to reach for a holy God without our Mediator.

Imitating high art culture or a rock concert culture will never substitute for God's prescribed directions and will inevitably result in a diminished view of God. No matter if we lead our people with sincere authenticity, if we do not approach worship in the prescribed way, our efforts, like David's, will end in disaster.

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[5] Ron Man, *Proclamation and Praise: Hebrews 2:12 and the Christology of Worship* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007), 59.

The ark of God being carted by oxen rather than carried by priests placed it in a precarious position. The unprescribed bovine ark carriers stumbled, perhaps due to a pothole, causing the ark to slide off the cart. Likewise, when worship pastors rely on experience to bear the weight of the worship service, they are at greater risk to twenty-first-century potholes that threaten our churches. There are many of these potholes, but I will highlight just three of them.

Pothole 1:
How Do We Win the Tug-of-War with the World?

A pothole causing potential whiplash in corporate worship is the pervading religious syncretism rampant in our culture. Christians who attend church on Sunday mornings have been bombarded throughout the week with multiple views of God, themselves, and the world around them that sound disconcertingly close to biblical truth and yet are insidiously dangerous: "God wants you to be happy." Or, "Our world is united by love so we can live our lives with vastly different views of truth." It is a daunting task to consider all of the Christ-forming recalibration that needs to occur in a 60–75-minute gathering when people have been pounded throughout the week by advertisements, podcasts, movies, television, and social media with mis-forming and mis-shaping world views. Can music apart from the Word of God and slick production serve as an antidote in an ever-growing syncretistic world?

Pothole 2:
Where's the Specific Order
of Worship in the New Testament?

One of the most confounding challenges of considering what the Bible teaches specifically about weekly worship gatherings is that there are no detailed instructions outlining an explicit order of worship in the New Testament. Not surprisingly, an uncountable variety of worship service styles and structures exists among evangelical churches. As D. A. Carson so articulately expresses, "It is not easy to

find an agreed-upon method or common approach to discovering precisely how the Bible should re-form our views on worship."[6]

Pothole 3:
What Is the Role of the Worship Leader and Should They Be Theologically Trained?

Without trekking in detail through the history of changing worship leader roles in evangelical churches over the past fifty years, it might be helpful to consider one small but significant paradigm shift: the title change from "minister of music" to "worship leader." As pastors and church leaders began looking more for the worship-leading guitarist or pianist and less for the music minister/choral director, they unwittingly placed more weight on the new Sunday morning troubadours than they may have intended. According to Dr. Ken Boer of Memphis, "The worship leaders in the new contemporary order found themselves responsible for worship planning, public prayer, spoken transitions, and being sensitive to the congregation's emotional involvement."[7] The job rapidly (and rightly) morphed from musical leadership to spiritual formation of the congregation. And for many churches, the weight of responsibility for effective corporate worship has been placed on many good musicians who often have little biblical training in the theology of worship. That was me. I was a sincere, well-meaning, musically adept musician leading emotionally charged experiences but I had no real understanding of the biblical "what" and "why" behind the weekly worship gathering.

So what happens when the production and the experience and the music or technology drive the worship? I contend, as in the story of Uzzah, biblical worship dies. Worship dies when the leaders try to "carry" corporate worship on something other than Jesus

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[6] D. A. Carson, "Worship under the Word," in *Worship by the Book*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 14.

[7] Kenneth Alan Boer, "A Comparative Content Analysis of Worship Leader Job Descriptions and Undergraduate Worship Leader Curricula in the Southern Baptist Convention" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019), 1.

Christ, who is most clearly and tangibly revealed through his Word in the power of the Holy Spirit. How does this happen? Think through the following progression:

If people are not responding in any way to the Word of God, then who or what are they responding to?

- the music
- a charismatic leader
- the atmosphere of the room

If people have been conditioned to respond to the music and the leader rather than the Triune God through the truths of the Word in which he revealed himself, then both the music and the leader bear the burden of fulfilling the expectations of those gathered.

When the leaders (through the music) work to meet their own emotional expectations and the expectations of those gathered with the "right" sound and all the necessary atmospheric mood-creating devices, then well-meaning leaders and worshipers potentially may equate the emotion of the moment with the presence of the Holy Spirit. As Harold Best so aptly articulates, "Much of what we call worship may only be manipulation, self-consciously contrived and depending more on conditioned reflex than faith . . . [the] production [becomes] more important than content."[8]

Worship leaders and worshipers must never "credit music with the power to bring worship about."[9] God seeks out and invites his people to worship him (John 4:23), and his redeemed are able to respond to him most authentically when they respond to something they can trust to be true and right and perfect—God's Word. Without Scripture saturating corporate worship, people may respond to something or someone other than Jesus Christ. And when Christ is not the object of worship, the Holy Spirit is not the One empowering the worship. I contend that Word-less worship leads to Christ-less worship, which leads to Spirit-less worship. Most evangelicals rally around the Bible as infallible and inerrant, yet the functional practices of the weekly service are void of Scripture.

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[8] Harold M. Best, *Music through the Eyes of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper-One, 1993), 148.

[9] Best, *Music through the Eyes of Faith*, 57.

Our people are desperate for an experience, but it's not one we can manufacture for them. Their longing for an experience is actually an innate desire for an encounter with the God who designed them, and that is only ever and always done through the Person of Christ by the Holy Spirit. So, if we cannot manufacture an experience that will lead to an encounter, why are we here? How do we facilitate an encounter with the Triune God? The portal to God's Presence is not experience, but Christ Himself. The time has come for us to put the weight of worship on the back of the only one who can carry it—our High Priest, Jesus Christ.

How do we move the burden of worship from the cart of experience to the whip-scarred back of our Savior? Christ is not merely the honored guest speaker; through His Word *He is the worship leader and His Spirit the innervating power of Sunday mornings*. Scripture must not simply accessorize but structure the worship contour. When Scripture is the scaffolding, the beams and lumber, the roof, the doors, the windows (as Constance Cherry expounds in her book *The Worship Architect*),[10] we and our congregation will get the glimpse of glory for which all of our hearts were designed to long after. Those sculpting worship are entrusted with a sacred stewardship. The pinnacle of that stewardship is for worshipers to respond to an accurate presentation of the Triune God. As God demonstrated for us through Uzzah, we cannot touch God. We need a Mediator. If we cannot touch God, how can we encounter Him? Through Christ, by the power of the Spirit, and his Word.

Music does not have the power to unite God's uniquely diverse people. A worship leader's personality will fall short in engaging everyone in the congregation; no matter how excellent the performance in any style of music, not all will be captivated by the artistry of the performer. Only Scripture has the power to unite. Scripture is transtemporal; it is effective through the ages. It is transcultural; it is perfect in every culture. It is transgenerational; there has never been an age that was too old or too young to consider its words relevant. For these reasons, the Word of God is the greatest unifier of the church. Because of the Holy Spirit, God promises that the Word does not return void.

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[10] The premise of Constance Cherry's book *The Worship Architect* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010) is built on the idea of designing and building a biblical structure for corporate worship and is essential reading for worship leaders.

So, how do we revive our Uzzahs with some CPR? Allow me to describe a scene in my own life where I was gasping for breath as a worship leader, and I know my people were on life support as well:

> I remember sitting at my kitchen table and weeping. I was confused, fearful, desperate. "Oh God! Show me how to do this. I don't know how to lead worship for so many people who are asking for so many different things." There were complaints from several people that I had ended the tradition of weekly "special music," and they were missing their favorite soloist. Others complained that we sang too many hymns while another faction protested that I didn't lead enough hymns on a weekly basis. Some people were convinced that a choir and orchestra should not have a role in any kind of modern worship. If song selection, special music, and choirs didn't stir concerns, it was as certain as the change of seasons that parents of high school students would begin a yearly chorus of protest after summer youth camp: "You should go to camp to see and experience the youth in their worship. . . . Oh, how I wish we could worship on Sunday mornings like them! We are missing out and the youth really know how to worship!"

Ad to this the plight of a growing number of ministers of music and worship leaders everywhere: the satellite branch of the metropolitan mega church plopped six professional band members and a Nashville-quality-voiced worship leader a mile from a 150-year-old Baptist church to begin a new church plant and the life just got sucked out of the congregation as scores of people left to experience the studio-quality worship of the newest church in town.

Throughout the Psalms and in the historical accounts of the nation of Israel, we see David pleading with God to incline his ear to his need, but our Lord, in his tender goodness, *inclined David's ear to God.* Although David "was angry because of the Lord's outburst against Uzzah" (1 Chron 13:11), David saw the blessing the Lord bestowed on the house of Obed-edom while the ark of God resided there (2 Sam 6:11), and David was reminded of the blessings that come from simple *obedience to God's Word.* Once again, David attempts to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem. But this time, the ark is not transported on a cart but on the backs of priests. David said, "No

one but the Levites may carry the ark of God, because the LORD has chosen them to carry the ark of the LORD and to minister before him forever" (1 Chron 15:2). A simple step of obedience to God's Word made all the difference in the second and successful parade of praise. Notice, nothing else changed. David was clear in his instructions as he summoned Israel's spiritual leaders: "He said to them, For the LORD our God burst out in anger against us because you Levites were not with us the first time, for we didn't inquire of him about the proper procedures" (1 Chron 15:12–13).

The problems I faced as I cried out to God about leading worship in our church were real and gut-wrenching. For some of you, the issues are real for you in this very moment. But there is an unspeakably glorious vista just beyond the complaints of special music, youth understanding worship better than you, and the megachurch satellite campus a mile from your church building. As we call out to God for help, in the same way He did for David, he will do for *us as he inclines our ear to his Word*. He did it for me when I finally realized my focus could not be on worship methods or trying to copy the techniques of the church down the street. God wanted me to trust him by trusting his Word, and in his Word I found new life for the worship in our church. As the Lord in His tender goodness inclined my ear to His Word, he graciously directed my first feeble attempts at doing something I dubbed "Scripture-Guided Worship."

Winston Churchill once said: "We shape our buildings; thereafter, they shape us." Similarly, what is true of physical buildings is true of worship structures as well. We shape worship structures; thereafter, they shape us. The Word is the never-ending well of insights into the Person of Jesus Christ, because every word in the Scriptures serves to illuminate him and his gospel.

There are four keys that I would like to identify as CPR measures in basing the musical portion of the service on the Bible: First, a *trust in the authority of Scripture, allowing the specific passage to narrate the worship story-structure and clarify the transition statements between elements.* As the worship pastor, I have nothing to say to our congregation that was more important than what is in the Bible. Certainly, I use other words as connective tissue between the elements of the worship service, but what is said, prayed, and sung are all intimately tied to that particular day's passage. And when the pastor preaches, he stands and speaks not from his own positional

authority, but on the authority of the words of God. Relying on the Scriptures as God's true Word provides the people with a fundamental baseline upon which they see their own life narratives against the Story that gives their lives meaning.

Second, *music is placed in its rightful place – under the Word of God as a support, not as a replacement for it.* For many worship leaders who design and implement the weekly gathering, the primary approach to developing a worship order centers on what songs are sung. In other words, many worship leaders create worship orders that are *song-driven rather than Scripture-driven.* Do the following questions sound familiar as Sunday planning begins?

- "What haven't we sung in a while?"
- "What are the top songs on the CCLI list?"
- "What five songs can we use this week?"
- "What two or three up-tempo opening songs flow well together?"
- "I need a good power ballad before the sermon . . . what can I use?"

As good and appropriate as thousands of hymns and songs are, worship leaders should be able to give a clear and specific reason for using every song during a worship service. "It's been a long time since we've sung that hymn" is not a valid reason for including a song. "This song has a cool bridge" or "I love the groove of this song" provides absolutely no biblical and spiritual warrant for use in a worship service. When I heard Harold Best say, "Music is a wonderful servant, but a horrible master," it was a eureka moment for me. The music in worship is not the point, Jesus Christ is, and people are most clearly pointed to the Son of God when the Word of God is the source of revelation. Music is a powerful instrument to support God's Word, but it can never replace it.

Third, *the Scripture (not the musical sound or style) is the primary focus of participation among various ages and cultural backgrounds within a congregation.* When a worship leader sets up a song or a hymn through Scripture, the congregation understands the purpose in singing the song, but even beyond that, the emphasis shifts from the music to the Scripture driving the music choice.

The key for the worship leader is to demonstrate that the Scripture is what gives songs and hymns their relevance and purpose within the contour of the service. When worshipers connect the dots between Scripture and the song, their sensitivity to truth goes up, and their personal preferences concerning the musical styles fade. If 80-year-old Mrs. Bell first hears the "unsettling" sound of a driving guitar as the introduction to a doctrinally rich new song, the odds that she will engage are relatively slim. However, if the same song is preceded by the Scripture from which the song is based and the worship leader gives a brief transition statement highlighting the connections between the Scripture and the song, Mrs. Bell has a more compelling reason to participate, because her response is to the Word not to the song. The song necessarily loses its place of prominence as it is placed under the guiding authority of the Word.

Fourth, *by relying on the Bible, the worship planner never runs out of material.* As I sit down to work through an order of worship, I never begin by looking at a blank piece of paper. I also never have to begin a worship service planning session by opening the "Songs" tab on the Planning Center app and praying that the Holy Spirit would supernaturally highlight the right songs for the week's service. The Bible contains hundreds if not thousands of worship service outlines waiting to be exposited by singing through the passages, praying through the passages, preaching through the passages, giving through the passages, baptizing through the passages, serving the Lord's Supper through the passages, and dismissing the congregation through the passages.

If you agree that people's view of God is what is at stake on Sunday mornings, then the most effective way of sharpening their view of God is to show them Jesus. Jesus is most clearly revealed in the Word through the power of the Holy Spirit, and the Scriptures provide us with the never-ending well of truth from which we can celebrate and express our worship, love, and thanks to Christ our King. When we see Jesus clearly, through the lens of his Word in the power of the Spirit, we worship him more fully.

O Lord, incline our hearts to your Word. Open our eyes that we may behold wonderful things from your Word. Help us

to trust Your word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.[11]

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[11] Adapted from John Piper's prayer in his article "How to Read the Bible for Yourself," March 17, 2015, https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/how-to-read-the-bible-for-yourself.

"I Wanna Talk about Me": Analyzing the Balance of Focus between God and Man in Congregational Songs of the American Evangelical Church

Nathan Burggraff[1]

Narratives in contemporary culture have become increasingly narcissistic. This is cleverly illustrated in Toby Keith's 2001 hit country song "I Wanna Talk about Me." The song's two verses lament the fact that the singer's girlfriend only ever talks about herself. This in itself shows the girlfriend's own narcissism. The song's chorus then presents an ode to the singer, who would like to talk about himself once in a while:

> I wanna talk about me
> Wanna talk about I
> Wanna talk about number one
> Oh my me my
> What I think, what I like, what I know,
>   what I want, what I see
> I like talking about you, you, you,
>   you usually, but occasionally
> I wanna talk about me
> I wanna talk about me.

While the song is meant to poke fun of narcissistic and self-absorbed girlfriends, it also shows a reality for most people: we like talking about ourselves. Unfortunately, contemporary culture continues to

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provide more and more outlets for people to talk about and promote themselves: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, self-started blogs, etc.

In his book *The Divine Embrace: Recovering the Passionate Spiritual Life,* Robert Webber contends that the church has embraced this culturally driven narrative, resulting in me-oriented worship that sees God as the object of man's worship rather than the subject:

> Me-oriented worship is the result of a culturally driven worship. When worship is situated in the culture and not in the story of God, worship becomes focused on the self. It becomes narcissistic. . . . The real underlying crisis in worship goes back to the fundamental issue of the relationship between God and the world. If God is the object of worship, then worship must proceed from me, the subject, to God, who is the object. God is the being out there who needs to be loved, worshiped, and adored by men. Therefore, the true worship of God is located in me, the subject. . . . If God is understood, however, as the personal God who acts as subject in the world and in worship rather than the remote God who sits in the heavens, then worship is understood not as the acts of adoration God demands of me but as the disclosure of Jesus, who has done for me what I cannot do for myself. In this way worship is the doing of God's story within me so that I live in the pattern of Jesus's death and resurrection.[2]

As Webber states, all of creation and history reveals God as the subject. This is what should be celebrated in worship. Webber continues, "Biblical worship tells and enacts [God's] story. Narcissistic worship, instead, names God as an object to whom *we* offer honor, praise, and homage. Narcissistic worship is situated in the worshiper, not in the action of God that the worshiper remembers through Word and table."[3]

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[2] Robert Webber, *The Divine Embrace: Recovering the Passionate Spiritual Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 231–32.

[3] Webber, *The Divine Embrace*, 232–33.

Scope of the Analytical Study

Several recent studies have analyzed contemporary congregational song lyrics, in relation to point of view or Trinitarian content, in order to address this perceived shift of focus.[4] Specifically, Daniel Thornton's 2016 dissertation examines the balance of focus between references to God and references to man in 25 popular contemporary congregational songs, arguing that the lyric content in contemporary songs is predominantly God-centered, despite claims to the contrary.[5]

Expanding upon Thornton's initial research, the following corpus study analysis identifies and clarifies changes in the balance of focus between God and man in congregational songs over time. The corpus consists of song lyrics in 506 songs currently sung in American evangelical churches, as well as the 150 Old Testament Psalms. The content of the song corpus is based on ranked lists from Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI), PraiseCharts, and Hal Leonard.[6] The analysis includes a tabulation of the number of references to man through personal pronouns implying man, as well as the number of references to God, both through pronouns implying God and direct names for God. The tabulation of God and man references was compared in each song in order to determine balance of focus.

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[4] See Lester Ruth, "Some Similarities and Differences between Historic Evangelical Hymns and Contemporary Worship Songs," *Artistic Theologian* 3 (2015): 68–86; Daniel Thornton, "Exploring the Contemporary Congregational Song Genre: Texts, Practice, and Industry" (PhD diss., Macquarie University, 2015); and Stuart Sheehan, "The Changing Theological Functions of Corporate Worship among Southern Baptists: What They Were and What They Became (1638–2008)" (PhD diss., University of Aberdeen, 2017).

[5] Thornton, "Contemporary Congregational Song Genre."

[6] The main corpus, made up of 406 songs, is a combination of CCLI's Top 100 Songs (June 2016–2019), CCLI's 100 Most Popular Public Domain Songs (June 2016–2019), CCLI's semi-annual Top 25 song lists (1989–2015; from Lester Ruth's 2015 article), PraiseCharts Top 100 Worship Songs of All Time (2018), Hal Leonard's "The Best Praise & Worship Songs Ever" (2004), and Hal Leonard's "More of the Best Praise & Worship Songs Ever" (2018). Two additional corpuses were created from CCLI's Top 50 Gettys Songs and CCLI's Top 50 Sovereign Grace Songs, since both groups are scarcely represented in the other ranked lists, but are sung in many churches in America.

One question that arises in this kind of tabulation analysis is determining what to do with repeated lyrics in a song. In previous lyric analysis studies conducted in Ruth 2015 and Thornton 2015, song lyrics were counted only once, even if notated to be sung multiple times. My tabulation analysis, however, is based on the form of the song, taken from the lead sheets on CCLI, to determine how many times particular passages of lyrics are sung in a song. While not every congregation will sing a song in exactly the same form, the CCLI lead sheets provide an objective standard from which to compile the statistical data, as well as to consider actual musical practice.

The songs in the main corpus (406 songs) were compiled into five time periods to reflect music changes over time: (1) songs written prior to 1970, (2) songs written from 1970 to 1989, (3) songs written from 1990 to 1999, (4) songs written from 2000 to 2009, and (5) songs written from 2010 to 2019. Additional mini corpus studies were conducted on the top 50 songs by the Gettys and by Sovereign Grace, based on popularity in CCLI data, and compared to the main corpus song data. The 150 Old Testament Psalms were also compared with the main corpus song data in order to assess potential differences or similarities between them.

A potential issue with tabulating references to God and man in the Old Testament Psalms is the text language used for analysis. One could argue that any English translation of the original Hebrew language will provide grossly inaccurate tabulation numbers. This is true to an extent; however, while the number of pronoun references in English translations greatly exceed those in the original Hebrew, the ratio of first-person to second-person to third-person references is very close between the original Hebrew language and the English translations, as seen in table 1.[7] Having compared the ratios between the English Standard Version (ESV), New American Standard Bible (NASB), and the King James Version (KJV), the ESV is the closest of the three to the percentages of the original Hebrew language. Therefore, the ESV was the chosen version to use for tabulation of pronouns and direct names for God.

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[7] The tabulation of the Hebrew pronouns was performed using a search and find function in Logos Bible Software.

Table 1. Instances and Percentages of Pronouns in the 150 Old Testament Psalms

	Hebrew		ESV		NASB		KJV	
1st Person Singular	1675	42.0%	2395	42.6%	2427	42.6%	2439	42.7%
2nd Person	1337	33.5%	1806	32.1%	1810	31.8%	1819	31.9%
3rd Person	979	24.5%	1418	25.2%	1461	25.6%	1453	25.4%
Total:	3991		5619		5698		5711	

Analyzing References to God

The first focus of the analysis was to look at references to God, both through pronoun usage and direct naming of God. Direct names include names that would indicate God as Father, Son, or Holy Spirit. However, words such as "fortress," "rock," etc., were excluded from a tabulation of direct names of God, since these refer to images for God rather than names for God. There are several interesting results of this analysis, as shown in table 2. First, the number of songs using the second-person pronoun for God (you/your), within the main corpus of songs, doubles from songs prior to 1970 to songs written after 1990. The Old Testament Psalms sit somewhere in the middle to upper range of those averages. The Gettys follow similar statistics as traditional hymnody, while Sovereign Grace follows contemporary lyric practices. Second, songs that use the third person pronoun (he/him), indicating a more formal, distant aspect, decrease by almost half from songs prior to 1970 to songs written after 1990. The traditional hymnody songs follow closely with the Old Testament Psalms, as do songs by the Gettys. Third, the number of songs directly naming God decreases steadily in songs after 1970, to the point that after 1990, more than 16% of songs within the main corpus do not directly name God even once! This means that these songs only use pronouns to refer to God, or use imagery to depict God, without formally addressing God. Conversely, every Psalm in the Old Testament formally names God at least one time.

Table 2. Percentage of Songs that Reference the Godhead in Each Category

	Psalms	<1970	1970–1989	1990–1999	2000–2009	2010–2018	Gettys	Sov. Grace
You / Your	69.3	42.1	51.7	88.0	82.4	83.0	46.0	92.0
He / Him	76.0	70.7	53.3	24.0	45.6	37.5	76.0	54.0
Direct Names	100.0	98.6	95.0	84.0	83.8	84.1	98.0	96.0
% of:	150 Psalms	140 songs	60 songs	50 songs	68 songs	88 songs	50 songs	50 songs

In regard to the lack of direct reference to the Godhead in contemporary congregational songs, Mark Evans mentions two possibilities for this.[8] One possibility is that secularization in culture is creeping into the church. However, Evans argues against this, since often these songs are simply personal responses to the praise of God, without naming Him. The second possibility is the idea that these songs are, as in the Jewish tradition, the "not-yet-holy" songs. Anything can be holy if Christians ascribe to the song aspects of God's grace and design. This promotes the idea of being in the world but not of it, which is riskier and a balancing act with songs in the church. Evans states, however, "this is exactly the process major congregational song producers and the huge Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) industry are involved in. They take the music of the secular culture and 'redeem' it, by bringing it into the Church and giving it holy meanings and functions."[9] Conversely, John Fischer argues just the opposite in his 1994 book *On a Hill Too Far Away: Putting the Cross Back into the Center of Our Lives*:

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[8] Mark Evans, *Open Up the Doors: Music in the Modern Church* (London: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2006).

[9] Evans, *Open Up the Doors*, 165.

God has always preferred to put his messages at odds with the world. More often than not, he slants his messages counter-culturally. He works against the grain. . . . Jesus stood both inside and outside of culture. This ability of the gospel to transform as well as transcend—to stand outside of culture as well as inside—is the aspect of the gospel that our present contemporary efforts lack.[10]

Table 3. Percentage of Songs that Directly Name the Godhead and the Number of Times the Godhead is Directly Named in the Song

	Psalms	<1970	1970–1989	1990–1999	2000–2009	2010–2018	Gettys	Sov. Grace
0	0.0	1.4	5.0	16.0	16.2	15.9	4.0	6.0
1 or more	100.0	98.6	95.0	84.0	83.8	84.1	96.0	94.0
2 or more	99.3	91.4	81.7	82.0	80.9	78.4	94.0	84.0
5 or more	76.7	57.9	48.3	56.0	63.2	55.7	72.0	64.0
10 or more	32.0	25.7	18.3	22.0	41.2	39.8	30.0	30.0
% of:	150 Psalms	140 songs	60 songs	50 songs	68 songs	88 songs	50 songs	50 songs

As table 3 shows, while the percentage of songs with no direct naming of God is roughly 16% in songs written after 1990, the number of times God is referenced in songs is not as off-balanced. For instance, the percentage of songs referencing God at least five times is around 58% in songs written before 1970, which is roughly the same, or even lower, than in songs written after 1990. In fact, the percentage of songs referencing God at least ten times is at its highest in songs

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[10] John Fischer, *On a Hill Too Far Away: Putting the Cross Back into the Center of Our Lives* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2001), 52–53.

written after 2000. In other words, songs written in the last 20 years show a propensity for either not naming God at all or naming Him in abundance.

As mentioned before, while direct names of God were used for this tabulation, there are instances of references to God without direct names for God. However, even with that tabulation entered, there are still 21 songs that have no reference to God, other than pronoun usage. These songs are listed in figure 1. As this song list shows, 20 of the 21 songs were written after 1990. These songs could be referred to as the "Jesus is my boyfriend" songs, since there is no direct reference to the person being addressed.

- When I Look Into Your Holiness (1981)
- Draw Me Close (1994)
- Breathe (1995)
- In the Secret (1995)
- Above All (1999)
- Be Glorified (1999)
- The More I Seek You (1999)
- Here We Are (2000)
- Grace Like Rain (2003)
- I Am Free (2004)
- How He Loves (2005)
- Your Love Never Fails (2008)
- I Will Follow (2010)
- One Thing Remains (2010)
- You Are Good (2010)
- Lay Me Down (2012)
- It Is Well (2013)
- Come As You Are (2014)
- Fierce (2015)
- Your Love Awakens Me (2016)
- Stand in Your Love (2018)

Figure 1. Songs from the Main Corpus with No Direct Reference

With regard to the referencing of God, it is important to look not only at the number of songs that use pronouns or direct names for God, but also at the number of times each type of pronoun or direct naming of God is used compared to the total number of God references. Table 4 presents the percentage of second-person pronouns, third-person pronouns, and direct names of God, compared to the total number of God references in all the songs from each time period. There are several notable results from this analysis. First, the percentage of "you" pronouns accounts for more than half of all references to God in songs written after 1990, compared to 16% in songs prior to 1970. Conversely, the number of "he" pronouns decreases substantially in songs written after 1990, as does the percentage of direct

names of God. The songs by the Gettys follow closely to traditional hymnody, while Sovereign Grace follows closely to contemporary lyric practices.

Table 4. The Percentage of Pronouns or Direct Names of the Godhead Compared to the Total Number of References to God

	Psalms	<1970	1970–1989	1990–1999	2000–2009	2010–2018	Gettys	Sov. Grace
2nd Per./All	31.0	16.0	29.0	57.0	48.0	53.0	21.0	51.0
3rd Per./All	24.0	30.0	23.0	9.0	13.0	13.0	27.0	16.0
Names/All	42.0	42.0	39.0	28.0	31.0	28.0	43.0	29.0
% of:	150 Psalms	140 songs	60 songs	50 songs	68 songs	88 songs	50 songs	50 songs

Figure 2a provides a timeline of the main corpus (406 songs) from the previous table, with trendlines showing the averages. The dark blue line designates second-person pronouns, the light blue line designates third-person pronouns, and the green line designates direct names. As this figure highlights, using a 50-song moving average, the transition period occurs between 1970 and 1990, and continues much the same way after 1990. However, by changing the moving average to 20 songs, as shown in figure 2b, there is a more nuanced picture of these changes. For instance, songs prior to 1870 in the corpus shared a similar percentage for each of the categories. Songs between 1870 and 1970 provided a general consensus of direct names were the highest average, while second-person pronouns being the lowest average. While the years 1970–1990 still show the transition period, there are some oscillations in the data after 1990. For instance, the use of direct names reaches its lowest point in the mid-2010s, while the third-person pronouns reach their highest point

since 1990. Also, the use of second-person pronoun usage spikes in the mid-1990s as well as in the early and late 2010s. There are a couple of times, however, that the use of second-person pronouns drops below the use of direct names for God, particularly around 2010 and in the mid-late 2010s. Thus, while the larger picture shows the general trend, there are some smaller-scale shifts in God references in the last 40 years.
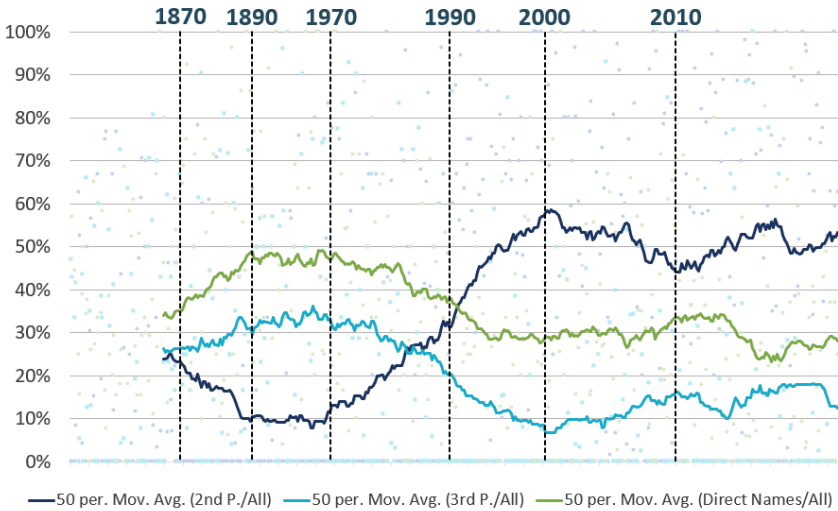

Figure 2a. Trendlines Showing the Percentages of Point of View References to God in Songs of the Main Corpus Over Time (50-song moving average)
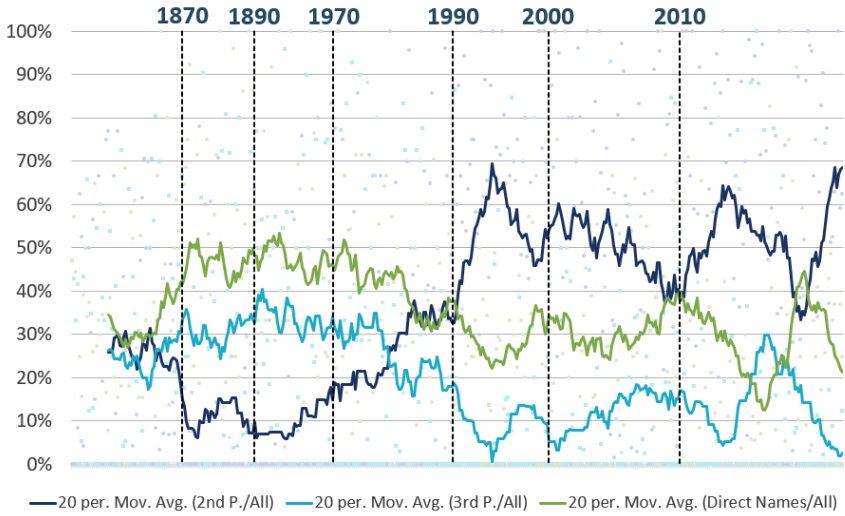
Figure 2b. Trendlines Showing the Percentages of Point of View References to God in Songs of the Main Corpus Over Time (20-song moving average)

Analyzing Personal References

The second focus of the corpus analysis is on the use of personal references. There are two possible uses of personal pronoun references. One is the singular first person (I, me, my, mine), which focuses on the individual singing. The other is the plural first person (we, us, our), which focuses on the corporate body singing the song. Table 5 presents the percentage of songs that utilize either first person singular pronouns, first person plural pronouns, both singular and plural, or neither. It is interesting to note that 18% of the Psalms do not have a first-person pronoun in them. These Psalms are not focused on first-person man at all, but rather outwardly to others and to God solely. While around 10% of songs prior to 1990 are also solely God-focused, that number drops substantially to only 2% of songs after 1990. Another interesting observation is that while first-person singular pronouns range from 60 to 80%, and first-person plural pronouns range from 35 to 50% of songs in the main corpus and Psalms, the songs by the Gettys fall way outside these averages in both cases.

Table 5. Percentage of Songs that Reference Man, Using Singular or Plural Pronouns, or Both

	Psalms	<1970	1970–1989	1990–1999	2000–2009	2010–2018	Gettys	Sov. Grace
Neither	18.0	9.3	11.7	2.0	1.5	2.3	4.0	0.0
Singular	68.9	60.0	61.7	80.0	73.5	72.7	46.0	64.0
Plural	40.0	45.0	43.3	34.0	50.0	52.3	84.0	56.0
Both	26.0	14.3	16.7	18.0	25.0	27.3	34.0	20.0
% of:	150 Psalms	140 songs	60 songs	50 songs	68 songs	88 songs	50 songs	50 songs

The Getty songs use first person singular pronouns in less than half of the songs in the corpus, while first-person plural pronouns are found in 84% of those songs. These statistics are strikingly different than all other categories, and highlight the songwriters' focus on "corporate" singing. Figure 3 presents the songs in the main corpus (excluding Gettys and Sovereign Grace) that do not use a first-person pronoun in the song. Several of the songs address other individuals, even shown in the title using second-person pronouns, but the song is focused outward, rather than inward.

- Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow (1551)
- Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus (1830)
- Joy to the World (1848)
- It Came Upon a Midnight Clear (1850)
- Only Trust Him (1874)
- Are You Washed in the Blood (1878)
- America, the Beautiful (1882)
- Blessed Be the Name (1887)
- Count Your Blessings (1897)
- There Is Power in the Blood (1899)
- God Will Take Care of You (1905)
- Thou Art Worthy (1963)
- Seek Ye First (1972)
- Ah, Lord God (1976)
- Let There Be Glory (1978)
- There's Something About that Name (1979)
- Majesty (1981)
- Come into His Presence (1983)
- No Other Name (1988)
- Agnus Dei (1990)
- Ancient of Days (1992)
- Come As You Are (2014)
- O Come to the Altar (2015)

Figure 3. Songs from the Main Corpus with No Singular Pronoun References to Man

In addition to looking at the percentage of songs utilizing first person pronouns, the analysis included examining the number of times pronouns were used in each song. This again involved looking at the form of the song and tabulating each type of pronoun based on how many times it would be sung in a repeated passage. Table 6 shows the average number of times a category of pronouns was sung in each song within a time period. The asterisks in the Psalms column indicate that these averages are based on the Hebrew text, since that is ultimately the number of times each category of pronouns is used (unlike the percentage of each category used in total, which stays almost the same between the original Hebrew and the English translations). As the table shows, the use of first-person singular pronouns dramatically increases in songs after 1990 in the main corpus, as does the use of first-person plural pronouns. Traditional hymnody follows very closely to the word averages of the Psalms. At the same time, the use of second-person pronouns for God (you) increases even more dramatically, more than five times the amount from songs prior to 1970 to songs after 2010. Here, however, the Psalms sit roughly in the middle. Finally, while the use of third-person pronouns decreases over time by roughly half, the use of God references actually increases slightly over time.

Table 6. Average Number of References to Man and God in Songs from Each Category

	Psalms	<1970	1970–1989	1990–1999	2000–2009	2010–2018	Gettys	Sov. Grace
1st Person Singular	10.41*	10.21	5.23	18.90	16.40	20.17	5.82	10.98
1st Person Plural	1.68*	2.76	2.75	1.72	5.00	7.35	6.00	6.58
2nd Person God	8.91*	3.14	5.13	13.32	14.13	17.49	4.22	12.76
3rd Person God	6.43	6.28	3.32	2.28	3.59	3.13	4.90	5.86
Reference to God	8.61	8.66	7.88	8.56	11.06	10.36	9.74	8.84
Out of:	150 Psalms	140 songs	60 songs	50 songs	68 songs	88 songs	50 songs	50 songs

Figure 4a represents the average usage of first-person (man), second-person (God), and third-person (God) pronouns over time. As the figure shows, the use of first-person pronouns (dark blue line) actually increased between 1870 and 1970, before dropping significantly from 1970 to 1989. Figure 5 presents a list of selected songs from the main corpus that were written from 1970 to 1989, all which reflect a sharp decrease in use of first-person pronouns and an increase in use of third-person pronouns. This dramatic change coincides with the rise of the charismatic movement in America, as well as the Jesus movement within the evangelical community. However, after 1990, the use of first-person pronouns increases significantly, reaching an average of 30 times per song by the mid-2010s. This is three times the number of uses of first-person pronouns than in songs prior to 1870. While the use of first-person pronouns increases

significantly after 1990, the use of second person (God) pronouns also significantly increases. Conversely, the use of third-person pronouns decreases during that time. The significant rise of second-person pronouns for God in songs after 1990 indicates a shift in the view of God in song lyrics. Songs tend to focus on the personal aspect of God, his immanence to man, rather than his transcendence and distance from man. The increased use of "you" pronouns also can have the effect of clouding the object of who one is singing to, especially if there is no direct name for God, or it comes late in the song. Figure 4b presents the same data, but with a moving average of 20 songs instead of 50 songs. This graph shows the stark contrast in first person pronouns between songs prior to 1970, the drastic drop from 1970 to 1990, and the even more drastic increase after 1990.
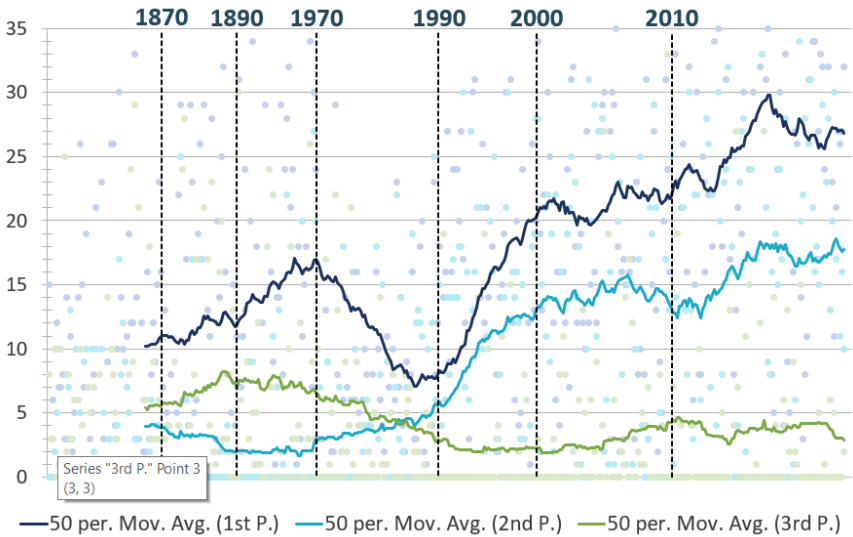
Figure 4a. Trendlines Showing the Number of Instances of Point of View Pronouns in Songs of the Main Corpus Over Time (50-song moving average)
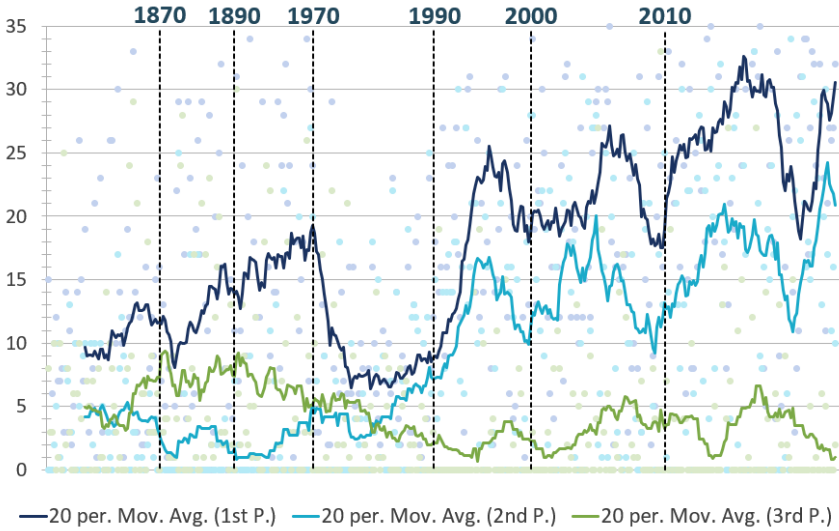
Figure 4b. Trendlines Showing the Number of Instances of Point of View Pronouns in Songs of the Main Corpus Over Time (20-song moving average)

- Jesus, Name above All Names (1974)
- Emmanuel (1976)
- Praise the Name of Jesus (1976)
- All Hail, King Jesus (1981)
- How Majestic Is Your Name (1981)
- Majesty (1981)
- Great is the Lord (1982)
- There is a Redeemer (1982)
- He is Exalted (1985)
- Worthy, You are Worthy (1986)
- No Other Name (1988)

Figure 5. Selected Songs from 1970 to 1989 in the Main Corpus

Analyzing the Balance of Focus between God and Man References

Finally, the lyrical analysis includes a look at the balance of focus between God and man in each of the songs/Psalms. Here, the research is based on a simple formula used in Daniel Thornton's

dissertation. In explaining his notion of "balance of focus," Thornton states:

> It is not only the point of view [POV] that is relevant, but how much of the personal (singular or plural) perspective is referenced compared with the song's terms of address to the Godhead. . . . After counting the number of POV references, and the number of Godhead address references, a fraction was created. If the number of POV references was greater than the number of address references, then the fraction would be greater than 1, and would represent a singer-focused song rather than a God-focused song for a fraction of less than 1.[1]

Figure 6 shows a visual representation of the Godhead versus man point of view fraction. As shown, any number over 1 is considered man-focused, while any number under 1 is considered God-focused.

$$\frac{\text{Number of personal references}}{\text{Number of God references}} > 1 = \text{More individually focussed}$$

$$\frac{\text{Number of personal references}}{\text{Number of God references}} < 1 = \text{More God focussed}$$

Figure 6. Visual Representation of Godhead and Point of View fraction

Table 7 shows the percentage of songs in each time period, based on the balance of focus for each song. The middle three rows add up to 100% of songs in each time period, while the outer rows indicate the percentage of songs that are at least doubly God or man focused. There are several interesting findings in this analysis. First, the most God-focused time period of songs, by far, is 1970–1990, followed by 2000–2009. Part of the reason that songs prior to 1970 are lower is the fact that songs after 1870 become much more man-focused. Second, the most man-focused time period is nearly tied between 1990–1999 and 2010–2018. Third, the Psalms are more God-

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[11] Thornton, "Contemporary Congregational Song Genre," 191.

centered than the main corpus time periods, other than the 1970s–80s, and more than half the Psalms reference God at least twice as many times as man. None of the other time periods are that doubly God-focused. Finally, in contrast to the main corpus, the Gettys and Sovereign Grace songs are much more God-focused, with over 75% of their songs referencing God more than man.

Table 7. The Percentage of Songs and Their Balance of Focus between God References and Man References in Each Category

	Psalms	<1970	1970–1989	1990–1999	2000–2009	2010–2018	Gettys	Sov. Grace
Over 2	8.0	10.7	0.0	4.0	19.1	10.2	6.0	4.0
Over 1	29.3	32.9	8.3	44.0	33.8	44.3	22.0	20.0
1	2.0	6.4	6.7	6.0	0.0	3.4	4.0	4.0
Under 1	68.7	60.7	85.0	50.0	66.2	52.3	74.0	76.0
Under .5	53.3	37.9	48.3	26.0	36.8	23.9	44.0	32.0
% of:	150 Psalms	140 songs	60 songs	50 songs	68 songs	88 songs	50 songs	50 songs

Following the previous analyses, Figure 7a presents the main corpus data in chronological order, showing trends over time, using a 50-song moving average. This figure highlights the fact that the balance of focus in congregational songs has actually shifted back and forth over time. The period 1870–1970 shows a shift from more God-focused songs to more man-focused songs. In fact, from 1890 to 1970, the graph presents the most man-focused song average than any other period, including today. This actually refutes the notion that songs today are more "me-focused" than ever before. The period from 1970 to 1990 again shows an abrupt shift, with the balance of focus shifting back to God-focused. After 1990, however, the balance

of focus shifts back to man-centered, a trend that has stayed roughly the same for the past 30 years.

Figure 7a. Trendlines Showing the Balance of Focus between God References and Man References in Songs of the Main Corpus Over Time (50-song moving average)

Figure 7b uses a moving average of 20 songs instead of 50 songs to provide a more nuanced picture of the shifting balance of focus over time. For instance, the period 1890–1970 shows a steadier man-focused average, and the shift at 1970 is even more abruptly to God-focused songs than the previous graph indicated. The shift back to man-focused songs is also more abrupt after 1990. Also, there are several points in the last 30 years that the songs written tended toward more God-focused than man-focused, as indicated with the trendline bouncing back and forth around the line of demarcation. As the very end of the trendline shows, however, the shift has been quite steady toward man-focused songs in that last couple of years.
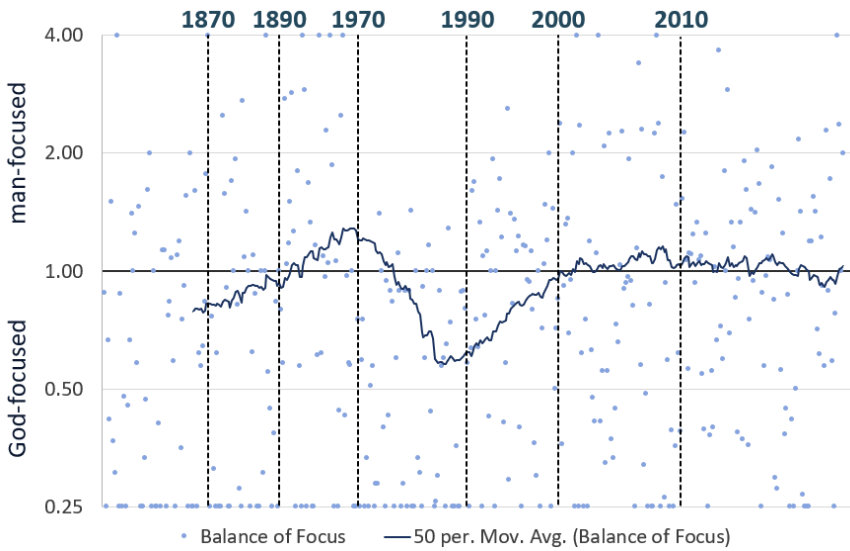
Figure 7b. Trendlines Showing the Balance of Focus between God References and Man References in Songs of the Main Corpus Over Time (20-song moving average)

The reason that the balance of focus has not dramatically shifted to man-centered songs in recent years, despite the increased number of "man" references in the songs, is that there is an almost equal increase in the number of God references in those same songs, which is depicted in figure 8a. For instance, when viewing the trend over time of the number of personal references to the number of God references, the two lines tend to decrease and increase at similar intervals. With a more nuanced trendline in figure 8b, showing a 20-song moving average, there are a couple of times when the personal references overtook the number of God references, specifically at around 1900–1970, and again during the mid-2010s, and even currently. This recent trend is probably what people are referring to when saying that songs are so me-centered in worship today.

Figure 8a. Trendlines Showing the Number of Man References and God References in Songs of the Main Corpus Over Time (50-song moving average)
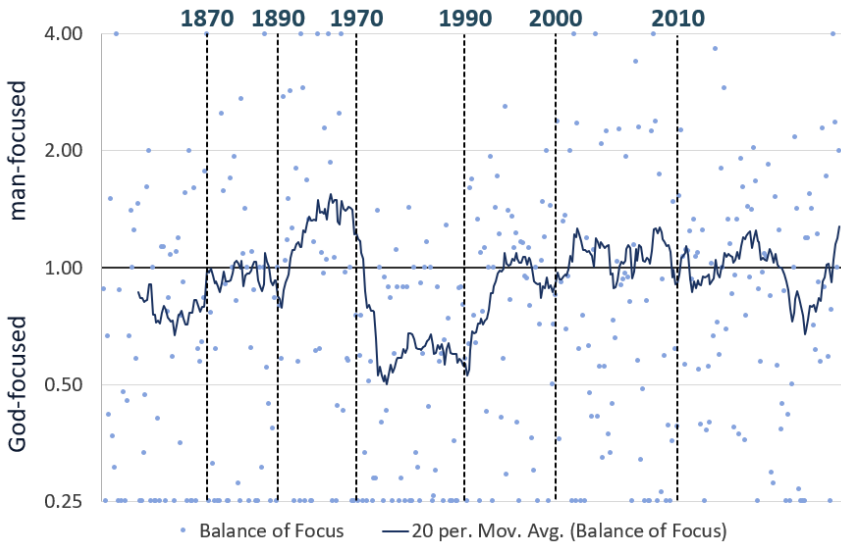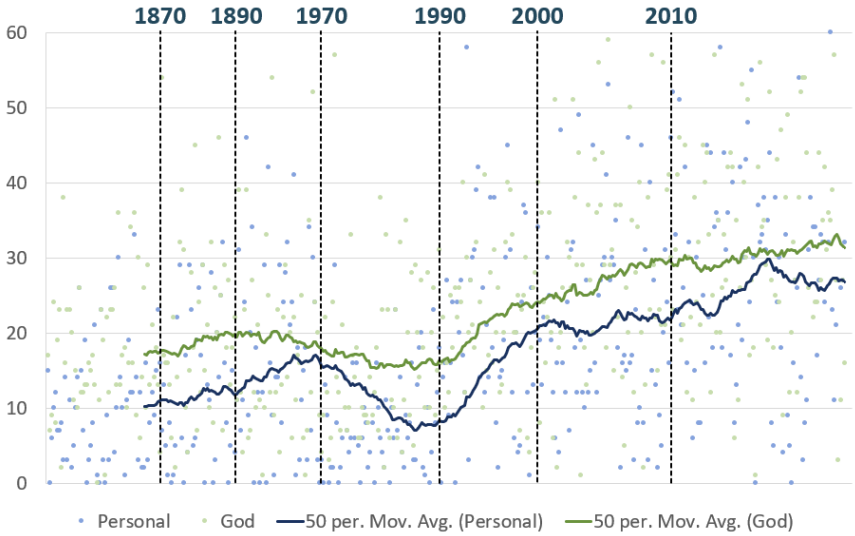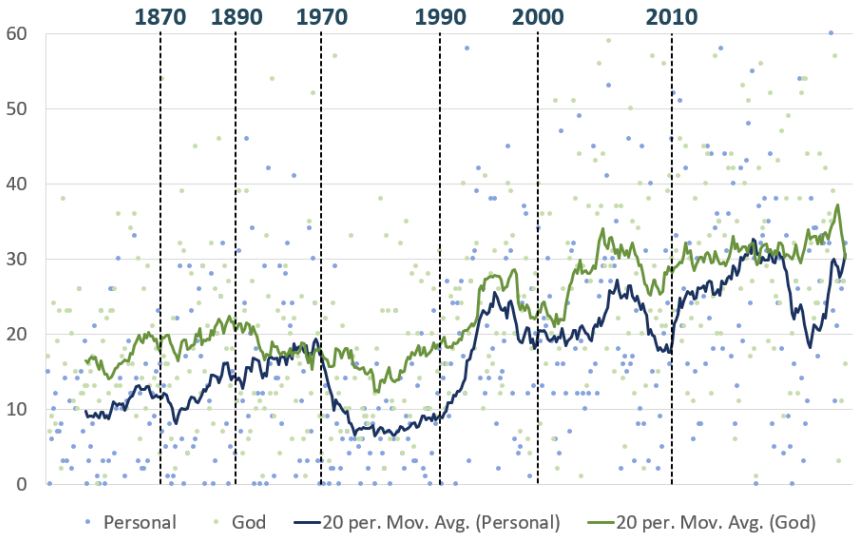

Figure 8b. Trendlines Showing the Number of Man References and God References in Songs of the Main Corpus Over Time (20-song moving average)

While these figures present the general trends in groups of songs over time, the corpus analysis is not arguing that singing a man-focused congregational song is somehow less praiseworthy than singing a God-focused song. There are plenty of excellent man-focused songs written over the years. For instance, figure 9 list songs in the corpus with a fraction larger than four, which means that they have at least four times as many man references as they do God references. In looking at the list, six of the 11 songs were written between 1869 and 1932, the period of time when the trendline shifts to more man-focused songs. However, these songs are still theologically sound and display a richness for thinking about our place before God. The point is not to disparage the use of man-focused songs, but to understand that there needs to be a balance between focusing on man versus focusing on God. If we only sing man-focused songs, we miss out on truly focusing our attention on and our position to the subject of our worship, which is the Triune God.

- The Star-Spangled Banner (1814)
- Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross (1869)
- Alas and Did My Savior Bleed—Hudson (1885)
- Amazing Grace (1900)
- A New Name in Glory (1910)
- The Old Rugged Cross (1913)
- I'll Fly Away (1932)
- Ancient Words (2001)
- Grace Like Rain (2003)
- I Heard the Bells (2008)
- Raise a Hallelujah (2018)

Figure 9. Songs of the Main Corpus That Are at Least 4x Man-Focused

Conclusion

As the preceding corpus analysis has shown, there have been several changes within lyrical content of congregational songs over time. With regard to referencing God, there has been an increase in the number of songs that do not directly name God, specifically after 1990. At the same time, songs after 1990 have significantly increased the use of the personal pronoun "you" when referring to God, in that over 50% of the references to God in those songs are with second person pronouns. With regard to personal references, there has been a two-fold increase in the number of personal references between

songs written prior to 1970 and songs written after 1990. Finally, in looking at the balance of focus in songs, there have been several shifts back and forth between man-focused and God-focused songs over time. Ultimately, this research offers clarity and precision to the discussion of those textual changes in congregational songs. It is intended to show some of the nuances of these changes in order to help worship leaders understand and take seriously the role of selecting songs for corporate singing. This role includes studying the lyrics and examining the balance of focus between God and man in each song being sung. We need to be ever mindful of the subject of our worship, which is God. As believers, we are not the subject of worship, and any song that puts the focus on man without properly aligning that focus to the true subject of worship, God, should not be considered for corporate worship of God. It should be the goal of every worship leader to choose songs that express these truths, and this research hopefully helps shed light on some of the issues to consider when selecting appropriate songs for corporate worship.

New Forms of Old Measures: Nineteenth-Century New-Measures Revivalists' Understanding of Their Methodologies

Laramie Minga[1]

The Second Great Awakening (1790–1840) began with a fresh set of revivals not unlike that of the First Great Awakening (late 1730s–40s); however, out of this new awakening, men like Charles Finney developed a revivalistic movement driven by means such as anxious meetings, protracted meetings, and the anxious seat. This system of means, reaching its peak in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, is popularly known as new-measures revivalism.[2] These new measures, however, were not without opposition. Many opposed Finney and other new-measures revivalists (NMRs) on the basis of innovation and practicing means that had no biblical warrant. More recent historians, too, claim that Finney's revivalism "broke 'The Tradition of the Elders,'" citing one of Finney's own sermons, by introducing radically new innovations to church practice and worship.[3]

Yet what these critics and historians often overlook is the fact that the NMRs defended their practices by actually citing biblical and historical precedent, arguing that their methods were not new at all. The purpose of this paper is to reveal the ways in which the NMRs made the above appeal and to what extent they believed their methods to have precedent. I will not assess whether their practice may, indeed, be defended on biblical and historic grounds; rather, my

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[2] Leonard I. Sweet, "The View of Man Inherent in New Measures Revivalism," *Church History* 45, no. 2 (June 1976): 206–21.

[3] William McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959), 66.

intent here is to more clearly identify their reasoning so that such an assessment can occur without caricaturing their arguments.

To accomplish this, first, I will give a brief history of the development of new measures along with the controversy that surrounded them, prompting NMRs to defend their practices. Second, I will examine their comparisons of new measures to the Old Testament events of Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles. Third, I will consider their comparisons to the New Testament events of Jesus's ministry, Pentecost, and Paul's ministry. Fourth, I will survey their appeal to the means of the sixteenth-century Reformers, Edwards, Whitefield, Wesley, and other common practices in church history as justification of their own new measures. Having examined the comparisons made in biblical and church history, I will argue that by appealing to biblical and historical precedent for defense of their methods, new-measures revivalists showed that what they believed to be new was the form, not the measures themselves.

New-Measures Revivalism

In the early eighteenth century, during a period that has since been recorded as the First Great Awakening, men like Jonathan Edwards recounted a "surprising work of God" that was taking place in the New England colonies.[4] The work was surprising in that men did not practice means outside of the ordinary ones of faithful gospel proclamation and prayer or attempt to fulfill experiential conditions, yet sinners were awakened in large numbers. Therefore, when this awakening emerged, the work was overwhelmingly attributed to God.

Later that century, a second awakening developed out of the same circumstances of ordinary means, led by men like Francis Asbury, Timothy Dwight, and Seth Payson who had been laboring in

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[4] Jonathan Edwards, *Edwards on Revivals: Containing a Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton, Massachusetts, A.D. 1735: Also, Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England, 1742, and the Way in Which It Ought to Be Acknowledged and Promoted* (New York: Dunning & Spalding, 1832).

the work of ministry for years already.[5] This awakening, however, lasted longer, reached further geographically, and affected far more people.[6] With the transition into the nineteenth century, a new phenomenon entered, born out of a practical necessity by the Presbyterians to set aside four or five days for a communion season. The result was the camp meeting. Eventually, Methodists and Baptists participated in these, the most notable being the ones in Logan County and Cane Ridge, KY, where perhaps as many as 21,000 people gathered, a majority of whom were not church members.[7] During these camp meetings, men reported vast numbers of conversions. However, Iain Murray states that a side to these revivals in Kentucky consisted of excess and emotionalism, which began to discredit the work as a whole, leading him to distinguish between revival and revivalism.[8]

In response to the report of many conversions in the camp meetings, men wanted to continue the work and therefore sought to promote revival by replicating and further developing certain means. Calvin Colton, a Presbyterian minister and proponent of new measures, remarked that revivals of religion had grown into a system of calculation, with the promotion of means having become as equally a subject of study as that of prayer.[9] Although Charles Finney was not the innovator, his *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* owns the most popular instruction on this system in what has become known as new-measures revivalism. While a variety of new measures existed, Finney specified and gave instruction on three that he found particularly helpful: protracted meetings, the anxious seat, and anxious meetings.[10]

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[5] Iain Hamish Murray, *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism, 1750–1858* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), 127.

[6] Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 118–19.

[7] Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 151–13.

[8] Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 163. In his introduction, Murray makes the distinction by contrasting Edwards's language of a "surprising work of God" with the nineteenth-century notion of strategically planned evangelistic meetings that guaranteed results (xvii–xviii).

[9] Calvin Colton, *History and Character of American Revivals of Religion* (London: Frederick Westley, and A. H. Davis, 1832), 58.

[10] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (New York: Leavitt, Lord & Co., 1835), 232–55. Other new-measures revivalists sometimes used different terms (inquirer meetings, mourner's bench, etc.) when referring to specific new measures. Throughout this paper, I will use Finney's terms for consistency and to avoid confusion.

Protracted meetings, Finney said, were a series of days devoted to religious services in order to impress spiritual things upon the minds of the people.[11] According to James F. White, they eventually contained a liturgy that included a song service, a sermon, and a harvest of new converts.[12] This harvest of new converts is where the NMRs employed the anxious seat. It, Finney said, was a "particular seat in the place of meeting, where the anxious may come and be addressed particularly, and be made subjects of prayer, and sometimes conversed with individually."[13] The hope was that through the sinners' determination to be Christians, coming to the anxious seat would result in their immediate conversion.[14]

The third new measure, and frequent partner to the anxious seat, was the anxious meeting. Its purpose was to have a setting in which ministers could hold personal conversations with anxious sinners. They held the meetings either ahead of a protracted meeting as a means to become familiar with the anxious or following a protracted meeting so as to continue pressing the anxious towards an immediate decision.[15] In this system, NMRs found a methodology that would produce the intended fruit, thus providing the primary justification of their new measures.[16]

New measures, even with their success, were not without opposition.[17] Many opposed them on the basis of innovation apart from biblical warrant and excessive manipulation.[18] John Nevin, in response to an attempt by a visiting preacher to employ new measures in the German Reformed church in Mercersburg, PA, wrote *The Anxious Bench*, going as far as to identify new measures as heresy.[19]

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[11] Charles Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 242. Because the description of a protracted meeting in its most basic understanding also matches that of a camp meeting, I will be treating camp meetings as a form of protracted meetings.

[12] James F. White, *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989), 177.

[13] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 247.

[14] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 248.

[15] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 242.

[16] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 12.

[17] Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 163.

[18] E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 372.

[19] John W. Nevin, *The Anxious Bench*, 2nd ed., rev. and enl. (Chambersburg, PA: German Reformed Church, 1844), 14.

Likewise, Asahel Nettleton and Lyman Beecher in a series of letters and later in person condemned Finney's revivalistic practices on the basis of excess and a lack of warrant.[20] Nettleton viewed Finney's new measures as a work of Satan and a deviation from scriptural order and wisdom.[21]

In defense, NMRs reached beyond their typical pragmatic argument[22] and claimed that their measures were "not new, but have always been practiced in some form or other."[23] Reuben Weiser, a Lutheran minister, replying to John Nevin's *The Anxious Bench*, said that new measures were "as old as the Bible" and that the anxious seat was simply a form of a bench system that has always existed.[24] Finney similarly stated that the new measures of the day had been arrived at by degrees, with each new measure throughout history only being a succession of a previous measure and simply an adjustment in form.[25] They showed this by appealing to precedent in the OT, NT, and church history. In the three main sections that follow, I will show this appeal, revealing their belief that their measures were new in form, not in substance.

Precedent in the Old Testament

Two of the three most frequent references to biblical precedent for new measures are in the OT. NMRs consistently pointed to the Passover Feast and the Feast of Tabernacles as examples of God's desire for them to continue protracted meetings. Barlow Gorham, a Methodist minister, argued that if God did not want them to practice

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[20] Lyman Beecher and Asahel Nettleton, *Letters of the Rev. Dr. Beecher and Rev. Mr. Nettleton on the "New Measures" in Conducting Revivals of Religion* (New York: G. & C. Carvill, 1828).

[21] Bennet Tyler and Andrew A. Bonar, *Nettleton and His Labours: The Memoir of Dr. Asahel Nettleton* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1975), 339, 449.

[22] Showing NMRs pragmatic argument is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is thoroughly evident in their writings. For an example, see Finney's chapter "When a Revival Is to Be Expected" in his *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*. In it, he says the right means can accomplish revival as assuredly as a farmer can produce a crop (30).

[23] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 242.

[24] Reuben Weiser, *The Mourner's Bench or an Humble Attempt to Vindicate New Measures* (Bedford, PA, 1844), 29.

[25] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 238.

protracted meetings, he would not have ordained the annual week-long festivals of the Jews.[26] Finney, while acknowledging that the Jewish festivals were conducted differently than protracted meetings in his day, claimed that foundationally they were the same.[27] Not only were they acceptable for the church's use, Gorham urged, but needed.[28] Below, I will show how the NMRs made the comparison of protracted meetings to the Jewish festivals.

The Passover Feast

While the Israelites were still in Egyptian captivity, God gave them instructions on what they must do to avoid the consequences of the tenth and final plague that would leave the firstborn in the land of Egypt dead and lead to the Israelites' release (Exod 12:1–13, 29–32). In the midst of their preparations, God also instructed them in how to memorialize this event. Beginning on the fifteenth day of the first month, they were to set aside seven days when they would eat only unleavened bread, culminating in a feast on the twenty-first day of the same month (Exod 13:3–10).

Many NMRs saw the similarity between this event and their own protracted meetings as a legitimate defense against the accusation of unbiblical innovation. Gorham attributed the same foundational goal to both: "to reach a higher altitude in the divine life."[29] However, NMRs did not appeal simply to the motives of the meeting, but more specifically to the circumstances of the feast. James Gallaher, a Presbyterian minister, noted its protracted nature, as seen in 2 Chronicles 30:23, when the assembly kept the initial feast seven days but then decided to protract it by seven more.[30] Weiser, in describing this event, combined the motive and the circumstances, going further in detail:

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[26] Barlow W. Gorham, *Camp Meeting Manual: A Practical Book for the Camp Ground* (New York: H. V. Degen, 1854), 46.

[27] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 242.

[28] Gorham, *Camp Meeting Manual*, 29.

[29] Gorham, *Camp Meeting Manual*, 46.

[30] James Gallaher, *The Western Sketch Book* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1850), 141.

Here we see good king Hezekiah appointing a meeting at Jerusalem, which was to last seven days. But behold! When the work of God was revived among the backsliding Israelites, they "took counsel to keep other seven days" [2 Chr 30:23], "and they kept other seven days with gladness." Was not this a protracted meeting! And what was the result? It is said that there was great joy in Jerusalem. Many were no doubt brought from sin to holiness. Did not God himself appoint protracted meetings? Did he not command all the male population of Israel to appear . . . and there engage in religious worship for a number of days in succession? Were not these protracted meetings? Who will say they were not? . . . No doubt, many a glorious revival of religion commenced in Jerusalem during these seasons of grace.[31]

For Weiser and others, the similarities were close enough to justify their protracted meetings as a present-day form of the Passover Feast. However, they would make a stronger connection in the Feast of the Tabernacles.

The Feast of Tabernacles

Of the two OT feasts to which the NMRs compared their new measures, they most frequently pointed to the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths. The feast was a seven-day event that commemorated the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt and their time in the wilderness. Beginning on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, they would cease from work and dwell in booths, as they had in the wilderness, presenting a food offering to the Lord on the final day (Lev 23:33–36, 39–43).

Douglas Gorrie, a Methodist Episcopal minister, when describing a camp meeting, a form of protracted meeting, presupposed it to be a Feast of Tabernacles:

Camp Meetings. These are usually held annually in the summer season, in a grove or forest, in some central and convenient place. The members from the different parts of the

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[31] Weiser, *The Mourner's Bench*, 29.

presiding elder's district, and from a distance of even fifty miles, assemble to enjoy this feast of tabernacles. . . . On the morning of the last day of the meeting (which usually lasts about a week) a love feast is held.[32]

Gorham further connected the camp meeting to the Feast of Tabernacles by pointing to the tents in which the people would temporarily dwell.[33]

Because they saw the camp meeting to be at minimum a form of the Feast of Tabernacles, to oppose this new measure was to encourage idolatry. To show this, Gorham and Gallaher both referenced King Jeroboam who established a feast in opposition to the Feast of Tabernacles out of fear that it would cause the people to return to the Lord, kill him, and make Rehoboam their king.[34] Gorham and Gallaher believed that Jeroboam understood the power of influence that a protracted meeting had and thus could only prevent the people from submitting to it by leading them into idolatry.[35] Because the form of the protracted meeting had precedent in this feast, any opposition, likewise had precedent in Jeroboam's idolatry.

In summary, NMRs appealed to the OT feasts of Passover and Tabernacles as precedent for their new measures because of what they perceived to be similarities in motives and circumstances. They understood that God had not only commanded the OT feasts to fulfill a purpose of a simple commemoration, but the feasts were also events purposed to revive the people of God and impress the divine things upon their minds. Additionally, the OT feasts shared common circumstances of being protracted for several days, concluding with a feast, and in the case of camp meetings, temporary dwelling spaces.

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[32] Douglass P. Gorrie, *The Churches and Sects of the United States* (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman, and Co., 1856), 40.

[33] Gorham, *Camp Meeting Manual*, 30–31.

[34] Gorham, *Camp Meeting Manual*, 31; Gallaher, *The Western Sketch Book*, 141–42.

[35] Gorham, *Camp Meeting Manual*, 31; Gallaher, *The Western Sketch Book*, 141–42.

Precedent in the New Testament

The third of the three most frequently referenced annual gatherings is the account of Pentecost in the NT discussed below. In addition to Pentecost, NMRs also appealed to certain events in the ministries of Jesus, Paul, and other apostles as new measures. Generally, NMRs saw private evangelistic conversations as forms of the anxious meeting, sermons which ended with conversions as forms of the anxious bench, and consecutive gatherings as forms of protracted meetings. To show this I will view the events chronologically, beginning with Jesus's ministry, followed by Pentecost and the events leading up to it, and concluding with Paul's ministry.

Jesus's Ministry

Jesus's three years of ministry were filled with evangelistic conversations and religious meetings remote from the synagogues and Temple, which NMRs saw as earlier forms of their own anxious meetings. Charles Thompson, a Presbyterian minister, considered any conversation between a Christian and a sinner on the subject of personal religion to be an anxious meeting.[36] Regarding such conversations of Jesus, he explained:

> Christ and Nicodemus had such a meeting. It was the first of a series of influences that changed the timid Jew into a brave Christian. Christ and the woman at the well had such a meeting, the fruits of which brought a great company of Samaritans to the feet of Jesus. The young man came to the Savior with the world's oldest question: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" and there was an inquiry meeting, though alas so far as we know, without saving result.[37]

Thompson did, however, consider the anxious meetings of his day, which were technically a private meeting following a public revival

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[36] Charles L. Thompson, *Times of Refreshing: A History of American Revivals from 1740 to 1877, with Their Philosophy and Methods* (Rockford, IL: Golden Censer Co., 1878), 378.

[37] Thompson, *Times of Refreshing*, 378.

meeting, to be different in form from Jesus's meetings.[38] What connected them, for Thompson, was the common practice of identifying the state of the sinner through instruction and offering him counsel towards an immediate decision for salvation.[39]

NMRs also saw in Jesus's ministry what they perceived to be protracted meetings. In the same way that Gorham understood that the annual festivals of the Jews were God's approval of protracted meetings, he believed that Jesus's frequent withdrawals with the multitudes away from their homes into desert places for successive days engaged in the worship of God were also an affirmation of protracted meetings, specifically camp meetings given their remote nature.[40] Simeon Harkey, a Lutheran minister, noting that Jesus was constantly engaged in meetings day and night, exclaimed, "Indeed the Savior's whole ministerial life was one of intense excitement among the people. He held a 'protracted meeting' of more than three years continuance!"[41]

Pentecost

Enoch Pond, a Congregational minister, believed that during the period between Christ's ascension and Pentecost, approximately eight to ten days, the disciples held a protracted prayer meeting as they "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:14).[42] Following this period, the day of Pentecost arrived, and the believers gathered there were all filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1–4). They then began to speak in the tongues of other languages so that all present could hear in his own tongue. Some were amazed, but others presumed them to be drunk (Acts 2:5–13). This prompted Peter to preach to the crowd, resulting in about three-thousand conversions (Acts 2:14–41). On another day Peter preached resulting in

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[38] Thompson, *Times of Refreshing*, 379.

[39] Thompson, *Times of Refreshing*, 383.

[40] Gorham, *Camp Meeting Manual*, 38.

[41] Simeon W. Harkey, *The Church's Best State; Or Constant Revivals of Religion* (Baltimore: Lutheran Book Company, 1843), 54.

[42] Enoch Pond, *The Young Pastor's Guide; or Lectures on Pastoral Duties* (Bangor, ME: E. F. Duren, 1844), 175–76. All Scripture references, as it was the translation used by NMRs, are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

about five-thousand conversions (Acts 4:4). NMRs like Harkey considered Peter's sermons on the day of Pentecost and afterwards to result in "the greatest revival ever known."[43] Weiser said that it was protracted at least ten days.[44] Even after Pentecost, Pond considered the believers' continual daily gathering "with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house" (Acts 2:46) to be a protracted meeting.[45]

In addition to viewing the events at Pentecost as protracted meetings, Weiser argues that the apostles during Peter's sermon obviously made use of the bench system, to which the anxious seat belongs. It is unreasonable, he said, to think that Peter responded to those who had been awakened in Acts 2:37 with simply "repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."[46] To those who would argue that the Bible does not say the bench system was used, Weiser responded, "But does the Bible say it was not used?" He considered this to be an incompetent call to conversion if not more words than these were used; therefore, he assumed Peter along with the disciples must have included a form of the anxious seat for it to have had so much success.[47]

Paul's Ministry

Weiser found another form of the bench system in the NT in Paul's ministry. He says that the jailer who was holding Paul and Silas in Acts 16 was in the same mind as the five thousand converts after Pentecost.[48] After Paul and Silas had been singing and praying, an earthquake occurred, opening the prison doors and unfastening the prisoners' bonds. When the jailer rushed in upon hearing Paul's voice, he fell down before Paul and Silas, brought them out, and asked them what he must do to be saved. They instructed him and

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[43] Harkey, *The Church's Best State*, 54.

[44] Weiser, *The Mourner's Bench*, 29.

[45] Pond, *The Young Pastor's Guide*, 176.

[46] Weiser, *The Mourner's Bench*, 5.

[47] Weiser, *The Mourner's Bench*, 5.

[48] Weiser, *The Mourner's Bench*, 6. Interestingly Finney argues that it was the practice of new measures that resulted in Paul's and Silas's arrest (Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 248).

his household to believe in the Lord Jesus for salvation and be baptized at once (Acts 16:25–34). Because of the jailer's prostration and the immediacy of conversion, Weiser said that this was another form of the bench system.[49] Here he makes it clear that one can find precedent for the anxious seat in any event where an anxious sinner takes a physical posture of prostration and a charge towards immediate conversion is given.

On this occasion, Paul and Silas instructed the jailer and his family to baptized. Finney stated that the church has always needed something to serve the purpose of an immediate profession of faith. In instructing on the anxious seat, he reasoned:

> The church has always felt it necessary to have something of the kind to answer this very purpose. In the days of the apostles, baptism answered this purpose. The gospel was preached to the people, and then all those who were willing to be on the side of Christ were called on to be baptized. It held the precise place that the anxious seat does now, as a public manifestation of their determination to be Christians.[50]

Finney's explanation reveals that he understood the anxious seat to be synonymous in function to baptism in the first-century church.

One last connection the NMRs made to Paul was his ministry in Ephesus in Acts 19, when he preached in the Jewish synagogue for three months and the hall of Tyrranus for two years. "Here was an Apostolical protracted meeting, continuing, not for a few successive days," Pond said, "but with little cessation for two whole years."[51]

In summary, the NMRs saw precedent for all three new measures in the NT. The evangelistic conversations between Jesus and Nicodemus, the woman at the well, and the rich young ruler were forms of their own anxious meetings because of the two-fold goal of inquiring of their spiritual state and then instructing them to make an immediate decision. The times of gathering in Jesus's ministry, at Pentecost, and in Paul's ministry were forms of protracted meetings because of the successive nature of the meeting to discuss religion. The public calls to salvation in Peter's sermons following

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[49] Weiser, *The Mourner's Bench*, 6.
[50] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 248.
[51] Pond, *The Young Pastor's Guide*, 176.

Pentecost and in Paul's and Silas's instructions to the Philippian jailer were forms of the anxious seat because of the posture of prostration and the immediacy with which they urged conversion. Even when no example of the anxious seat was given in Scripture, they assumed it was used because words alone were insufficient.

Precedent in Church History

The type of precedent in which the NMRs saw their new measures in church history differed from that which they saw in the OT and NT. Whereas they understood their forms to be more closely related to the biblical events, their appeal to church history was in relationship to a precedent for successive degrees of new measures. In other words, the sixteenth-century Reformers and leaders of the First Great Awakening all practiced new measures with opposition to some degree, but by the early-to-mid-nineteenth century their methods were considered acceptable with the NMRs' methods now facing opposition.

Gallaher, in his fictional sketch "The Living and the Dead Prophets" based on true historical events, displays this shift well. In the first scene, set during Jesus's ministry, Annas and Caiaphas are venerating the prophet Elisha while deriding Jesus's works as disorderly, fanatical, extravagant, and unacceptably innovative.[52] The second scene, set in a church in Scotland in the sixteenth century, is a conversation between three churchmen, all of whom are troubled by the innovations of Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Knox, which undermine the past. The churchmen reminisce over the great work of the leaders of the NT church like Stephen, Peter, John, and Paul.[53] The third scene moves further ahead to 1742 to find three ministers critical of the modern excitements of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield who "wish to take the conversion of sinners into [their] own hands," while praising the previously mentioned men of the Reformation.[54] The final scene is set in the 1840s, about the time that Gallaher is writing this, and is a conversation between a young man and an aged man. The young man begins by venerating the men who

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[52] Gallaher, *The Western Sketch Book*, 177–83.
[53] Gallaher, *The Western Sketch Book*, 183–85.
[54] Gallaher, *The Western Sketch Book*, 185–86.

were at the forefront of the First Great Awakening but speaking derogatorily of the "modern revivals." The aged man, portrayed as being wise, speaks up and admonishes the young man by saying, "You have fallen into the common error of mankind, who eulogize and build the sepulcher of the prophet that is dead, while they stigmatize and reject the prophet that is living."[55] The aged man further explains that this pattern is of the same type that led the Jews to reject Jesus.[56] The point Gallaher attempts to make with this sketch is that the revivals of his day are no different in substance than those throughout the history of the church, therefore they should be accepted.

In response to Nevin's objection that the anxious seat, being only forty years in use, should be rejected as an innovation, Weiser said that to carry this principle out is to claim that the labor of Luther, Calvin, and Knox were all a farce and in vain.[57] In defending protracted meetings, Pond mentioned that it had long been a tradition for large churches to hold religious services every day throughout the season of Lent.[58] Furthermore, he stated that revivalists of the seventeenth century would preach daily in successive meetings in the same place.[59]

Finney, likewise, in explaining that new measures have arrived by a succession of degrees shows that the apostles uprooted the Jewish system, Luther and others reformed the Catholic Church, Wesley and Whitefield introduced new measures to the Episcopal Church, and Jonathan Edwards refused to baptize the children of ungodly parents.[60] He concludes by saying, "I mention it merely to show how identical is the opposition that is raised in different ages against all new measures designed to advance the cause of religion."[61]

Colton saw the new measures of the day so closely connected to that of a hundred years previous that he made no distinction between the revival that began in New England in the 1730s, claiming

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[55] Gallaher, *The Western Sketch Book*, 187.
[56] Gallaher, *The Western Sketch Book*, 186–93.
[57] Weiser, *The Mourner's Bench*, 14.
[58] Pond, *The Young Pastor's Guide*, 176.
[59] Pond, *The Young Pastor's Guide*, 177.
[60] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 240–42.
[61] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 242.

that for one hundred years revival has been uninterrupted.[62] If anything, the only difference he would attribute to the revivals of the day was that the current leaders have gained "the wisdom of a century's experience"[63] and are now "more educated and experienced in how to promote them."[64]

Not only did NMRs point back to leading figures in the church, but they also pointed out various practices that could be considered new measures as well: Sabbath-schools,[65] education and missionary societies,[66] reading sermons,[67] preaching without notes,[68] hymn and psalm books,[69] lining the hymns,[70] choirs,[71] pitch pipes,[72] instrumental music,[73] extemporary prayer,[74] and kneeling in prayer.[75]

In summary, NMRs saw the leaders and practices throughout church history as precedent for their new measures. While they often viewed their methods as forms of those that came before them, such as protracted meetings in the eighteenth century and in Lenten seasons and forms of the anxious seat in the Reformers and the First Great Awakening, most often they appealed to practices that were unlike their new measures, yet had the same qualification of innovation of their own practices and were found acceptable.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper I have sought to show that the NMRs' appeal to biblical and historical precedent as a defense of their new

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[62] Colton, *History and Character of American Revivals of Religion*, 159–60.

[63] Colton, *History and Character of American Revivals of Religion*, 192.

[64] Colton, *History and Character of American Revivals of Religion*, 83–84.

[65] Harkey, *The Church's Best State*, 110.

[66] Harkey, *The Church's Best State*, 111.

[67] Weiser, *The Mourner's Bench*, 22.

[68] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 238.

[69] Weiser, *The Mourner's Bench*, 22; Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 236.

[70] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 236.

[71] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 237.

[72] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 237.

[73] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 237.

[74] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 238.

[75] Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 238.

measures revealed that they believed them to be new in form only. Often, they would argue that their measures were not novelties or innovations, that they "have been continued, in one form or another, through almost every period of the church's history."[76] To demonstrate this I have shown their appeal to the OT, NT, and church history.

The NMRs saw forms of their protracted meetings in the feasts of Passover, Tabernacles, and Pentecost. They also believed the preaching ministries of Jesus, the apostles, Paul, and the First Great Awakening to be protracted meetings. The successive nature of these events, with consecutive gatherings of days, weeks, and even years, is the form that caused them to claim precedent for their own protracted meetings. Because they understood the anxious meeting to include the actions of discerning the state of the anxious and to instruct the individual towards immediate conversion, they believed any evangelistic conversation to be a form of the anxious meeting; therefore, Jesus's many conversations with unbelievers served as a form of this meeting. The current form of the anxious seat for the NMRs was a section of seats or pews set aside within the public evangelistic meeting for the purpose of calling the anxious forward so that they could be led to immediate conversion. The form in which they found precedent was in the context of a public evangelistic meeting and the purpose of calling the sinner to immediate conversion. According to the NMRs, this form could be seen in Peter's sermons following Pentecost, the apostles' practice of Baptism, and in Paul's and Silas's instructions to the Philippian Jailer and his family. The NMRs appeal to church history primarily served to show how their new measures arrived by a succession of developments over time and how they have always existed in a variety of forms. These defenses of their new measures based on precedent indeed shows that the NMRs believed their measures to be new in their current form only, having been practiced with a common foundation throughout biblical and church history.

My intent here was to more clearly elucidate the NMRs' argument in defense of their measures so that the measures may be honestly assessed. Such a careful assessment is important since, as McLoughlin rightly observes, NMRs' methods "transformed 'the

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[76] Pond, *The Young Pastor's Guide*, 175.

new system' from a minority to a majority religion. By mid-century it was in fact the national religion in the United States."[77] Churches that have inherited practices from NMRs but that wish to remain faithful to biblical prescription need to carefully consider whether these new measures actually find precedent in Scripture and church history.

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[77] McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism*, 66.

On the Decline of "Unmodified" Psalmody in the English Tradition: A Question of Hermeneutics and Ecclesiastical Mission

Mark A. Snoeberger[1]

Examining the indices of historical English songbooks used for worship is an enlightening exercise. One is overwhelmed, especially in the oldest of these, by (1) the preference for (and sometimes the exclusivity of) the psalms and other inspired material and (2) the prominence of the themes of lament and the crucible of experience in both inspired and non-inspired hymnody. While the Christian gospel is not absent in older hymnals, neither is it dominant: (3) the theme of divine providence takes pride of place and evangelical truth is to be inferred. This article explores historical reasons why these features have faded from English hymnody. Its conclusion is that the decline of unmodified psalms (and with them the themes of lament and providence) and the corresponding uptick in evangelical psalmody, original hymnody, and more buoyant lyrical themes stem from troubling hermeneutical and missional developments with respect to gathered worship.

That the Hebrew psalms are mandatory of Christian worship cannot be credibly denied (Col 3:16; Eph 5:19). The church cannot obey God without singing them.[2] Nor do we find any express reason in the Scriptures to exclude any of the Hebrew psalms—they are *all*

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[2] Paul's use of the term ψαλμοῖς in Eph 5:19 and Col 3:16 points with near certainty to the OT Hebrew psalms, as the term finds virtually no representation outside a Jewish context. We may rightly question what qualifies as a "hymn" or a "song," but the psalms are plainly identifiable as the 150 canonical psalms. We must sing them.

appropriate to Christian worship. It is true, of course, that affections of longing engendered by certain forward-looking psalms may evoke today affections of relief and delight in their fulfillment; psalms of confidence may become more emphatic as elements of faith become sight; and outmoded cultic and cultural elements in the psalms may invite analogical application (e.g., the believer finds his modern trials embodied in David's wilderness experiences). Still, all in all, the OT psalms remain incredibly timeless as they stand written—a fact emphatically reinforced in the hymnody of early church history. The Hebrew psalms are as much the property of contemporary Christianity as they were of ancient Israel.

The reason that this is true, it would seem, is that the general *experience of faith* (e.g., new life, conversion, justification, sanctification, assurance, and hope for resurrection) is identical for both the OT and NT faith communities. It is true that the respective faith *expressions* of these two communities featured some disparity, but the essence of their faith, the object of their faith, the crucible of their faith (depravity, finiteness, persecution, etc.), and the hopeful end of their faith was the same. And for these reasons, the psalms of God's more ancient people are of equal profit for his contemporary people.

The progress of revelation and especially Christ's historical accomplishments suggest, perhaps, that there is abundant fodder for additional hymns in the present age—and it is possible that the NT included poetic devices to this end (Phil 2:5–11; Col 1:15–20; 1 Pet 2:21–25; etc.).[3] Some suggest further that Paul's allowance not only for "psalms" but also for "hymns" and "spiritual songs" anticipates original hymnody, identifying two other categories of worship music.[4] The relative paucity of such hymns in the early centuries of the

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[3] I hesitate to identify these as congregational hymns, because we simply don't know that this is what they were. They may simply be mnemonic devices for public and private use in creeds, catechisms, and the like.

[4] Clint Arnold, for instance, notes that, unlike the term ψαλμοῖς in Ephesians 5:19, the terms ὕμνοις and ᾠδαῖς have Gentile antecedents, and thus that Paul was legitimating Gentile, even pagan musical elements in NT hymnody, repurposed for Christian themes (*Ephesians*, ZECNT [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 353; Barry Leish, *The New Worship: Straight Talk on Music and the Church*, exp. ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001], 41). Others see in these terms diverse *functions*: respectively, songs of praise/prayer, doctrine, and the Christian experience (e.g., Donald P. Hustad, *Jubilate II: Church Music in Worship and Renewal* [Wheaton: Hope, 1993], 146). Still others see in these terms diversities of *style* (Bob Kauflin, *Worship*

Church suggests, however, that caution was the order of the day: the early Church used primarily psalms in gathered worship.[5]

The Reformation and English Psalmody

After the Medieval period, in which choral music largely displaced congregational singing, the latter was revived, and with this revival, the trend (albeit uneven) toward caution. Luther, true to his normative principles, allowed and even composed original hymns; still, his creativity was tempered, and his compositions were rarely divorced entirely from inspired material.[6] John Calvin was more severe, but never properly forbade the practice of original hymn-writing, and is even credited with at least one original hymn of his own

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Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God [Wheaton: Crossway, 2008], 104). While all of these offer reasons for Paul's use of three terms rather than one, I am troubled by the anachronism and circular reasoning in these and other popular treatments (i.e., "By approving of ὕμνοις and ᾠδαῖς, Paul has legitimized my favorite contemporary novelties").

The best of minds suggest instead that firm distinctions of content/style cannot be definitely made (so F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984], 158; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 395; Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002], 710; Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008], 289;—though, oddly, all four of these commentators, having denied that firm distinctions between the terms can be made, all spend time attempting to do so). James D. G. Dunn suggests that the first two terms are synonyms, but cannot countenance Paul's "needlessly tautologous" use of *three* synonyms, so hazards that the last term references charismatic worship, possibly inspired and even glossolalic in nature (*The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 238–39). Andrew Lincoln (*Ephesians*, WBC [Nashville: Word, 1990], 361) and Frank Thielman (*Ephesians*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010], 346) argue contrarily that Paul's penchant for redundancy—frequently in the form of triplets—offers good evidence for the synonymy of the three terms.

For a helpful summary of the debate, see Scott Aniol, "Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: Assessing the Debate," *Artistic Theologian* 6 (2018): 13–18.

[5] Among many others, see Hughes Oliphant Old, *Worship: Reformed according to Scripture* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2002), 36–40.

[6] Luther's most enduring hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," for instance, is a loose but consistent rendition of Psalm 46. This loose dependence on inspired material is a hallmark of Luther's hymnody.

(though its provenance and purpose are much debated).[7] While the 1539 edition of the Genevan Psalter, prepared under Calvin's direction, contained only psalms and sundry other biblical songs, later editions contained several original hymns.[8] Still, while Calvin's name cannot be included emphatically among the exclusive psalmodists, his caution on the matter prompted many in succeeding generations of Reformed to adopt exclusive psalmody as the most defensible way to implement the regulative principle of worship and to divorce their liturgy from Rome's. This pattern dominated continental Reformed life for nearly two centuries, and spread therefrom to England, where it took firm root especially in Puritan worship.[9]

By the 1560s, several English psalters had emerged, none more revered than the *Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter* (1562), often called the "old psalter," which was frequently published together with the *Book of Common Prayer* in a single volume. Hermeneutical

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[7] A few years ago, a hymn ostensibly written by Calvin, "I Greet Thee Who My Sure Redeemer Art," became a popular repast for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The poetry is ancient, first appearing in French (*Je Te salue, mon certain Rédempteur*) in the 1545 Strasbourg Psalter *La forme des prières et chants ecclésiastiques* used, among others, by John Knox. Further discovery of the poem in an "old Genevese prayer book" (so Philip Schaff, *Christ in Song* [New York: Anson D. F. Randolph and Co., 1868], 678) may suggest earlier and Calvinist provenance, but this is not verifiable. It was not until 1867 that the poem was attributed to Calvin and included in his Strasbourg *Works* (6:23). This dubious attribution was cemented in the *Presbyterian Hymnal* (1869, no. 457), whereafter it became known as "Calvin's Hymn."

[8] The *Aulcuns Pseaulmes et cantiques mys en chant* first appeared in 1539 and was revised and/or expanded four times during Calvin's lifetime (minor revisions in 1542 and 1543; major revisions in 1551 and 1562), the last of which saw all 150 Hebrew psalms represented. The fourth edition (1551) contained "Calvin's Hymn" and also, for the first time, the venerable rendition of "Old Hundredth" so deeply cherished still by a great many of God's people.

We should note, however, that the Genevan psalter had a function greater than public worship. It also supplied fodder for private use by Christian families. It is possible that the original hymns in the Genevan psalter were restricted to the latter function. If this is the case, then Calvin's exclusive psalmodist credentials, *at least in terms of public worship*, may be restored.

[9] Anglicanism was slow to abandon many of the ceremonial forms and clerical hierarchy common in Romanism. Laudian or "High Church" Anglicanism perpetuated this trend through the eighteenth century and cultivated a robust choral element in worship, including both chanted psalms and original anthems. The "Low Church" tradition, with its evangelical interests and antipathy toward ceremony, embraced original hymnody from its inception.

strictness marked the "old psalter," and became a defining hallmark of early seventeenth-century psalters, including, among others, the *Scottish Psalter* (1635) and *Bay Psalm Book* (1640), the latter distinguished as the first work published in the Americas. John Cotton's preface to the latter is instructive. In it Cotton admits that the psalm settings found in the *Bay Psalm Book* "are not always so smooth and elegant as some may desire or expect," but defends this shortcoming on the principle that "God's altar needs not our polishings: for we have respected rather a plain translation, than to smooth our verses with the sweetness of any paraphrases and so have attended conscience rather than elegance, fidelity rather than poetry, in translating the Hebrew words into English language, and David's poetry into English metre."[10]

In 1647 the Westminster Assembly approved the *Directory for the Publick Worship of God* to replace the *Book of Common Prayer* in the churches represented in that Assembly. In it, the Westminster divines offered additional parameters for the singing of psalms:

> It is the duty of Christians to praise God publickly, by singing of psalms together in the congregation, and also privately in the family.

> In singing of psalms, the voice is to be tunably and gravely ordered; but the chief care must be to sing with understanding, and with grace in the heart, making melody unto the Lord.

> That the whole congregation may join herein, every one that can read is to have a psalm book; and all others, not disabled by age or otherwise, are to be exhorted to learn to read. But for the present, where many in the congregation cannot read, it is convenient that the minister, or some other fit person appointed by him and the other ruling officers, do read the psalm, line by line, before the singing thereof.[11]

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[10] Available at https://www.wdl.org/en/item/3600/view/1/21/.

[11] *A Directory for Publique Worship of God throughout the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Together with an Ordinance of Parliament for the Taking away of the Book of Common Prayer, and for Establishing and Observing of this Present*

The *Directory* made no allowance for singing anything other than psalms and offered two key recommendations, viz., (1) that the music be "gravely ordered" and (2) that unfamiliar psalms be introduced to congregations by "lining them out." Neither piece of advice was wholly embraced. Not only did the insistence on *gravity* of mood (which some churches read not as a call for sobriety, but as a call for *morbidity*) meet with resistance, but the experiment with "lining out" was often implemented poorly.

These factors proved a catalyst for discontent and reform, and in 1696 a psalter more vernacular and graceful in the ear was published by Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady, viz., the *New Version of the Psalms of David Fitted to the Tunes Used in the Churches* (sometimes called "Tate and Brady" or, more simply, the "new psalter"). But dissatisfaction with the "old psalter" ran deeper than mere style and mood. In the 1698 and 1700 reprintings of the "new psalter," a supplement of hymns was added, the firstfruits of what Robin Leaver calls the "hymn explosion."[12] In 1701, a supplementary volume of hymns was added even to the venerable "old psalter."[13]

The Collapse of English Exclusive Psalmody

The trend observed in the "new psalter" and its supplement did not occur in a vacuum, and broad acceleration away from older and especially exclusive praxis of psalmody was swift. Influences toward this change were legion, but two stand out: (1) criticism of exclusive psalmody among English dissenters (Baptists and other Independents), leading to revision both in the *interpretation* and *function* of psalms in gathered worship; and (2) the rise of evangelicalism in

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Directory throughout the Kingdome of England and the Dominion of Wales (London: T. R. and E. M. Company of Stationers, 1651), 55–56 (available at books.google.com).

[12] Robin Leaver, "The Hymn Explosion," *Christian History*, no. 31 (1991): 14–17.

[13] *The Divine Companion; or, David's Harp New Tun'd. Being a Choice Collection of New and Easy Psalms, Hymns, and Anthems. The Words of the Psalms Being Collected from the Newest Versions. Compos'd by the Best Masters and Fitted for the Use of Those Who Already Understand Mr. John Playford's Psalms in Three Parts. To Be Used in Churches or Private Families, for Their Greater Advancement of Divine Music* (London: J. Robinson, 1701).

the English-speaking world, including suspicion of formalism, fervent pietism, and evangelical missionism.

Baptist Dissent and Acceptance of Original Hymnody

The genesis of English original hymnody is almost impossible to trace. Folk hymnody extends back into the Medieval period and was often preserved orally (which is to say it was often not preserved at all). Early notables in the Modern era include George Wither (1588–1667) and George Herbert (1593–1633); neither, however, composed hymns that were used (at least in their day) for congregational singing.[14] John Austin, John Playford, and John Mason prepared hymnals in 1668, 1671, and 1683, respectively, but these were critically received and used in public worship only sparingly and regionally.[15]

A major "breakthrough" in popularizing original hymns for use by English congregations came at the hand of the Baptist minister Benjamin Keach. Keach began composing hymns as early as 1673, and slowly introduced them in his church, first conjoined with the ordinances (important matters that distinguished the Baptists from other Protestants and not discoverable in the Hebrew Psalms), and then more broadly.[16] In 1689, Keach sued for accommodation of the

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[14] In 1622, Wither received a patent from King James I to publish some of his original hymns (*Hymnes and Songs of the Church*) together with the *Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter* in a single volume. The furor raised by this unwarranted royal intrusion into ecclesiastical life, however, added to the scandal of the hymns themselves, all but guaranteeing their exclusion from public worship. James I later revoked the patent, resulting in Wither's financial ruin. Herbert's poems were not immediately set to music, and when they were, tended to choral anthems.

[15] For a great many obscure details on these and other early attempts to introduce original hymnody to the English-speaking church, see Louis F. Benson, *The English Hymn: Its Development and Use* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915), 19–107. In Benson's estimation, by pushing too hard for the use of hymns in worship, "the actual influence [of these early hymnals] was by way of prolonging the period of Psalm singing" (182).

[16] Joseph Boyse followed this pattern as well, publishing a hymnal in 1693 containing strictly paraphrased Scriptures—save one original hymn: a hymn on baptism by immersion. Joseph Stennett, a seventh-day Baptist, did the same, releasing a collection of Lord's Supper hymns in 1697 and a collection of baptism hymns in 1712.

practice in the proceedings that resulted in the Second London Baptist Confession. The Baptist confession, which preserved verbatim large swaths of the 1646 Westminster Confession of Faith, expressly modified the latter's liturgical injunction for congregations to engage strictly in "singing of psalms with grace in the heart"[17] to the broader (but still biblical) "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord."[18]

In 1691 Keach published an extended defense of original hymnody: *The Breach Repaired in God's Worship; or, Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, proved to be an Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ*,[19] a definitive treatment that paved the way not only for the publication of Keach's own hymnal,[20] but others as well, notably one by Richard Baxter.[21] It must be stressed that Keach continued to privilege the psalms in worship and did not engage, like Isaac Watts later would, in denigrating, rewriting, and omitting certain psalms from NT worship (many Baptists, such as John Gill, in fact, maintained the practice of exclusive psalmody); still, Keach represents a significant hole in the dike of exclusive psalmody in the English Calvinist tradition. The controversy that ensued was widespread and heated, especially within the dissenting church, but eventually beyond. Competing essays on the topic were exchanged over the next two decades,[22] and crested with a very civil Friday lecture series in Eastcheap (1708), sponsored by a mixed body of Presbyterians and Independents, that effectively conceded the fact that original hymns were not going

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Boyse's hymnal is often recognized as the first Baptist hymnal, but wrongly on both counts. Keach's hymnal was released earlier, and Boyse remained resolutely Presbyterian until his death (Benson, *The English Hymn*, 100).

[17] *Westminster Confession of Faith* 21.5.

[18] *Second London Baptist Confession* 22.5.

[19] (Southwark: For the Author, 1691).

[20] Benjamin Keach, *Spiritual Melody, Containing Near Three Hundred Sacred Hymns* (London: Printed for John Hancock, 1691).

[21] Richard Baxter, *Paraphrase on the Psalms of David in Metre, with Other Hymns* (London: Printed for Thomas Parkhurst and Jonathan Robinson, 1692).

[22] For a detailing of these, see James Hamilton, *Psalter and Hymn Book: Three Lectures* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1865), 65–67; also Benson, *The English Hymn*, 97–106.

away, and charted a course for cautiously *including* and *regulating* rather than *resisting* them.[23]

It was in the midst of this extended controversy, instigated significantly by Keach, that Isaac Watts's philosophy of hymnody was incubated.

Radical Reformed Influences on Psalmody

While the German practice of original hymnody began centuries before the Reformation, Jan Hus and Thomas Münster are often identified as the earliest to publish vernacular hymn collections, and rank among the primary influences on Luther to do the same.[24] The same impulse that encouraged vernacular Bible translation among these pre-Reformers also encouraged vernacular hymnody—hymnody that borrowed not only the distinctive *tunes* of the Germanic peoples, but also original *lyrics*.

The popularity of German original hymnody expanded with its approval by Luther, but rapidly accelerated beyond the continent in the early eighteenth century in the Pietist movement, which in 1704 produced a hymnal, edited by Johann Freylinghausen (at the behest of his father-in-law, August Hermann Francke, a leading light in the Pietist movement): *Geistreiches Gesangbuch*.[25] The world was introduced to Pietist hymnody through the missionary efforts of the *Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine*, under the guidance (and considerable financial backing) of Nikolaus Ludwig, Reichsgraf von Zinzendorf. The primitive influence of Zinzendorf's parents toward Pietism was confirmed in Zinzendorf's youth.[26] A lad of deep feeling, Zinzendorf began writing poems to Jesus at age six, many of which were set to

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[23] See Benson, *The English Hymn*, 89–90; The original 1708 publication of these lectures, *Practical Discourses of Singing in the Worship of God; Preach'd at the Friday Lecture in Eastcheap*, by several ministers (London: Printed by J. Darby for N. Cliff) has been republished many times.

[24] Kenneth H. Marcus, "Hymnody and Hymnals in Basel, 1526–1606," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 32 (2001): 730.

[25] (Halle: In Verlegung des Wassenhausen). A 1734 ed. is available at books.google.com.

[26] Zinzendorf's godfather was Philipp Jakob Spener, a leading representative of continental Pietism; Zinzendorf was also schooled at Francke Foundations in Halle (founded by the aforementioned August Hermann Francke).

tunes. As he grew into young adulthood, Zinzendorf, moved by the terrible suffering that many of his sectarian brothers were enduring at the hands of Reformed and Romanist magistrates alike, established at Herrnhut a "brotherhood" (a.k.a., the *Unitas Fratrum*, later the Moravian Church) where he welcomed Bohemians (Hussites), Moravians, Schwenkfelders, and other disenfranchised Protestant sectarians. These he invited to recuperate, but not to remain in the sanctuary of the brotherhood; instead, he both encouraged and financed their dispersal throughout Europe to effect revivals of true religion among the impious, and throughout the world to seek conversions among the heathen. Zinzendorf supplied not only financial backing, but also literature for his missionaries, maintaining a printing press to publish vernacular Bibles, tracts, and hymnals for their use. Herein lie the truest roots of the evangelical movement—a movement marked from the beginning by evangelistic hymnody, that is, *hymnody designed to promote and compel faith in the Christian Gospel*. That is to say, the hymns were designed to complement Gospel preaching *in churches* to the *unconverted*. This was a novel function of music in the gathered church, and one absent in the Hebrew Psalter.

The most famous effect of Moravian piety and evangelistic hymnody in the English world was that influenced upon John Wesley, whose 1736 spiritual awakening and eventual conversion occurred under Moravian influence, especially their piety and song. John determined to bring his experience to the whole English-speaking world, and with the help of his brothers (chiefly Charles, who wrote more than 6500 original hymns), eventually succeeded. Developing hymns as "creeds . . . in witness to the world,"[27] Wesleyan hymnody began modestly,[28] but eventually rode four waves of evangelical awakening in England and in the Americas to a place of prominence.[29] John Wesley did not discount the use of psalms (indeed, he

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[27] Old, *Worship*, 51.

[28] John Wesley's first hymnal, published in Charlestown in 1737, was poorly received and largely forgotten. His bark rose, however, on the wake of Whitefield's preaching.

[29] George Whitefield's advocacy of hymns in the colonies, beginning in 1738, is isolated by David Music as the "key event in introducing hymnody into American churches." "Whitefield championed Watts's hymns," Music notes, because they "were better suited than the metrical psalms to his fervid style of preaching." In less than two years, both Watts's and Wesley's hymns had gone through several printings in the colonies. By 1742, Jonathan Edwards would

published many of his own adaptations); however, he wrote psalms in the habit of Isaac Watts (discussed below), incurring the wrath of many in his own tradition, including that of his own brother Samuel.[30] Like Watts, Wesley's musical fame rests almost entirely on his original hymns.[31]

Isaac Watts's Severe Modification of English Psalmody

No figure looms larger in challenging the Reformed consensus on psalmody, however, than Isaac Watts. Watts's innovation was threefold: he (1) improved the English poetry of the standard psalms of the day (at the expense, some argued, of their clarity); (2) updated the psalms in light of the NT Scriptures and especially of Christ's first advent; and (3) defended the composition of original, uninspired hymns — of which he wrote hundreds.[32]

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complain that his church had an appetite for nothing else ("America's Hesitation over Hymns," *Christian History*, no. 31 [1991]: 27).

[30] Samuel wrote the following poem in opposition to the Christianizing of the Psalms (*Poems on Several Occasions* [London: E. Say, 1736], 242–43):

> Has David Christ to come foreshowed? Can Christians then aspire,
>   To mend the harmony that flowed From his prophetic lyre?
> How curious are their wits and vain, Their erring zeal how bold,
>   Who durst with meaner dross profane His purity of gold!
> His Psalms unchanged the saints employ, Unchanged our God applies;
>   They suit th' Apostles in their joy, The Saviour when He dies.
> Let David's pure unaltered lays Transmit through ages down,
>   To Thee, O David's Lord, our praise, To Thee, O David's Son!
> Till judgment calls the seraph throng To join the human choir,
>   And God, who gave the ancient song, The new one shall inspire.

[31] Watts and Wesley did not share identical philosophies of hymnody, but their legacy of supplanting inspired psalmody hymnody with original hymnody was shared. For a fascinating contrast of Watts's and Wesley's hymnody, see Benjamin A. Kolodziej, "Isaac Watts, the Wesleys, and the Evolution of 18th-Century Congregational Song," *Methodist History* 42 (July 2004): 236–48.

[32] Watts did not pioneer these ideas. He claimed as a precedent one John Patrick, whose 1679 *Century of Select Psalms and Portions of the Psalms of David, Especially Those of Praise* was seminal. Watts, however, was more progressive and popular than Patrick (see the discussion in Benson, *The English Hymn*, 52ff).

A story from Watts's youth offers an early glimpse into Watts's philosophy of church hymnody. While still living with his parents, Isaac ostensibly complained to his father about the terrible songs they used in worship at their Southampton church. Upon being rebuked by his father and challenged to do better, young Isaac reportedly wrote an original hymn, "Behold the Glories of the Lamb," based loosely on Revelation 5. Young Isaac's rebellion was thereafter met not with rebuke, but with praise, and he was emboldened to write many more such hymns.[33] In short order he had written over two hundred, which he published in 1707 in a volume titled *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. "Behold the Glories of the Lamb" was the first song in this collection.

Watts's tensions with the psalms of his day ran far deeper, however, than merely bad poetry and tepid presentation. His concern was also *hermeneutical*. He believed the psalms to be written for another dispensation, and that they were thus of limited value for the New Testament believer.[34] In the preface to his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, Watts wrote:

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[33] The original accounting of this story rests, by the author's frank admission, on hearsay (Thomas Gibbons, *Memoirs of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D. D.* [London: James Buckland, 1780]: 254), but has been variously but relentlessly retold by Watts's modern hagiographers. Sometimes the story is set in 1690, other times in 1694; often the story is embellished with conflicting bits of dialogue (see, e.g., David G. Fountain, *Isaac Watts Remembered* [Southampton: Mayflower Christian Bookshop, 1974], 34; N. A. Woychuk, *The Poetic Interpretation of the Psalms, with a Biography of Watts* [St. Louis: Miracle Press, 1974], 238; Douglas Bond, *The Poetic Wonder of Isaac Watts* [Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust, 2013], 15; Graham Beynon, *Isaac Watts: His Life and Thought* [Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2013], 22; Philip Moyer, "Isaac Watts and the Death of Psalmody," Clearnote Songbook blog entry, June 4, 2015, available at http://clearnotesongbook.com/blog/ 2015/06/isaac-watts-and-death-psalmody). The tale may be mythical, but it has a ring of truth that has convinced many of Watts's biographers to retell it as history.

[34] By using the term *dispensation*, I do not suppose that Watts was a dispensationalist, as some do (see, e.g., Robin A. Leaver, "Isaac Watts's Hermeneutical Principles and the Decline of English Metrical Psalmody," *Churchman* 92 [1978]: 58). Such an identification is anachronistic and based on credentials far too narrow to place him in the dispensational fold. Watts's Christological hermeneutic, view of Israel as typological of the Church, and commitment to the Covenant of Redemption as the governing basis for redemptive history place him firmly outside the dispensational camp (for a demonstration of this see Scott Aniol, "Was Isaac Watts a Proto-Dispensationalist?" *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 16 [2011]: 91–112). The theory that the Hebrew Bible belongs

The Gospel brings us nearer to the heavenly State than all the former Dispensations of God amongst Men: And in these last Days of the Gospel we are brought almost within Sight of the Kingdom of our Lord; yet we are very much unacquainted with the Songs of the New Jerusalem, and unpracticed in the Work of Praise. To see the dull Indifference, the negligent and the thoughtless Air that sits upon the Faces of a whole Assembly, while the Psalm is on their Lips, might tempt even a charitable Observer to suspect the Fervency of inward Religion. . . . Of all our Religious Solemnities *Psalmody* is the most unhappily managed: That very action which should elevate us to the most delightful and divine Sensations, doth not only flatten our Devotion, but too often awakens our Regret, and touches all the Springs of Uneasiness within us.

I have been long convinced, that one great Occasion of this Evil arises from the Matter and Words to which we confine all our Songs. Some of them are almost opposite to the Spirit of the Gospel: Many of them foreign to the State of the New Testament, and widely different from the present Circumstances of Christians. Hence it comes to pass, that when spiritual Affections are excited within us, and our Souls are raised a little above this Earth in the beginning of a Psalm, we are checked on a sudden in our Ascent toward Heaven, by some Expressions that are most suitable to the Days of *Carnal Ordinances*, and fit only to be sung in the *Worldly Sanctuary*. When we are just entering into an Evangelic Frame by some of the Glories of the Gospel presented in the brightest Figures of Judaism, yet the very next Line perhaps which the Clerk parcels out unto us, hath something in it so extremely Jewish and cloudy, that darkens our Sight of God the Saviour: Thus by keeping too close to David in the House of God, the Veil of Moses is thrown over our Hearts. While we are kindling into divine Love by the Meditations of the *Loving-Kindness of God,*

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principally to OT Israel and the Greek Bible principally to the NT Church is an aberration that has surfaced periodically throughout the whole history of the church, and has sometimes, admittedly, found expression in dispensational life, but it is neither essential nor unique to that system. As a dispensationalist myself I grant no credence to this theory.

and the Multitude of his tender Mercies, within a few Verses some dreadful Curse against Men is proposed to our Lips; that God *would add Iniquity unto their Iniquity, nor let them come into his Righteousness, but blot them out of the Book of the Living*, Psal. 69, 16, 27–28. which is so contrary to the New Commandment, of *loving our Enemies*; and even under the Old Testament is best accounted for, by referring it to the Spirit of Prophetic Vengeance. Some Sentences of the Psalmist, that are expressive of the Temper of our own Hearts, and the Circumstances of our Lives may compose our Spirits to Seriousness, and allure us to a sweet Retirement within ourselves; but we meet with a following Line, which so peculiarly belongs but to one Action or Hour of the Life of David or of *Asaph*, that breaks off our Song in the Midst; and our Consciences are affrighted, lest we should speak a Falsehood unto God: Thus the Powers of our Souls are shocked on a sudden, and our Spirits ruffled before we have Time to reflect that this may be sung only as a History of ancient Saints; and perhaps in some Instances that Salvo is hardly sufficient neither: Besides, it almost always spoils the Devotion, by breaking the uniform Thread of it; For while our Lips and our Hearts run on sweetly together, applying the Words to our own Case, there is something of divine Delight in it; but at once we are forced to turn off the Application abruptly, and our Lips speak nothing but the Heart of David. Thus our own Hearts are as it were forbid the Pursuit of the Song, and then the Harmony and the Worship grow dull of mere Necessity.

Many Ministers, and many private Christians, have long groaned under this Inconvenience; and have wished, rather than attempted a Reformation: At their importunate and repeated Requests I have for some Years past devoted many Hours of Leisure to this Service. Far be it from my Thoughts to lay aside the Book of *Psalms* in public Worship; few can pretend so great a Value for them as myself: It is the most noble, most devotional, and divine Collection of Poesy; and nothing can be supposed more proper to raise a pious Soul to Heaven, than some Parts of that Book; never was a piece of Experimental Divinity so nobly written, and so justly

reverenced and admired: But it must be acknowledged still, that there are a thousand Lines in it which were not made for a Church in our Days to assume as its own.[35]

Note some of the specific hermeneutical concerns Watts had. First, Watts doubted that all the psalms are "divine," but rather contained many words of strictly human origin ("nothing but the Heart of David") that were not appropriate to worship *even in the OT economy*, much less that in the NT Church. Second, Watts asserted that some of the material expressed in the psalms is "opposite to the Spirit of the Gospel," and that the faith expressions of OT saints reflected in the Psalms were "carnal" and "worldly." Note that Watts viewed the OT liturgical expressions not merely as antiquated—he calls them *worldly* and *carnal*, suggesting that theirs was an experience of Law alone, devoid of the grace of gospel. Thirdly, Watts suggested that many of the sentiments expressed in the Hebrew Psalms were "contrary to the New Commandment *of loving our Enemies*," and "Falsehood unto God." Watts approved joyful psalms about God's "Mercies" and "Loving-kindness," but forbade all imprecation (repeating of divine "Curses") as "unrighteous" and "vengeful." Fourthly and summarily, Watts cast aspersions on a substantial percentage of the Hebrew psalms. Only "Parts" of the corpus might be salvaged; indeed, among the 2,461 verses in the Psalms, Watts found "a thousand Lines . . . which were not made for a Church in our Days to assume as its own." It is little wonder, then, that the church became "affrighted" to sing them!

Watts proposed that parts of the psalms be recovered by means of "Paraphrase": their "dark Expressions enlightened, and the Levitical Ceremonies, and Hebrew Forms of Speech changed into the Worship of the Gospel, and explained in the Language of our Time and Nation; and what would not bear such an Alteration is omitted and laid aside. After this Manner, should I rejoice to see a good Part of the Book of Psalms fitted for the Use of our Churches, and David converted into a Christian."[36] Again, only a "good Part" of the

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[35] I cite for this section (incidentally, the oldest volume in my personal library), a 1789 London printing of Watts's *Hymns and Spiritual Songs in Three Books*, new ed., corrected, iii–vi.

[36] Watts, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, ix.

Psalms could be salvaged, but a greater part, apparently, than could be used before Watts paraphrased them.

Watts also included an extended appendix to his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* titled "A Short Essay Toward the Improvement of Psalmody Or, An Enquiry How the Psalms of David Ought to Be Translated into Christian Songs, and How Lawful and Necessary It Is to Compose Other Hymns According to the Clearer Revelations of the Gospel, for the Use of the Christian Church." This essay (together with all of the psalms) was removed in all subsequent printings of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, then, in 1719, substantially updated as a preface for Watts's complete psalter, *Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament and Applied to the Christian State and Worship*.[37] In these essays, Watts doubled down on the principles outlined in his 1707 preface, calling for the omission of "worldly" and "carnal" elements in the psalms, and identifying whole psalms that could not be "accommodated to our times."[38] He further (and continuing our enumeration above, fifthly), rejected the hermeneutical principle of originalism, opining that the psalms "ought to be translated in such a Manner as we have reason to believe David would have compos'd 'em had he lived in our Day."[39] He suggested, for instance, that "Judah and Israel may be called England and Scotland, and the Land of Canaan may be translated into Great Britain."[40] Sixthly, Watts added a new and troubling hermeneutical feature, calling for a greater incidence of joy, praise, and thanksgiving in contemporary song than is found in the Psalms, criticizing the OT penchant for lament as a relic of times "when the Saints were kept in hard Bondage, and had not half so much Occasion for Praise."[41]

Watts's greatest concern, however, and seventhly, was that the psalms needed to be *Christianized*, that is, subjected to an extreme Christological hermeneutic and "omitted and laid aside . . . [all] . . . that cannot bear such an Alteration."[42] To this end Watts appealed repeatedly to Psalm 2 as his prime exemplar. Note how he adapted this psalm:

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[37] (London: J. Clark, R. Ford, and R. Crittenden), iii–xxx.

[38] "A Short Essay Toward the Improvement of Psalmody," 247.

[39] Watts, "A Short Essay," 252.

[40] Watts, "A Short Essay," 246.

[41] Watts, "A Short Essay," 264.

[42] Preface to Watts's *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, ix.

1 Why did the Jews proclaim their rage,
    The Romans, why their swords employ
  Against the LORD their pow'rs engage,
    His dear anointed to destroy?

2 "Come, let us break his bands," they say,
    "This man shall never give us laws";
  And thus they cast his yoke away,
    And nailed the monarch to the cross.

3 But GOD who high in glory reigns,
    Laughs at their pride, their rage controls;
  He'll vex their hearts with inward pains,
    And speak in thunder to their souls.

4 "I will maintain the king I made
    On Zion's everlasting hill;
  "My hand shall bring him from the dead,
    And he shall stand your sov'reign still."

5 His wond'rous rising from the earth,
    Makes his eternal Godhead known;
  The LORD declares his heav'nly birth,
    "This day have I begot my Son."

6 "Ascend, my Son, to my right hand,
    There thou shalt ask, and I bestow,
  "The utmost bounds of heathen lands;
    To thee the Northern Isles shall bow."

From this versification, we find good illustration of Watts's plan to "Christianize" the psalms. Watts applied the psalm *strictly* to Christ, stripping it of all possible application to the Davidide generally, much less to the experiences of the broader community of faith. The psalm ceased to be a celebration of God's sovereignty and providence in the world at large, and reduced to a single act of God's sovereign will, viz., the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Watts also supplied a provincial/contextualized translation of the Psalms: the

"nations" (the גוֹיִם) are Rome (never mind the plural); the "peoples," rather improbably, are Israel; the "anointed one" is strictly Jesus; the announcement of sonship is eternal generation, not coronation/installation; the "ends of the earth" are the "Northern Isles."[43] In Moyer's words, Watts "effectively weaned the church off of the Psalms by over-contextualizing them, causing the people of God to believe that the Psalms in their original form were irrelevant to the New Testament church."[44]

In view of these adjustments, the psalms lost, in a single generation, their place in the church as a comprehensive manual for the appropriate redress of God, much less Calvin's "anatomy of all the parts of the soul" (i.e., a display of the full range of faithful affections, *coram deo*, in the light of God's gracious, providential orchestration of all things).[45] The psalms reduced to a prophetic testimony to a *particular act of God* (Christ's redemptive work) and lost all of their rich value in demonstrating the *general ways of God* (his providence). In view of this emasculation of psalmody, it is no surprise that the Church suddenly developed an overwhelming appetite for something more.[46] Isaac Watts had plundered the psalms and had left miserable Christians with nothing to sing.[47] In Leaver's words, while

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[43] The Northern Isles are an archipelago of 26 remote islands in the North Sea annexed by Great Britain in 1707.

[44] "Watts and the Death of Psalmody." By agreeing with Moyer I am not suggesting that our Lord Christ cannot be referenced in application of Psalm 2—He surely may be! But to conclude that he is the *only* such application robs the psalm of its richness.

[45] John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Psalms*, trans. James Anderson, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1845), 1:xxxvi–xxxvii.

[46] I do not wish to criticize in this article the richness to be found in the original hymnody of Isaac Watts. Indeed, I persist in my regard of Watts as the greatest of all the English hymnists. But he never could have achieved this superlative status had he not first created a market for his hymns by undermining English psalmody. This is the great disappointment I have with Watts.

[47] I borrow this line from Carl Trueman's "What Do Miserable Christians Sing?" (*Themelios* 25 [2000]: 1–3), a complaint about the loss of psalms and specifically of lament in the modern church. Trueman notes that since "a high proportion of psalms are taken up with lamentation, with feeling sad, unhappy, tormented and broken," and that Christians accustomed to "one long triumphalist street party" simply cannot find any place for them—they even find lament contrary to evangelism or to the spirit of the Gospel (1–2). To the contrary, Trueman observes, the Gospel does not remove our agony or despair or misery. Rather, it introduces us to the manifold means of grace by which we may endure

"Watts is rightly regarded as the father of the English hymn, . . . he can also be seen as the assassin of the English metrical psalm."[48]

Conclusion

The reasons for the decline of psalmody and lament in congregational worship are manifold, but determinate. The initial impetus was reactionary—a response to bad poetry, strict hermeneutics, and an overly "grave" style. But this reaction was a façade for other concerns. Chief among these was a hermeneutical/theological concern that the Hebrew psalms were neither written for the church nor suitable to its worship. Written in the dispensation of Law, the Psalms were much too Jewish, too miserable, and too lacking in Gospel themes to offer suitable fare for New Testament worship. Some of the psalms could be updated, but not all; some were fit only for the dustbin.

Prevailing hermeneutical methods employed to update the psalms also reduced their general value: (1) extreme contextualization rendered the psalms suitable only for British imperialists and exceptionalists; (2) Christocentrism fixated unnaturally on Messianic implications of the psalms at the expense of their general application to the life of faith lived in the shadow of divine providence.

The rise of the evangelical movement sealed the fate of the psalms, and especially of lament. As the function of the gathered church shifted away from communal catechesis, renewal, and assurance to evangelistic urgency, the music shifted with it. Evangelical preachers needed music "better suited than the metrical psalms to [their] fervid style of preaching." The content of the song, too, increasingly focused on introducing the gospel and its distant hope rather than on developing the sundry and complex implications of the gospel for theology and faith in the crucible of the now. The psalms were far too doctrinaire, too moralistic, and (above all) too dour to serve the evolving needs of the evangelical church.

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them. A church that asks it membership to suppress these sentiments in lieu of "the Gospel" betrays a woeful misunderstanding of that Gospel.

[48] "Watts and the Decline of English Psalmody," 59.

The ascendancy of the Western church has crested; evangelical triumphalism is gasping its last. We desperately need the psalms to navigate the dark days ahead—not select psalms, excerpts from the psalms, or gospelized resignifications of the psalms, but the whole psalter as it stands written. Because when our aggrieved souls can no longer articulate our desperate need for God's manifold providence and grace, we need to have something to sing.

Borrowed Music, Imported Meaning: History, Theology, and Allusion in the Popular Worship Song "Before You I Kneel (A Worker's Prayer)"

Georgina Bartlett[1]

In 2014, Don Carson—who was then the president of the evangelical Christian organization *The Gospel Coalition*—sat down with the Christian singer-songwriters Matt Boswell and Keith Getty to discuss the role of music in modern Christian worship. In the past ten years, American Matt Boswell has garnered a considerable reputation among Protestant churches in the US for his songwriting, recordings, performances, and training materials on how to lead church worship.[2] But Keith Getty OBE—originally from Northern Ireland—has been a veritable pillar of Christian worship music worldwide since the early 2000s, collaborating with his wife, Krystin, and English singer-songwriter Stuart Townend. With the latter, Keith wrote the phenomenally popular song "In Christ Alone" in 2001, which was voted the UK's second-most loved hymn of all time in

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[1] Georgina Bartlett, DPhil, is lecturer and organizing tutor in music at St. Peter's College, University of Oxford.

[2] Read about Matt Boswell's hymn collection and recordings at *Messenger Hymns,* website, all websites here accessed June 3, 2020, https://www.messengerhymns.com. Boswell is involved with the group *Doxology & Theology,* which conducts conferences and publishes materials on how to lead worship well. See Matt Boswell (ed.), *Doxology and Theology: How the Gospel Forms the Worship Leader* (Nashville: B&H Books, 2013), and *Doxology & Theology,* website, https://www.doxologyandtheology.com/. Boswell is a founding pastor of Trails Church in Prospero, Texas and since 2019, he has also been Assistant Professor of Church Music and Worship at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. See "Matt Boswell, a Leading Figure in Church Music and Worship, Joins Southern Seminary Faculty," May 28, 2019, *Southern News,* Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, https://news.sbts.edu/2019/05/28/matt-boswell-leading-figure-church-music-worship-joins-southern-seminary-faculty/.

2013, according to BBC *Songs of Praise.*[3] Keith (a pianist/guitarist/composer) and Krystin (a singer/lyricist) tour internationally and have active recording careers with their own Dove Award-winning music label (distributed by Capitol Christian Distribution), but their airplay on Christian radio in the US and the UK is not commensurate with their reputations and popularity in churches worldwide.[4] This is because—unlike radio favorites MercyMe, For King & Country, Lauren Daigle, or Matthew West—the Gettys and Townend are self-identified popular "hymn-writers," focusing on strophic songs for congregational singing rather than Christian-themed "pop" music for radio airplay (the same can be said of Matt Boswell, who is the author of *Messenger Hymns*).[5] Following the path of the modern

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[3] "2013: The UK's Top 100 Hymns," *Songs of Praise,* BBC One, website, accessed June 3, 2020, https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/ 42TSJ0LNMfp0h0wNvxqlw93/2013-the-uks-top-100-hymns.

[4] See "Keith and Krystin Getty Win Dove Award for 'Inspirational Album of the Year,'" October 16, 2019, *Getty Music,* website, accessed June 3, 2020, https://www.gettymusic.com/news/2019doveaward. See also playlists from the major UK Christian radio station *UCB1* (*United Christian Broadcasting Network*), available online and through digital radio (DAB radio). Christian radio stations in the US are numerous, but the major online radio station *CBN* (*Christian Broadcasting Network*)—available online and through an app—provides a good indication of a typical line-up for Christian radio stations in the US. Interestingly, the Gettys are not even highlighted performers on CBN's *Praise* channel, which states on its homepage 'Worship like it's Sunday morning, all week long!' See UCB1, https://www.ucb.co.uk/radioplayer/uk/, and CBN1, https://www1.cbn.com/radio/praise, both accessed June 3, 2020. See also "About Keith & Kristyn Getty," *Getty Music,* website, accessed June 3, 2020, https://www.gettymusic.com/about-us.

[5] There are some other important songwriting groups that focus on congregationally focused Christian music. Notables include the very successful *Hillsong Worship* group, part of Hillsong Church, a non-denominational evangelical church originating in New South Wales, Australia, but now with churches worldwide. Their songs, however, tend to be in radio-friendly pop formats. See *Hillsong Worship,* website, all sites here accessed June 3, 2020, https://hillsong.com/worship/. Another important group is *Emu Music*, which is a collaborative group of Christian songwriters and recording artists that are based between Sydney, Australia, and Oxford, UK; the musicians involved with *Emu Music* compose congregation-appropriate songs, perform in concert, record, and run *Word in Song* conferences in churches around the world. See "About Us," *Emu Music,* website, https://emumusic.com/collections/zabout-us-1. *Indelible Grace*, based out of Nashville, is another group of songwriters and artists that have focused on revivifying hymn-based worship music by composing new music for old hymns. See *Indelible Grace,* website, http://www.igracemusic.com/.

English hymn-writer Graham Kendrick (active from the late 1960s and known for his perennial favorite "Shine, Jesus, Shine"), the Gettys and Townend have built their reputations as Christian artists by writing simple, catchy, congregation-friendly melodies, featuring stepwise motion and limited syncopation—songs like "In Christ Alone." These melodies are ready-made hymns that are published widely with chordal keyboard accompaniments in church hymnals.[6] However, the Gettys' own performances of their hymns on recordings and on tours feature diverse instrumentations and innovative arrangements that incorporate Irish music, bluegrass, gospel, and even rock influences, often with virtuosic instrumental solos between verses.[7] Thus, the Gettys' music has successfully appealed to "traditional" and "contemporary" churches alike, leaving it (somewhat) immune to the heated polemics of the "worship wars" in modern church music.[8]

Don Carson's choice of guests for his 2014 interview was strategic: the focus of the discussion was the role of music in *congregational* worship—an issue that Boswell and Getty, as modern-day hymn-writers, were particularly well equipped to address. During the interview, Carson asked his guests the following: "What place do we have for rejuvenating *old* hymns—picking the best of them and

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[6] For example, nine songs by one or both of the Gettys are included in the *Mission Praise,* a major modern hymnbook including over 1,000 old and new songs for church worship, published by HarperCollins, now in two volumes. *Mission Praise* (London: HarperCollins, 2015).

[7] A good example of a rock-influenced arrangement would be Keith and Krystin Getty's "Come, People of the Risen King," track 2 on their 2009 album *Awaken the Dawn,* Getty Music Label. Also, listen to the lively, Irish- and blues-influenced instrumental track "Village Reel," as well as the rich fusion of country, gospel, and Irish elements in the canon-like arrangement of "Kyrie Eleison," tracks 6 and 8 respectively, on *Hymns for the Christian Life*, released 2012 by Getty Music Label.

[8] According to the Gettys' website, "in the more contemporary church, more than 60 of their songs are featured on top 2,000 CCLI charts between the UK and USA." See "About Keith & Kristyn Getty," *Getty Music*. CCLI is *Christian Copyright Licensing International*, which acts as a performance rights organization for Christian artists around the world, monitoring the performance of congregational songs via projector as well as through printed materials. See also "CCLI Top 100," *SongSelect,* CCLI, which showed that eleven Getty songs were in the top 100 songs performed in churches on the access date of June 3, 2020, https://songselect.ccli.com/search/results?List=top100&PageSize=100&CurrentPage=1.

rejuvenating them again too? . . . do we have to start from zero in every generation?" As part of his response, Keith Getty said the following:

> The hymn book's transition to modern worship music . . . has taken away something of the breadth and actually something of the humility and a sense of the universal church, that you could sing the great hymns of the church fathers, the great settings of the Jewish Psalms they set . . . the songs of the reformers, the revivalists, and the people who changed, and as with every generation, as with every continent, as with every human being, each of those display nuances, strengths, weaknesses, that we today stand on the shoulders of and can learn from. So, I think to lose all of that history is an incredibly dangerous thing for our generation. . . . The revival that many of *The Gospel Coalition* leaders have seen in theology in our generation didn't actually happen because they just got back into the Word of God, it's because they discovered and learned from leaders of previous generations . . . and right now, musicians have neither that humility, nor that wisdom.[9]

In this paper, I will explore how the Gettys and their frequent collaborator Stuart Townend engage with past musical—and doctrinal—traditions in their hymn writing, focusing on one song from their *Hymns for the Christian Life* collection of 2012 titled "Before You I Kneel (A Worker's Prayer)" (also written with Jeff Taylor, a Nashville-based accordionist).[10] In particular, I will consider the songwriters' use of musical material from J. S. Bach's popular chorale setting of "Zion hört die Wächter singen" (the second verse of the hymn by Philipp Nicolai) in their modern song, suggesting that Bach's chorale setting may provide the hymn with relevant textual and theological

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[9] Keith Getty and Matt Boswell interviewed by Don Carson on March 24, 2014, "Truth We Believe and Songs We Sing: How Important Is Theology in Worship?" *The Gospel Coalition*, website, both Carson's and Getty's quotations come from 3:06–4:34, transcription by author, accessed June 3, 2020, https://youtu.be/-msx__TteHY.

[10] Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty, Jeff Taylor, and Stuart Townend, "Before You I Kneel (A Worker's Prayer)," *Hymns for the Christian Life* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2013).

meaning, as well as forming its musical foundation.[11] Moreover, I will suggest that the use of Bach's material allows the songwriters to graft this hymn—and themselves—into an interdenominational historical lineage of Protestant worship music, emphasizing the continuity and interconnectedness of church music through the centuries. But before we can understand how and why Bach's chorale setting was used in the modern hymn, we must first examine its musical qualities and venture some ideas about its own theological meaning—as intended by Bach, but perhaps more relevantly, its theological meaning as interpreted by the songwriters of "Before You I Kneel (A Worker's Prayer)."

"Zion hört die Wächter singen" functions as the fourth movement and the second chorale setting of Bach's cantata BWV 140 *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*, composed for the twenty-seventh day after Trinity (the liturgical context of this cantata will be discussed later in the paper). Originally, the chorale setting was scored in E-flat for a tenor soloist (or tenors) accompanied by two violins, a viola, and basso continuo, but the composer later created an organ transcription of the work. The text of Bach's cantata movement is a poetic German adaptation of Matthew 25:1–13, the Parable of the Ten Virgins (see table 1 for the original German text of the relevant verse with Catherine Winkworth's 1858 poetic English translation of it).[12] The hymn was itself "borrowed" from the Lutheran theologian, pastor, and hymn-writer Philipp Nicolai (1556–1608), who in turn may have adapted its tune from a pre-existing Meistersinger melody, according to Walter Blankenburg and Friedhelm Brusniak.[13] Thus Bach was himself part of a lineage of musical borrowing in worship music: in fact, the incorporation of past musical styles and compositions was as characteristic of Bach's music as it is of the Gettys' and Townend's. In the words of Eric Chafe:

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[11] Johann Sebastian Bach, *Cantata BWV 140* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1881).

[12] Philipp Nicolai, *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme* (Frankfurt: Philipp Nicolai, 1599), and Catherine Winkworth and Philipp Nicolai, "Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying," *Amazing Grace: Hymn Texts for Devotional Use*, edited by Bertus Frederick Polman, Marilyn Kay Stulken, and James Rawlings Sydnor (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 54–55.

[13] Walter Blankenburg and Friedhelm Brusniak, "Nicolai, Philipp," *Grove Music Online*, www.oxfordmusiconline.com, accessed June 3, 2020.

J. S. Bach's interaction with tradition, embodied in countless aspects of his oeuvre—his settings of the modal chorale melodies of the Lutheran church, to name but one—is one of the most interesting sides of his work. Bach's capacity to evoke and revitalize past musical styles often involves specific religious contexts for which a sense of temporal distinctions is central.[14]

Table 1. Chorale Text and Translation

Philipp Nicolai's Original German Hymn Text (Verse 2)	Catherine Winkworth's English Translation (Verse 2)
Zion hört die Wächter singen, Das Herz tut ihr vor Freuden springen, Sie wachet und steht eilend auf.	Zion hears the watchmen singing, And in her heart new joy is springing, She wakes, she rises from her gloom.
Ihr Freund kommt vom Himmel prächtig, Von Gnaden stark, von Wahrheit mächtig, Ihr Licht wird hell, ihr Stern geht auf.	For her Lord comes down all-glorious, And strong in grace, in truth victorious; Her Star is risen, her Light is come!
Nun komm, du werte Kron', Herr Jesu, Gottes Sohn! Hosianna! Wir folgen all' zum Freudensaal Und halten mit das Abendmahl.	Now come, O Blessed One, Lord Jesus, God's own Son, Sing Hosanna! We answer all in joy your call; We follow to the wedding hall.

One of Bach's most recognizable chorale settings, the fourth movement of the cantata is typically Bachian in featuring not one but *two* distinct melodic lines that are played simultaneously. There is of

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[14] Eric Chafe, *Analyzing Bach Cantatas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 3–4.

course Nicolai's solid and unadorned vocal melody, but Bach did more than realize a suitable harmonic accompaniment for the borrowed material: he wrote a second, fully formed melodic line for the instrumental parts that has proved to be far more memorable than the hymn tune itself. The juxtaposition and interaction of these two distinct musical lines has been interpreted by Bach scholar E. Ann Matter as a musical representation of conjugal union between Christ and his Church, based on the pervasive wedding imagery in the cantata's text.[15] Her interpretation of the chorale setting's meaning is not universally accepted, however. The study of Bach's religious music has become increasingly controversial in the last two decades, firstly, because of the growing abundance of individual musical-textual interpretations, and secondly, because of modern debates about the degree to which the composer's musical settings should be interpreted as *meaningful* versus simply *musical*. In her iconoclastic thesis "Bach among the Conservatives" (2006), Rebecca Joanne Lloyd radically breaks from the approaches of traditional Bach scholars like Matter, Eric Chafe, Michael Marissen, and the twentieth-century Bach research group *Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft für theologische Bachforschung*.[16] Lloyd criticizes these scholars for equating Bach's theology with Martin Luther's; for using him as a banner-bearer of German "muscular" Christianity; and for approaching his music as "exegetical" (in other words, assuming that the music does not just "dramatically" reflect religious texts, but aims to theologically interpret

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[15] E. Ann Matter, "The Love between the Bride and the Bridegroom in Cantata 140 from the 12th Century to Bach's Day," in *Die Quellen Johann Sebastian Bachs: Bachs Musik im Gottesdienst* (Heidelberg, Germany: Manutius, 1998), 107–17.

[16] A good example of these scholars' approaches appears in Michael Marissen's *Bach & God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3–4: "I suggest in several chapters of this book that there are, however and moreover, vocal works of Bach's in which his musical setting puts a religious spin on its religious text. That is to say, in these especially nuanced and interpretively noteworthy cases, 'pure' aesthetic appreciation of Bach's pitches, rhythms, and tone colors would lead to serious *misunderstanding* of the repertory"; and also 13, ''I would like to put forward the notion that Bach's musical settings of church cantata poetry can project theological meanings that are purposefully different from those arrived at by simply reading his librettos." See also Rebecca Joanne Lloyd, "Bach among the Conservatives: The Quest for Theological Truth" (doctoral thesis, King's College London, 2006), 9–37.

them through music).[17] As part of her thesis, Lloyd offers a new interpretation of this very same cantata, which she reads as a simple, "dramatic" representation of Christ's union with the individual soul (the so-called *unio mystica,* which is considered a Christian heresy entertained by the Pietists), rejecting Matter's more orthodox interpretation of the cantata's conjugal imagery as depicting the union between Christ and the whole body of believers that makes up the universal Church. Lloyd's thesis is devoted to uprooting ingrained assumptions in musicological scholarship that Bach was in fact a "theologian"—or, at least, that he was an orthodox one—but ultimately, she just leaves us with yet another interpretation of the interaction between Bach's music and its text. Interpretations of this particular cantata seem to be hopelessly entangled in the intricacies of historical theological debates within the Lutheran church. How are we to assess the meaning of this chorale setting in such muddy and obscure waters? And more importantly, does either Matter's traditional or Lloyd's radical interpretation of Bach's cantata have any relevant bearing on the chorale setting's inclusion in the modern hymn "Before You I Kneel"?

Perhaps not, according to Julian Mincham, who has offered another reading of this cantata that bypasses the orthodox/Pietist controversy entirely. In his *Bach Cantatas* project, Mincham suggests that Bach's treatment of Nicolai's hymn may not have been intended to represent the union of marriage, but the relationship between the "earthly" and the "Divine." In his own words:

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[17] See Lloyd. The multiple strands of Lloyd's argument run throughout her thesis, but see particularly page 7 to find her discussion on how Bach has been conflated with Luther because of the former's service in the German reformed church, though the two men were not contemporaries and may have differed in their approaches to worship and theology; see pages 30–54 (particularly 37) to find Lloyd's argument that Bach has been made a poster-boy of a particular brand of "muscular German Christianity" by a small but influential faction of conservative Lutheran scholars in the 20th century, and that his musical settings have therefore been interpreted as propounding anachronistic Lutheran theologies (it is in countering this point that she suggests her alternate reading of *Wachet auf*); see pages 41 and 168 to find her views on the commonly held assumption that Bach was not just a musician but also a musical "exegete"; see pages 133, 157–62, and particularly 173 to find her argument that scholars should approach Bach as a composer rather than a theologian, and his settings of religious texts as "dramatic" interpretations rather than theological "exegeses" (though the distinction between these two methods of musical setting is not clearly defined by Lloyd in her thesis).

It is possible that Bach saw this as a symbol of the earthly and the spiritual, seemingly apart, dissimilar and diverse and yet, by reason of the Ordained Natural Order, ultimately fitting together and perfectly complementing each other. Thus we might consider the chorale as representing matters spiritual, with the foursquare, almost stolid string melody as earthly life and environment. Each may be depicted perfectly well independently, but the fundamental message is that they have been conceived, by the Almighty, as the two parts of the same reality.[18]

Nicolai's hymn, on which the chorale setting is based, certainly reflects the wedding theme from Matthew's parable, and in other parts of Bach's cantata, additional wedding imagery is featured from the Song of Solomon. However, the Parable of the Ten Virgins as found in Matthew's Gospel is not—in fact—a description of Christ's final union with the body of his church (or its individual believers, as the case may be): rather, it is an exhortation for earthly *preparedness* for that great day. It encourages listeners to remain alert, readying themselves for the second coming of Christ so they are not caught unaware. If interpreted as suggested by Mincham, the juxtaposed melodies of "Zion hört die Wächter singen" represent not the mystical union of Christ and the Church—or of Christ and the individual soul—but the relationship between the mundane rumblings of the earthly experience and the order and purpose of heavenly realities.

Mincham's interpretation remains debatable: though Nicolai's hymn itself was based on Matthew's parable, Bach also included as recitatives preceding the cantata's two arias some poetic material by an unknown author that focuses on marriage in fulfilment rather than expectation (lending weight to either Matter or Lloyd's interpretations, perhaps). Nevertheless, I would argue that Mincham's suggestions about the meaning of Bach's chorale setting are the most relevant to this discussion for three reasons. Firstly, given that the purpose behind the parable in Matthew's Gospel is quite clear in its

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[18] Julian Mincham, "Chapter 55: BWV 140 *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*," *The Cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach: A Listener and Student Guide,* website, accessed June 3, 2020, http://www.jsbachcantatas.com/documents/chapter-55-bwv-140.htm.

original biblical context, I think it possible that Bach's own under-standing of the hymn related *as much* to preparedness as final union. Lloyd might object to this suggestion because it makes the age-old assumption that Bach was intentionally engaging in theological in-terpretation of the text through his music. However, the reality is that when we approach set texts as music scholars, we always *do* assume that their composers engaged intentionally with the words, in ac-cordance with their particular understanding or "interpretation" of them, even if we disagree as to what that "interpretation" was: Lloyd herself demonstrated this through her reading of this cantata, in which she suggested that Bach was propounding Pietist theology in his setting of the wedding imagery. Secondly, the placement of this cantata within the liturgical calendar would support the suggestion that its primary focus was on preparedness (more on this soon). Thirdly and perhaps most importantly, I would argue that it does not ultimately matter whether Bach interpreted the text as Mincham, Matter, or even Lloyd have suggested. If we aim to understand the meaning of Bach's borrowed material within the modern song by the Gettys, Taylor, and Townend, we should be less interested in Bach's *intentions* for the chorale setting than in the modern *reception* of it. What we actually want to know is how Bach's chorale setting would be interpreted by modern, interdenominational Protestant evangeli-cals like the Gettys and Townend. As Nicolai's textual material has been derived from the Parable of the Ten Virgins from Matthew's Gospel, I think we could make a strong argument that the modern hymn's songwriters would interpret the text within its original *bibli-cal* context rather than its historical Lutheran context: biblically, it was a parable about being prepared in this life for Christ's return.

If we are to approach Bach's music as per Mincham's sugges-tion, then the "earthly" experience is represented in the chorale set-ting by the instrumental line. Bach's instrumental accompaniment is constructed of four discrete melodic segments (see example 1) rang-ing from two to four bars in length. In the initial statement of the in-strumental themes, preceding the entrance of the vocal melody, these segments are arranged into an AABCD form, but as the chorale set-ting progresses, the melodic phrases are rearranged in unexpected ways (see example 2 and also table 2 for a diagram of the formal ar-rangement of the instrumental part in relation to the vocal melody). All four units are rhythmically fast: though the bass is predominantly

written in quarter notes, the melodic segments form a steady stream of eighth and sixteenth notes, punctuated by only a handful of eighth-note rests, most of which lead into the upbeat of the A segment. Each segment blends seamlessly into the next without pause or reflection, evoking the ceaselessness of earthly life; the segmentation of the melodic materials suggests the fragmentation and repetition of the earthly experience; the ordering and reordering of the melodic segments appears to lack both predictability and purpose.

Example 1. The Melodic Segments in Bach's Instrumental Accompaniment (from the First Iteration of the Chorale Setting)

Table 2. Formal Arrangement of the Melodic Segments from Bach's "Earthly" Instrumental Line

Instrumental Form	AABCD	AACB	AABCD	AACBB
Vocal Form	Introduction	A	Instrumental Interlude	A

Instrumental Form	CD	CBAAB	CD	ABCD
Vocal Form	Instrumental Interlude	B (opening)	Instrumental Interlude	B (closing)

Example 2. Bach's Chorale Setting from the Entrance of the Vocal Melody (the first *Stollen*)

The most recognizable of the chorale setting's melodic segments—the instrumental A segment—is distinctive, featuring both large leaps and several accented non-chord tones: the eighth-note suspension on beat two and the eighth-note appoggiatura on beat three of its first bar lends the melody a sighing, striving quality. The restlessness of the segment's rhythmic motion—when combined with the 4/4 "walking" meter and a bumpy contour—creates a laboring instrumental part, toiling without rest. The two-bar segment ends on a curious weak cadence in E-flat on the upbeat of the third quarter-note: this awkward, unexpected conclusion sounds as if the melody

rushed to its end, only to continue on again almost immediately. The two initial statements of this melody are written over an intriguing E-flat pedal, underscoring the earthly melody with a monotonous drone from the outset.

The two-bar B segment follows after another leap of a fifth to a B-flat anacrusis, succeeded by descending scalar passages, mostly in sixteenth notes, and leading to a half-cadence. Segment C is also only two bars, but it begins with syncopated anticipation tones followed by descending leaps, effectively leading the music out of the tonic and into the dominant (B-flat), ending on a half-cadence in the new key. Segment D begins on an upbeat and continues with an eighth-note scalar passage that foreshadows a dominant cadence on the first beat of the segment's third measure; however, this is interrupted by an unexpected extension of a bar and a half, which plunges into a lower register. It seems that the "work" of the earthly line is never quite done.

If we are to interpret Bach's instrumental line as a representation of the "earthly" life—with its repetitive, constant wanderings, without obvious purpose or design—then Nicolai's vocal line is used as a representation of the "Divine." When simultaneously sounded, these two melodies illuminate the mysterious relationship between the earthly life and heavenly realities. Contrasted with Bach's instrumental part, Nicolai's tenor vocal melody sounds clear and slow, as if soaring above the pedestrian, "walking" instrumental part below. The Parable of the Ten Virgins specifically addresses the importance of readiness, stressing that the return of the Bridegroom (Christ) will be unexpected and cannot be predicted by earthly events. This aspect of the text is, I would suggest, reflected by the relationship between the instrumental and vocal parts in Bach's chorale setting: though the music fits together, the lines are formally, rhythmically, melodically, and, at times, harmonically distinct.

As already noted, the melody of Nicolai's hymn was probably not written by Nicolai himself, but adapted from a Meistersinger song.[19] As such, the hymn is in the form AAB, also known as *bar form*, the musical structure associated with the Meistersinger tradition of German poet-musicians.[20] The hymn determines the chorale setting's

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[19] See Blankenburg and Brusniak, "Nicolai, Philipp," *Grove Music Online.*

[20] See John Milsom and Basil Smallman, "Meistersinger," in *The Oxford Companion to Music,* www.oxfordmusiconline.com, accessed June 3, 2020.

overarching structure, but interestingly, the form of the instrumental part does not align clearly with the vocal melody, and the imposition of the hymn's melody over the instrumental part is a source of surprise in this work: the introduction ends in bar 12, yet the vocal line does not enter until the third beat of bar thirteen (an anacrusis), entering unexpectedly and maintaining its autonomy throughout. Not only do the three phrases of the vocal melody's *Stollen* (A section) enter on unusual and unpredictable beats (the first phrase enters on beat three, the second on beat four, and the third on beat two), but in the *Abgesang* (B section), the vocal line exhibits metrical displacement: a descending line from B-flat to E-flat starting on beat four in its initial statement is immediately echoed, but displaced to the second beat. The movements and entrances of the vocal line cannot be predicted from the instrumental line below, even though the hymn's AAB structure ultimately determines the chorale setting's overall form.

As well as being formally distinct from the instrumental line, the vocal line of the chorale is of course rhythmically and melodically distinct too, consisting mostly of quarter and half notes that arpeggiate or elaborate the I, V, and vi chords. More interestingly, though, the vocal line is also harmonically distinct from the instrumental line. Retaining the characteristics of Nicolai's straightforward Lutheran hymn tune, the vocal melody remains in the tonic key throughout, even while the instrumental line explores other tonal centers, as mentioned above (primarily the dominant B-flat, but C and G minor in passing, too). The harmonic interaction between these lines could have interesting implications for its underlying theological meaning. The instrumental introduction (consisting of AABCD) ends in the dominant key, as segment C modulates to B-flat, ending on a half cadence in that key, with segment D providing a four-bar consequent phrase that ends on an authentic cadence in B-flat. Without the stabilizing influence of the "Divine" vocal line, the instrumental melody wanders off into a non-tonic key within twelve bars. But in preparation to *receive* the vocal part, the earthly melody returns again to its rightful key, ready to harmonize with the tenor's entrance. This occurs again in the instrumental interlude following the completion of the vocal line's repeat of the A section (the second *Stollen).* The C segment ends on an elided dominant cadence, and after a brief excursus back to the tonic key, the D segment returns to conclude on the

dominant before the beginning of the *Abgesang* (the vocal line's B section*)* – once more in the tonic key. The instrumental line "awakens" or prepares for the coming of the vocal line by re-establishing itself in the right key. In the final iterations of the instrumental segments C and D—which consecutively finish the chorale setting—the wayward dominant tonality has been conquered, and both vocal and instrumental melodies end in E-flat major. The convincing synthesis of the vocal and instrumental lines—distinct in form, melody, rhythm, and harmony—could be interpreted as an intricate manifestation of the text's theological meaning: the imposition of Divine order on the apparent chaos of earthly life and the importance of preparedness for the unexpected coming of God.

This analysis has found some compelling support for Mincham's idea that Bach's chorale setting depicts the interaction between the "earthly" and the "Divine"—an interpretation that would introduce some meaningful topical resonances between Bach's borrowed material and the Gettys' modern hymn on earthly work. But does this assume too much of the composers' intent in borrowing material from Bach? To answer this, we should consider the hymn's writers. On the Gettys' website, the artists describe themselves thus:

> Keith and Kristyn Getty occupy a unique space in the world of music today as preeminent modern hymn writers. In reinventing the traditional hymn form, they have created a catalogue of songs teaching Christian doctrine and crossing the genres of traditional, classical, folk and contemporary composition which are sung the world over.[21]

Engaging with "classical" music is an explicit part of the Gettys' artistic ethos as "crossover" musicians, and the inclusion of Bach's melody in their hymn certainly fulfils the requirements for a "classical crossover." However, the incorporation of explicitly Christian musical materials in the Gettys'/Townend's music as a *purely* musical element—without consideration for its historical context or textual associations—seems inconsistent with their other public statements about hymn writing. For example, the description of the *Hymns for the Christian Life Project* on the Gettys' website reads:

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[21] "About Keith & Kristyn Getty," *Getty Music.*

"'Hymns for the Christian Life' reflects both the Celtic and American folk traditions, old and new world brought together, *just as we lean on the rich legacy of Church music we already have* with songs written for the life of the Church today" (emphasis mine).[22] This collection was created in active dialogue with the "legacy" of church music, suggesting that any allusions to preexistent church music within the hymnody would be meaningful and intentional rather than just stylistic. Moreover, we can turn back to Don Carson's interview with Keith Getty and Matt Boswell in 2014: in the excerpt already seen above, Keith Getty expressed a desire to maintain a connection with the "great hymns of the church fathers, the great settings of the Jewish Psalms they set . . . the songs of the reformers, the revivalists." He said that "we [Christian musicians] today stand on the shoulders of and can learn from" church musicians from previous generations.[23] In a separate interview with Adrian Warnock in 2008, the Gettys' collaborator Stuart Townend made a statement that reflects a similar attitude towards historical worship music: "It's a shame that some think lively worship has to be the modern stuff. People have been getting excited for centuries." Here we see Townend challenging a modern assumption that before the advent of "worship bands," church music was backward, boring, emotionally disengaged, or irrelevant.[24] Both Townend and Getty have indicated that they see modern worship music as a part of a historical lineage, but what is particularly clear from Keith Getty's phrasing is that the music of his self-described *musical* heritage is closely associated with the key events that form a part of his *theological* heritage: he mentions the music of "the church fathers" (denoting the leaders of the Early Church), "the reformers" (Martin Luther and then the Calvinist reformers who marked a return to a scripturally based understanding of the Christian faith), and "the revivalists" (possibly alluding to the Methodist Revivals, Thomas Chalmers and the Free Church of Scotland, and the

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[22] See "Projects: Hymns for the Christian Life," *Getty Music,* website, accessed June 3, 2020, https://store.gettymusic.com/uk/album/hymns-for-the-christian-life/.

[23] "Truth We Believe and Songs We Sing: How Important Is Theology in Worship?" *The Gospel Coalition*, 3:06–4:34.

[24] Stuart Townend, interview by Adrian Warnock, "NWA08 – Interview with Stuart Townend," April 8, 2008, *Patheos*, website, accessed June 3, 2020, https://www.patheos.com/blogs/adrianwarnock/2008/04/nwa08-interview-with-stuart-townend/.

First and Second Great Awakenings in America). Getty's list is re-markably heterogenous: all Protestant , but of differing denomina-tions (though, in fact, even the Protestant church's roots in Catholic liturgy is acknowledged by the Gettys on their album *Hymns for the Christian Life* with the song titled "Kyrie Eleison").[25] The interdenom-inational quality of Keith's answer is in line with the Gettys' and Townend's public images as "Evangelical Christians," rather than members of a particular Protestant denomination. Keith Getty's words are chosen carefully to acknowledge a broad base of Protestant influence and history, but it is evident from his phrasing that all the musical traditions that he judges to be worthy models for modern worship music are valued primarily for their *theological* and *doctrinal* messages rather than for their musical qualities or styles. Signifi-cantly, in the interview, Getty goes on to detail how the modern evan-gelical revival has sprung from theologians and churches looking not just at scripture, but also at historical models for understanding and handling it; he then suggests that a revival in church *music* should be achieved in the same way—by looking to the historical church and seeing how it handled music in worship.

Given Keith Getty's focus on both historical tradition and the-ology in his answer, it seems unlikely that he and his co-writers would incorporate music from a distinguished Christian composer from the classical "canon" without intentionally engaging with and acknowledging the borrowed music's theological meaning. Further-more, in a brief interview about the *Hymns for the Christian Life* pro-ject, Krystin Getty talked about the challenges she faced in forging lyrics that adequately explored all the theological issues surrounding the complex topic of work in "Before You I Kneel (A Worker's Prayer)": "When we wrote this song on the working day, a hymn for work . . . there were so many new concepts that I had never even had to work into lyrics before, and that was exciting."[26] I would suggest that as a lyricist, Krystin intentionally used Bach's chorale setting—with its possible juxtaposition of the earthly and the Divine—as a

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[25] Keith and Krystin Getty, "Kyrie Eleison," track 8 on *Hymns for the Christian Life*, released 2012 by Getty Music Label.

[26] "Keith & Krystin Getty 'Hymns for the Christian Life' EPK," on "Projects: Hymns for the Christian Life," *Getty Music,* video, relevant portion from Krystin Getty found at 3:56–4:17, transcription by author, accessed June 3, 2020, https://store.gettymusic.com/uk/album/hymns-for-the-christian-life/.

helpful framework around which to build a prayer about earthly strivings in the context of heavenly realities.

I have argued that the text—as well as the biblical and historical contexts—of Bach's chorale setting proved significant to the songwriters of "Before You I Kneel (A Worker's Prayer)." But I would suggest that its *liturgical* context was significant as well. The liturgical calendar, developed within the Catholic Church, has remained an important part of the Lutheran tradition (and many other Protestant denominations as well). As explained by Bach scholar Elizabeth B. Joyce:

> The church year begins with the first Sunday in the season of Advent. On the broadest level, the year is divided into two halves. The first deals with the unfolding of Christ's life and work. This half of the year builds to an emotional apex at Easter and the following fifty days, during which the Church celebrates Jesus' resurrection, ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The themes prevalent during the Trinity season center around faith and doctrine, including such diverse topics as the appropriate manner of Christian living, preparation for current persecution and suffering, and the contrast of this life with the next. The central challenge is to maintain one's faith. As the Trinity season progresses, eschatological scriptural readings prepare the Christian for leaving the world. With Advent, an expectation of the second coming of Christ merges into waiting for the birth of Christ; the cycle begins again.[27]

As already noted, Bach's cantata W*achet auf* was performed on the 27th Sunday after Trinity, in the second "half" of the liturgical year: this meant that it was performed in the part of the year that focuses on how Christians are to live while awaiting God's entrance into the world. In the words of Eric Chafe, "The Trinity season represents the era of the church in the world."[28] As a part of the Gettys' *Hymns for the Christian Life* project, "Before You I Kneel (A Worker's Prayer)" explores how Christians are to work in the everyday while

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[27] Elizabeth B. Joyce, "Representation of 'The World' in the Church Cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach" (PhD diss., Brandeis University, 2009), 2–3.

[28] Chafe, *Analyzing Bach Cantatas*, 148.

preparing for Christ's coming: the overlap of topical themes between this song and the second half of the liturgical year seems too exact to be coincidental. Keith Getty himself identified the influence of liturgy on his songwriting in *The Gospel Coalition* interview. At one point in the discussion, Don Carson asked Keith Getty the following:

> So, let me ask a slightly presumptuous question: what do you and Kristyn . . . and Stuart Townend do in terms of choosing topics? Do you think through at some point: "what Christian themes have we been overlooking? What . . . themes have we ignored, or . . . that we're not singing about that we should, we should pay more attention to?" Do you . . . think about things like that?[29]

To this, Keith Getty answered:

> Sure, though I guess there's two answers to that. . . . In terms of our own short biography, we began just in the frustration of group Bible studies, of trying to set the Apostles' Creed. . . . So we began with that, and that was where the first collection, "In Christ Alone" . . . and so on, came from, then from that we expanded to looking. . . . I'm very prone to liturgy, so I thought looking through the service of worship, looking through the church's year, and so we began to fill in the gaps of liturgy, and then two years ago, we took on another project called *Hymns for the Christian Life*, which was looking at subjects like work, the social needs of those around us, you know, fellowship and reconciliation.[30]

Though the Gettys' and Townend's hymns are used for corporate worship in non-denominational Protestant churches internationally, Keith Getty professedly draws on his heritage of church *liturgy* to shape and direct his song writing.[31] The *Hymns for the*

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[29] "Truth We Believe," 4:34–4:57.

[30] "Truth We Believe," 4:57–5:51.

[31] It is also worth noting that though he now attends a non-denominational church, Stuart Townend has roots in the Anglican (Church of England) tradition, which is also liturgical. "Stuart Townend," *We Are Worship*, website, accessed June 3, 2020, https://www.weareworship.com/uk/worship-leaders/stuart-townend/.

Christian Life project was not explicitly intended to "fill gaps in the liturgy" like the Gettys' first project, but I believe the songwriters' selection of topics for this collection was informed and guided by church liturgy and by historical composers who had themselves treated these "earthly" Trinity topics before—composers like Bach.

So, how did the Gettys incorporate Bach's borrowed material into their modern worship song? The first thing to note about their borrowing is the issue of form. Significantly, Bach's musical materials have been forged into a *hymn*. Corporate singing in Protestant church services attempts to recreate the musical worship of the Early Church, particularly as recorded in the Bible: in his letter to the Ephesian Christians, Paul writes "but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:18b–20, ESV); similarly, in his letter to the Colossians, Paul assumes that worship singing is practiced by all believers when he says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (3:16); and in Acts, Luke records, "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them" (16:25). The modern hymn borrows its melody from Bach's chorale setting, but its form and function make a definite statement about the *role* of music in Christian worship that is at some variance with the musical tradition from which it borrows. Of course, Bach's cantata is itself based on Nicolai's hymn (though Nicolai's melody is not the musical material borrowed by the Gettys, Townend, and Newman), so again, Bach has set a precedent for the re-forging of music from past musical traditions to fit modern needs and worship contexts.

Example 3. Vocal Melody from "Before You I Kneel (A Worker's Prayer)"

Table 3. Form of "Before You I Kneel (A Worker's Prayer)" in the Hymn Score

Verse 1	Adjusted segment A (instrumental)	Verse 2	Adjusted segment A (instrumental)	Verse 3

   In the modern song, Bach's original musical material undergoes considerable manipulation to fit within the formal conventions of a hymn: to use J. Peter Burkholder's more precise definitions for musical borrowing, the hymn's melody is a "paraphrase" of Bach's, using his materials to forge a new tune which, at some points, copies the original exactly (what we might more commonly call a "quotation").[32] As the song is in strophic form, the writers have organized the chorale setting's melodic segments in a consistent, repeated order throughout, unlike the dynamic patchwork found in Bach's original instrumental accompaniment (see example 3 above and example 4 below). Each verse is broken into two sets of four-bar parallel phrases, forming an antecedent and consequent. Notably, the hymn score features no introduction, but does include a notated instrumental interlude after the first and second verses, consisting of nearly the

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[32] J. Peter Burkholder, "The Uses of Existing Music: Musical Borrowing as a Field," *Notes* 50, no. 3 (1994): 851–70, here 854.

entire segment A from Bach's chorale setting. Keith and Kristyn Getty's recording of the hymn adds no extra vocal materials (bridges, etc.), but it does highlight the hymn's source material through extended quotations of Bach's original melody, going beyond the brief allusion in the instrumental interlude from the hymn score.[33] Like in Bach's original arrangement, the hymn recording starts with a statement of segment A (in an almost complete form) on violin, mirroring the chorale setting's instrumentation. This interlude reappears after verse 1, but after verse 2, there is a complete statement of the chorale setting's instrumental introduction—including modulation. Verse 3 then picks up again in the "right" key, and after a short extension, ends with another adjusted statement of segment A (see table 4).

The writers of "Before You I Kneel" also make considerable melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic adjustments to Bach's musical materials to make a congregation-friendly hymn. Most obviously, they adapt Bach's swift, bumpy melody to produce a singable, relatively unsyncopated vocal line that nevertheless retains the essential characteristics of the original. The first and second phrases of the hymn are based on segment A of Bach's chorale setting, beginning with a leap of a fourth to the tonic, followed by stepwise motion up to the third scale degree. The accented passing tones are omitted, though the melody's essential contour remains the same (see example 4 for a comparison of the relationship between the original and adapted melodies).[34] The latter two phrases incorporate fragments of Bach's segments D and B: like segment D, the hymn's consequent phrases begin on the upper tonic followed by a descending scalar passage, broken by a neighbor tone (of sorts) on the fourth note. In the transposed segment D, this is A-G♯-A, but in the hymn, it is changed to A-F♯-A, so as to avoid the tonicization of the dominant. Interestingly, the troublesome C theme, which modulates into the dominant, does not have an adapted counterpart in the hymn. As an exposition on God-glorifying earthly toil, the song never leaves the "right" key: it is diatonic from beginning to end.

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[33] Keith and Krystin Getty, "Before You I Kneel (A Worker's Prayer)," track 5 on *Hymns for the Christian Life,* released 2012 by Getty Music Label.

[34] See Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty, Jeff Taylor, and Stuart Townend, "Before You I Kneel (A Worker's Prayer)," *Hymns for the Christian Life* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2013).

Table 4. Form of "Before You I Kneel (A Worker's Prayer)" on the Gettys' Recording

Adjusted Segment A (instrumental)	Verse 1	Adjusted Segment A (instrumental)	Verse 2
Complete Instrumental Introduction (AABCD)	Verse 3 (ends on deceptive Cadence)	Extension: Phrase 4 repetition	Abbreviated Segment A (instrumental)

Example 4. The Adaptation of Musical Materials in "Before You I Kneel (A Worker's Prayer)"

The songwriters also make some necessary adjustments to the rhythms of Bach's original melodic materials. Both the hymn and the chorale setting are in common time, but the latter's quick rhythm is augmented in the hymn, making it more suitable for congregational singing: sixteenth notes become eighth notes, and eighth notes become quarter notes. The harmonic rhythm is slowed considerably, too: Bach's instrumental accompaniment features a new harmony on nearly every beat (and at times, twice per beat). Traditional, organ- or piano-led hymns can easily accommodate a new harmony on each beat, but this modern hymn favors a simplified harmonic motion that allows it to be led comfortably by guitars and contemporary music groups as well as by keyboardists. On the whole, the harmonic

rhythm of "Before You I Kneel" is one chord for every half-measure (two beats). There are three occasions where there is an increase in harmonic movement (bars 11, 12, and 15), but there are also several points in which this pace slows down to only one harmony per bar (bars 3, 9, 10, 13, 14, and the final measure).

In his chorale setting, Bach employed a characteristically varied harmonic vocabulary: he embellished his harmonic progression with pedal tones (as in the first, second, and sixth iterations of segment A), along with many inversions, secondary dominants, and—of course—modulations. However, in order to make the earthly melody suitable as a hymn, adjustments had to be made: "Before You I Kneel" has a straight-forward harmonic scheme, suited to its diatonic melody. It features no secondary dominants, and only one suspension. See table 5 for a diagram of the hymn's harmonic progression.

Table 5. Harmonic Analysis of "Before You I Kneel (A Worker's Prayer)" from Score (without Instrumental Interludes)

Phrase 1				Phrase 2			
(Measure) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
I - V₆	vi – V	IV	V – I	I - V₆	vi – V	IV - ii	V - I
Phrase 3				Phrase 4			
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
vi	iii	vi – V₆ - I	ii – Vsus - V	vi	iii	IV – ii – V	I

Finally, we can turn to the specifics of the hymn's text, evaluating how it fits into the theological framework of Bach's chorale setting. The song is sung as a prayer—as made explicit in its title; the Parable of the Ten Virgins, as found in the Gospel of Matthew and adapted by Nicolai, is not referenced directly in the hymn, but the extrinsic text does provide a framework of meaning for the modern song. The context of work is, from the hymn's outset, framed by the relationship between the earthly and the Divine, and the theme of

readiness is present: readiness for the return of Jesus through earthly submission and attentiveness to his will in the believer's earthly labors, but also readiness to meet the Divine *within* the incessant cyclicity of earthly work itself. In the first verse, the text says:

> Before You I kneel, my Master and Maker,
>   to offer the works of my hands.
> For this is the day you've given Your servant;
>   I will rejoice and be glad.
> For the strength I have to live and breathe,
>   for each skill Your grace has given me;
> for the needs and opportunities
>   that will glorify Your great Name.

Why rejoice at work? Work is tiring and arduous (as the song implies in the second verse to come), but the songwriters are expressing a Christian joy in the earthly present because of a belief that God cares about the daily striving of believers, is present for it, and works out his plan *through* earthly striving—"the works of [the believer's] hands." This verse also implies that God governs and orders daily work through the acknowledgment that time itself is something that he gives: "this is the day you've given your servant." And there is a sense of preparing for God's intervention in the world in the last line, bringing the verse to a close with a focus on the glorification of God's name in the *present*—glorification that will reach its fullness with the return of Christ at the end of time.

The second verse opens with a prayer for God's goodness to be present in earthly work, to bless it but perhaps also to redeem it and use it for good purpose—for God "to cover" the believer's earthly work.

> Before You I kneel and ask for Your goodness
>   to cover the work of my hands.
> For patience and peace to shape all my labour;
>   Your grace for thorns in my path.
> Flow within me like a living stream;
>   Wear away the stones of pride and greed,
> till Your ways are dwelling deep in me
>   and a harvest of life is grown.

Lines two and three ask for the believer to be equipped to execute this earthly work—focusing on spiritual strength to meet difficulties, rather than asking for the removal of metaphorical "thorns" along the way. Moreover, the third and fourth line make it clear that it is *through* the difficulties of work that spiritual strength is gained—like a muscle being exercised. This, the text suggests, is one of God's purposes for work: to grow "a harvest of life" in the believer.

In the third and last verse, the focus pans out to reveal the finiteness of earthly work, to remind the worshiper of the temporality of earthly striving, and to again focus on the intervention of the Divine in the world:

> Before You I kneel, our Master and Maker;
> > establish the work of our hands.
> And order our steps to seek first Your Kingdom
> > in every small and great task.
> May we live the Gospel of Your grace;
> > serve Your purpose in our fleeting days;
> then our lives will bring eternal praise
> > and all glory to Your great Name.

From the first line, we see the earthly *intersecting* with the heavenly as the prayer seeks for earthly work to be "established": to be given purpose and a place in God's permanent design for the world. Interestingly, the next line explicitly expresses a desire for God to impose his "order" on earthly work so that it fulfills his plans. The work of these "fleeting days" is all for God's glory and done as the believer waits and anticipates his return in readiness—part of the "eternal praise" that the believer's completed life will bring to God's name. Throughout, the hymn encourages the believer to remain prayerful in earthly labor, waiting for the coming of God's kingdom with patience, but also waiting with intentionality, striving to be prepared for his coming—prepared not by a wealth of industry or material productivity, but by the peace (verse 2, line 2) and humility (verse 2, line 3) brought about by patiently laboring under the divine reality of God's sovereignty.

I have suggested that the borrowed musical material from Bach's setting of "Zion hört die Wächter singen" imports specific

meanings into this hymn that would inform our understanding of the latter's music and text. In doing so, I have made various conjectures about the songwriters' interpretation of Bach's chorale and their intentions in incorporating it in their hymn; these conjectures may be criticized for being too sophisticated or not sophisticated enough. In any case, I would argue that the relationship between the two works must be interrogated closely in order to form a credible interpretation of the hymn's meaning. Musical allusions *always* produce meaning because they forge intertextuality between works, inviting us to search beyond the surface of the music and its text, to ponder the significance of the borrowed material, and to ask of it "why are you here?" Through their act of musical borrowing, the Gettys, Townend, and Taylor invite us to approach their hymn intertextually, challenging us to consider how its meaning has been refined or altered by its relationship with Bach's chorale setting, and calling us to situate its message within the intricate weave of biblical Truth and the rich history of Christian worship music.

From God to Me to Us:
Chris Tomlin
and the Dimensions of Worship

Samantha M. Inman[1]

Sacred music both shapes and reflects beliefs. Significantly, both lyrics and musical style contribute to this process. As Scott Aniol notes, "Aesthetic form shapes propositional content . . . doctrinal facts take the shape of the aesthetic form in which they are carried."[2] While discussing contemporary hymn arrangements, Joshua Busman argues that changes in musical style, form, and climax can color or even alter the meaning of a song, even when the text remains identical to the original.[3] As Greg Scheer summarizes, "Repertoire Is Theology."[4] Unpacking this theology requires consideration of the text, music, and their interaction.[5]

This study examines expressions of the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the Christian life as expressed in recordings by

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[1] Samantha M. Inman, PhD, is an assistant professor of music theory at Stephen F. Austin State University.

[2] Scott Aniol, *By the Waters of Babylon: Worship in a Post-Christian Culture* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2015), 158.

[3] Joshua Kalin Busman, "(Re)Sounding Passion: Listening to American Evangelical Worship Music, 1997–2015" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, 2015), 83–144, ProQuest (UMI 3703738).

[4] Greg Scheer, *The Art of Worship: A Musician's Guide to Leading Modern Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 55.

[5] While this claim may seem obvious to scholars of art song, arguments for or against Contemporary Worship Music (CWM) have often fixated on either lyrics or musical style, often ignoring or downplaying their interaction. While some condemnations of CWM pertain to the lyrics, far more focus on purely musical traits. As Busman summarizes, "the 'worship wars' centered on a question of the inherent spirituality or moral neutrality of specific musical forms. Opponents of the newer popularly-inspired music argued that the form of 'rock and roll' was not morally neutral and therefore was incapable of conveying a Christian message. But proponents of the music saw no moral content inherent within its form, arguing for its potential use as a powerful tool of Christian evangelism"; see Busman, "(Re)Sounding Passion," 5.

American singer-songwriter Chris Tomlin. In particular, it considers those songs in which a change in point of view in the lyrics is paired with a significant formal, melodic, or textural event in the music, resulting in a heightened awareness of the worshipper's relation to God and to other people, especially fellow believers. While Tomlin is far from the only worship artist to include lyrics with such grammatical shifts, he nevertheless provides a valuable case study because of his dominance in Contemporary Worship Music (CWM). His accolades include numerous Dove Awards from the Gospel Music Association and a Grammy for Best Contemporary Christian Album (*And if Our God Is for Us . . .*).[6] Tens of thousands of college students have been introduced to his music through Passion Conferences, with which Tomlin has been involved since its founding in 1997.[7] Perhaps most important, however, is the fact that Tomlin's songs are widely sung in church services, as evidenced by their regular appearance in the Top 25 and Top 100 lists maintained by Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI).[8]

The relationship between CWM and the perceived value of worshiping in the context of a Christian congregation is complex. In unpacking connections, the three sections of this article move from general context towards specific case studies focused on Tomlin's music. Part I considers the significance of point of view in CWM in light of past congregational music and ethnographies of current musical practice. Part II analyzes a corpus of one hundred three songs

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[6] "Past Winners," *GMA Dove Awards*, Gospel Music Association, accessed December 18, 2018, https://doveawards.com/awards/past–winners/; "Artist: Chris Tomlin," *Recording Academy Grammy Awards*, accessed December 18, 2018, https://www.grammy.com/grammys/artists/chris-tomlin.

[7] Busman, "(Re)Sounding Passion," 75–78 discusses Passion, its founder Louie Giglio, Tomlin's involvement, and the associated record label sixstepsrecords, which was founded for artists associated with Passion. Also see this evangelical organization's website: https://passionconferences.com/.

[8] For a list of the one-hundred twelve songs that have appeared on CCLI's top–25 lists from 1989 through February 2015, see Lester Ruth, "Some Similarities and Differences between Historic Evangelical Hymns and Contemporary Worship Songs," *Artistic Theologian* 3 (2015): 79–80. Tomlin has recorded eight of these: "Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone)," "Forever," "Holy Is the Lord," "Indescribable," "Jesus Messiah," "Joy to the World (Unspeakable Joy)," "Let God Arise," and "Our God." For an explanation of reporting cycles and the significance of CCLI's list, see Robert Woods and Brian Walrath, eds., *The Message in the Music: Studying Contemporary Praise and Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 19–20.

drawn from ten of Tomlin's albums, highlighting patterns in lyrics and musical structure typical of his writing and arranging. Part III identifies three types of interactions between lyrical shifts and musical form, closely analyzing representatives of each type drawn from the larger corpus. Interestingly, over half of Tomlin's songs in this study include an internal change in speaker or audience. Shifts in point of view coupled with musical expression can heighten awareness of both the vertical relation between a worshiper and God and also the horizontal relation among Christians.

Part I: Pronouns, Congregational Music, and "Really Worshiping"

Christian worship invokes a network of relationships. The act of worship by definition involves the vertical relationship between a worshiper and God. However, worship—including worship through song—also places a person in a horizontal relation to other believers. Indeed, both the vertical and the horizontal appear in Jesus's summary of the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."[9] In practice, both dimensions impact relationships both within and outside the church. Monique M. Ingalls demonstrates the role CWM plays in shaping four interrelated types of evangelical congregations: churches, conferences, concerts, and audiovisual materials.[10] Consideration of the relative emphases of the vertical and horizontal dimensions surface in discourse about the lyrics of worship music in general and of CWM in particular. For instance, in a podcast hosted by Chris Tomlin, Christian singer-songwriter Christy Nockels describes the rise of CWM as "the church . . .

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[9] Matthew 22:37–39 KJV. Also see Mark 12:29–31 and Luke 10:26–27.

[10] Monique M. Ingalls, "Awesome in this Place: Sound, Space, and Identity in Contemporary North American Evangelical Worship" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2008), ProQuest (UMI 3328582), and Monique M. Ingalls, *Singing the Congregation: How Contemporary Worship Music Forms Evangelical Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

shift[ing] from singing songs *about* God to singing songs *to* God."[11] This idea can be traced back at least as far as John and Carol Wimber of the charismatic Vineyard Movement.[12] While demonstrably false in the narrow sense, this bold claim underscores the importance of point of view, word choice, and value of congregation to studies of CWM.

The "lines of communication" Scheer identifies in Christian lyrics provide a useful starting place for considering point of view in both traditional and modern worship music. He emphasizes three of these as primary: human to human, human to God, and God to human.[13] A human speaker is usually presumed to be a Christian, though the real or imagined human hearers may be fellow believers, non-Christians, or a mixture of the two. While in a theological sense all quotations from the Bible can be interpreted as communications from God, lyrics that specify God as the speaker in a dramatic sense appear only sparingly. This might be due in part to the tension such lyrics create between the understood speaker and the reality of a human singer. Each line has the potential to interact with more than one of the grammatical points of view listed in table 1. In particular, each category can be expressed in first person, second person, or a fluid mixture of the two. Lyrics in first person tend to emphasize the experience and attributes of the speaker(s), while lyrics in second person emphasize the same for the recipient(s). Third person, when used, most often surfaces in lyrics in the human to human line that focus on ideas rather than the nature of the speaker.

Christian lyrics have used a variety of points of view for centuries. This is evident even when confining attention to English-speaking churches. The Old Testament book of Psalms—the only texts even permitted to be sung in many Protestant churches in the early days of the American colonies—includes both statements to

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[11] Chris Tomlin, "HOLY ROAR: Doves & Armadillos . . . a Conversation with Christy & Nathan Nockels," *Things You May Not Know with Chris Tomlin: A Holy Roar Project*, Podcast audio, November 9, 2018, Spotify, 34:25–34:32.

[12] John Wimber, ed., *Thoughts on Worship* (Anaheim: Vineyard Music Group, 1996), 1–2; quoted in Wen Reagan, "A Beautiful Noise: A History of Contemporary Worship Music in Modern America" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2015), 245–46, ProQuest (UMI 3689059).

[13] Scheer, *The Art of Worship*, 56–57. This passage also lists the less common options "humans to other beings" and "the worshiper speaks to himself or herself."

God and to people.[14] Likewise, hymnals explore multiple points of view.

Table 1. Grammatical Points of View

	Singular	Plural
1st	I am	We are
2nd	You are	You (all) are
3rd	It is/He is/She is	They are

Table 2 illustrates this variety, providing representatives for each of Scheer's lines.[15] The examples of both the human to human and the human to God categories are subdivided based on whether the lyrics specify a single speaker, indicate a group, or sidestep the question through avoidance of personal pronouns. The third column indicates possibilities for point of view, listing the most likely option first. Confession and testimony tend toward first person, while praise and supplication gravitate toward second person. The third line, God to human, is the least common, often only appearing in part of a song's lyrics. Examples of the first two lines abound in these older repertoires. While congregational music with lyrics addressed directly to God originated long before the advent of the pop-rock style of modern praise bands, CWM tends to emphasize second person singular.[16] Third person, perhaps the option most closely associated with "singing *about* God," is less common in this repertoire.

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[14] Robert E. Webber, *Worship Old & New: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Introduction*, revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 118. This book provides an effective overview of how music and other elements in a worship service have changed over the centuries.

[15] This chart uses the ordering of the Psalms included in most English translations of the Bible, which aligns with the Hebrew numbering rather than the Greek numbering. See the extensive database at https://hymnary.org/ for hymn texts and the long lists of hymnals in which the representatives appear.

[16] Daniel Thornton confirms this in his study of twenty-five representative contemporary congregational songs, noting that "the majority . . . are from the personal/singular perspective." He notes three exceptions in his corpus, two of

Table 2. Lines of Communication following Greg Scheer, *The Art of Worship*

Communication	Speaker #	POV	Psalm	Hymn (author, date)
Human to Human	Singular	1st or 2nd	2, 34, 121	"Amazing Grace" (John Newton, 1779); "Nothing but the Blood" (Robert Lowry, 1876); "The Old Rugged Cross" (George Bennard, 1913)
	Plural	1st or 2nd	20, 46, 124	"Brethren, We Have Met to Worship" (George Atkins, 1819); "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" (Martin Luther, 1529, trans. Frederick H. Hedge, 1852)
	Unspecified	3rd or 2nd	1, 96, 127, 150	"Blessed Be the Name" (William H. Clark, Ralph E. Hudson, 1888); "Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy" [verses only] (Joseph Hart, 1759)
Human to God	Singular	2nd or 1st	51, 119, 139	"Great Is Thy Faithfulness" (Thomas O. Chisholm, 1923); "My Jesus, I Love Thee" (William R. Featherston, 1864); "How Great Thou Art" (Carl Gustav Boberg, trans. Stuart K. Hine, 1949)
	Plural	2nd or 1st	21, 44, 80	"Holy, Holy, Holy" (Reginald Heber, 1826); "All Glory, Laud, and Honor" (Theodulph of Orleans; trans. John M. Neale, 1854)
God to Human	Singular	1st or 2nd	46:10; 60:6-8; 75:2-5; 95:8-11	"How Firm a Foundation" [verses 2ff.] (from Rippon's Selection of Hymns, 1787)

which are Tomlin's: "Our God" and "How Great Is Our God"; see Daniel Thornton, "Exploring the Contemporary Congregational Song Genre: Texts, Practice, and Industry" (PhD diss., Macquarie University, 2015), 105.

CWM departs from the formal tone of many older settings of psalms and hymns in favor of the current vernacular. Specifically, CWM embraces modern pronouns (You/Your) over the antiquated pronouns of many older hymns (Ye/Thou/Thee/Thy/Thine).[17] In comparison to the shift from singing in Latin to singing in German that took place under Martin Luther in the early days of the Reformation, this change might seem unremarkable.[18] However, some attach deeper theological significance to the issue, claiming that the older language stresses God's transcendence while modern everyday language emphasizes God's immanence.[19] Marva J. Dawn advocates striving for balance, noting the dangers of elevating one attribute over the other: "Worship that focuses on God's transcendence without God's immanence becomes austere and inaccessible; worship that stresses God's immanence without God's transcendence leads to irreverent coziness."[20]

Hymns and CWM also differ in means and amount of internal repetition. On one hand, congregational hymns tend to be strophic while most CWM uses more complex structures involving verses, choruses, and contrasting bridges. On the other, CWM tends to use a smaller harmonic vocabulary than hymns, often employing only four or five chords from the same diatonic set. The most pronounced difference, though, involves the repetitions of words. Ruth attributes this to a change in tone: "CWS [contemporary worship songs] come before divinity in worship in terms of bold address to God, eagerly, and repeatedly, whereas EH [evangelical hymns] tend to praise in indirect ways."[21] As Scheer notes, "hymns typically develop one

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[17] Recent editions of some hymnals likewise update pronouns where possible. Some modernizations go further, replacing or restructuring entire phrases and eliminating obscure imagery.

[18] This shift impacted both lyrics and music: "Just as [Martin Luther] wanted the Bible to be in the German language, he also wanted the texts and the tunes of German church music to be in the vernacular"; Scott Aniol, *Worship in Song: A Biblical Approach to Music and Worship* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 2009), 64.

[19] Scheer, *The Art of Worship*, 69.

[20] Marva J. Dawn, *Reaching Out without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 96.

[21] Ruth, "Some Similarities and Differences," 74.

idea, whereas Praise & Worship songs repeat an idea . . . verbatim or with slight variations."[22] In fact, CWM often repeats individual words or phrases enough to merit the nickname "7–11 songs" (i.e., seven words sung eleven times).[23]

Additionally, CWM lyrics are often colloquial and even intimate, a fact not lost on critics pejoratively referring to this genre as "Jesus-is-my-boyfriend (or girlfriend) music."[24] Such "overt emphasis on the love relationship between God and the worshipper" reflects the influence of Vineyard's writings and music.[25] Evidence of the ubiquity of this trait includes the unabashed title *Lovin' on Jesus*, a book by Swee Hong Lim and Lester Ruth on the history of contemporary worship.[26] Jenell Williams Paris identifies twenty-seven of the seventy-seven songs that occupied CCLI's Top 25 song lists from 1989 to 2005 as "romantic," and Keith Drury explores both positive and negative reactions to this trend.[27] More generally, Scott Aniol notes increased emphasis on "themes such as human freedom,

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[22] Scheer, *The Art of Worship*, 65–66.

[23] One example is "Trading My Sorrows" (1998) by Darrell Evans, the chorus of which is dominated by repetitions of "yes, Lord" (2015), as mentioned in Tim Stewart, "7–11 songs," *Dictionary of Christianese*, posted August 13, 2015, accessed September 4, 2019, https://www.dictionaryofchristianese.com/7-11-song/.

[24] This is "a song whose lyrics express an overly romantic or love-sick devotion to Jesus," as defined in Tim Stewart, "Jesus per minute, and Jesus is my girlfriend," *Dictionary of Christianese*, posted August 5, 2012, accessed July 26, 2019, https://www.dictionaryofchristianese.com/jesus-per-minute-and-jesus-is-my-girlfriend/. Also see Scheer, *Art of Worship*, 69–71. For more extensive considerations of the romantic overtones of some CWM, see Jenell Williams Paris, "*I Could Sing of Your Love Forever:* American Romance in Contemporary Worship Music," in *The Message in the Music: Studying Contemporary Praise and Worship*, ed. Robert Woods and Brian Walrath (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 43–53; and Keith Drury, "*I'm Desperate for You:* Male Perception of Romantic Lyrics in Contemporary Worship Music," in *The Message in the Music: Studying Contemporary Praise and Worship*, ed. Robert Woods and Brian Walrath (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 54–64.

[25] Reagan, "A Beautiful Noise," 240. Also see the remainder of chapter 5 (223–64) for more information on Vineyard's history and contributions to CWM.

[26] Swee Hong Lim and Lester Ruth, *Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017).

[27] See Paris, "*I Could Sing of Your Love Forever*," 46; and Drury, "*I'm Desperate for You*," 54–64.

personal experience, and decision to change one's self more than on theocentric worship."[28]

Cautions against self-centeredness surface even in charitable commentaries on CWM. Chris Tomlin writes:

> Our increasingly me-centered culture has even influenced a lot of our worship songs. There's so much "me," "mine," "I," and "Lord, do this for me." I'm not saying it's wrong or theo-logically incorrect to word a song like this. (If that were so, we would have to throw many of the Psalms out as well. David cries out to God about himself all through his songs.) It's just that we must be careful not to keep all the attention on us. But our flesh, our sinful selves, can confuse us. Confuse us into thinking that the world revolves around us, that somehow our desires should be at the center of our response to God.[29]

Such lyrics encourage some worshipers to downplay the importance or even the presence of the congregation in the midst of a corporate worship service. In his study of a church in Canada, Gordon Adnams discusses the irony in comments by one worshiper in particular:

> Eyes are closed to shut out all of the other singers who are necessary for the occasion of singing in a worship service. But at some point in time, they apparently become a distraction for a really worshipping member whose goal appears to be a private, inner awareness of communicating to God the personalized feelings named in the communally sung words. . . . For one who is really worshipping, a song becomes "personal truth."[30]

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[28]Aniol, *Worship in Song*, 73.

[29] Chris Tomlin, *The Way I Was Made: Words and Music for an Unusual Life* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2005), 53–54.

[30] Gordon Adnams, "'Really Worshipping', not 'Just Singing,'" in *Christian Congregational Music: Performance, Identity and Experience*, ed. Monique Ingalls, Carolyn Landau, and Tom Wagner (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 196–97. Also see Gordon Adnams, "'Here I Am to Worship': Conflicting Authenticities in Contemporary Christian Congregational Singing," *Phenomenon of Singing* 6 (2013): 22–29.

The emphasis on the need for an individual to worship God is not surprising in light of evangelical theology, which teaches the need for each individual "to be transformed through a 'born-again' experience and a lifelong process of following Jesus."[31] What is more surprising is the ambivalent attitude towards fellow-worshipers during the act of worshiping through music, even in the midst of a live worship service.[32]

The differences in lyrics between traditional psalm settings and hymns on one hand and most CWM on the other are multifaceted. While psalms and older hymns employ a wide range of points of view, CWM favors second person singular. Containing a higher degree of repetition than older styles, CWM lyrics emphasize simple wording and intimate imagery. Sometimes in the act of "singing *to* God" with CWM, the emphasis on the experience of individuals can eclipse the value of fellow worshipers. As Drury notes, "the church could use more lyrics expressing the love relationship between Jesus and the collective church, replacing 'I, my, and mine' with 'we, our, and ours.'"[33] In light of these trends, CWM songs that employ shifts in speaker, audience, and point of view might heighten rather than suppress awareness of the corporate dimension of congregational singing.

Part II: Characteristics of Tomlin's Studio Albums

The ten albums listed in figure 1 provide the main source material for this study.[34] These include Tomlin's solo studio albums

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[31] "What Is an Evangelical?" National Association of Evangelicals, accessed July 29, 2019, https://www.nae.net/what-is-an-evangelical/.

[32] Ambivalence and ambiguity multiply further in considering the use of CWM in personal devotion. Even advertisements for worship music and resources emphasize the private individual over the public congregation; see Anna E. Nekola, "US Evangelicals and the Redefinition of Worship Music," in *Mediating Faiths: Religion and Socio-Cultural Change in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Michael Bailey and Guy Redden (New York: Routledge, 2016), 96–104.

[33] Drury, "*I'm Desperate for You*," 63. Scheer, *The Art of Worship*, 64 similarly stresses the need to write "from the 'we' perspective or the collective 'I,' but never in the first person without regard for the collective voice."

[34] Major streaming services including Spotify and Amazon Music currently include only the deluxe edition of *Never Lose Sight* but only the original

released from 2001 to 2018 that are not compilations and are not associated with a specific event or a season (such as Christmas). The analysis that follows focuses on these particular recordings, consulting published transcriptions and other recordings as secondary sources.[35] As with much CWM, most of the songs Tomlin has recorded involved co-authorship of the lyrics, music, or both. The Appendix lists the contents of all ten albums, specifying authorship for each of the one hundred seventeen tracks. The remainder of this study excludes only thirteen of these: the twelve in which Tomlin is not credited as a songwriter (indicated in grey), and the titular track of *Burning Lights*, which essentially functions as an introduction to the album. While both the long and shortened versions of "Forever" are mentioned below, the general statistics count only the long version. Despite the influence of a variety of pastors, producers, and performers, the remaining one hundred three songs constitute a cohesive corpus. Surveying patterns in the music and lyrics of Tomlin's output provides necessary context for close analysis of individual songs.

The Noise We Make (2001)
Not to Us (2002)
Arriving (2004)
See the Morning (2006)
Hello Love (2008)
And if Our God Is for Us . . . (2010)
Burning Lights (2013)
Love Ran Red (2014)
Never Lose Sight, deluxe ed. (2016)
Holy Roar (2018)

Each issues as a compact disc by sixsteprecords/Sparrow Records

Figure 1. Chris Tomlin Discography

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release of *Love Ran Red*. This study uses these editions, reflecting the version listeners are most likely to access.

[35] While many worship teams routinely add or omit repeats or sections of a given song in services, they often do so in reference to a particular recording. As Busman, "(Re)Sounding Passion," 129 notes, "The rapid incorporation of Passion's songs into the repertoires of individual congregations means that particular recordings of songs often become normative, not just through album sales or radio play, but also by serving as the *urtext* for the majority of weekly performances in local churches."

The vast majority of Tomlin's songs follow some variation of verse-chorus-bridge form.[36] The basic pattern includes an instrumental introduction (I), two iterations of a verse-chorus pair (V, C), a contrasting bridge (B), a return to the chorus (C), and a concluding tag (T) or instrumental passage (I). In some of Tomlin's songs, a sung introduction (N) replaces the instrumental introduction or the introduction is minimized or omitted. Possible additions to the basic scheme include one or more reiterations of the chorus, internal instrumental breaks, a prechorus (P), or an additional verse. Patterns emerge when grouping songs by the number of verses containing distinct words. Table 3 shows the form of the eleven songs with only a single distinctive verse, which usually appears twice as part of a verse-chorus pair. Table 4 shows two distinct verses in sixty-five songs, nearly two-thirds of the corpus. The only change from the first category is here each distinct verse typically appears only once in a verse-chorus pair. Songs with three different verses take a slightly different approach, as shown in the twenty-six songs in table 5. Here, the first and second verses are usually grouped together before the first chorus, which is followed by the third verse and its attendant chorus. These songs thus move from an emphasis on the verses at the beginning of the song to an emphasis on the chorus by the end. The single remaining song in the corpus, "Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)" is anomalous in comparison to Tomlin's other songs (including his other hymn arrangements) for including four distinct verses, the last of which concludes the song (I V1 V2 C V3 C C V4 T).

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[36] This common pattern has more than one name in popular music scholarship. "Verse-chorus-bridge form" features in Ken Stephenson, *What to Listen for in Rock: A Stylistic Analysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 140–41. John Covach refers to the same structure as "compound AABA" in "Form in Rock Music: A Primer," in *Engaging Music: Essays in Music Analysis*, ed. Deborah Stein (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 74–76.

Table 3. Form of Tomlin's Songs with One Verse

Song (11 with 1 verse = 11%)	Form
Be Glorified	V I V C I V C I B C T
Boundary Lines	T V I C I V I T C T T/C I
Exalted (Yahweh)	V C1 V C1 C1 I B C2 C2 I B
Goodness, Love and Mercy	V C V C I B C I
Holy Is the Lord	I V P C V P C B P C I T
Kyrie Eleison	I V C C B C I
Let Your Mercy Rain	I V C1 V C1 C2 B C1 C2 C2 I
Need You Now	I V C V C B I C C I
Sovereign	I V C V C B C T I
The Noise We Make	I V C I V C B C I B I
We Fall Down	I V C V C C C T

Table 4. Form of Tomlin's Songs with Two Verses

Song (65 with 2 verses = 63%)	Form
All the Way My Savior Leads Me	V1 C V2 C C T
All Yours	I V1 C V2 C B C C T
Almighty	I V1 C1 V2 C B C T I
America	I B V1 C I V2 C I B C T
At the Cross (Love Ran Red)	I V1 C V2 C B C T
Awake My Soul	I V1 C I V2 C I C C T
Awakening	I V1 C V2 C C I B I B I T
Awesome Is the Lord Most High	I V1 C V2 C B C C C T
Come Let Us Worship	I V1 C1 V2 C1 I C2 I
Countless Wonders	V1 C V2 C B C C C T
Crown Him (Majesty)	I V1 C V2 C B C C T
Enough	C I V1 C I V2 C B C T
Everything	I V1 C1 V2 C1 C2 B T
Famous One	I C I V1 C I V2 C C I C
Fear Not	C1 V1 C1 V2 C1 C2 I B C1 C2

Song (65 with 2 verses = 63%)	Form
Glorious	I V1 C V2 C C B C C C I
Glory Be	I V1 V2 C I V2 C B I C I
Glory in the Highest	I V1 C1 V2 C1 B C2 C2 C2 I
God Almighty	I V1 C I V2 C I B C I
God and God Alone	I V1 C V2 C B C C B T
God of Calvary	I V1 C1 I V2 C1 B C2 I
God's Great Dance Floor	I V1 P I V2 P C1 I P C1 I C2 I C2 C2 I
Greater	I V1 C V2 C B C C T I
He Lives	I V1 C V2 C B C C
Holy Roar	V1 C V2 C B C C T
How Can I Keep from Singing	I V1 C V2 C B C T
How Great Is Our God	I V1 C V2 C B C C C
I Lift My Hands	I V1 C I V2 C C B C C T
I Stand in Awe	V1 C V2 C B C C T
I Will Follow	N V1 C V2 C B C C
I Will Rise	I V1 P C V2 P C B I C T
Impact	I V1 P C V2 C I B C B
Impossible Things	I V1 C I V2 C B1 C C B2 I V1 T
Jesus Loves Me	I V1 C V2 C B C T
Jesus Messiah	I V1 C V2 C B C T
Kindness	I V1 V1 C I V2 C C I V1
King of Glory	I V1 C V2 C B T
Lay Me Down	I V1 C I V2 C I B C T I
Let God Arise	I V1 C I V2 C I B C T
Lovely	I V1 C1 V2 C1 B C2 C1 T
Made to Worship	I V1 C V2 C B C C T I
Mighty Is the Power of the Cross	I V1 C V2 C B C C T
My Deliverer	I V1 P C V2 P C C B C T I
No Chains on Me	I V1 C I V2 C I B C T
Not to Us	I V1 C V2 C B T
On Our Side	I V1 C V2 C I C C T

Song (65 with 2 verses = 63%)	Form
Our God	I V1 V2 C I V2 C C I B C C B
Overflow	V1 C V2 C I B T
Praise Him Forever	I V1 C I V2 C B C T
Psalm 100	I V1 C I V2 C B I C I
Rejoice	I V1 C I V2 C C B C C I
Satisfied	C V1 C V2 C B1 B2 C B1
Shepherd Boy	I V1 C1 V2 C1 I C2 C2 T
Sing, Sing, Sing	I C V1 V2 C V1 C I C C I
Thank You God for Saving Me	I V1 C V2 C I B1 B2 C
The God I Know	I V1 C V2 C I B C B C F
The River	V1 C1 V2 C1 C2 B T
The Roar	V1 C1 V2 C1 B C1 C2
The Way I Was Made	I V1 C V2 C B C T
Unfailing Love	I V1 C V2 C B C C T
Waterfall	I V1 C I V2 C I B C T
White Flag	I V1 C V2 C I B C C B I
With Me	I V1 P C V2 P C I V1 C T
You Do All Things Well	I V1 C V2 C B C C I
You Lifted Me Out	I V1 C I V2 C I B C I

Table 5. Form of Tomlin's Songs with Three Verses

Song (26 with 3 verses = 25%)	Form
All Bow Down	I V1 V2 C V3 C B C C I
All to Us	I V1 V1 C I V2 C C B I V3 T
Come Home Running	I V1 V2 C V3 C C T
Come Thou Fount (I Will Sing)	I V1 V2 C I V3 C C V3b
Faithful	I V1 V2 C V3 C B C
First Love	I V1 V2 P C V3 P C C I
Forever	I V1 P V2 P C1 I V3 P C1 C1 B P C2 C2 C2 C2
Forever Young	I V1 V2 C V3 C C T

Song (26 with 3 verses = 25%)	Form
Home	I V1 V2 C I V3 C B C T
How Sweet It Is	V1 C V2 C B V3 C C
I Will Boast	I V1 V2 C I V3 C C T I
Jesus	V1 V2 C1 V3 C1 B C2 C2 T
Jesus My Redeemer	I V1 V2 C I V3 C I B I C I T
Jesus, Son of God	I V1 V2 C V3 V3 C B C
Love (with Watoto Children's Choir)	N V1 V2 C V3 B I C T
Majesty of Heaven	I V1 V2 C V3 C I B C T
Praise Is the Highway	I V1 V2 C V3 C B I C I T
Praise the Father, Praise the Son	I V1 V2 C V3 C C B C
The Name of Jesus	V1 V2 P C V3 P C I B P C T
The Table	V1 V1 C V2 V3 C B C T
The Wonderful Cross	I V1 V2 C V3 C C I V3 I C C
This Is Our God	I V1 V2 C1 V3 C1 C2 T
Unchanging	I V1 V2 C V3 C I B C C C I
Uncreated One	I V1 C I V2 C I V3 C I
Whom Shall I Fear [God of Angel Armies]	I V1 V2 C V3 C B C C T
Wonderful Maker	I V1 V2 P C V3 P C B C I

Like much of CWM, the harmony, texture, and melodic contour of Tomlin's repertoire adheres to the norms of secular pop-rock.[37] The vast majority include only triads, sevenths, and sus chords diatonic in major. Only eighteen songs (about 17%) contain applied chords or mixture harmonies. These are listed in table 6, which shows ♭VII to be the chromatic chord appearing most frequently. Loops of two to four chords are common.

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[37] For extensive surveys of rock stylistic traits ranging from form to harmony to texture, see Stephenson, *What to Listen for in Rock* mentioned above as well as David Temperley, *The Musical Language of Rock* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

Table 6. Chromatic Chords in Tomlin's Songs

Song	Ib7 or V7/IV	II or V/V	vii°7/vi or V7/vi	bVII	bIII	bVI	v
All Bow Down				x			
America				x	x		
Be Glorified				x			
Come Home Running			x				
Crown Him (Majesty)		x					
Everything				x			
Famous One				x			
Forever Young		x					
Glorious				x			
Goodness Love and Mercy			x				
Holy Is the Lord		x					
I Lift My Hands				x			x
Let God Arise	x						
On Our Side	x			x			
Praise the Father, Praise the Son			x			x	
Sing, Sing, Sing	x						
The Noise We Make				x			
The Way I Was Made				x			
TOTAL (18 = 17%)	3	3	3	10	1	1	1

Examples include the openings of "Let Your Mercy Rain" (IV–I) and "Unchanging" (I–V–IV over a tonic pedal). Verses often avoid tonal closure, instead generating tension for the arrival of a tonic chord at the start of the chorus. Such is the case in "Holy Roar." Verses tend to feature a relatively low vocal register and thin texture, while choruses tend to reach into a higher vocal register supported with thicker texture. For example, "Whom Shall I Fear [God of Angel Armies]" rises in vocal tessitura and dynamic level with section changes. The melody of the verse spans the pitches C3–C4, mainly accompanied

by guitars. In contrast, the chorus and bridge rise to A3–F4, noticeably increasing dynamics with synthesizer and more prominent percussion.

Tomlin's lyrics often combine quotation, paraphrase, and original description on the given theme. Some songs focus on a single passage from the Bible: "Goodness, Love and Mercy" paraphrases Psalm 23, and "We Fall Down" draws from Revelation 4.[38] Others touch on elements drawn from more than one passage of Scripture. "Holy Is the Lord" combines Isaiah 6:3 with Nehemiah 8:6.[39] Others incorporate phrases from sacred music of previous eras. For instance, "Kyrie Eleison" incorporates the opening words of the traditional mass ordinary, and "Glory Be" sets the lesser doxology. Several songs simply intersperse a new chorus into verses of a traditional hymn: examples include "Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)," "Come Thou Fount (I Will Sing)," "Crown Him (Majesty)," and "The Wonderful Cross." Other songs include more subtle references to hymns. "Thank You God for Saving Me" includes phrases from two familiar hymns: "my hope is built on nothing less" comes from the opening of "The Solid Rock," and "great is Your faithfulness" changes only one word from the opening of "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." Such connections to older traditions are deliberate.[40] Tomlin writes: "Young people these days don't want a faith that's just the latest thing. They're excited to know that we stand in a long line of worshipers—a huge cloud of witnesses—who have gone before."[41] Thus, changes in the use of pronouns or lines of communication are not due to the source materials themselves, which remain centered on the Bible and traditional texts.

Nevertheless, Tomlin's songs do explore multiple possible pairings of speaker and audience. While in some sense God is always the "audience" of songs sung in worship, here the term refers to the

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[38] For an account of "We Fall Down," see Chris Tomlin and Darren Whitehead, *Holy Roar: 7 Words that Will Change the Way You Worship* (Brentwood, TN: Bowyer & Bow, 2017), 76–79.

[39] Tomlin and Whitehead, *Holy Roar*, 24–27.

[40] Indeed, the practice of borrowing phrases from not only hymns but even other contemporary songs is commonplace, as noted in Thornton, "Exploring the Contemporary Congregational Song Genre," 121.

[41] Tomlin, *The Way I Was Made*, 166. While this quotation refers specifically to *Hymns Ancient and Modern: Live Songs of Our Faith*, an album excluded from this study, the core idea also applies to his other albums.

recipient implied by a close reading of the text, which most often is either God or other humans. Table 7 provides an overview of songs with a stable pairing of a speaker with an audience. Specifically, these are songs in which pronouns referring to the speaker are either all singular or all plural, and the entirety of the song is addressed either to God or to other humans. As the subtotal shows, such songs constitute slightly less than half of the corpus. Most interestingly, songs in which an individual person sings exclusively to God with no acknowledgement of other people comprise only about one-fifth of the corpus, a lower proportion than stereotypes of CWM might suggest. Table 8 shows the remaining songs, namely those that contain changes in speaker, audience, or both. The two largest groups include one human dividing attention between God and other humans, and several humans likewise dividing attention between God and humans. Together, these two groups comprise about one third of the corpus. Four of the other groups feature shifts between singular and plural pronouns in reference to the speaker, sometimes voicing the words of an individual and sometimes voicing the words of a congregation. The subtype in which the speaker number changes but the audience remains God alone is remarkable in that it acknowledges both the horizontal connection of an individual to fellow believers while still focusing on the vertical connection to God.

Table 7: Tomlin's Songs with a Stable Speaker-Audience Pair

Speaker	Audience	Song Titles	# of Songs	% of Stable Songs (45)	% of All Songs (103)
Human	God	Awake My Soul; Be Glorified; Come Thou Fount (I Will Sing); Countless Wonders; Enough; Famous One; First Love; Forever Young; Glory in the Highest; How Sweet It Is; I Stand in Awe; I Will Follow; Jesus, My Redeemer; Lay Me Down; Majesty of Heaven; Need You Now; Overflow; Satisfied; Sovereign; Unfailing Love; Waterfall; You Lifted Me Out	22	49%	21%
Human	Humans	Come Home Running; I Will Boast; I Will Rise; Jesus Loves Me; The Table	5	11%	5%
Human(s) [unspecified]	God	Everything	1	2%	1%
Humans	God	All to Us; All Yours; Glorious; Jesus, Son of God; Kindness; Sing, Sing, Sing; Uncreated One; White Flag; Wonderful Maker	9	20%	9%
Humans	Humans	Fear Not; Holy Is the Lord; Let God Arise; Love; Made to Worship; Praise Is the Highway; Psalm 100; We Fall Down	8	18%	8%
			46	Subtotal	44%

Table 8: Tomlin's Songs with Shifting Speaker-Audience Pairs

Speaker	Audience	Song Titles	# of Songs	% of Shifting Songs (58)	% of All Songs (103)
God, Human(s) [unspecified]	God, Humans	America	1	2%	1%
Human	God, Humans	All the Way My Savior Leads Me; Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone); At the Cross (Love Ran Red); Boundary Lines; Glory Be; Goodness, Love and Mercy; How Can I Keep from Singing; I Lift My Hands; Impact; Lovely; My Deliverer; Praise the Father, Praise the Son; The God I Know; The Roar; The Way I Was Made; The Wonderful Cross; Whom Shall I Fear [God of Angel Armies]	17	29%	16%
Human(s) [shifting]	God	Faithful; God Almighty; Let Your Mercy Rain; Not to Us; Thank You God for Saving Me; With Me; You Do All Things Well	7	12%	7%
Human(s) [shifting]	God, Humans	Almighty; Crown Him (Majesty); God of Calvary; God's Great Dance Floor; Greater; Impossible Things; Jesus; No Chains on Me; Shepherd Boy; The River	10	17%	10%
Human(s) [shifting]	God, Self	Awakening	1	2%	1%
Human(s) [shifting]	Humans	He Lives; Home; How Great Is Our God; Mighty Is the Power of the Cross; On Our Side; Praise Him Forever	6	10%	6%
Humans	God, Humans	All Bow Down; Awesome Is the Lord Most High; Come Let Us Worship; Exalted (Yahweh); Forever; God and God Alone; Holy Roar; Jesus Messiah; King of Glory; Kyrie Eleison; Our God; Rejoice; The Name of Jesus; The Noise We Make; This Is Our God; Unchanging	16	28%	15%
			58	Subtotal	56%

This survey of one hundred three of Tomlin's songs summarizes general patterns in the music and lyrics. The vast majority are in verse-chorus-bridge form, mostly varying only the number of verses and instrumental breaks present. Harmony mostly entails only diatonic chords. Vocal range and density of instrumentation contribute far more to the creation of energy and tension in these songs. Lyrics tend to be infused with quotations, paraphrases, and concepts from the Bible, sometimes also referencing lyrics and even tunes from older sacred music. The corpus employs various lines of communication, exploring more than one pairing of speaker and audience in over half of the songs. This summary provides a necessary backdrop for the close analyses below.

Part III: Analyses

Two main features inform analysis of a worship song that contains shifts in speaker, audience, point of view, or some combination thereof. The first involves the main dimension emphasized in the song, which may or may not change from start to finish. For instance, a song might open with lyrics addressed to God and end with lyrics addressed to people, thus moving from vertical worship to horizontal testimony or exhortation. The reverse is also possible, emphasizing the horizontal at the beginning and the vertical at the end. Alternatively, the start and end might have a similar emphasis, bookending changes that occur only in the middle of the text. The second main feature, which helps to shape the first, is the location of each shift in the context of the song's form. As the analyses of Tomlin's songs below demonstrate, these include three possible strategies. The first aligns each shift with a boundary between formal sections, thus using the song form to underscore major changes in the lyrics. The second entails shifting within a formal section, often exploring the interaction of the vertical and horizontal dimensions. The third involves altering the words to the chorus, often changing from a general statement of truth to a personal expression in the altered version. The subsequent analyses of Tomlin's songs explore each strategy in turn, demonstrating the overall trajectories idiomatic to each.

Changes between Sections

Table 9 lists Tomlin's twenty-seven songs that change speaker, audience, and/or point of view only at a major formal boundary. This strategy pairs common musical changes between sections (verse, chorus, bridge, etc.) with less common changes in the text's perspective, fostering coherence of the latter. Placing changes between sections is the most flexible of the three main strategies, allowing for a wide variety of narratives exploring vertical and horizontal dimensions. The case studies below sample three possibilities.

Table 9: Tomlin's Songs with Shifts between Sections

Song (27/58 = 47%)	Speaker	Audience	POV
America	God, Human(s) [unspecified]	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
All the Way My Savior Leads Me	Human	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
Glory Be	Human	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
Goodness, Love and Mercy	Human	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
How Can I Keep from Singing	Human	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
Impact	Human	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
Lovely	Human	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
My Deliverer	Human	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
Praise the Father, Praise the Son	Human	God, Humans	2nd
The God I Know	Human	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
The Way I Was Made	Human	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
Whom Shall I Fear [God of Angel Armies]	Human	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
Faithful	Human(s) [shifting]	God	2nd
God Almighty	Human(s) [shifting]	God	2nd
Not to Us	Human(s) [shifting]	God	2nd

Song (27/58 = 47%)	Speaker	Audience	POV
Thank You God for Saving Me	Human(s) [shifting]	God	2nd
With Me	Human(s) [shifting]	God	2nd
You Do All Things Well	Human(s) [shifting]	God	2nd, 3rd
Almighty	Human(s) [shifting]	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
The River	Human(s) [shifting]	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
He Lives	Human(s) [shifting]	Humans	1st, 3rd
God and God Alone	Humans	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
Holy Roar	Humans	God, Humans	1st, 2nd, 3rd
Jesus Messiah	Humans	God, Humans	1st, 2nd, 3rd
King of Glory	Humans	God, Humans	1st, 2nd, 3rd
The Noise We Make	Humans	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
Unchanging	Humans	God, Humans	1st, 2nd

"Thank You God for Saving Me" from *Burning Lights* (2013) adds a horizontal dimension to the main vertical dimension through both a temporary shift from singular to plural pronouns and judicious use of two singers, Chris Tomlin and Phil Wickham. The text contains the flexible mixture of first and second person common in intimate lyrics. As the title implies and as table 10 summarizes, most of the song depicts a single believer thanking God for salvation. The single exception is the first bridge. Two elements of the text mark this passage as the song's climax. First, the bridge contains the most detailed account of the basis of salvation, describing the substitutionary atonement made possible through Jesus's death on the cross and victorious resurrection. Second, the switch to plural pronouns situates the individual believer in the community of believers, further accentuating the wonder of salvation. The bridge's shift in speaker number was foreshadowed earlier in this duet between Tomlin and Wickham. As shown in figure 11, each verse features only a single singer. They do not sing simultaneously until the second iteration of the chorus, shortly before the first bridge. Both the chorus and first bridge

feature homorhythm and mostly parallel motion between the singers. The lyrics of the second bridge switch back to singular pronouns, and the singers reflect this by replacing their rhythmic unison with call-and-response, stressing individual voices. While this song starts and ends with a single believer thanking God for the salvation received individually, the climactic bridge uses text and orchestration to highlight the grandeur of salvation and the resulting body of believers.

While the previous example changes only speaker number, "Praise Is the Highway" from *Holy Roar* (2018) maintains the speaker number while changing audience and point of view. As shown in table 11, most of this song features humans speaking to other humans. The chorus and verses emphasize third person and the indicative mood. These sections minimize personal pronouns, thus focusing the audience's attention on external states and actions rather than internal experience. The bridge interrupts the act of observation with a series of commands in second person. The indicative leads to the imperative; God's character and power and relationship to his people demand their response in praise. As with the previous example, the musical contrast of the bridge highlights the most important idea in the song. Unlike the previous example, this song contains a second contrasting passage. The tag departs from the main body of the song in two ways, one pertaining to the music and one pertaining to the text. Like many tags, the vocal declamation of this tag is improvisatory, less conducive to congregational singing. For the first time in the song, the lyrics directly address God. In effect, this tag fulfills the demands of bridge, responding to the call to praise in the bridge with praise itself in the tag. While most of this song depicts horizontal communication, the goal first commanded and then illustrated is to enact vertical communication.

Table 10: "Thank You God for Saving Me," *Burning Lights* (2013)

Section	Instr.	Verse 1	Chorus	Verse 2	Chorus	Instr.	Bridge 1	Bridge 2	Chorus	
Time	0:00	0:09	0:34	1:08	1:34	2:10	2:33	3:19	3:40	4:26
Lyrics		"What can I give"	"I called Your name"	"The Rock of salvation"	"I called Your name"		"You gave Your life … we are saved"	"Thank you, God"	"I called Your name"	
Speaker		Human	Human	Human	Human		Humans	Human	Human	
Audience		God	God	God	God		God	God	God	
Point of View		1st/2nd	1st/2nd	1st/2nd	1st/2nd		1st/2nd	1st/2nd	1st/2nd	
Singer(s)		Tomlin	Tomlin	Wickham	Both		Both	Both	Both	

Table 11: "Praise Is the Highway," *Holy Roar* (2018)

Section	Instr.	Verse 1	Verse 2	Chorus	Verse 3	Chorus	Bridge
Time	0:00	0:11	0:30	0:49	1:13	1:34	1:58
Lyrics		"The rocks will"	"Idols will"	"Praise is the highway"	"Revival will come"	"Praise is the highway"	"Lift up your head"
Speaker		Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans
Audience		Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans
Point of View		3rd	3rd	3rd	3rd	3rd	2nd
Mood		Indicative	Indicative	Indicative	Indicative	Indicative	Imperative

Section	Instr.	Chorus	Instr.	Tag	
Time	2:48	3:14	3:50	4:02	4:56
Lyrics		"Praise is the highway"		"And when You move"	
Speaker		Humans		Humans	
Audience		Humans		God	
Point of View		3rd		2nd	
Mood		Indicative		Indicative	

"Almighty" from *Love Ran Red* (2014) recombines factors yet again to differentiate the bridge from the rest of the song. As table 12, shows, most of the song addresses God. The first verse so firmly embraces second person that it avoids specifying whether the speaker is singular or plural. Plural pronouns enter in the chorus and second verse, clarifying that believers are singing to God together. In contrast, the bridge depicts an individual addressing the congregation, using singular pronouns in first person to shift to personal testimony. The opening of the bridge is marked through a drastic thinning of the orchestration. Tomlin sings alone, and, with the exception of acoustic piano, all instruments fall silent. In contrast, volume surges at the second pass through the bridge's text. Here Tomlin sings in a higher part of his range, supported with a return of the instruments and the backup singers. This explosion of sound assists with the individual's re-assimilation into the worshiping congregation, which is maintained through the subsequent chorus and tag. This song combines the horizonal elements of individual testimony and shared congregational experience with the vertical act of praising and worshiping God in language addressed directly to Him.

While all three of these examples align changes in the text with boundaries in the musical form, each provides a different mixture of vertical and horizontal emphases. While "Thank You God for Saving Me" addresses God throughout, the internal shift from singular pronouns to plural pronouns and back again situates the believer in relation to other Christians. "Praise Is the Highway" focuses primarily on declaration of truth to humans, rising to address God directly only near the end. "Almighty" starts and ends with multiple believers focused on God, breaking for the testimony of an individual in the middle.

Table 12: "Almighty," *Love Ran Red* **(2014)**

Section	Instr.	Verse 1	Chorus	Verse 2	Chorus	Bridge	Chorus	Tag	
Time	0:00	0:09	0:49	1:23	2:02	2:33	3:12	3:36	4:07
Lyrics		"You have no rival"	"Almighty, we're"	"Our God eternal"	"Almighty, we're"	"I see the Holy One"	"Almighty, we're"	"Almighty"	
Speaker		Human(s)	Humans	Humans	Humans	Human	Humans	Humans	
Audience		God	God	God	God	Humans	God	God	
Point of View		2nd	1st/2nd	2nd	1st/2nd	1st	1st/2nd	2nd	

Changes within a Section

Table 13 lists the twenty-one songs that change speaker, audience, or point of view within a section. This strategy trades stability for increased excitement, heightening awareness of both the horizontal and the vertical dimensions. Many small-scale shifts emerge as joyous exclamations, as two examples illustrate.

Table 13: Tomlin's Songs with Shifts within Sections

Song (21/58 = 36%)	Speaker	Audience	POV
Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)	Human	God, Humans	1st, 2nd, 3rd
At the Cross (Love Ran Red)	Human	God, Humans	1st, 2nd, 3rd
Boundary Lines	Human	God, Humans	1st, 2nd, 3rd
The Wonderful Cross	Human	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
I Lift My Hands	Human	God, Humans (self?)	2nd, 3rd
Let Your Mercy Rain	Human(s) [shifting]	God	2nd
Crown Him (Majesty)	Human(s) [shifting]	God, Humans	2nd, 3rd
God's Great Dance Floor	Human(s) [shifting]	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
Greater	Human(s) [shifting]	God, Humans	1st, 2nd, 3rd
Impossible Things	Human(s) [shifting]	God, Humans	1st, 2nd, 3rd
No Chains on Me	Human(s) [shifting]	God, Humans	1st, 2nd, 3rd
Awakening	Human(s) [shifting]	God, Self	2nd
Home	Human(s) [shifting]	Humans	1st, 3rd
How Great Is Our God	Human(s) [shifting]	Humans	1st, 2nd, 3rd

Song (21/58 = 36%)	Speaker	Audience	POV
Mighty Is the Power of the Cross	Human(s) [shifting]	Humans	1st, 3rd
On Our Side	Human(s) [shifting]	Humans	1st
Praise Him Forever	Human(s) [shifting]	Humans, Creation	2nd
Kyrie Eleison	Humans	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
Our God	Humans	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
Rejoice	Humans	God, Humans	2nd
The Name of Jesus	Humans	God, Humans	2nd, 3rd

The chorus of "Our God" rapidly juxtaposes the vertical orientation of the verses with the horizontal orientation of the bridge. Table 14 provides an overview of the song, showing the shifts in audience. The verses praise God directly for his actions and attributes. The bridge—which appears both in its normal position and again at the song's end—involves the congregation encouraging each through paraphrases of Apostle Paul's rhetorical question from Romans 8:31: "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Incidentally, the bridge's opening line also serves as the album title: *And if Our God Is for Us . . .* (2010). The melody climbs higher as the text repeats, moving from emphasizing ^ 1 and ^2 at the beginning to sustaining ^5 at the end of the bridge. The heart of this song, though, resides in the chorus. Figure 2 highlights the repetition of a short motive as well as the five iterations of the titular phrase "Our God." Most of this chorus is addressed to humans, who are understood to be fellow worshipers. The second line departs from the others in two ways: the audience changes from humans to God, and the point of view changes from first person to second person. The melody underscores this shift by altering motive x to climax on "higher," touching on the ^5 featured at the end of the bridge. Excited explanation of God's greatness to others erupts into praise addressed directly to God. The brevity of this extraordinary line is balanced by its frequent recurrence; table 14 notes the five full passes through the chorus. Changing the audience not only between but within sections in this song thus celebrates God, his work on His people's behalf, and the joy of worshiping alongside fellow believers.

Table 14: "Our God," *And if Our God Is for Us . . .* (2010)

Section	Instr.	Verse 1	Verse 2	Chorus	Instr.	Verse 2	Chorus	Chorus
Time	0:00	0:18	0:36	0:55	1:13	1:22	1:40	1:59
Lyrics		"Water You turned into wine"	"Into the darkness, You shine"	"Our God is greater"		"Into the darkness, You shine"	"Our God is greater"	"Our God is greater"
Speaker		Human(s)	Humans	Humans		Humans	Humans	Humans
Audience		God	God	Humans/God		God	Humans/God	Humans/God
Point of View		2nd	2nd	1st/2nd		2nd	1st/2nd	1st/2nd

Section	Instr.	Bridge	Chorus	Chorus	Bridge	Chorus		
Time	2:17	2:36	3:12	3:30	3:48	4:45		
Lyrics		"And if our God is for us"	"Our God is greater"	"Our God is greater"	"And if our God is for us"			
Speaker		Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans			
Audience		Humans	Humans/God	Humans/God	Humans			
Point of View		1st	1st/2nd	1st/2nd	1st			

Figure 2: Chorus of "Our God," *And if Our God Is for Us . . .* **(2010)**

"Impossible Things" from *Never Lose Sight* (2016) engages all three types of changes between and within sections to situate a believer in relation to both God and to other Christians. Table 15 provides an overview of this complex example. The verse lyrics feature a single human singing to God. Appropriately, Tomlin sings the first verse, and Danny Gokey sings the second, emphasizing the singular pronouns by taking turns. Notably, the song concludes with a return to the first verse and a second tag based upon it, meaning that the song starts and ends with the same speaker, audience, and point of view. The beginning of the chorus provides sharp contrast, changing all three factors. Believers sing to each other of God's matchlessness until reaching the final line that abruptly switches the address back to God himself with the line, "'Cause You do impossible things." Unusually, this passage acts as a refrain at the end of not only every chorus, but also both iterations of the bridge. Like the chorus, the first part of the bridge addresses humans.

Table 15: "Impossible Things," *Never Lose Sight* **(2016)**

Section	Instr.	Verse 1	Chorus	(refrain)	Instr.	Verse 2	Chorus	(refrain)	Bridge	(refrain)
Time	0:00	0:10	0:30	0:44	0:55	1:05	1:24	1:40	1:49	2:04
Lyrics		"You heal the broken"	"There is no healer"	"Cause You do"		"Though I walk"	"There is"	"Cause You do"	"One word"	"Cause You do"
Speaker		Human	Humans	Humans		Human	Humans	Humans	Human(s)	Human(s)
Audience		God	Humans	God		God	Humans	God	Humans	God
Point of View		2nd	3rd/1st	2nd		1st/2nd	3rd/1st	2nd	3rd	2nd
Singer		Tomlin	Tomlin	Tomlin		Gokey	Both	Both	Both	Both

Section	Bridge	(refrain)	Chorus	(refrain)	Chorus	(refrain)	Tag 1	Verse 1	Tag 2	
Time	2:10	2:24	2:29	2:44	2:49	3:04	3:13	3:43	4:03	4:27
Lyrics	"One word"	"Cause You do"	"There is"	"Cause You do"	"There is"	"Cause You do"	"More than I could ask"	"You heal the broken"	"You are lifting me"	
Speaker	Human(s)	Human(s)	Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans	Human	Human	Human	
Audience	Humans	God	Humans	God	Humans	God	God	God	God	
Point of View	3rd	2nd	3rd/1st	2nd	3rd/1st	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd	
Singer	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both	

The speaker number is not specified here, as the language remains consistently in third person, listing examples of "impossible things" that require only "One word" from God to transpire. This list moves from the external ("walls start falling") to the physical ("blind will see") to the spiritual ("sinner's forgiven"). The last is the most wondrous in this list, motivating the shifts brought by the refrain. This mention of forgiveness serves as the keystone for the arch form of this song. All of the relationships this song explores—a single believer to God, members of the church to each other, and the body of believers to God—are made possible through God's "impossible" forgiveness.

Changes in Chorus Repeats

While most songs use the same lyrics for each iteration of the chorus, the ten songs listed in table 16 break this convention. In each, the first version of the chorus gives way to a second version of the chorus somewhere in the second half of the song. While used less frequently than shifts between or within sections discussed above, unidirectional alterations to the chorus exaggerate the end-accented nature of most pop-rock songs.[42] This strategy lends itself well to a powerful shift from speaking to other humans to speaking directly to God.

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[42] As in secular rock, "With regard to energy, we often find an increasing trajectory over the course of a song"; see Temperley, *The Musical Language of Rock*, 201.

Table 16: Tomlin's Songs with Changes in Chorus Repeat

Song (10/58 = 17%)	Speaker	Audience	POV
The Roar	Human	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
God of Calvary	Human(s) [shifting]	God, Humans	1st, 2nd, 3rd
Jesus	Human(s) [shifting]	God, Humans	1st, 2nd, 3rd
Shepherd Boy	Human(s) [shifting]	God, Humans	1st, 2nd, 3rd
All Bow Down	Humans	God, Humans	2nd, 3rd
Awesome Is the Lord Most High	Humans	God, Humans	2nd
Come Let Us Worship	Humans	God, Humans	1st, 2nd
Exalted (Yahweh)	Humans	God, Humans	2nd, 3rd
Forever	Humans	God, Humans	1st, 2nd, 3rd
This Is Our God	Humans	God, Humans	1st, 2nd

Perhaps the simplest example of this paradigm is "Come Let Us Worship" from the 2002 album *Not to Us*. Table 17 provides an overview of the song, which includes two verses but no bridge. Both verses and the first version of the chorus embrace first person as worshipers exhort each other, switching to second person for the second version of the chorus addressed directly to God. The first verse opens with the first line from Psalm 95:6: "Come, let us worship and bow down." The text of the chorus derives from Psalm 95:7, as shown in table 18.

Table 17: "Come Let Us Worship," *Not to Us* **(2002)**

Section	Instr.	Verse 1	Chorus 1	Instr.	Verse 2	Chorus 1	Instr.	Chorus 2	Instr.	
Time	0:00	0:14	0:41	1:10	1:23	1:51	2:19	2:32	3:15	4:24
Lyrics		"Come, let us worship"	"For **He is** our God"		"Come, let us lift"	"For **He is** our God"		"**You are** our God"		
Speaker		Humans	Humans		Humans	Humans		Humans		
Audience		Humans	**Humans**		Humans	**Humans**		God		
Point of View		1st	**1st**		1st	**1st**		**2nd**		
Acoustic Guitar	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Electric Guitar								x		

Table 18: Chorus Lyrics from "Come Let Us Worship," *Not to Us* (2002)

	Psalm 95:7a KJV	Chorus Version 1	Chorus Version 2
Text	For He is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.	For He is our God; and we are his people. He is our God; And we will not be forsaken.	You are our God; and we are your people. You are our God; And we will be with You. You are our God; And we will be with You forever.
Point of View	1st (humans to humans)	1st (humans to humans)	2nd (humans to God)

The second version of the chorus alters pronouns and verb tenses, repeats the second half, and, most significantly, replaces the negative "will not be forsaken" with the positive "will be with you forever." Supporting the change in wording, both orchestration and

form render the final statement of the chorus as the climax. Most of the song is fairly soft, foregrounding acoustic guitar. The last chorus, in contrast, is significantly louder, featuring distorted electric guitar and drum set. This climactic plateau is sharply delineated by the surrounding instrumental passages, which are far more contemplative in nature. The concluding instrumental passage lasts over a minute. This unusually long duration both represents and encourages meditation on "forever," the final word of the song. The last chorus thus glimpses the future joy of worshiping God in eternity while acknowledging the perseverance needed for the present.

In contrast, the next example engages similar themes with a stronger sense of forward drive to and through the final section. "Forever" combines a change in chorus lyrics with a formal deformation to emphasize a shift to speaking directly to God at the song's end. Table 19 shows the form of the long version, which appears as track 2 on the 2001 album *The Noise We Make*. The form of the first half of the song is fairly conventional for Tomlin's songs with three verses, delaying the chorus until after the second verse. The second half of the form, however, defies convention. Including two iterations of the chorus just before the bridge is uncommon. Including four iterations of the chorus at the end is unique in Tomlin's output, placing even more weight than customary after the bridge.[43] The unusual form mirrors the unusual text. Psalm 136 provides much of the song's lyrics; the phrase "His love endures forever" that ends each biblical verse is included twice in each song verse. These verses integrate declarations in third person with instructions in second person, depicting humans speaking to humans throughout. The first version of the chorus declares "Forever God is faithful . . . strong . . . with us," keeping the same speaker-audience pairing. The second version of the chorus, appearing as the block of four final statements, replaces "God is" with "You are." Although involving few words, this alteration changes both the audience and point of view of the chorus. The text and the music together capture exuberant expectation of eternity. The shift in lyrics mirrors how worshipers in this life see only each other as they sing in hope, while worshipers in the next will see God. In addition to the unusual repetitions, two other musical features of the

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[43] To shorten this unusually long song, the "Forever Radio Remix" included as track 11 omits one of the verses and fades out during the third statement of chorus 2.

final block of choruses capture future expectation. While Tomlin sings the lead melody for most of the song, the accompanying gospel choir usurps this role in the final two iterations of the chorus, representing the multitudes singing to God. Furthermore, the song ends with a fade out, indicating how worship continues even beyond our ability to experience it now.

Table 19: "Forever," *The Noise We Make* (2001)

Section	Instr.	Verse 1	Pre-chorus	Verse 2	Pre-chorus	Chorus	Instr.	Verse 3	Pre-chorus
Time	0:00	0:32	0:48	0:57	1:13	1:29	1:47	1:54	2:10
Lyrics		"Give thanks to the Lord"	"Sing praise, sing praise!"	"With a mighty hand"	"Sing praise, sing praise!"	"Forever God is faithful"		"From the rising"	"Sing praise, sing praise!"
Speaker		Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans		Humans	Humans
Audience		Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans	**Humans**		Humans	Humans
Point of View		2nd/3rd	2nd	3rd	2nd	3rd		1st/3rd	2nd

Section	Chorus	Chorus	Bridge	Pre-chorus	Chorus	Chorus	Chorus	Chorus	
Time	2:26	2:42	3:04	3:39	3:56	4:12	4:29	4:45	5:16
Lyrics	"Forever God is faithful"	"Forever God is faithful"	"Give thanks to the Lord"	"Sing praise, sing praise!"	"Forever You are faithful"	"Forever You are faithful"	"Forever You are faithful"	"Forever You are faithful"	
Speaker	Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans	Humans	
Audience	**Humans**	**Humans**	Humans	God	God	God	God	God	
Point of View	3rd	3rd	2nd/3rd	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd	

While the previous two songs use the modified chorus to drive the shift in point of view, "Jesus" from the 2016 album *Never Lose Sight* uses the modified chorus to sustain a shift that has already occurred. Table 20 shows how point of view bifurcates this song. Third person dominates the first half, with only occasional singular or plural first-person pronouns distracting from the list of Jesus's attributes and actions from both the Old and New Testaments. For instance, the chorus describes him walking on water (Matthew 14:25–33, Mark 6:47–52, John 6:16–21), standing in fire (Daniel 3, Isaiah 43:2), roaring like a lion (Hosea 11:10, Revelation 5:5), and bleeding like a lamb (Revelation 5:6). The bridge initiates the switch to second person, and the remainder of the song features a single human addressing God. The moment this occurs is highlighted by wording and orchestration. In stark contrast to the repetitions of "there is" in the verses, the bridge opens with the exclamation "Messiah, my Savior." This climax in the lyrics is highlighted by a temporary silencing of most instruments, leaving acoustic piano in the foreground. The remainder of the song continues to address Jesus directly, using orchestration to regain energy. The drums and guitars reenter in the second half of the bridge only to drop out again at the first part of the modified chorus, highlighting the change from "Who" in the first version to "You" in the second. Orchestration gradually thickens, reaching the musical climax in the second and final statement of the modified chorus. Energy dissipates in the tag, concluding with the hushed statement "There is no one like you, Jesus." This line combines the "there is" phrase from the verses with the second person point of view from the second half of the song. The dramatic arch of this song encapsulates both the motivation and experience of authentic worship, moving from declaration of truth to personal application to awestruck reverence.

In each of these examples, the second version of the chorus plays an important role in shifting attention from humans to God over the course of the song. Altering words allows the musical climax often found in the final statement of the chorus to take on new significance, communicating a shift in the attention and heart of the worshiper. Such songs attend first to the horizontal dimension before turning to the vertical dimension, reaffirming the value of Christian community before narrowing the focus to God alone.

Table 20: "Jesus," *Never Lose Sight* (2016)

Section	Verse 1	Verse 2	Chorus 1	Verse 3	Chorus 1	Bridge	Chorus 2	Chorus 2	Tag	
Time	0:00	0:27	0:52	1:23	1:48	2:20	2:51	3:15	3:45	4:00
Lyrics	"There is a truth"	"There is a light"	**"Who walks"**	"There is a name"	**"Who walks"**	"Messiah, my Savior"	**"You walk"**	**"God, You walk"**	"There is no one"	
Speaker	Humans	Humans	Human	Human	Human	Human	Human	Human	Human	
Audience	Humans	Humans	**Humans**	Humans	**Humans**	God	**God**	**God**	God	
Point of View	3rd (1st)	3rd (1st)	**3rd (1st)**	3rd (1st)	**3rd (1st)**	2nd	**2nd**	**2nd**	2nd	

Conclusion

Tomlin's songs explore the gamut of relationships that triangulate God, an individual believer, and other humans. Some involve a stable pairing of speaker and audience. Those depicting a single individual singing to God—the type most in danger of reinforcing "me-centric" tendencies—constitute a relatively small percentage of Tomlin's output. The remaining songs with stable pairings consistently use plural pronouns, reinforcing and normalizing the horizontal dimensions of fellowship and witness. Over half of Tomlin's songs feature shifts in speaker, audience, or both. Such changes draw further attention to the interactions on both the vertical and horizontal planes. The dynamism of these shifts partially depends on the relationship between the lyrics and the music, as these songs harness form and style for expressive purposes. Naturally, incorporating a change in point of view does not singlehandedly guarantee the theological, musical, or practical value of a given song. However, strategic shifts in speaker or audience can serve as a powerful reminder that the Christian life involves both the vertical connection to God and the horizontal connection to His people.

This case study demonstrates that most of Tomlin's songs are far less self-absorbed than stereotypes of Contemporary Worship Music imply. Many are exemplary for the genre, simply yet effectively using form, range, and texture to shape and support biblical lyrics. This does not obviate legitimate criticism of individual songs and practices in CWM including excessive repetition, inappropriate romantic language, and elevation of the individual over the body of believers. It does, however, demonstrate the need for further corpus studies to facilitate discussions of the genre. The approach applied here to Tomlin's output might profitably be applied to that of other artists or organizations such as Passion or Hillsong in order to ground claims about attributes and trends (whether read as positive or negative) in concrete statistics. Establishing this context further informs close analysis of the music and lyrics of individual songs, many of which can serve as creative and effective vehicles in corporate worship.

Appendix: Album Contents

Grey = Song in which Tomlin was not part of the writing team.

Album	Year	Track #	Song	Writers (composers and lyricists)
The Noise We Make	2001	1	The Noise We Make	Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves
		2	Forever	Chris Tomlin
		3	Kindness	Chris Tomlin, Louie Giglio, Jesse Reeves
		4	America	Chris Tomlin, Jack Parker, J. D. Walt
		5	The Wonderful Cross	Chris Tomlin, Lowell Mason, Jesse Reeves, J. D. Walt, Isaac Watts
		6	Captured	Joel Hanson
		7	Be Glorified	Chris Tomlin, Louie Giglio, Jesse Reeves
		8	The Happy Song	Martin Smith
		9	Need You Now	Chris Tomlin, Jack Parker
		10	This Is Our God	Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves
		11	Forever Remix	Chris Tomlin
		12	We Fall Down	Chris Tomlin
Not to Us	2002	1	Everything	Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves
		2	Enough	Chris Tomlin, Louie Giglio
		3	Not to Us	Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves
		4	Wonderful Maker	Chris Tomlin, Matt Redman
		5	Famous One	Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves
		6	Come Let Us Worship	Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves

Album	Year	Track #	Song	Writers (composers and lyricists)
		7	The River	Chris Tomlin, Daniel Carson, Jesse Reeves
		8	Unchanging	Chris Tomlin
		9	Come Home Running	Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves
		10	Overflow	Chris Tomlin, Daniel Carson, Jesse Reeves
Arriving	2004	1	Indescribable	Jesse Reeves, Laura Story
		2	Holy Is the Lord	Chris Tomlin, Louie Giglio
		3	How Great Is Our God	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Jesse Reeves
		4	Your Grace Is Enough	Matt Maher (Chris Tomlin adds lyrics)
		5	Unfailing Love	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Cary Pierce
		6	The Way I Was Made	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Jesse Reeves
		7	Mighty Is the Power of the Cross	Chris Tomlin, Shawn Craig, Jesse Reeves
		8	All Bow Down	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash
		9	On Our Side	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Jesse Reeves
		10	King of Glory	Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves
		11	You Do All Things Well	Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, Michael John Clement
See the Morning	2006	1	How Can I Keep from Singing	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Matt Redman
		2	Made to Worship	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Stephan Conley Sharp
		3	Let God Arise	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Jesse Reeves
		4	Everlasting God	Brenton Brown, Ken Riley

Album	Year	Track #	Song	Writers (composers and lyricists)
		5	Glory in the Highest	Chris Tomlin, Daniel Carson, Ed Cash, Matt Redman, Jesse Reeves
		6	Awesome Is the Lord Most High	Chris Tomlin, Jon Abel, Cary Pierce, Jesse Reeves
		7	Glorious	Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves
		8	Uncreated One	Chris Tomlin, J. D. Walt
		9	Rejoice	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Jesse Reeves
		10	Let Your Mercy Rain	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Jesse Reeves
		11	Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)	Chris Tomlin, Louie Giglio, John Newton
Hello Love	2008	1	Sing, Sing, Sing	Chris Tomlin, Daniel Carson, Matt Glider, Travis Nunn, Jesse Reeves
		2	Jesus Messiah	Chris Tomlin, Daniel Carson, Ed Cash, Jesse Reeves
		3	You Lifted Me Out	Chris Tomlin, Louie Giglio, Matt Gilder, Matt Redman, Jesse Reeves
		4	God of This City	Richard Bleakley, Aaron Boyd, Peter Comfort, Ian Jordan, Peter Kernoghan, Andrew McCann
		5	I Will Rise	Chris Tomlin, Louie Giglio, Matt Maher, Jesse Reeves
		6	Love (with Watoto Children's Choir)	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Mike Finley, Cary Pierce, Jesse Reeves

Album	Year	Track #	Song	Writers (composers and lyricists)
		7	Praise the Father, Praise the Son	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash
		8	God Almighty	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash
		9	My Deliverer	Chris Tomlin, Daniel Carson, Matt Maher, Jesse Reeves
		10	With Me	Chris Tomlin, Andrew Osenga, Cary Pierce
		11	Exalted (Yahweh)	Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves
		12	All the Way My Savior Leads Me	Chris Tomlin, Fanny Jane Crosby, Matt Redman
And if Our God Is for Us . . .	2010	1	Our God	Chris Tomlin, Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman, Jesse Reeves
		2	I Will Follow	Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram, Reuben Morgan
		3	I Lift My Hands	Chris Tomlin, Louie Giglio, Matt Maher
		4	Majesty of Heaven	Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, Matt Redman
		5	No Chains on Me	Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, Matt Redman
		6	Lovely	Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram
		7	The Name of Jesus	Chris Tomlin, Daniel Carson, Ed Cash, Matt Redman, Jesse Reeves, Kristian Stanfill
		8	All to Us	Chris Tomlin, Matt Maher, Matt Redman, Jesse Reeves
		9	Faithful	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Christy Nockels, Nathan Nockels
		10	Jesus My Redeemer	Chris Tomlin, Daniel Carson, Jason Ingram

Album	Year	Track #	Song	Writers (composers and lyricists)
		11	Awakening	Chris Tomlin, Reuben Morgan
Burning Lights	2013	1	Burning Lights	Chris Tomlin, Daniel Carson, Jason Ingram, Jesse Reeves
		2	Awake My Soul	Chris Tomlin, Daniel Carson, Jason Ingram, Jesse Reeves
		3	Whom Shall I Fear [God of Angel Armies]	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Scott Cash
		4	Lay Me Down	Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram, Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman
		5	God's Great Dance Floor	Chris Tomlin, Nick Herbert, Martin Smith
		6	White Flag	Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram, Matt Maher, Matt Redman
		7	Crown Him (Majesty)	Chris Tomlin, Matthew Bridges, Ed Cash, George Elvey, Matt Maher, Godfrey Thring
		8	Jesus, Son of God	Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram, Matt Maher
		9	Sovereign	Chris Tomlin, Martin Chalk, Jason Igram, Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman
		10	Countless Wonders	Chris Tomlin, Matt Armstrong, Ed Cash
		11	Thank You God for Saving Me	Chris Tomlin, Phil Wickham
		12	Shepherd Boy	Chris Tomlin, Martin Smith
Love Ran Red	2014	1	Greater	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Ben Fielding, Matt Redman
		2	Waterfall	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash

Album	Year	Track #	Song	Writers (composers and lyricists)
		3	At the Cross (Love Ran Red)	Chris Tomlin, Matt Armstrong, Ed Cash, Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman
		4	Jesus Loves Me	Chris Tomlin, Ben Glover, Reuben Morgan
		5	Boundary Lines	Chris Tomlin, Scott Cash, Ed Cash
		6	Almighty	Chris Tomlin, Jared Anderson, Ed Cash
		7	The Roar	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Wayne Jolley
		8	Fear Not	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash
		9	The Table	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Wayne Jolley
		10	Psalm 100	Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram
		11	I Will Boast	Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram
		12	Jesus, This Is You	Jonas Myrin
Never Lose Sight	2016	1	Good Good Father	Anthony Brown, Pat Barrett
		2	Jesus	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash
		3	Impossible Things	Chris Tomlin, Brenton Brown, Ed Cash, Chris McClarney
		4	Home	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Scott Cash
		5	God of Calvary	Chris Tomlin, Matt Maher, Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman
		6	He Lives	Chris Tomlin, Ben Cantelon, Nick Herbert, Reuben Morgan
		7	Glory Be	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Jason Ingram, Jonas Myrin

Album	Year	Track #	Song	Writers (composers and lyricists)
		8	Come Thou Fount (I Will Sing)	Chris Tomlin, Robert Robinson
		9	Yes and Amen	Tony Brown, Chris McClarney, Nate Moore
		10	All Yours	Chris Tomlin, Jess Cates, Jason Ingram, Reuben Morgan
		11	First Love	Chris Tomlin, Reuben Morgan, Kathryn Scott, Martin Smith
		12	The God I Know	Chris Tomlin, Ross Copperman, Jason Ingram
		13	God and God Alone	Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram, Jonas Myrin
		14	Kyrie Eleison	Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram, Matt Maher, Matt Redman
Holy Roar	2018	1	Holy Roar	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Jason Ingram
		2	Nobody Loves Me Like You	Ed Cash, Scott Cash
		3	Resurrection Power	Tony Brown, Ed Cash, Ryan Ellis
		4	Goodness, Love and Mercy	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Bear Rinehart, Bo Rinehart
		5	Satisfied	Chris Tomlin, Ross Copperman, Jason Ingram
		6	Impact	Chris Tomlin, Tommy Iceland, Mitch Wong
		7	Praise Him Forever	Chris Tomlin, Jonathan Smith, Phil Wickham
		8	Is He Worthy?	Andrew Peterson, Ben Shive
		9	Forever Young	Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Nick Herbert, Bo Rinehart, Martin Smith

Album	Year	Track #	Song	Writers (composers and lyricists)
		10	I Stand in Awe	Chris Tomlin, Audrey Assad, Martin Chalk, Mark Schoolmeesters
		11	Praise Is the Highway	Chris Tomlin, Sean Feucht, Ben Fielding, Brian Johnson
		12	How Sweet It Is	Chris Tomlin, Pat Barrett, Hank Bentley, Jessie Early

A Comparison of Ancient Near Eastern Lament to Selected Passages of Biblical Lament

Jessica McMillan[1]

People of all cultures throughout time have experienced suffering and have found methods for expressing their deep pain and overwhelming feelings of despair. The very existence and expression of lament throughout history demonstrates that embedded in the universal nature of suffering humans is the innate longing to seek hope in something greater than one's self. Ancient Near Eastern religious expressions were adopted and adapted into other cultural expressions, including the worship of Yahweh. Biblical writers, carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21), used a recognizable literary form as a basis upon which to share the hope they found in God with the hurting people around them.

Biblical lament and the lament of ancient Near Eastern societies share some strikingly common features, but their functions are remarkably different. One of the roles of ancient lament was to attempt to gain attention from deities in order to ease human suffering while biblical lament was (and is) a function of worship that points toward the hope of rescue. Therefore, a proper understanding of the role of lament is important because the truth found in biblical lament is the same truth available for suffering humanity today. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of lament from examples found in ancient Near Eastern material, to compare some of the elements with examples of biblical lament, and to highlight the need for incorporating lament into modern corporate worship gatherings.

Coupled with the unique capability to decipher Egyptian and Akkadian hieroglyphics in 1823 and the 1850s respectively, the

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subsequent discovery of (and ability to decipher) Sumerian, Hittite, and Ugaritic provided a different framework for examining and interpreting Old Testament literature. Ancient Near Eastern culture plays a vital role in the study of the function of lament in biblical literature.[2]

When studying a particular aspect of ancient history and culture, one also must examine the surrounding geographical areas since cultural influence seeps across boundaries of location.[3] Generally, the ancient Near East is considered to be the home of early civilizations that roughly correspond to the modern Middle East. The approach to this topic is intended as a survey, since the material is so vast. In order to be concise and maintain focus, only Hittite and Sumerian lament will be examined, though there is much more available to study. The term "lament" will be described intentionally in a broad context that includes both genre and cultural features. Because there are so many examples of lament (or portions thereof) in the Bible, only selected passages will be examined.

Throughout the Old Testament, Israel knew Yahweh as the one who could deliver them from affliction. Israel's relationship with him was based on his saving acts when they cried out to him in distress.[4] According to Amos 5:16, mourning was dramatic and loud. Jeremiah 32:9–12 and 41:5–6 allude to some physical aspects, such as the beating of one's breast and the removal of certain types of clothing. The theological significance of the lament genre only can be found in the proper distinction of the lament of *affliction* from that of lament for the *dead.* Funerary laments look backward at the life of someone deceased, and the lament born from affliction gives a voice to suffering while looking forward to the hope of rescue.[5] Although the outward act of weeping is similar for both types of lament, the Hebrew terms for each action should not be mistaken for one another.[6]

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[2] J. J. M. Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Collected Essays* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 44–45.

[3] Giovanni Comotti, *Music in Greek and Roman Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 57.

[4] Claus Westermann, "The Role of the Lament in the Theology of the Old Testament," *Interpretation* 28, no. 1 (January 1974): 21.

[5] Westermann, "The Role of the Lament," 22.

[6] Westermann, "The Role of the Lament," 23.

Ancient pagan lamentation was not just a method of mourning and appeasing the dead. Lamenters believed they could persuade the spirits of the dead to relieve the pain and suffering while encouraging fertility and prosperity in both the land and in humanity.[7] Laments could be communal—spoken by one person on behalf of a suffering community, or they could be individual spoken on behalf of the person experiencing the pain and suffering.

Examples of Ancient Near Eastern Lament

Communication with a deity or deities was a fundamental element of ancient Near Eastern religious life. In typical ancient Near Eastern lament, the following elements are usually present:

Invocation
Praise to the deity
Complaint
Petition[8]

The invocation of the god included an abundance of flowery, lofty wording. The grandiose invocation often flowed into a section of praise for the deity for his or her wonderful qualities. Once the deity had been praised sufficiently, the lamenter explained the problem and sought help or relief from suffering. The complaint section often

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[7] Mary Bachvarova "Sumerian Gala Priests and Eastern Mediterranean Returning Gods: Tragic Lamentation in Cross-Cultural Perspective," in *Lament: Studies in the Ancient Mediterranean and Beyond,* ed. Ann Suter (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 18.

[8] For a more exhaustive discussion on the formal elements of ancient lament, see Tyler F. Williams, "A Form-Critical Classification of the Psalms according to Hermann Gunkel," used with permission with the stipulation that proper credit be given in this way: Prepared by Tyler F. Williams (10/2006). Sources: Hermann Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967; translation of his article in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* [2nd ed; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1930); and Hermann Gunkel (completed by Joachim Begrich), *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998); translation of *Einleitung in die Psalmen: die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985]); available from https://three-things.ca/?p=711.

flowed into the petition portion, where the speaker would beg for the desired outcome.

Hymns and laments were the primary methods of communication between Hittites and their deities, especially during times of distress and suffering. In this example of a Hittite prayer, the use of lofty *praise* is evident:

> Thou, Telepinus, art a noble god;
> Thy name is noble among all gods;
> Among the gods art thou noble, O Telepinus.
> Great art thou, O Telepinus;
> There is no deity more noble and mighty than thou.[9]

Also demonstrating the use of flowery invocation is this plea to Ea, who was thought to be the god of fresh waters.

> O wise king, perceptive creator, lofty prince, ornament of the Eabsu . . . artful, venerated one . . . sage of the Igigi . . . bringer of the high waters (that cause) abundance, who makes the rivers joyful. . . .

> In oceans and in reed thickets you make plenteous prosperity, in the meadows you create the livelihood of the peoples. Anu and Enlil rejoice because of you, the Anunna-gods bless you in their holy places, the peoples of the land extol your weighty command. . . .[10]

Just over four thousand years ago, in the area of modern-day Iraq, the Sumerian city of Ur fell. This excerpt from "Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur" describes the destruction of the kingdom by an enemy army that brought terrible suffering upon the people. In this excerpt demonstrating the element of *complaint*, the lamenter paints a vivid picture of civilians suffering in war.

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[9] Tremper Longman III, "Ancient Near Eastern Prayer Genres," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. Philip S. Johnson and David G. Firth (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press), 55.

[10] Allen Lenzi, "Invoking the God: Interpreting Invocations in Mesopotamian Prayers and Biblical Laments of the Individual," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 305.

There were corpses (floating) in the Euphrates. . . .
The trees of Ur were sick, the reeds of Ur were sick,
Laments sounded all along its city wall.
Daily there was slaughter before it. . . .
Alas, what can we say about it, what more can we add to it?
How long until we are finished off by (this) catastrophe?[11]

In the "Sumerian Prayer of Lamentation to Ishtar" (also called Inanna), the general elements of pagan lament are clear. Ishtar was a Mesopotamian goddess closely associated with love, beauty, sex, and war, and she was thought to be the greatest of all the goddesses, often referred to as "queen of heaven."[12] (There is a reference to Hebrew worship of her found in Ezekiel 8.) The elements of invocation, praise, complaint and petition are evident. (Categorization added.)

Invocation/Praise
I pray to thee, O Lady of ladies, goddess of goddesses.
O Ishtar, queen of all peoples, who guides mankind aright,
O Irnini, ever exalted, greatest of the Igigi,
O mighty of princesses, exalted is thy name.
Thou indeed art the light of heaven and earth. . . .
O Lady, glorious is thy greatness; over all the gods it is
       exalted. . . .

Complaint
O mighty one, Lady of battle, who suppresses the
       mountains,
Thou dost make complete judgment and decision. . . .
I am beaten down, and so I weep bitterly. . . .
Like one who does not fear my god and my goddess I am
       treated;
While sickness, headache, loss, and destruction are provided
       for me;
So are fixed upon me terror, disdain, and fullness of wrath,
Anger, choler, and indignation of gods and men. I have to

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[11] Translation taken from Benjamin Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature,* 3rd ed. (Bethesda: CDL, 2005), 643.

[12] Diane Wolkstein and Samuel Noah Kramer, *Innana, Queen of Heaven and Earth: Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 55.

expect,
O my Lady, dark days, gloomy months, and years of
      trouble.
Death and trouble are bringing me to an end.

Petition
Let the favor of thine eyes be upon me. With thy bright fea-
tures look faithfully upon me. Drive away the evil spells of
my body (and) let me see thy bright light.
How long, O my Lady, wilt thou be angered so that thy face
      is turned away? . . .
Subdue my haters and cause them to crouch down under
      me. . . . Let thy great mercy be upon me.[13]

The final example of pagan lament was written to some deity
that the lamenter did not even know, as evidenced in the title,
"Prayer to an Unknown God." Altars to unknown gods were com-
mon in antiquity.[14] (Paul referenced one in Acts 17:23.) This person,
however, does not know *who* he is praying to or *what* sin he has com-
mitted, but his sense of despair is dishearteningly evident. In this Su-
merian prayer, the elements of invocation, praise to the deity, com-
plaint, and petition/need for rescue are striking as they are interwo-
ven into this lament. The text is written in *emesal,* a dialect of the Su-
merian language that is restricted to direct speech of goddesses and
women in certain types of literary texts, in particular lamentations,
since even the gender of the deity is uncertain.[15]

May the wrath of the heart of my god be pacified!
May the god who is unknown to me be pacified!
May the goddess who is unknown to me be pacified!
May the known and unknown god be pacified!
May the known and unknown goddess be pacified!

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[13] Library of Biblical and Historical Documents,
http://jewishchristianlit.com/Texts/ANEhymns/lamIshtr.html.
      [14] James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 321.
      [15] Ann Suter, ed., *Lament: Studies in the Ancient Mediterranean and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 20.

The sin which I have committed I know not.
The misdeed which I have committed I know not.
A gracious name may my god announce!
A gracious name may my goddess announce!
A gracious name may my known and unknown god
        announce!
A gracious name may my known and unknown goddess
        announce!
Unto my merciful god I turn, I make supplication.
I kiss the feet of my goddess and [crawl before her]. . . .
How long, my god. . . .
How long, my goddess, until thy face be turned toward me?
How long, known and unknown god, until the anger of thy
        heart be pacified?
How long, known and unknown goddess, until thy
        unfriendly heart be pacified?
My god, my sins are seven times seven; forgive my sins!
My goddess, my sins are seven times seven; forgive my sins!
Known and unknown god, my sins are seven times seven;
        forgive my sins.[16]

From a reading of the above lament, one may notice the use of phrases such as "how long" and "seven times seven" that are included also in biblical literature. While the study of the influence of one culture upon another brings inherent questions regarding authenticity and primacy, many similarities between ancient types of literature are undeniable.[17]

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[16] From "Penitential Psalms," Robert F. Harper, trans., in *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, ed. Robert F. Harper (New York: Appleton, 1901); reprinted in Eugen Weber, ed., *The Western Tradition, Vol. I: From the Ancient World to Louis XIV*, 5th ed. (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1995), 38–39.

[17] Christopher B. Hays, *Hidden Riches: A Sourcebook for the Comparative Study of the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 15.

Biblical Examples of Lament

Ancient lament served a role within society. Cultic lament was performed in hopes of appeasement from suffering. In classical Greek literature (*Iliad, Odyssey*) the inclusion of lament indicates the act of mourning or the process of grief. Biblical lament, however, can be described as "crisis language" as it is a method for crying out to the deity for respite more than simply grieving an irreparable loss.[18] While there are some stark differences between Mesopotamian and Israelite poetry, hymns and prayers preserved in the ancient Near Eastern cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia demonstrate important parallels to the biblical psalms.[19]

Poetic devices, allusions to destruction, relation to sacrifice, and gender all share commonalities in both Mesopotamian and biblical lament. The previous examples of ancient Near Eastern lament conformed to a specific literary form with a specific structure. Biblical writers took similar elements of lament and used them in communicating their deepest cries of pain to the one true God. Biblical lament also has some formal elements. Like ancient pagan lament, biblical lament also can be communal or individual.[20] Just as there are many similarities between the laments of the ancient Near East and those found in biblical literature, there are also many stylistic differences. Four of them are related to invocation, praise, content, and petition.[21]

In Israel, lamenters did not attempt to flatter their deity as the Mesopotamians did. Most biblical laments begin with a brief invocation such as "Oh Yahweh" or "My God."[22] This insinuates that Yahweh can be approached with confidence and without pretense. While Mesopotamian laments typically *begin* with praise, biblical laments typically *end* with praise.[23]

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[18] Carleen Mandolfo, "Language of Lament in the Psalms," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*, ed. William P. Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 114.

[19] Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East,* 47.

[20] For a more thorough discussion of community vs. individual lament, see John H. Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context: A Survey of Parallels* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 162.

[21] Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature*, 209.

[22] Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature*, 304. Also, see Psalms 3:2; 6:2; 42:1; 51:3; and 59:2 as examples.

[23] Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature*, 160.

Another difference between Mesopotamian and Israelite lament is that, while formally similar, the content varies greatly. The Israelites pled for vindication and claimed their innocence while the Mesopotamians desired to appease the gods and claim their ignorance.[24] Possibly, this is due to the polytheistic nature of Mesopotamian beliefs or a reflection that the lamenter is uncertain of the offenses committed.[25]

Petition is an important feature in lament. Many biblical lament psalms are imprecatory in nature. Through them, the psalmist graphically requests God's punishment on the enemy in vivid terms. While Mesopotamian literature does include certain types of curses, imprecations are infrequent.[26]

Lament in the Old Testament

The Hebrew Bible contains many examples of lament. It is a widely used feature in Old Testament literature and can be found in books such as Lamentations, Psalms, Job, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Ezekiel, among others. Lament offers a method to express strong, heartfelt emotions and even accusations in the midst of deep pain, allowing the sufferer to petition God for divine intervention.

Psalms of Lament

Nearly one third of the book of Psalms fits the genre of lament. Psalms 44, 74, 79, 80, and 83 are considered to be examples of congregational or communal laments.[27] This type of lament typically follows the following pattern:

1) address and introductory cry to God for help
2) lament, usually political in nature
3) confession of trust
4) petition

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24 Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature*, 160.
25 Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature*, 147.
26 Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature*, 137.
27 Williams, "A Form-Critical Classification."

5) assurance of being heard
6) wish for God's intervention
7) vow of praise
8) praise of God when petition has been heard[28]

Individual laments, or complaints, found in the book of Psalms are 3, 5, 6, 7, 13, 17, 22, 25, 26, 27:7–14, 28, 31, 35, 38, 39, 42–43, 54–57, 59, 61, 63, 64, 69, 70, 71, 86, 88, 102, 109, 120, 130, 140, 141, 142, and 143.[29] Characteristics of the individual lament are (not always in the same order):

1) Summons to Yahweh.
2) Complaint (often preceded by a description of the prayer)
3) Considerations inducing Yahweh to intervene
4) Petition
5) Assurance of being heard/vow of praise[30]

The form has other nuances when applied to Hebrew lament and does not have to include all the aforementioned elements to be considered lament.[31] The following general elements, however, are usually present:

Invocation
Complaint
Request
Expression of confidence
Vow of praise[32]

In biblical lament, the address to God is usually a short, non-verbose expression of abandonment, such as "O Lord" (Ps 38:1), or "My God" (Ps 22:1). Following a brief invocation is a description of the need for rescue, and then the petition from the lamenter to Yahweh. Biblical

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[28] C. Hassell Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 136.

[29] Williams, "A Form-Critical Classification," 2.

[30] Williams, "A Form-Critical Classification," 2.

[31] Nancy C. Lee, *Lyrics of Lament: From Tragedy to Transformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 112.

[32] Lee, *Lyrics of Lament*, 209.

lament deviates from the ancient pagan form by including an exclamation of certainty or confidence that God will, in fact, act on behalf of suffering humanity. Finally, most biblical laments close with a vow of praise, more as a statement of hope in coming victory.

Psalm 13 is a clear example of the aforementioned elements of biblical lament. The writer uses a short invocation and follows with statements of complaint, request, confidence, and praise. (Categorization added.)

Invocation
1 How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?
  How long will you hide your face from me?

Complaint
2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
  and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
  How long will my enemy triumph over me?

Request
3 Look on me and answer, Lord my God.
  Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,
4 and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
  and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

Exclamation of Certainty
5 But I trust in your unfailing love;
  my heart rejoices in your salvation.

Vow of Praise
6 I will sing the Lord's praise,
  for he has been good to me.

Lamentations

The entire book of Lamentations expresses the suffering that occurred at the hands of the Babylonians after the destruction of

Jerusalem.[33] Various types of Sumerian lament are found in the book. It should be noted that such similarities are more than a mere borrowing of literary form between cultures as divine inspiration cannot be ignored. One example includes the use of the female voice, which begins in the first chapter, and is assumed to be taken from the non-literary performance of laments.[34] Although a male character enters in chapter three, one of the accomplishments of the book is to present an inclusive voice that only can be "accessed through human individuality" that humanity reads through the lens of gender.[35]

Another example of Sumerian lament in Lamentations is the sub-genre of city lament, albeit sometimes fragmentary in nature. Scholars agree that chapter three differs in form than the remainder of the book, but glimpses of city lament are evident even throughout this non-traditional chapter.[36] Most likely composed in commemoration of historical events, city laments comprised part of the Old Babylonian scribal curriculum. The writer of the book incorporates many elements of Near Eastern lament into the biblical text. Some of them include subject and mood, structure and poetic technique, the idea of divine abandonment, assignment of responsibility, the divine agent of destruction, the destruction itself, a weeping goddess,[37] lament, and restoration/return of the deities.[38]

Job 3, 10:1–22

Included in the middle of Job's discourse is his lengthy lament. In the beginning of chapter three, as in a typical lament, Job focuses his lament toward God and toward himself simultaneously as

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[33] Walter Brueggemann, "The Formfulness of Grief," *Interpretation* 31, no. 3 (1977): 274.

[34] F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, "Lamentations," in *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2002), 107.

[35] Dobbs-Allsopp, "Lamentations," 107.

[36] F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1993), 31.

[37] Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 31–85.

[38] Since biblical monotheism would not include a goddess, the personified Jerusalem is the Hebrew counterpart to this particular element of Mesopotamian lament (Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 77.)

he questions why he must endure such hardship.[39] After Job's friends speak to comfort him, he responds with lament (against both God and the friends). In chapter 10:20–23, he is not consumed by his difficulty as much as he is overwrought with meaninglessness.[40] He goes so far as to wish he had never been born. His lament is similar in structure and form to the individual laments of the Psalms.[41]

Lament in the New Testament

In the New Testament, suffering individuals cry out to Jesus for help. The influence of the Psalter on the New Testament is pervasive as lament psalms are interwoven throughout this portion of Scripture.[42] Some elements of lament are only allusions, as in Bartimaeus's story in Mark 10:47, while others are outright quotations, as when Jesus quotes the lament in Psalm 22 from the cross.

John 11:17–32, 12:1–7

Comforting the bereaved was a social and a religious duty during the first century A.D.[43] In the John 11 passage, most likely a large number of people had visited the grieving family as even those who passed a funeral procession were accustomed to joining it and participating in the lamentation.[44] Slipping out to be in private with Jesus, both Mary and Martha ask "why" even though they think they trust Christ. Their fragmented lament demonstrates that mourning practices that were similar to ancient ones were still common during

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[39] Samuel Eugene Balentine, *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Divine-Human Dialogue* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 169.

[40] Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 112.

[41] Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 202.

[42] Lee, *Lyrics of Lament*, 112.

[43] D. A. Carson, "The Gospel according to John," in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 411.

[44] Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary,* vol. 2 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 843.

the early church era in the sisters' ritual response to their brother's death.[45]

Mark 15:34, Matthew 27:45–46

Mark 15 and Matthew 27 both include an account of Jesus quoting Psalm 22. In one last beautiful act of worship from the cross, Jesus struggles to quote the words of a well-known lament that, for years, had been associated with suffering. As he comforted his family, friends, followers, and maybe even himself, those in attendance would have known the words well and instinctively recognized that this lament was Scripture.[46] Psalm 22 is true to biblical structural form of lament. (Categorization added.)

Invocation
1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?

Complaint
2 My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest.

Request
11 Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

Exclamation of Certainty
24 For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.

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[45] F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 247.
[46] J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 196.

Vow of Praise
25 From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly; before those who fear you, I will fulfill my vows.

Incorporating Lament in Worship Practice

Suffering is an unavoidable part of being human. God desires transparency and honesty, and he is worthy of worship even in the midst of difficulty. But how can someone lead others to worship in the midst of personal pain? How does one worship God while feeling angry at him or abandoned by him? While the initial interpretation of the term "lament" has been focused primarily on literary form used in ancient texts, a more modern general understanding includes the acknowledgment and expression of pain and uncomfortable emotions. Many church leaders feel that an emphasis on lament in worship is lacking in modern evangelical churches.[47] Believers have the unique opportunity to access several tools through which to express individual and collective pain during worship gatherings, such as Scripture readings, written prayers, and music.

There is a plethora of Scripture in the book of Psalms alone that a worship leader might select for reading in a public gathering of hurting people. For example, believers crying out for redemption and restoration might find solace in Psalms 44, 60, and 80, among many other communal laments. Those who are angry might turn to an imprecatory psalm, such as 35, 54, 79, or 137. Believers grieving over the death of someone they love or other significant losses could find comfort in the words of Psalms 9, 16, and 23, among various others. There are comforting and uplifting psalms for occasions such as the experience of unpleasant consequences for one's own sin (Psalms 30, 88), exhaustion and depression (Psalms 6, 69, 130), tragedy or trauma (Psalm 91), feelings of abandonment (Psalms 13, 22, 27), or even when the object of anger is God himself (Psalm 44). Scripture

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[47] Mark Vroegop, "The Danger of Neglecting Lament in the Local Church," *Crossway*, July 14, 2019, accessed January 19, 2021, https://www.crossway.org/articles/the-danger-of-neglecting-lament-in-the-local-church/; and "Strong Churches Speak the Language of Lament," *The Gospel Coalition*, April 9, 2019, accessed January 19, 2021, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/strong-churches-lanuage-lament/.

provides worshipers with words to express their pain while pointing to the hope and assurance of the faithfulness of God even amid suffering.

In addition to the book of Psalms, lamentation can be found in other biblical texts, such as Job, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. Acknowledgment of hope through pain also appears in many New Testament texts. In the accounts of the crucifixion in Mark and Matthew, Jesus, being both fully human and fully divine, quotes Psalm 22 from the cross as he expresses the pain of the feeling of abandonment. Romans 8:18 reminds the reader that present suffering cannot be compared to the glory that awaits.

Many struggling believers throughout the centuries have left written evidence of their heartfelt faith through pain in the form of written prayers. All people have the capacity to become overwhelmed with anxiety and sorrow over distressing stimuli such as broken relationships, struggles in marriage, parenting, singleness, loneliness, caring for aging parents, social unrest, financial insecurity, or fear of the future. Written prayers can be a great source of comfort to those who hear them spoken aloud for the first time or others who read them later but find connection and community in the knowledge that they are not alone in their quest for healing and peace.

"My harp is used for mourning and my flute for the sound of weeping" (Job 30:31). Job expressed his excruciating pain through music as evidenced in this verse. Hymn writers throughout the generations have penned heartfelt lyrics expressing joys and struggles born from deep painful experiences. Natural occasions for incorporating lament into worship would be the Lenten season, Passion Week, and Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. Other occasions when lament music might be helpful would be surrounding the times of local, state, or national tragedy, such as 9-11, a school shooting in the community, or effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. At such times, pastor/worship leader teams might consider a worship gathering centered around lament in order to help worshipers deal with negative emotions that are sometimes stifled or ignored. Of course, there are many selections of appropriate texts and tunes to aid in a time of lament. Even a quick perusal through random playlists on digital music forums such as Spotify can lead to hundreds of songs, already organized by genre. An intentional worship planner might choose from

the following sampling of hymns and worship songs that express faith in the midst of sorrow.

Hymns
"Abide with Me" (Henry Francis Lyte, 1847)
"It Is Well with My Soul" (Horatio Spafford, 1873)
"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" (Elisha Hoffman, 1887)
"My Shepherd Will Supply My Need" (Isaac Watts, 1719)
"Tell it to Jesus" (Jeremiah Rankin, 1855)

Worship Songs
"He Will Hold Me Fast" (© 2013 Getty Music Publishing, (BMI)/Matt Merker Music)
"I Will Trust My Savior Jesus" (© 2018 CityAlight Music, Capitol CMG Publishing)
"Jesus" (© 2017, Chris Tomlin, Capitol CMG Publishing)
"Way Maker" (© 2017, Osinach Okoro, Capitol CMG Publishing)
"When My Heart Is Torn Asunder" (© 2013, Phil Wickam, Essential Music Publishing)

Grief can be a gift when it is used to move a hurting believer toward deeper connection and relationship with God, and the process of grieving should be honored. Many who suffer, as well as well-meaning friends who want to help alleviate the pain of others, tend to move quickly past the pain toward the good that comes from suffering. While few people would choose to suffer, there is biblical precedent that God is honored when his children embrace their pain while he works providentially behind the scenes. Pastors and worship planners should work together intentionally to create a specific atmosphere where worshipers can be together and hurt together. God does not always remove the source of pain, but he remains a constant source of consolation throughout it. Evangelical believers who hold a high view of Scripture understand that the ultimate answer to suffering is found in the God of the Bible.

The early followers of Yahweh used a secular literary form that connected to the community around them, and God redeemed it. Then the cross—a symbol of death and despair—became a symbol of life and hope. If musical worship is always exuberant, then

worshipers may miss the growth that comes through pain. When lament contains only elements of suffering, that is no more than a pagan exercise. When suffering, however, is balanced with victory, *that* is the message of Christianity.

Abstracts of Recent SWBTS School of Church Music and Worship Doctoral Dissertations

A Performer's Study of *Treize Prières*, Op. 64 by Charles-Valentin Alkan

Sung Kyung Chang, DMA

The purpose of this document is to study *Treize Prières*, Op. 64 by the French-Jewish composer Charles-Valentin Alkan (1813–1888) in preparation for a lecture-recital. Chapter 1 is a biographical overview of Alkan as it provides vital clues to understanding his music. Chapter 2 discusses the backdrop of Parisian organ music and the organists at the first half of nineteenth century who influenced Alkan's interest in earlier music and organ pedal technique. In addition, his other compositions for "organ or pédalier" are introduced. Chapter 3 provides a theoretical study of Alkan's *Treize Prières*, Op. 64, focusing on the formal structure of the thirteen pieces in the set and the composer's use of harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic elements. Chapter 4 contains a brief look at the organ builder Aristide Cavaillé-Coll (1811–1899) and his symphonic organ. The Sainte-Clotilde organ is examined since Franck's transcription of selections from Alkan's *Treize Prières*, Op. 64 was written while he was organist at Sainte-Clotilde. Performance-related matters, including registration and pedaling as well as Franck's adaptations of Alkan's *Treize Prières*, Op. 64 for organ, published as his *Préludes et Prières de C. V. Alkan, choisis et arranges pour l'orgue par César Franck* are also discussed. Chapter 5 is a conclusion with a summary of the study.

Shofar, Salpinx, and the Silver Trumpets: The Pursuit for Biblical Clarity

John Francis, PhD

      The trumpet is the most mentioned instrument in the Old and New Testaments. However, because of the lack of specificity in translation, the word "trumpet" in the Bible is oftentimes assumed to be *shofar* in its derivation when it may be *chatsoserot* (silver trumpets) or even *salpinx* (Greek New Testament trumpet). This generalization may lead from mere confusion to full doctrinal misconceptions. This study seeks to clarify these misunderstandings by examining the different trumpets in Scripture: the *shofar*, the *chatsoserot*, and the *salpinx*. I will use this examination to argue that the *shofar*, though lauded by both Jews and Christians, is not a sacred instrument according to the Bible, but that the *chatsoserot* was, and the *salpinx* will be. Furthermore, I demonstrate that the *shofar*'s now sanctified existence is ostensibly talmudic.

      After an introductory chapter, chapter 2 details that the *shofar* currently has an inordinate amount of prestige among both the Jewish people and charismatic Christians. I make this claim by first looking at the *shofar*'s use in the modern Hebrew calendar and then in the milieu of Pentecostal Christianity. Chapter 3 serves as a detailed examination of the trumpets in the Old Testament by analyzing the etymologies of each instrument, their construction, references in Scripture, and extra-biblical writings. Furthermore, I demonstrate that the dominant status of the *chatsoserot* remained through the diaspora. Chapter 4 surveys the Second Temple period through the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 and chronicles how the *shofar* eclipsed the *chatsoserot*, rising to its modern status after AD 70. To determine this, I examine the prominence of the *chatsoserot* just before the Common Era, and the rise of the *shofar* soon after AD 70 using pseudepigraphical and deuterocanonical passages, coinage, imagery from synagogue ruins, and liturgies that include the *shofar*. Additionally, I will illustrate the *Talmud*'s positive effect on the status of the *shofar*. I also conclude the chapter with a study of the Greek New Testament trumpet: *salpinx*. Chapter 5 concludes this dissertation by discussing why this information is relevant to today's evangelical church with four

conclusions from this study toward better translation, and keener understanding of the trumpeting instruments in Scripture.

A Guide to Performing Two Twentieth-Century Song Cycles by Lori Laitman and Lowell Liebermann

Bora Kim, DMA

Nelly Sachs (1891–1970) was one of the most prominent German-Jewish Holocaust poets and desired to find a way of overcoming the despair of the massacre under the regime of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party. Many composers who have been inspired by her works have composed art songs, song cycles, cantatas, and operas. This document selects two song cycles from the masterful contemporary American composers Lori Laitman (b. 1955) and Lowell Liebermann (b. 1961). Laitman is a well-known vocal music composer, who has given special attention to writing music about the Holocaust. Liebermann has composed for many musical genres; his compositions for piano and flute are widely known. He also excels in the solo vocal repertoire. The purpose of this present study is to discuss two different American contemporary composers' song cycles for soprano that contain Nelly Sachs's Holocaust poetry. A detailed analysis of Laitman's *The Secret Exit* and Liebermann's *Six Songs on Poems of Nelly Sachs* presents a description of the text, melody, harmony, rhythm, and accompaniment, which includes the use of text-painting. This document examines performance considerations for both the singer and the accompanist to interpret Laitman's and Liebermann's Holocaust-themed song cycles and to aid for future performance preparation.

A Performer's Analysis of Piano Sonata No. 30 in E Major, Op. 109 by Ludwig van Beethoven and *Trois Mouvements de Pétrouchka* by Igor Stravinsky: A Historical and Analytical Study for Performance Guidelines and Musical Interpretation

KyeJung Rachel Park, DMA

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) and Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971) inaugurated new eras of music history with their innovative approaches, although they lived a century apart and pursued different styles of piano composition. Beethoven devoted much of his compositional output to piano sonatas throughout his entire life. Among his last five piano sonatas anticipating the Romantic era, the Sonata, Op. 109 is considered to be the most introspective and intimate of Beethoven's keyboard works. The masterpiece *Petrushka* reveals the fullness of Stravinsky's intense, innovative musical style. The piano transcription, *Trois Mouvements de Pétrouchka*, which was extracted from the original ballet music, conveys the brilliant and colorful orchestral sonority on the piano.

The purpose of this study is to provide a performer's analysis of Piano Sonata No. 30, Op. 109 by Ludwig van Beethoven and the *Trois Mouvements de Pétrouchka* by Igor Stravinsky. This document will focus on biographical study of the composers' lives as well as historical and analytical study of both works to offer practical solutions for the performer. The discussion will be based upon varied and reliable sources in order to provide insights into technical issues and musical interpretation.

Part One focuses on Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 30 in E Major, Op. 109. Chapter 1 undertakes a biographical study of the composer. Chapter 2 presents the historical and compositional background of Sonata, Op. 109, with a discussion of the characteristics of Beethoven's pianos, musical markings, and suggestions for musical interpretation. Chapter 3 presents an analytical study of each movement of the Sonata, Op. 109.

Part Two concentrates on Stravinsky's *Trois Mouvements de Pétrouchka*.

Chapter 4 is devoted to biographical information on Stravinsky and his major works.

Chapter 5 discusses the historical and compositional background of *Trois Mouvements de Pétrouchka*, including information about the ballet *Petrushka,* the transcription process, and the philosophy of the composer. Chapter 6 presents a musical analysis and a discussion of technical challenges, including suggested solutions for musical expression and interpretation.

Book Reviews

Bradshaw, Paul F. *Early Christian Worship: A Basic Introduction to Ideas and Practice: Second Edition.* **Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010. 112 pp. $19.95.**

Clearly and briefly articulating the complexity of issues surrounding the study of Early Christian Worship (ECW) is a daunting task. The scant and fragmented nature of early Christian worship sources, when carelessly handled, can produce a myriad of problematic notions when aiming to grasp the topic. In *Early Christian Worship: A Basic Introduction to Ideas and Practice,* Paul Bradshaw offers a concise and reliable summary of the development of ECW in the first few centuries. Bradshaw is an important scholar in the area of ECW and an abundant contributor of material in this realm of study. He was a long-time professor of liturgical studies at the University of Notre Dame and has several books and multiple articles credited to his name.

Bradshaw articulates his central thesis in the brief prologue to the work. He states that the intent of the book is not so much to present an account of *what* the early Christians practiced in their worship, but rather to recount *why* and *how* they arrived at the practices they did and the manner in which they performed them. Bradshaw offers for speculation why the early Christians chose their particular forms and practices and not others. He also encourages the reader to consider how certain practices provoked development of theology, as well as the reverse of considering how theology influenced practice (vii). Bradshaw develops his argument by way of exposition and analysis of the major rites of ECW explaining their origin and development. The work is not a chronological history that progresses sequentially through time. Instead, he takes what he considers the three central concerns for understanding ECW, that being Christian initiation, Eucharist, and liturgical time, and develops each topic systematically.

The first section focuses on Christian initiation from its New Testament origins until the fourth century, building the discussion

by evaluating differences based on location (Syria, Jerusalem) and through explanation of primary documents and figures. In particular, he describes various aspects and images incorporated into the rite such as the preparation (18), the renunciation (18–19), and the triple immersion (20). Bradshaw illustrates how by the fourth century the common baptismal process became a synthesis of traditions borrowed from the previous centuries. The primary difference in the post-Constantine era is that whereas in an earlier era baptism was seen as a completion of the conversion process, by the fourth century one would undergo baptism with hopes of bringing about their conversion (23).

The second section addresses the complex topic of the Eucharist and guides the reader through the pre-Christian Jewish origins towards an early-medieval understanding of the Table where the Eucharist evolved into a work of the clergy and not of the people. Bradshaw demonstrates how the theology of the Eucharist gradually became more robust: beginning by developing a strong focus on anamnesis and epiclesis (49), towards early traces of viewing the Eucharistic elements as the literal incarnate Christ (56), and leading to the concept that the Eucharist is a memorial sacrifice of Christ (67). Each of these theological developments and their liturgical counterpoint seem to emerge in tandem with one another. The final section explains the overarching context and ordering of liturgical time. Bradshaw offers an understanding for the sanctification of time through incorporation of daily prayer, the origins of Sunday worship, the primary liturgical seasons and gradual formation of saint commemoration days. In doing so Bradshaw shows how the eventual crystallization of set days, patterns, and seasons grew out of doxological convictions, eschatological anticipation, and theological developments.

The strength of this work is in its comprehensive yet succinct manner of presenting the information, arguments, and theories surrounding the central issues of ECW. Bradshaw exercises self-awareness of the details he is omitting on the topics at hand. One may perceive the brevity as a weakness, but Bradshaw makes this limitation known early in the work. Moreover, the appealing quality of this book is how it is contrasted with Bradshaw's other work. Bradshaw is a profound contributor, but for the lay reader much of his writing goes into such detail with incredible adherence to proper methodology that it can verge on being cumbersome to read. This work, on the

other hand, stays on the surface but is substantiated with a strong cognizance of the complexities of the details while applying the sound methodology for which Bradshaw is known. Lastly, his chosen manner for structuring the work, developing topics rather than presenting a sequence of events, helps the reader recognize the relevance for today's church regarding initiation, Eucharist, and liturgical time.

In sum, *Early Christian Worship* serves as an exceptionally beneficial exposition and introduction to understanding the primary issues of early Christian worship that brings forth a vivid and clear historical account of worship in the first few centuries. For those who want to proceed in their study, Bradshaw provides several helpful sources. And for those who have no further interest in early Christian worship, they will still have received an informative and edifying resource.

Braden J. McKinley

Taylor, W. David O., ed. *For the Beauty of the Church: Casting a Vision for the Arts*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010. 204 pp. $14.99.

Conversations regarding arts programs in Protestant churches can be challenging if the participants are unsure how to assimilate successful, God-honoring instruction that incorporates the arts. David Taylor approaches this issue, with the inclusion of other authors, and broadly covers discussion on the importance of utilizing the arts in ecclesiastical ministry. The authors draw from their varied experiences in arts ministries to include practical steps in implementing the arts into daily activities of the local church. Taylor articulates a clear purpose of the book by stating, "[This book] aims to inspire the church, in its life and mission, with an expansive vision for the arts" (21). Art genres included in his vision consist of music, dance, drama, media, and other various forms of visual art. The intention of this book is to help pastors and artists learn to speak the same language so meaningful conversations can lead to a presence of the arts in the church. Although each author approaches the issue of ecclesiastical art inclusion from varied points, the narrative carries similar themes with each writer offering a healthy view of arts ministries.

Taylor incorporates other contributing authors, including Andy Crouch, John D. Witvliet, Lauren F. Winner, Eugene Peterson, Barbara Nicolosi, Joshua Banner, and Jeremy Begbie. These authors offer opinions and research from a wide variety of backgrounds, including Catholicism, Judaism, and Protestantism. The diversity in experiences allow each author to speak from personal ecclesiastical understanding regarding positive and negative interactions with the arts in the church.

Banner, Peterson, and Taylor draw from their knowledge with artists and art programs in their churches, with Banner citing an arts program he developed within the walls of his church in the late 1990s. Peterson further recalls personal encounters with artists in his ministry, culminating with his charge to pastors to make friends with the artist, and Taylor highlights the dangers that arts ministries can expose, aiding both the peculiarities of the artist and perceived lack of support from the pastor, for the betterment of the congregation. All three pastors reference personal relationships with artists in their churches, and they encourage arts ministers to learn from the wisdom of those who have gone before, both in mistakes and successes, allowing the Spirit to guide them into future arts involvement in the local church.

Witvliet and Begbie represent the academy with their experiences as musicians and seminary professors. Witvliet challenges the reader to "express, challenge, and deepen our corporate acts of worship" (47), referencing multiple genres of art and how they can be utilized correctly as liturgical art. He focuses on the role of an arts ministry in the gathered body of believers, arguing that the arts in "corporate acts of praise, confession, lament, thanksgiving, proclamation, baptism, and Eucharist" (47) serve to "elevate, deepen, and sharpen each of these basic sensory actions and prime them as acts of worship" (55). Begbie points the discussion into the future by illuminating six healthy ways the church can use art through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. His charge is for artists to understand the history and importance of Scripture so their art will reflect the beauty of God.

Lastly, Crouch, Nicolosi, and Winner discuss their involvement with the church as artists themselves. Crouch examines the intersection of arts and society, believing that God created culture as a gift for Adam in the Garden and that we today continue to create it, with a poignant question raised regarding if the reader believes God

created culture as a gift (36). Nicolosi considers her involvement within the film industry, providing examples of what beauty is and is not, and Winner centers her topic around the importance of beautiful art in daily life and considers the view of art in Protestant churches, as she was raised in the Jewish tradition.

Taylor has compiled an excellent resource for ministers desiring to include the arts in their church. However, when including authors from such varied backgrounds, the methodology and emphasis in ministry initiatives can cause confusion to the reader in knowing how to proceed. Further, when comparing the tone of each author, the reader must reconcile personal experiences from some authors (pastors and artists) versus research significance from others (professors). By being aware of these issues, the reader will be able to assimilate the given information into a manageable approach to begin (or continue) arts ministry in the local church.

For the Beauty of the Church examines the positive and negative sides of utilizing arts ministries and provides multiple personal testimonies from both pastors and artists. The dialogue that is read between these pages can be inspirational to the reader, providing courage to pastors in learning how to communicate with artists. This communication, as noted in almost every chapter, is vital for "casting a vision for the arts" in the local church.

Kim Arnold

Bradshaw, Paul F., and Maxwell E. Johnson. *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity*. **Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011. 222 pp. $29.95.**

Until the late sixteenth century, the idea of a liturgical year did not exist, in terms of each of the celebrated feasts and festivals as a unified whole; therefore, tracing the history of the origin of the various celebratory events in the church year proves quite complex (xiii). In *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity*, Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson present the history of the celebrations of the church as they emerged in history: from the Lord's Day to the commemoration of saints. This book was intended to be a successor to that of Thomas Talley's 1986 *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*;

however, the authors do not agree with all of Talley's arguments. First of all, from the table of contents the reader notes that the structure of the book does not follow the liturgical year, which automatically points to the authors' aim to present the feasts and seasons in a historically chronological method, beginning with the Lord's Day as it was the earliest to be celebrated. Bradshaw and Johnson follow by dividing the book into parts, because,

> Christians in antiquity did not view the various festivals, fasts and seasons that they experienced through each year as forming a unity, a single entity, and indeed those events themselves did not emerge in any planned or co-ordinated fashion but instead as a number of entirely unrelated cycles, with the result that they tended to overlap or conflict with one another. (xiii)

The cycles covered by the authors include Sabbath and Sunday, Easter and Pentecost, Lent and Holy Week, Christmas and Epiphany, and finally martyrs and saint commemorations. The cycles that seem to hold the most overlap are Easter, Lent, and Epiphany, and Bradshaw and Johnson present their clarifying arguments on the cycle of Lent that so often causes confusion between the two outlying seasons of celebration.

Whereas the commonly held understanding of the origin of Lent once was a gradual backwards expansion from the Paschal baptism, Bradshaw and Johnson argue that "we can no longer speak of a *single* origin for Lent but, rather, of multiple origins for this period, which in the fourth-century post-Nicene context become universally standardized and fixed as the '40 days' that have characterized prepaschal preparation ever since" (90). The authors argue that Lent should not be confused with the Holy Week fast, which they establish as occurring historically earlier than Lent as "an independent preparation of the faithful for the imminent celebration of Pascha itself" (91). The elucidation between the overlap of the two fasting seasons and their origins occurs when the Paschal celebrations are identified as originating prior to the practice of Lent fasting—a task that Bradshaw and Johnson present clearly with evidential support in this text.

A few of the other notable contributions Bradshaw and Johnson make in this text include their section regarding the origin of

worshipping on the Lord's Day as well as the section on the shift of focus in the paschal triduum from the death of Christ to his resurrection. On the topic of the Lord's Day, Bradshaw and Johnson argue that the "adoption of the Lord's day by early Christians was not as a replacement for the Jewish Sabbath understood as a divinely mandated day of rest," but that it was the day of the week when God's people assembled for worship (13). They state instead that the Lord's Day was an eschatological day of worship, commemorating the *parousia* "which was intended to permeate the whole of a Christian's daily prayer and life" (13). The authors also discuss the shift of focus from Christ's death to his resurrection, celebrated on the Lord's Day, Sunday, of the paschal triduum, which also began the shift of "the interpretation and meaning of Pascha, from 'passion' to 'passage' — the passage from death to life" (60). Small shifts in the development of these cycles impacted the ones following it historically and those that overlap each other in the liturgical year — these shifts are what Bradshaw and Johnson bring to light and clarify for those longing for more understanding of the roots underlying the seasons celebrated in the church today.

While this book is quite concise and possibly digestible by those curious about this topic, I would suggest that it is more accessible for those within the academic/theological realm, including students, ministers, and theologians. Bradshaw and Johnson have compiled a worthy addition to the bookshelf of any liturgical scholar seeking answers to questionable and long-held tenets regarding the origin of the liturgical year.

Lyndsey Huckaby

Jensen, Robin M. *Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity: Ritual, Visual, and Theological Dimensions.* **Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. 256 pp. $28.00.**

"Baptism is not only a bath. . . . Baptism is also the restoration of the lost paradise" (212). In *Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity*, Robin M. Jensen, Patrick O'Brien Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame, traces the history of baptism beginning with the apostles through the fifth century. While many histories present

material in chronological order, Jensen's history is thematically arranged around the imagery found in the rituals (e.g., oil-anointing), visual expressions (e.g., catacomb art), and theological writings. Jensen's central goal is to thoroughly document the early church's dependency on imagery to reinforce and relay God's truth. In doing so, the author effectively appeals to the reader's "imagination by offering a collection of both textual and material data that both informs and inspires" (4).

Jensen argues that Christian baptism has always been about cleansing and salvation. In its most basic form, it is a bath, but more specifically it has to do with cleansing from sin. John the Baptist proclaimed the need for "forgiveness of *sins*" (Mark 1:4). When he saw Jesus, he exclaimed, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the *sin* of the world" (John 1:29). But for the early church, baptism did not start with John (8–10), and "almost any narrative that involved water could be a type of baptism." Cyprian asserts that "every reference to water in the Holy Scriptures is a prophetic allusion to baptism" (16). The most obvious baptismal allusion in the Old Testament was the story of Naaman (25).

Incorporation into the body is also an important part of baptism. While modern believers often view baptism as public profession, for the early church "the ritual of baptism was a closed, secret rite. Those who received it were initiated into an exclusive group that allowed them entry to the similarly private table fellowship" (63). Early Christian images like the fish (often caught in a net) and flock of sheep reflect this herd mentality (69). Even the sign of the cross performed at baptism is thought to have been viewed as a mark of identifying with the group like the branding of cattle (79).

The Spirit's works of sanctification and illumination was a major part of baptism. By the fourth century, anointing with oil (which represents the Spirit) regularly accompanied baptism (93). A symbol that occurred often in early Christian art was the dove. Just as the dove appeared to Noah at the *baptism* of the earth, so did the Spirit appear at the baptism of Christ (117). In some early Christian communities, we find milk (or cheese) and honey being consumed as a ritual for neophytes (127). As a picture of the sanctification and illumination the Spirit offers, the ancient world viewed milk as a sign of wisdom and perfection (115).

Rooted in Paul's teaching that believers are "buried therefore with him by baptism into death" (Rom 6:3–11), baptism as a symbol of dying and rising was also common. For this reason, baptism was especially common during Easter (141). Early Christians found affinity with imagery such as the pagan Phoenix, the mother's womb, and white garments.

"The ritual of Christian baptism not only effects the cleansing, incorporation, enlightenment, and regeneration of an individual . . . it recalls the moment when all creation began and foreshadows the unending moment when all creation will be transformed" (177). As with Paul's teaching to the Corinthians, early Christians saw eschatological meaning related to baptismal imagery in rivers, weddings, the number eight (*ogdoad*), facing east, and nude baptism. According to Jensen, "The ritual of baptism reconstructs creation's mythical, primordial beginning and interrupts the ordinary cycle of birth and death" (212).

An area that needs attention is the suggestion that believers may be genderless in the resurrection, which is proposed as possible motivation for the practice of nude baptism (181). If Paul did, in fact, intend for the church to neutralize gender (Gal 3:27–29) as Jensen suggests, then Paul himself did a poor job of doing so (see Eph 5:22–33 and 1 Tim 5:1–2). Jensen admits that the early church authors "stress the loss of socially identifying markers in baptism (e.g., social class, ethnicity), but genderlessness is not as prominent in their thinking" (182). This topic is addressed in the portion dealing with baptism as a picture of the restoration of Eden; what the author fails to note is that the distinctions of male and female (Gen 1:27) and the establishment of marriage between the man and woman (Gen 2:23–25) occurred in Eden before the fall.

Jensen's Catholic presuppositions do manifest in places throughout the work. For instance, the opening chapter is called "Baptism as Cleansing from Sin and Sickness" (7), which seems to reveal that the author holds the Catholic position of the redemptive necessity of baptism. This will be problematic for non-Catholic readers, but this work is still valuable for its thematic collection of the historical data. Jensen is a fair-minded scholar, not blindly defending Catholic practice. For instance, she points out that the use of candles in the liturgy is not well attested in literature predating the early Middle Ages (128). Another obstacle for readers who hold to *Sola*

Scriptura is that Jensen does not seem interested in resolving the conflict that occurs between biblical practice and post-apostolic practice. She tends rather to view the practice of the early church as equally authoritative to Scripture.

Robin M. Jensen is an insightful historian and a delightful author. *Baptismal Imagery in Early Christianity* is an important contribution for helping today's church understand the same church that existed two thousand years ago. I recommended this book as an aid for understanding the place of sacrament and art in the life of the early church.

Daniel Webster

Covington, David A. *A Redemptive Theology of Art: Restoring Godly Aesthetics to Doctrine and Culture*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2018. 316 pp. $24.99.

Beauty is not in the eye of the beholder but is instead in "the eye of the *Beholder*" (25, emphasis added). In his first academic book, David A. Covington argues that sin has tainted our perceptions of beauty, and we need a redeemed vision to see beauty rightly: as God sees it. Covington teaches at Westminster Theological Seminary and had a career as a Christian recording artist prior to entering academia.

Covington presents this book as a "Bible study and biblical theology of aesthetics" (23). He moves away from a conversation of "aesthetic *properties* to one of aesthetic *perceptions*, especially God's aesthetic perception" (61, emphasis added). Following a transactional ontology, he defines aesthetics as "a conversation between the maker's intention, the character and properties of the work, the impression made on the receiver's sense, and his affectional response" (38). Covington finds Scripture as his starting place for aesthetics, which he admits leads him to "depart from the historical brand of philosophy" of aesthetics (29). He does so because he claims "the Bible teaches . . . an entire theology of aesthetics and passions" (21). He frames this theology of aesthetics around the story of redemptive history, "creation, fall, redemption, consummation" (178), and finds key insights from the Genesis creation account.

The author begins with what he calls the "glory triad," which he finds first in Genesis 1–3 and then echoed throughout Scripture. The glory triad consists of the three elements of God's goodness as displayed in God's creation: beauty, truth, and power. Genesis 1–3 depicts this triad in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: "pleasing to the eye," "good for food," and "desirable for gaining wisdom" (63–64). He uses this triad throughout his book as the grounding framework for his argument. Confusingly, Covington cites another author who equates the same three elements of the Tree of Good and Evil with the Platonic Triad of truth, beauty, and *goodness* (73), but he never explains why he chose his "glory triad" over the Platonic Triad.

Covington then moves to the aesthetic consequences of sin, God's plan for redeeming our aesthetics, and finally the path for individuals to restore their aesthetic vision. Covington rests his theology of aesthetics on an unspoken Calvinistic hamartiology of sin leading to total depravity. Sin has distorted man's sense of beauty to the point of complete aesthetic blindness for the unredeemed just as it has utterly distorted his sense of power and truth (105). After establishing sin's blinding aesthetic consequences, Covington then proposes the prescription: extending the Gospel and redemption to the realm of beauty. A redeemed person can develop a redeemed aesthetic sensibility. With a redeemed aesthetic vision that "comes to us immediately and gradually" (144), the believer can find redeeming qualities in all artworks and all aspects of creation: even those that the original artists did not intend to bring glory to God. A redeemed aesthetic asks not: "*What* would Jesus watch?" Rather, it asks: "*How* does God see this?" (110). Covington argues that, as our aesthetics are redeemed, we will see that "God reveals himself in everything, so God's people can make God-centered meaning from everything" (178). In doing so, he makes the theological appeal for what Peter Leithart models in his 2015 book *Traces of the Trinity*. While Leithart compellingly *demonstrates* a redeemed aesthetics, Covington *advocates* the need for one.

A Redemptive Theology of Art would serve well for an in-depth Bible study for Reformed lay people. Each chapter concludes with discussion questions and response activities suitable to individual or communal learning. However, the book lacks the academic rigor expected of a scholarly biblical theology. Many of his biblical citations

work well as analogies for his arguments but buckle under the pressure of proof he places on them. For instance, he precariously bases his argument that "sin distorts [aesthetic] vision in three ways: it hijacks, it fragments, and it darkens" (94) on a speculative interpretation of the three sons of Lamech: Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-Cain. Due to his evil lineage, Covington rejects the Bible's claim of Jubal as the father of music, deeming him a "awkward founder of a cultural movement" (61). He calls Lamech's sons "pioneers of our distortion" as they each specialized in one of the three aspects of the glory triad and sought to master it (93). Shockingly, Covington criticizes mastery of a field to the point that he maligns academics despite holding a DMin (91). Finally, Covington's argument against unredeemed aesthetics has two more glaring problems. First, he criticizes others' application of common grace to a theology of aesthetics (47–49, 191–92). Second, he fails to mention the theology of the *Imago Dei* and how it informs humanity's aesthetic understanding.

Despite these shortcomings, Covington makes many great points. More importantly, he presents a compelling trinitarian argument for God-centered and God-filtered aesthetic perceptions. However, due to weaknesses like those highlighted above, *A Redemptive Theology of Aesthetics* likely will only persuade those already aligned with Covington's Reformed position. To convince non-Calvinists would require a more robust theological and philosophical work: a work I hope Covington will write.

Jordan Covarelli

Okholm, Dennis. *Learning Theology through the Church's Worship: An Introduction to Christian Belief*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. 242 pp. $14.84.

Students of theology may attest to the difficulties inherent in learning theology through a firehose during the course of their formal training. Theological concepts, given the sheer number to be covered in a limited time, can easily drift into the abstract. In his book, *Learning Theology through the Church's Worship*, Dennis Okholm argues that theology is best learned and understood in the context of a worshipping community whose liturgy helps its members to view

the world through a Christian lens (xii). He offers an introduction to systematic theology that presents each of the systems of theology in the context of one of the parts of the traditional Christian liturgy. Okholm arrived at his own ecclesiastical context along a winding path from Baptist and Pentecostal, to Presbyterian, and finally to the Anglican church (xi). He currently teaches at Azusa Pacific University and Fuller Theological Seminary and has written widely on theology, apologetics, and spirituality.

Okholm begins by defining both liturgy and theology since the interaction of these is central to his systematic theology. Liturgy is "ophthalmology" in the sense that it teaches the believer to see the world as God intends (Chapter 1), and true theology is studying God with the awareness of his presence—or theology with prayer (Chapter 2). He ties liturgy and theology together thus: Bibliology corresponds to the act of hearing and responding to Scripture in the liturgy (Chapter 3), Theology Proper to the reading of the Apostles' Creed (Chapter 4), Christology to Christological reflection upon the Creed (Chapter 5), and Creation and Providence to the prayers of the people (Chapter 6). He seems to treat Anthropology and Hamartiology together in relating them to the time of confession (Chapter 7). The Liturgy of the Table, Okholm argues, displays Soteriology in the "absolution" (Chapter 8), Pneumatology in "epiclesis" (Chapter 9), and Ecclesiology in "passing of the peace of Christ" (Chapter 10). Finally, the dismissal rehearses the doctrine of Eschatology (Chapter 12).

Okholm's foundational concept of liturgy as "ophthalmology" suggests that church leaders must carefully consider how the activities in their church gatherings shape belief. The structuring of these gatherings should help church members make sense out of life in God's world. One way he suggests this might be done is through a liturgical calendar that outlines the metanarrative of Scripture (42). Elements of the liturgy that highlight God's providence over creation shape worshipers' view of the world as belonging to God (111ff), rehearsing confession and assurance reminds them that they are sinners (127), and a constant return to the work of the cross reminds them that their access to God is through the work of Christ alone (153ff). More than existing to provide an uplifting spiritual experience, weekly services are for shaping and strengthening belief—for correcting spiritual myopia (2–3).

One of Okholm's strongest points is in relating Bibliology to the Liturgy of the Word (45). Just as the Liturgy of the Word is the umbrella category that includes various aspects of the Christian worship service, so Bibliology is the foundation for the study of Christian theology. If Christian worship consists primarily of hearing and responding to Scripture, worshipers' understanding of what the Scriptures are will directly impact each of the elements of their worship. If the Bible is the inspired Word of God authoritative for life, they will engage in worship differently than if they believed it to be merely the words of men. Likewise, Bibliology has great influence on the approach to the other doctrines. If worshipers believe Scripture to be the authoritative and complete self-revelation of God, they will base the study of theology primarily on what Scripture says (65–67).

Perhaps the weakest point in this book is the claim that liturgy has determined the dogma of the church. Though he promises to demonstrate this at the outset (xii), Okholm fails to prove that doctrine has arisen or should arise from liturgy. He expands momentarily on this idea, appealing to the *lex orandi lex credendi* principle in chapter 2, but this treatment may not be clear enough for the beginning student of theology, who seems to be his target reader (19–22). Furthermore, Okholm fails to caution his readers on the pitfalls inherent to liturgy shaping theology. Liturgy shaping theology should prompt careful reflection as to whether the outcome is faithful to the written Word.

Also, Okholm's connection between the dismissal and Eschatology seems forced (209ff). Although knowledge of last things should add a sense of urgency to the believer as he leaves the gathering, this sense of urgency should apply to all aspects of the believer's life. Why not connect Eschatology to the Lord's Table? We recall the words of Paul that in the celebration of Communion we "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26, ESV) A correlation could also be drawn to the liturgy as a whole when the author of Hebrews urges the believers to continue in their confession, relationships, and church attendance "all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Heb 10:25). Eschatology brings an urgency to the gathering of the church as much as to its dismissal.

Learning Theology through the Church's Worship is a thought-provoking introduction to systematic theology that would prove useful to seminarians and worship leaders alike. Okholm presents

theology in the context of a worshipping community and thereby reminds his readers that the task of theology is not simply academic. Theology determines the structure and content of church gatherings so that in worship the church members "see" theology played out and their faith is strengthened.

Stephen Lounsbrough

Bevins, Winfield. *Ever Ancient, Ever New: The Allure of Liturgy for a New Generation.* **Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. 219 pp. $16.99.**

Winfield Bevins, an experienced church planter, recognized speaker, compassionate pastor, and the director of church planting at Asbury Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, emphasizes an unusual phenomenon in this book: an increasing number of young adults attracted by the ancient liturgy, a liturgy "infused with historic Christian practices and rooted in creedal theology" (back cover). To uncover the reasons behind this movement, Bevins interviewed pastors and arranged conversations with the younger generations across the United States. As a result, Bevins discovers that "liturgy, when rightly appropriated, is one of the best ways for us to make disciples in a postmodern context" (22).

The author divides the book into three parts. The first part focuses on the reasons younger generations found unexpected excellent worship experiences in traditional liturgy. The second part evaluates various ways that lead young adults to embrace liturgy (21). The third part emphasizes how liturgy provides practical principles applicable to a Christian's daily life (21). In part one, he first defines liturgy and the significance of practicing liturgy in orthodox churches. In part two, the author offers more life stories from different churches, backgrounds, cultures, and regions to convey his statement that more young adults show favor toward aesthetic beauty from ancient times and in structural traditional worship services (100–102). In part three, with different testimonies from various mission grounds, the author stresses the benefits that a biblical worship liturgy could bring to a Christian's daily life, such as helping Christians grow the habit of a rhythmical life (172). Throughout the book, the author bolsters his thesis by drawing connections between the

phenomenon and the importance of the liturgy, sharing testimonies to show the impact liturgy could make on young adults and churches, and referencing the early church fathers' writings and classical Christian compositions to stress the value of traditional liturgy.

This book's advantage is that the author straightforwardly illuminates the significance of liturgy and draws a good connection between the liturgy and postmodern young Christians, which brings hope for postmodern churches concerned about decreasing attendance in young adults. In this postmodern society, churches may learn from this book and apply appropriate liturgy to their churches for mission purposes. A good understanding of the younger generation's urgent spiritual struggles is essential to minister to them and draw them back to church. The author holds this essential understanding and employs a proper worship liturgy to evangelize the younger generation. In chapter two, the author displays how a proper worship liturgy could help modern young adults, who often struggle with postmodern identity crisis, find strong identity in Christ and how the participatory nature of liturgy provides a unique worship experience that attracts young adults (48–53). Moreover, the author also offers various testimonies made by young adults and pastors from the mission field worldwide to demonstrate the effectiveness of applying proper liturgy in worship. The significant spiritual influences of liturgy and its effectiveness in increasing church attendance provide strong motivation for church leaders to adopt the worship liturgy the author describes.

One aspect that makes the central argument weak is that the author does not provide enough biblical references to support his thesis. Although the question raised by the author focuses on "*what is the allure of liturgy for a new generation,*" presenting the "why" and revealing the ultimate root of the answer is still necessary (18). Throughout the book, there are only a few direct quotations from Scripture. Instead of offering biblical or theological references about liturgy, the author employs the form, content, nature, and practical effectiveness itself as the ultimate reason and foundation for his argument (22–23). If the author inserted one or two chapters to lay the biblical foundation and drew an explicit connection between liturgy and Scripture's teaching, the main argument would be more convincing. The ultimate reason to practice traditional liturgy should be

rooted in Scripture, not in the increasing number of worshipers or the visible benefits it could bring to the church.

I would recommend this book to pastors and worship leaders who have a sound biblical foundation as an introductory book to recognize the importance of practicing traditional worship liturgy. This book shows clearly that traditional liturgy has elements that form congregations' minds and spiritual lives biblically. It contains more biblical truth in the program, teaches valuable doctrinal prayers to the congregation, requires more participation, and draws more Christians back to church, especially young adults. At the same time, I would also remind readers that the primary purpose of applying traditional liturgy in the worship service is to elevate the truth and biblical teaching, not to attract the next generation.

Leyi Ling

Bond, Douglas. *God Sings! (And Ways We Think He Ought To).* Scriptorium Press, 2019. 270 pp. $14.99.

Amid the prevalence of an entertainment ethos of worship in the "postmodern, post-Christian, and post-biblical culture," true worshipers cannot but welcome a biblically grounded perspective of worship (92). *God Sings!* provides them with its unique perspective that as our worship to God is a response to his revelation to us, so our singing in worship is to be a response to his singing over us. As Zephaniah 3:17 says, "[The Lord your God] will exult over you with loud singing." Douglas Bond is the author of more than 30 books, adjunct instructor in church history, director for the Oxford Creative Writing Master Class, leader of church history tours in Europe, and hymn writer. Well epitomizing his versatility in these roles developed for more than two decades, this book contends that congregational songs in contemporary worship saturated in an entertainment ethos should be recalibrated to those in a biblical ethos of worship.

Bond opens his discussion of our sung worship by presenting its biblical grounds: congregational singing should be done with reverence and awe as manifested in Hebrews 12:18 and in response to God's singing over us as demonstrated in Zephaniah 3:17, and singing should correspond to the nature of his voice represented in Psalm

29. He criticizes the prevalent contemporary worship music for its man-centered view resulting from the emphases on church growth and cultural relevance and its theologically and poetically poor song lyrics. He explores the nature of the entertainment ethos of contemporary congregational songs and idolatry worship, contrasting them with the scripturally grounded regulative principle of worship. For substantiation, he compares the popular song "10,000 Reasons" and some of David's psalms. For solutions to entertainment ethos-saturated songs of a repetitive and shallow nature, he urges lyricists to return to the authority of the Bible for more substantive content with theologically rich poetry, suggests hymns by Isaac Watts as a prototype for contemporary worship songs, and advocates the restoration of hymnals in worship.

God Sings! is another book on the war between theocentric worship and anthropocentric worship with the focus of congregational songs. However, it is unique in itself. Throughout the book, Bond's erudition as author of scores of books and his expertise in creative writing, church history, and hymn writing are well interwoven, providing a variety of lenses through which to look into the focal issue—congregational singing in an entertainment ethos: biblical and theological grounds, entertainment, pragmatism, poetry, music, congregation, lyricist, composer, cultural and literary influence, historical and developmental account, textual analysis, liturgy, idolatry, psalm, hymn, hymn writing, and hymnal. These lenses give the reader a holistic view of the main issue of the book.

Another uniqueness of *God Sings!* is its attempt to combine theory and praxis. In general, books and articles concerning worship gravitate toward theoretical discussion. Bond's personal experience as a hymn lyricist enables him to provide practical suggestions such as criteria for writing a good hymn in chapter twelve, though they are heavily focused on discussion with theological and poetic principles. Nevertheless, it is desirable to see writings on worship in any form be accompanied by praxis-related resources applicable to corporate worship.

God Sings! reads like a narrative of high fluidity, though inundated with detailed information as well as anecdotes or quotations from theologians, philosophers, poets, hymn writers, and musicians. In addition, not simply discussing issues biblically and theologically, he interweaves historical accounts and explications of song samples,

from biblical poetry and traditional hymns to contemporary worship songs. It is essential reading for those who seek to sing in corporate worship in a biblically prescribed manner, including musicians, both from a biblical ethos of worship and an entertainment ethos, pastors, Christian song lyricists and composers, and laity.

Myunghee Lee

Cherry, Constance M. *Worship Like Jesus: A Guide for Every Follower*. **Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2019. 129 pp. $17.99.**

Attempting to navigate the endless array of available books on worship can be overwhelming, especially to new believers. Discovering authors and publications that adhere to sound biblical principles and doctrine can be challenging even for the well-read theologian or theology student. *Worship Like Jesus: A Guide for Every Follower* is a book that fulfills both of these issues. Its author, Constance M. Cherry, has a DMin from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary and is a professor of worship at Indiana Wesleyan University. Writer of *The Worship Architect* and *The Music Architect*, Cherry provides a "worship discipleship" guide for believers with the intention of instigating an internal transformation so they are more discerning and involved in worship, moving them from observer to participant. Cherry discusses the challenges of modern worship, asking the reader to question how Jesus would worship today, and how a deeper understanding of initiated worship by God can be gained by using Jesus Christ as a model, examining his approach and participation in worship (xi).

Cherry lays out this title in a clear and succinct fashion, maintaining a similar structure throughout all eight chapters. She poses a key question at the beginning, a chapter topic description and explanation, followed by a key question and deliberation of how Jesus practiced these elements, and then closes with a reflection section, an action, and a prayer. These elements all serve to keep a solid cohesion throughout the book, and the lesson style format ensures that the reader feels a sense of disciple growth and development through each section. Cherry explains that worship is "the heartbeat of the relationship between God and believer," that it is a "highly

transforming event," and that "all Christian disciples are formed *in* worship *by* worship" (xi, 8).

Following the worship wars, numerous changes occurred in worship practices with modern cultural trends being adapted by many churches. Cherry poses the question, who or what are we imitating when we adapt our practices of worship (9)? Cherry approaches her entire book from the perspective of "How would Jesus worship?," using him as the model for worship as he plays the significant roles of receiver, mediater, and leader of Christian worship (43). She states that modern worshipers need to focus on what Jesus would do within these worship changes, and how would he approach and participate in worship. Cherry describes the current modus operandi of worship, focusing on how the definition of God has become blurred, with worshipers often choosing either polytheistic, narcissistic, relativistic, or ambiguous worship to fulfill their needs (28, 29). Through Scriptural use she expounds on the discussion between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, clarifying that Jesus "worshipped God and God alone," evident by his prayer life and his speaking the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9 (33). Cherry continues by then addressing the age-old debate of Jesus's incarnation, the nature of his humanity and deity, stating that he was both of the Triune God and of humanity, and that simultaneously, "both dimensions are portrayed at once" (43).

With strong liturgical practices being neglected in many churches, through these lessons of discipleship, Cherry encourages the reader to follow a liturgical year or "kingdom calendar," which will "allow us to reorient our lives" and "worship with the whole story of God over time" (65). She discusses gifts of worship that God has given mankind, highlighting the necessities and benefits of corporate worship for believers and how "communal worship takes corporate worship to a deeper level" (89, 112). Through Cherry's repeated use of excerpts and examples from Scripture, she constantly brings the reader's focus back to God's laws and mandates, ensuring that there is no confusion about the elements of worship, which is vital for new believers to understand due to the constant change found in today's churches.

One of the most important points highlighted by Cherry is the value that Jesus places on "authentic relationships and authentic worship." She elaborates by saying that it is incumbent upon

believers to repair broken relationships with each other through forgiveness before coming before the Lord for worship, because "pure relationships are valued for pure worship" (112). When all believers are fully engaged corporately with each other through pure relationships, they "encourage each other to love God more deeply, serve God more devotedly, and care for each other more sincerely" (114). This is the very reason for worship, to serve God wholeheartedly as a church body.

Worship Like Jesus is an excellent resource for examining the elements of worship, transforming the reader's understanding and approach as to why, how, and who they worship. Cherry provides scriptural evidence to substantiate each element she discusses, focusing the reader on Christ and the central figure of worship, God. She reminds the reader that God is "a wholly relational being" and that worship between Him and the worshiper is "dialogical" in truth and in spirit (72, 73). This "revelation and response" dialogue is the bedrock of worship, upon which Cherry provides excellent guidance throughout for the discipleship of believers, all the while referring them to a comparison between their worship practices and how Jesus would worship (75). In theory, Cherry provides a scriptural compass that serves not only to educate new believers, but also to re-orientate and remind all Christians that the fundamentals of worship remain the same, regardless of what manmade changes occur.

This book would greatly assist pastors, worship leaders, and those connected to ministry work to facilitate change within their congregations. It is a helpful and transformative guide, especially to new believers, and is written with church groups in mind. In the words of the author, *Worship Like Jesus* is "well suited for use by small groups, Sunday school classes, Bible study groups . . . in short, wherever two or three are gathered" (xii). It would make a welcome and educational addition to every church and ministry bookshelf, serving to educate, disciple, and simply remind believers of the nature of worship.

Liz Nolan

Leithart, Peter J. *Theopolitan Liturgy.* **West Monroe, LA: Theopolis Books, 2019. 146 pp. $11.95.**

In a time when the distractions and depravities of secular culture are bombarding the liturgical life of the Christian church, an intentional shift toward a biblical theology of worship is more important than ever. Peter Leithart, President of the Theopolis Institute and teacher at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama, wrote *Theopolitan Liturgy* to delve into what the Bible says about liturgy and to explore the "analogies among and the intertwinings of three levels of reality: creation, culture, and liturgy" (xii–xiii). Through five thought-provoking chapters, Leithart argues that the church's liturgy (when shaped by Scripture) is "culture transformed into Kingdom" (xx).

Five overarching themes comprise the chapters of Leithart's volume: place, dialogue, sacrifice, time, and joy. Through numerous comparisons to Old Testament accounts of the worship practices of ancient Israel, the author surveys how human culture "distorts" these five aspects of creation and how liturgy "corrects, redirects, glorifies, and completes" each of them (xiii). It is important to note from the outset that Leithart has clearly written this book from the transformationalist point of view. In the volume's preface (and continually throughout the book), Leithart reveals his presuppositions about the church's role in society. He emphatically states that when liturgies meet the biblical standard, the inevitable result is the consecration and transformation of culture: "the liturgy is culture being Christianized" (xix).

The author's discussion of place begins in the Garden of Eden. He professes that God's intent for creating the world was to establish a liturgical space that would be filled with "joyous eternal worship" (3). The Garden was to be a "sanctuary for God's image" and a dwelling place for his presence (4). Just as God's creation begins as worship space in the book of Genesis, it also ends in a worship space in the book of Revelation, with a "shout" and "radiating waves of praise" surrounding the Lamb of God (7). Because the biblical narrative begins and ends with sacred space, Leithart asserts that "man's purpose is to transform creation into sanctuary" (14).

In the second chapter, Leithart begins his discussion of dialogue by noting that one of the first things that Scripture reveals

about God is that he speaks. His first words "let there be light" enable a response from creation. In the same way that God "initiates the liturgy of history" by his spoken word, the grand liturgy will end with a pronouncement of his final word of judgment. The whole of human history "is suspended between God's first and final word" (28–29). Leithart also points to a "redemption" of dialogue that occurs within liturgy as language is "Christianized, infused, and corrected by the Scriptures" (39).

The strengths of this book are found in the statements that are fully consistent with Scripture. Leithart writes that God's character is reflected in what he has spoken; his words are altogether true, authoritative, powerful, and accomplish exactly what he intends: "when he makes a promise, we should trust it. When he says something is true, we should believe it. When he commands, we should obey . . . everything in our lives is shaped by how we answer his words" (27). When speaking of the actions and content of liturgy, Leithart effectively notes the significance of thanking God for his Word during corporate worship. In many church traditions, after a passage of Scripture is read aloud, the reader will say "The Word of the Lord," to which the congregation responds in unison with the words "Thanks be to God." Leithart rightly observes that "no matter what word he speaks, no matter how shattering or startling, the liturgy trains the church to say, 'Thank you.' It's more than etiquette. It's a confession of faith" (44).

Although such statements are true and useful, the book also contains a number of esoteric passages that are superfluous and do not always align with Scripture. Throughout the narrative of the book, the author's words often wax strangely mystical, as seen in the following passage: "The God who creates the universe as a cosmic temple is himself an eternal divine temple. God is a dwelling for God. . . . God is our liturgical space. . . . *He* is redeemed space, the one safe place in a world of displacement" (20–21). Although Leithart's text is filled with Scripture references and symbolism, extraneous embellishments such as these read as theological stream of consciousness and greatly distract from his biblically faithful observations.

Another example of theological haphazardness occurs in the preface, in which the author states that the church's liturgy, and even the Bible, are "incomplete" without culture: "Studied in private, the Bible doesn't do its temple-building work. The Bible can't be all it's

supposed to be outside the liturgy" (xiv–xv). Such a statement is inconsistent with the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture and elevates liturgy to an almost idolatrous state. The Word of God stands eternally complete, entirely unaffected by the action or inaction of human beings. As Psalm 19:7 reveals, "the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul." The Apostle Paul instructs in 2 Timothy 3:16–17 that "all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Despite the unusual tangents taken by Leithart, he does make other statements of value throughout the book. When describing the church's worship, Leithart declares that the forms of liturgy "are acceptable only if they conform to God's word" (71). Regarding time, he states that when the church conforms to the rhythms of the world, "she becomes worldly at a fundamental level" (99). In his discussion of joy, Leithart rightly notes that it is God who "always initiates worship" in the church (112).

Leithart's thesis that liturgy is "culture transformed into Kingdom" is a discussion well suited for seminary and university classrooms. While Leithart brings many interesting points to consider, the nature of the church's liturgy is best understood and developed through the biblical commission to make disciples—to form worshipers.

Holly M. Farrow

Aniol, Scott. *Draw Near: The Heart of Communion with God.* Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020. 90 pp. $15.00.

In this little book, Scott Aniol, associate professor of church music and worship at Southwestern Seminary, beautifully pictures the Christian life as one characterized by authentic worship, genuine abiding, and faithful communion with the Triune God. In doing so, Aniol enables us to see afresh the importance of drawing near to God, the priority of sharing with other believers in corporate worship and community, as well as the significance of regularly partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Building on Hebrews 10:22, Aniol expands on the exhortation to "Let us draw near." He notes that the idea of drawing near is a translation of a term that means more than just a casual coming toward something. This exhortation to draw near means coming to the one, true, and living God. Throughout the book of Hebrews, the author compares the idea of drawing near to Old Testament worship practices as indicated in terms like "holy place," "the veil," "high priest," "sprinkling," and "cleansing." Drawing near, Aniol maintains, is the essence of worship, the heart of communion with God.

Aniol provides wise theological framing of his subject, focused on the worship of God the Father, through Jesus Christ the Son, and enabled and energized by the Holy Spirit. The book is built around eight perspectives on the meaning of communion with God, including "the call to," "the basis of," "the meaning of," "the heart of," "the strengthening of," "the fruit of," "the threat to," and "the recovery of communion with God."

Recognizing that worship is central in the existence and continuation of the church as presented in the New Testament, Aniol extends the trajectory of thought found in the writings of W. T. Conner, the Southwestern Seminary theologian who so greatly influenced the Southwestern community and Southern Baptist life during the first half of the twentieth century. Finding themes of continuity between the Old and New Testaments, Aniol uses the book of Hebrews as a bridge to find elements of Christian worship that are similar to those found in the Old Testament.

Aniol highlights the centrality of the Christological orientation that forms and informs New Testament believers. Readers are led to see that the risen and exalted Christ gives a new depth and content to the worshiping community. Moreover, the church's worship is influenced by the Holy Spirit. Fitting and acceptable worship can only be offered by and through the Holy Spirit. Building on these priorities and the continuity of the Scriptures, Aniol emphasizes the importance of community, including the proclamation of the Word of God, the importance of koinonia, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Each reader will find portions of this book that are more applicable for his or her own Christian journey. I personally found Aniol's emphasis on the Lord's Supper to be quite valuable. The Supper provides a vivid reminder for believers of the One who provided our

redemption and who is coming again. The celebration of the Supper is central to the church's worship and thus should be a regular and frequent occurrence for the believing community, providing enablement and guidance for our shared worship of the Triune God, leading to fellowship, service, ministry, and outreach. In doing so, the church is reminded that it does not exist merely for itself but for the world. Aniol encourages believers to reflect on their call to discipleship, recognizing that the church has a missionary task that is not optional.

While thoroughly practical and pastoral, readers will find guidance that is shaped by Scripture and deeply informed by theological conviction, leading to paths of faithful Christian living designed to honor and exalt our majestic God. In all of these things, we find implications for Christian fellowship and unity, enhanced discipleship, and a winsome witness before a watching world. Believers will be refreshed, renewed, strengthened, and encouraged by reflecting on the thoughtful insights offered in this fine work.

David S. Dockery

Cruse, Jonathan Landry. *What Happens When We Worship*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2020. 200 pp. $18.00.

Every so often a book warrants the thought in my mind, "I wish I would have written this book." Such is the case with *What Happens When We Worship* by Jonathan Cruse, pastor of Community Presbyterian Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Cruse's primary concern is Christians who find worship boring; the solution to this problem, Cruse argues, is not that worship needs to be made more interesting, rather, Cruse insists that we find worship boring because "we are not aware of what is happening when we worship" (3). Thus, Cruse argues that "something *is happening* when we worship. Something happens *to* us, something happens *between* us and the people we worship with, and, most importantly, something happens *between us and God*" (1).

In Part 1 (chapters 2–7), Cruse explains a theology of worship from Scripture that will answer the book's central question. Part 2 (chapters 8–13) explores the various elements of a worship service

that enact worship's purpose. Part 3 (chapters 14–15) encourages believers to consequently prepare their hearts for worship based on this more robust understanding of why we gather and how what we do in corporate worship accomplishes the purpose.

Cruse argues that in corporate worship we meet with God, shaping us into worshipers, which is the most important thing we will ever do. This transformational meeting is a regular renewal of our covenant with God, where we are reminded again both of our sinfulness and God's faithfulness to remain true to the promises he has made to us in Christ. In corporate worship, we renew our commitment to obey God's commands, and we enjoy communion with other saints with whom we share union in Christ.

This understanding of what happens when we worship informs each element of the service from the call to worship, to confession of sin and declaration of pardon in Christ, to the preaching of God's Word and feasting around God's Table, to the final benediction. For each of these elements, Cruse presents practical, meaningful definitions:

- God calls us to the most important work imaginable, hears our plea for help, and promises to be with us and accept us despite our inadequacies. (83)
- God, week in and week out, puts to death the old self of sin through the law and brings to life and sustains a new creation in Christ through the proclamation of the gospel. (94)
- By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus speaks through his ordained servant, saving sinners by the spoken word to the glory of God. (108)
- Through the Lord's Supper, God's Spirit strengthens our faith, hope, and love in the finished work of Jesus Christ as believers really and truly feast on him. (124)
- God blesses his people by confirming that his name is on them for good in Christ, and thereby strengthens them to serve him in the week ahead. (142)
- God has gifted us with song that we might have a fitting way to praise him for his work, pray to him with our deepest needs, and proclaim to one another the sanctifying truths of the gospel. (150)

A thorough understanding of these significant realities that take place each week we gather for corporate worship, Cruse suggests, should lead us to intentional preparation and heartfelt engagement in the service. We won't chase after excitement or entertainment; rather, we will be satisfied with the simplicity and "ordinariness" of what we do, recognizing that truly extraordinary things are happening by the Spirit of God. He concludes in the final chapter with very practical advice for how we can prepare and engage in light of these truths.

Cruse's argument is both biblically rich and historically grounded. He offers nothing "new," per se; rather, what Cruse presents is an important and necessary corrective to the expressionist worship so common in modern evangelicalism, and he does so in a winsome, clear, and practical presentation. The one quibble I have is not so much a disagreement as a wish for an addition. Cruse's chapter on singing is very good, but he emphasizes the importance of singing as a response and as a proclamation of truth, while neglecting a discussion of music's formative power. Music in worship does not merely help us express toward God, it also forms our expressions.

This book will become required reading in several of my classes. It is easy to read—suitable for laypeople, pastors, and students—but deeply profound and enriching. I wish I would have written this book.

Scott Aniol

Hooper, William L. *Congregational Song in the Worship of the Church: Examining the Roots of American Traditions*. **Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2020. 312 pp. $36.00.**

"The Hebrew people were not the first to worship, but they were the first to worship Yahweh," writes William L. Hooper in his book *Congregational Song in the Worship of the Church* (x). Hooper is the former dean of the School of Church Music at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, long-time worship pastor, and prolific author on church music and worship. Some of his other writings include *Church Music in Transition* (1962), *Ministry and Musicians* (1982),

and *Worship Leadership for the Worship Leader* (2007). Additionally, he has written several instructive books on music theory fundamentals and numerous church music cantatas.

In this latest work, Hooper provides a chronological survey of church worship through congregational song in which he asserts the voice is the "primary instrument used in worship" and has been from "ancient times until the present" (273). The author limits the scope of this book to the use of the voice in corporate worship. The book outlines how worship evolved to its twenty-first-century state in America by looking at each period through the lens of the people, events, and ideas formative to congregational song in worship.

Hooper devotes a chapter of the book to each of the commonly accepted periods of church history. He organizes each chapter around three main questions:

1. How and why has song been used as a sacred ritual activity in worship?
2. Who and what determines when and how a song is appropriate for worship?
3. What were the biblical and theological criteria that inform the discussion? (ix)

First, this book excels in answering two of the author's organizational questions for the book—the *how/why* and the *who/what* of congregational song. For example, chapter two, "Congregational Song in the Old Testament," begins by depicting the instruments the Israelites used as they came out of Egypt. Next, it describes the practice of old covenant worship. The chapter describes the Hebrew canticles, the order of worship, major feasts, instruments, musicians, and the prophet's musical role (50–57). Subsequent chapters apply this level of detailed exploration to the early church, Reformation, the English tradition, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the twentieth-century American tradition. Whether briefly highlighting the wind or string instruments of Old Testament worship or differentiating between the various types of gospel music, *Congregational Song* gives the reader a comprehensive view of the crucial figures and ideas that formed each significant period of western church history.

Second, Hooper argues effectively that congregational song is a "ritual action" to be viewed similarly to "prayer or Scripture

reading" (ix). He shows the church gathered and sang in each of the periods of church history. And at the end of each chapter, he invites the reader to reflect on these practices and consider how these periods and their particular issues relate to modern worship practice. However, Hooper does not answer with the same detail and purpose the last of his organizational questions given in the preface.

The book's premise is that a historical survey of congregational song can help the reader understand how American worship traditions developed. While giving ample historical context to periods of music surveyed, the book leaves the reader without a clear understanding of what overarching biblical principles and methods should govern congregational song. The author does not promise to give any sense of "finality" in response to every question raised (x). Instead, Hooper concludes that the final answer to these questions remains "elusive" in determining what songs are appropriate for worship or what the theological context should be in deciding what songs are used in congregational worship (274). Furthermore, this book begins with a prehistoric, non-biblical origin of worship practice. While this view may be growing in popularity, it remains a controversial topic. By starting here, Hooper causes some unnecessary distraction from his otherwise strong historical overview. The reader must then decide how to process the author's analysis in light of this foundational issue.

When church music and worship today seem to undervalue or ignore historical worship practice, this book provides a useful entry point towards understanding this essential practice and its implications. *Congregational Song in the Worship of the Church* offers a historical survey of past church worship practice that would benefit seminarians, college students, and interested readers.

Jarrod Richey

Lott, R. Allen. *Brahms's* A German Requiem: *Reconsidering Its Biblical, Historical, and Musical Contexts*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2020. 512 pp. Hardback, $117.28.

Despite almost universal modern assessments of Johannes Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* (A German Requiem) as a

deliberately secular choral treatment of death, R. Allen Lott, professor of music history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, meticulously demonstrates that "the *Requiem* is not theologically or doctrinally inclusive but instead adroitly summarizes the unique Christian view of death, grief, and an afterlife" (2). Along with being one of the most performed choral works from the nineteenth century, Brahms's *Requiem* is notable for the fact that unlike a standard Latin mass for the dead, the composer used exclusively texts from Luther's German translation of the Bible. Yet Christ is not explicitly named, leading most modern scholars to conclude that Brahms did not intend his *Requiem* to be a Christian work but rather a humanist composition inclusive of all creeds. In contrast to this recent consensus, Lott presents his case through evaluating early writings about the work, investigating how audiences understood it during the first fifteen years of performance, and in-depth textual and musical analysis, providing a definitive conclusion that a Christian understanding of this beloved nineteenth-century choral masterpiece "is not only allowable but the most rational one to adopt" (2).

Lott lays an interpretive foundation for his analysis in Chapter One, arguing for a "course correction to a path that has been focused primarily on Brahms's enigmatic objectives" (13) since "intention does not trump execution" (14). Therefore, determining whether the *Requiem* is a Christian work should be decided based on how the original audiences would have understood the intertextuality of the biblical texts Brahms chose and how he set them musically (37). The broader contexts of those passages, along with that of the sacred music traditions within which Brahms composed his work, strongly suggest Christian theological implications.

Lott introduces those implications with an exegesis of the biblical texts in Chapter Two, which he argues "embody unambiguous Christian positions that are distinct from other religious traditions" (60). He demonstrates that, despite common claims, the *Requiem* is certainly about Jesus Christ since Brahms quotes Jesus's own words (61) and other texts that mention or allude to Christ without naming him (64). "These multiple references to Christ," Lott contends, "inherently make the *Requiem* a Christian work" since "Christ's identity as the Son of God and the Savior of the world are the most distinguishing features of Christianity that separate it from all other religions" (67). Further, "Brahms's text includes unambiguous

references to Christian doctrines that are not commonly held" (72), including explicitly Christian understandings of creation, redemption, resurrection, and the afterlife, each of which provides uniquely Christian comfort and promise of joy in the face of death. "Only simple ignorance of or willful disregard for the details of the text," Lott concludes, "can justify a universal interpretation of the *Requiem*" (93).

If Lott's biblical exegesis were not enough to convince skeptics, he demonstrates in Chapter Three that "the first commentators . . . consistently read and heard [the *Requiem*] as a piece upholding common Christian beliefs" (98). Based on the fact that "religion continued to be a vital element in nineteenth-century German life" (101), "it should not be surprising that listeners experienced the *Requiem* with is purely scriptural text as a Christian work" (110). Lott provides numerous statements by critics, musicologists, and theologians of the time who clearly identified it as Christian, even Protestant (120), and its classification "as a specimen of church music, which could only refer to settings of doctrinally orthodox texts, verify the recognition and acceptance of the work's Christian content" (133).

In Chapter Four Lott examines one of the most frequently cited "proofs" of the *Requiem's* supposed universal focus, a letter written by conductor Karl Reinthaler prior to its 1868 premiere in Bremen, wherein he stated, "For the Christian consciousness it lacks the point around which everything revolves, namely, the redeeming death of the Lord" (171). Lott demonstrates that this one statement taken out of context does not account for the fact that Reinthaler made other comments in his letter supporting a Christian interpretation and repeatedly programmed the work for Good Friday performances (178). In fact, such explicitly Christian programming continued for years by others; Lott demonstrates that "more than one-fourth of the early performances of the *Requi*em occurred during Holy Week, indicating a perceived resonance between the work and an important Christian observance" (184).

Lott presents what he considers "the most important hermeneutical guide to the *Requiem*"—musical analysis—in Chapter Five, explaining that "Brahms set his *Requiem* text sympathetically, convincingly, dramatically, and, above all, with an earnest devotion to sacred music traditions" (230). In particular, Brahms alludes in the *Requiem* to several well-known sacred works, most notably Handel's *Messiah*. Lott argues that "the general similarities between the

Requiem and *Messiah* as well as several areas of textual overlap and interrelatedness encourage a Christian perspective on the *Requiem*" (277), which he explores at length. Finally, Lott meticulously traces Brahms's "musical devotion to scripture as a composer and his continuation of longstanding practices," leading listeners "to accept the revered, traditional interpretation of the biblical text" (319).

In the final analysis, Lott provides an overwhelmingly convincing, substantively documented case for a Christian interpretation of Brahms's *Requiem*. Indeed, as Lott notes, "modern scholars seem to impose a set of guidelines for assessing the *Requiem* that are not followed for any other musical work, not even the other choral works of Brahms" (327), in an attempt to substantiate a universalist claim. Far from being a dry musicological monograph, Lott's extensive analysis is engaging and even devotional, and though his musical analysis requires some competency in music literacy (especially in Chapter Five), theologians and even lay Christians would find this work fascinating. Perhaps Lott's treatment will cause skeptics and Christians alike to consider anew that "blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

Scott Aniol

Ruth, Lester. *Flow: The Ancient Way to Do Contemporary Worship.* **Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2020. 132 pp. $19.99.**

In a world where churches increasingly have to choose between traditional and contemporary services, *Flow* by Lester Ruth offers a way for liturgists to synthesize these seemingly divergent streams. Lester Ruth, a research professor of Christian worship at Duke Divinity School specializing in the history of contemporary Christian worship (CCW), stands well qualified to propose such a paradigm for worship planning. While *Flow*'s bibliographic information lists Ruth as the book's sole author, the book identifies six of Ruth's Duke Divinity School students as contributors to the work: Zachary Barnes, Andrew T. Eastes, Jonathan Ottoway, Adam Perez, Glenn Stallsmith, and Debbie Wong. This collective of scholars draws from Justin Martyr's *First Apology* fresh insights into how early Christians worshiped and connects those insights to CCW elements. *Flow*

argues that ancient Christian worship expressions possessed qualities similar to CCW and offers ways that biblically faithful liturgists can incorporate modern expressions of these qualities into a four-fold service order of Gathering, Word, Table, and Sending.

The book easily divides into two sections, each paralleling a different audience. The introduction and first three chapters have a theoretical focus that will interest scholastic readers. They explore the theological and historical rationale for practicing ancient Christian worship in a contemporary way. The remaining six chapters have a practical nature that appeals to liturgists. They give real-world tips on how to apply the ancient-contemporary concepts in traditional services.

In the introduction, Ruth provides the historical motivation for his thesis: a missed opportunity in the 1990s for two different worship renewal movements to work together in revitalizing worship in mainline Christian worship. Ruth identifies these two movements as the official mainline denominational liturgical reform movement that re-introduced the four-fold order and the CCW renewal that emphasized informality and cultural relevance. Ruth then lays out the argument for how contemporary and ancient worship frameworks overlap. He finds in Justin Martyr's summary of Christian worship gatherings allusions to not only the acts of the historical four-fold order but also to three attributes of worship that more closely align with CCW expressions: "open-ended time, extemporaneity, and an understanding of worship as a flow of actions" rather than objects (7). He argues that as church structures developed, lectionaries formalized, and liturgical works codified, worship became increasingly scripted and these three flow attributes disappeared.

After Ruth's opening chapters, the remainder of *Flow* is written by Ruth's Duke Divinity school students. Zachary Barnes provides a historical overview of how "flow" became indispensable in contemporary worship, from its origins in the 1970s Vineyard movement to its twenty-first century advocates. Next, Adam Perez proposes an experiential—and subtly Pentecostal—understanding of the four-fold order where services are "encounters with God" (29). The rest of the book offers examples of how to plan corporate worship that is both relevant to contemporary culture and authentic to historical/biblical principles. The authors outline methods to incorporate flow into worship planning, music, spoken elements, and visual

technology. The book concludes with two chapters and two appendixes that give additional resources for the ancient-contemporary liturgist.

Flow aims to bring ecumenical harmony; therefore, it adds a welcome voice to the growing field of worship studies. Where other worship scholars critique contemporary worship's short-comings—and often rightfully so—Ruth and his contributors offer a historical-theological argument for the acceptance of some CCW elements while stopping short of championing the CCW movement as a whole. They propose and model the possibility of divergent forms of worship finding a biblically and historically rooted synergy. However, the authors do not address the concerns often raised by four-fold liturgists surrounding the fittingness of contemporary artistic forms for corporate worship. Instead, Ruth and his students assume that intentionally using these artforms and "flow" qualities to support the message of the gospel in a worship service will result in the artforms increasing worshiper engagement rather than serving as entertainment.

The main limitations of this book rise from its brevity (only 132 pages) and narrow scope (it only gives examples from a United Methodist context). When the authors give examples of how to incorporate flow into musical and technological elements, their examples always depict the most traditional four-fold order services and assume little-to-no preexisting knowledge of technology from the reader. They do not provide examples of more advanced techniques. Therefore, this book has only a few rings of influence. It will most benefit liturgists and worship students of the United Methodist church and to a lesser extent those of other denominations that follow a traditional order but seek to incorporate CCW elements. Finally, worship leaders and students in a contemporary context can benefit from *Flow* by deconstructing its lessons and applying them in a retrograde fashion. Indeed, a fruitful companion work to *Flow: The Ancient Way to Do Contemporary Worship* would be a book subtitled *The Contemporary Way to Do Ancient Worship*.

Jordan Covarelli

Taylor, W. David O. *Open and Unafraid: The Psalms as a Guide to Life*. **Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2020. 230 pp. $24.99.**

In his book *Open and Unafraid: The Psalms as a Guide to Life*, W. David O. Taylor, assistant professor of theology and culture at Fuller Theological Seminary, explores the Book of Psalms through a lens of emotional honesty, so Christians can discover a more "transparent, resilient, and fearless life of faith." Taylor believes that when people open their hearts, becoming intimate and vulnerable before God, devoid of deceit and secrets, is "the only way to be made holy, whole and wholly alive" thus allowing humanity to derive the greatest benefit from the psalms (xxiii).

Taylor launches *Open and Unafraid* by introducing the reader to the historical background, poetic devices, and content found within the psalms. He explains that through honesty and prayer, the psalms provide a Christological dialogue between God and mankind, as individuals and as a community. The subsequent chapters guide the reader through specific themes in the psalms via assorted narratives, many of which are taken from the author's personal experiences. Divulging these personal experiences make the reader more connected emotionally to the chapter content. Each chapter concludes with questions for reflection, general exercises, and a closing prayer, all of which revolve around the chapter's central theme. These aspects are present in every chapter and maintain a cohesive thread throughout the book, while also providing excellent discussion points for church groups.

Athanasius believed that the psalms enabled people to become whole before God and whole in their true selves. The psalms are filled with imagery that stir up "all the emotions we are ever likely to feel (including some we hope we may not), and they lay them, raw and open, in the presence of God" (9). Taylor explores this myriad of human emotion along with definitive topics such as sadness, anger, and joy, encouraging the reader to contemplate that they are "never alone in their sorrows, angers, doubts, joys, thanksgivings, or questions about life and death" (xxi). By confronting and challenging the emotions found within the Psalter, in particular lament or imprecatory psalms, Christians expose their emotional vulnerabilities to God for reformative healing (88). As Taylor states, "The psalms invite us, thus, to stand in the light, to see ourselves truly and to

receive the reformative work of God through the formative words of the psalmist, so that we might be rehumanized in Christ" (3). It is through the light of the psalms that the brokenness of man can be revealed and reshaped.

As the author moves through various topics, he focuses on the recurring theme of God's reformative work through scriptural examples. By referring to Scripture in conjunction with the psalm subjects, Taylor guides the reader to focus firmly on both Jesus and God's Word, reminding them that the Psalter "embraces the praise of saints and sinners" and that God is the great creator and "the ultimate source of joy" (96–97). Just as God is the beginning and the end, the Psalter mirrors God's creation by opening with two psalms that reflect the beginning of the book of Genesis and closing with "a vision of the entire cosmos at praise" (175). Psalms are the "heart song of Jesus" and by approaching and praying them with honesty, Christians trust "they will open up a space in our hearts to give and receive the steadfast love of God, from whom no secrets are hidden" (xxv).

Taylor provides fresh and current commentary on twenty-first century events, demonstrating that the psalms are just as relevant to the human condition today as they were when originally written. In his chapters on enemies, justice, and death, he urges Christians to speak honestly about their adversaries and "lament the brokenness" of their own lives, while recognizing that Jesus underscores every decision with the command to love and pray (117). Injustice is not defined by any one parameter, and the psalms detail prayer repeatedly, prayer that is needed today for global events such as the displacement caused by Boko Haram in Nigeria, the contamination of the water supply in Flint, Michigan, and the child sex abuse accusations of the Catholic Church (122). The psalms are not passive; "prayer and worship require something of us: doing justice." Justice is only mediated through Jesus, who is "the Good Shepherd who defends the vulnerable" and is "the perfect justice of God" (127, 130).

Open and Unafraid is an excellent book for those wishing to explore the psalms more stringently and honestly, delving deeper into their emotional content. This book is not intended for light reading but requires readers to be actively engaged at all times. The centrality of Christ in the Book of Psalms causes Christians to examine their hearts more closely. If Jesus is the song leader then His people need to have an honest and open dialogue with Him. The author

highlights this dialogical nature of worship, showing how, through this dialogue, the psalms mold and shape hearts, thoughts, and action. Taylor never shies away from discussing the light and dark emotional elements found in the Book of Psalms; in fact he welcomes and embraces them all for discussion. These elements allow humanity to "give voice to the whole anatomy of the soul" (45).

The amount of biblical references that Taylor includes within each chapter can be a little overwhelming, but he succeeds in challenging readers both intellectually and emotionally, guiding them to be candid in their examination of the psalms. The inclusion of the chapter exercises makes *Open and Unafraid* ideal for use within church groups and ministry training. Seminary students will also find the recommended resource list and chapter notes highly informative.

<div align="right">Liz Nolan</div>

Fujimura, Makoto. *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2021. 184 pp. $26.00.

"It is impossible to have faith without imagination" (89). So claims artist and author Makoto Fujimura in what he considers his life work, *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making*. Fujimura, a world-renowned artist, writer, and culture influencer, has received numerous awards for his previous books including the Aldersgate Prize and the 2014 "Religion and the Arts" award from the American Academy of Religion. This newest book gracefully weaves together discussions of vocation, loss and renewal, post-industrial worldviews, the New Creation, and worship and witness in a postmodern society.

Fujimura writes like he paints. His larger paintings have sixty to eighty or more layers of paint applied to them to create the deep luminosity they reveal to the patient viewer. Likewise, throughout *Art and Faith*, he repeatedly returns to many key themes, adding layer upon layer of insight. And yet, the book never feels redundant. Each layer, like each layer of his paintings, adds a new level of brilliance to his argument. Every page brings clarity, nuance, and depth to previously planted ideas.

While *Art and Faith* has several interweaving theses, Fujimura binds them together in a single sentence at the start of his book: "Imagination gives us wings to create, but it is through Christ's tears and the invitation to the feast of God that we can be partakers of the New Creation" (3). The book explores these three insights. First, our postindustrial culture desperately needs imagination in our faith and witness. Fujimura claims: "modernist assumptions that verifiable knowledge is the ultimate path to truth have overlooked the fact that mystery and beauty are at the core of knowledge" (83) and "it is through our imagination that God reaches us" (85). Second, as symbolized by Jesus's tears at Lazarus's tomb, God does not merely fix our hurts; he sits with us in our pain, values our wounds, and renews us. Using the Japanese art of Kintsugi as an artistic metaphor, Fujimura says, "it is precisely through our brokenness and fissures that God's grace can shine through, as in the gold that fills fissures in Kintsugi" (52). And third, God patiently partners with human creativity to reveal himself and to make the New Creation. This is most deeply evidenced by God's "use of our ability to make bread and wine to reveal Jesus's resurrected presence" to us at the Eucharist (73). Fujimura explains the biblical promise at the heart of his Theology of Making is that "not only are we restored, we are to partake in the co-creation of the New [Creation]" (46).

If, as Emily Dickinson once said of poetry, art "tells the truth but tells it slant," then *Art and Faith* tells theological truth but tells it slant. It does not give a systematic theology of art or making. Instead, a work of art all its own, *Art and Faith* models a deeply Trinitarian, renewed look at the things of God, life in him, and New Creation. Fujimura combines diverse artistic inspirations like Kintsugi, Nihonga, T. S. Eliot, and Mark Rothko with theological influences like Ellen Davis, N. T. Wright, and Jürgen Moltmann. In doing so, he invites both contemplation and action, both meditation and making. Rather than argue doctrinal axioms, Fujimura models his theological perspective: he creates a work of literary art that exemplifies "the arts need to cast good spells [from which we get the word 'gospel'] into a world that is dying and cynical" (137).

Additionally, *Art and Faith* makes a strong epistemological argument. Much theological writing in the last several centuries springs from the age of modernism and industrialization. From these perspectives, society and theology have adopted utilitarian

emphases that Fujimura attempts to correct. In a postmodern world where rational apologetics falls flat, Fujimura proposes that "instead of debating, Christians ought to be involved in Making. . . . not to 'prove' God's existence, but to affirm the source of creativity and imagination, [God himself]" (85–86). Fujimura asks: "What if . . . imagination is seen as necessary . . . for our faith journeys" (87). He then proposes: "the analytical and the intuitive, the rational and the emotional, the active and the contemplative: these are not dichotomies or dualities to each other, but they are complements" (110). The artist's mind and body offer imaginative and somatic knowledge that brings fresh perspective to doctrinal truths.

Art and Faith is a rare example of an academic book with universal appeal. Theologians of all denominations would benefit from the rich creative insights it offers. Christians of all walks and theological training will find the book's tone and concepts approachable and refreshing. Artists of all faiths and worldviews would be encouraged and challenged by the book's wisdom. Furthermore, by addressing a "theology of making" rather than one of "creativity," this work broadens its audience from artists and theologians to every human being. Since everyone makes something, "we are all artists" (149), and "the Artist calls us little-'a' artists to co-create, to share in the 'heavenly breaking in' to the broken world" (90–91). With *Art and Faith*, readers cannot help but catch flashes of New Creation bursting into their hearts.

Jordan Covarelli

Merker, Matt. *Corporate Worship: How the Church Gathers as God's People.* **Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021. 176 pp. $14.99.**

Understanding the true purpose of the gathering of believers in worship is a challenge for many evangelical churches today. As Matt Merker points out, knowing the reason of worship begins with discerning the purpose of the local church. He believes that "a biblical view of the local church informs all the practical aspects of putting a worship service together" (27). Thus, his book answers the questions of who gathers, why they gather, what they do when they gather, and how they structure their gatherings. Merker states that "corporate

worship is the responsibility of every church member" (29), and he continues his emphasis on the responsibility of the worshiper throughout each chapter.

Chapter one poses the question of who is to gather for worship, which Merker answers as the local church "is an assembly of blood-bought, Spirit-filled worshipers who build one another up by God's Word and affirm one another as citizens of Christ's kingdom through the ordinances" (35). Further, he sees the local body of believers functioning as "An Outpost of the Kingdom of Heaven" (35), "A Holy Temple" (38), and "The Body of Christ" (41). In his second chapter, Merker inquires why believers must gather, and responds by stating that "a local church is an assembly" and if a church "never meets, it is no church at all" (46). In continuing to emphasize a biblical view of the local church, he additionally comments that meeting as a body "isn't just something churches *do*. A meeting is, in part, what a church *is*. God has saved us as individuals to *be* a corporate assembly" (46). Lastly in addressing the question of why we gather, Merker's third chapter answers why God gathers believers, and asserts that "God gathers us unto his glory, for our mutual good, before the world's gaze" (61).

Having answered the questions of why a church gathers, Merker addresses the questions of how a church gathers in his fourth and fifth chapters. He states in chapter four that "God, by his Word, governs what the local church should do when it gathers" (78), which he furthers by expounding on the purpose of the regulative principle of worship and the importance of applying it in worship practices. Chapter five focuses on liturgies, through which Merker considers specific elements and patterns of worship services. He provides a couple of sample liturgies in this chapter and lists even more in his Appendix.

Merker's final two chapters answer the questions of how the church participates in the gathering and how congregational singing impacts the assembly. Both chapters include suggestions on how to incorporate all believers in different elements of the liturgy, about which Merker writes that the "various *somebodies* of the congregation unite into *one body* to receive and share the ministry of the Word, and the Spirit builds them up together into maturity" (130–31). As in previous chapters, Merker addresses the function of the local church and

states that "a deep understanding of the local church is often what's missing when churches don't sing" (134).

Throughout his book, Merker quotes other worship writers and theologians, including Bryan Chapell, D. A. Carson, C. S. Lewis, and Marva Dawn, to name a few. Merker helpfully addresses the topic of corporate worship, focusing on biblical and liturgical traditions as discipleship-forming practices. He often provides illustrations from his own worship leading experiences, helping the reader to understand practical ways in which to employ the methods he addresses.

In his discussion on liturgy in chapter five, however, Merker makes the statement that the "actual content of each element of the service matters more than the order in which they are arranged" (102). He later states that "if we care more about the order of service than the content of each element of the service, we may ironically end up neglecting the proclamation of the gospel" (103). Although Merker makes these statements, almost every liturgy example he cites follows a similar pattern, which includes a Call to Worship, Praise, Confession, Assurance, Opening of the Word, Response, Benediction. Merker seems to undermine his point that the order of the elements of the service does not matter by providing examples that all broadly follow the liturgical examples found in Scripture. Ultimately, his point is to care more for the content of the element rather than the placement of the element in the liturgy, but his argument could be stronger if he would eliminate this idea completely or provide more explanation on where liturgies are found in Scripture, thus regulating why biblical liturgies broadly follow the structure mentioned above.

Overall, Merker's book would make a tremendous resource for evangelical churches wanting to understand and employ more reformed worship liturgies. *Corporate Worship* serves as a basic primer for instructing those that are unfamiliar with biblical worship practices. Merker rightly concludes "*Who* the church is shapes *how* it worships. And corporate worship, in turn, shapes the church" (151).

Kim Arnold

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