A THEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF THE ROLE AND USE OF MUSIC FOR WORSHIP IN THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

by

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Summary
A theology of Church music for worship has been conspicuous by its absence. The need is clearly demonstrated in this thesis, as is the methodology to develop this theology. The Biblical record of musical usage shows that theological principles can be uncovered to guide the use of music today. The same process can be applied to the use of music for worship in Church history. In order for these principles to have practical application, the challenges facing the Methodist of Southern Africa today are examined. Finally, a theology of Worship Music is developed under three headings. The first, Worship Music as Sacred Sound, explores the inherent music making of God, and of humanity. The second heading, Worship Music as Sacred Act, explores the way music is used as part of the Church’s worship activity. The third heading, Worship Music as Sacred Word, explains how music can communicate in worship.

Title of Thesis:
A Theological Exploration of the Role and Use of Music for Worship in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa

Key Terms:
Worship; Music; Theology of music; Theology of worship; Church music; Methodist music; South African Church music; Music in the Bible; Sacred sound; Sacred Act; Sacred word
I declare that *A Theological Exploration of the Role and Use of Music for Worship in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

John William van de Laar
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"... What I mean,' said Bach, 'is that the universe is like a great mathematical game that is played upon a tremendous scale. Music is one of the purest forms of mathematics. Each mathematical formula can be converted into music ... And music can be converted into mathematics, with, I might add, surprising results. The Architect who built the universe designed it that way. Music has power to create a universe or to destroy a civilisation. If you don’t believe me, I suggest you read the Bible."1

Throughout the history of humanity music has played a significant role in the lives of people. Studies of every age of human existence have shown that music has been used for pleasure, for celebration, for ritual and for worship. That music is powerful, and that it effects human beings at every level of their lives is clear from historical and contemporary evidence.

Music has also always had an important place in the worship of God’s people. From the earliest chapters of the Bible, through to the present day, the worship of Israel, and of the Church has been musical. The truth and impact of this resulted in an extremely large proportion of the music theory and practice of the Western world being developed in the Church, as will be seen. However, there has been little written about why this should be so, or how best to utilise music for God’s glory. A theology of worship music has been conspicuous by its absence.

A question raises its head at this point. What is theological about music? Can the study of music really be done from a theological point of view, and what benefit can be derived from such a study? What grounds are there for justifying the development of a theology of music? In the sense that God fills all of His creation, and all things find their source in Him, all things can be viewed theologically in some way, and therefore also music. However, there are strong reasons to support the idea of developing a systematic theology of music in its own right, and no where is this more true than in the area of worship.

**A] JUSTIFICATIONS FOR A THEOLOGY OF MUSIC**

1) **The Purpose of Theology**

Before dealing with the reasons for a theology of music specifically, it would be enlightening to examine why theology as a discipline is useful, and discover if any of these principles apply to the practice of music. Then, the discussion can more effectively examine the need for a theology of music, building on this foundation.

John Macquarrie defines theology as:

> ... the study, which, through participation in and reflection upon a religious faith, seeks to express the content of this faith in the clearest and most coherent language available.²

He indicates that theology both participates in faith, speaking from the standpoint of faith, and reflects on that faith, attempting to step outside of it and express it from the perspective of (as far as possible) an objective observer. Thus, theology

² *Principles of Christian Theology*, p.1
is an attempt to "study" faith, and express its observations in systematic and coherent ways.

While the question has clearly been answered in the affirmative for centuries, it is nevertheless, foundational to ask whether such a reasoned statement of faith is actually necessary. Some Church traditions, notably some independent Pentecostal churches, have been rather outspoken about their contempt for theology, believing it to be a human construct with little or no relevance to the actual work of God through his Spirit. Alfred C. Lamb, however, gives a very concise and helpful summary of why theology is necessary, and what benefits it brings to the Church.\(^3\) He outlines seven reasons why theology is important. It is not necessary here to expand on these reasons in detail, but it will be helpful to list them. Firstly, theology enables a Christian to face the questions that inevitably arise in faith, with honesty and intelligence. Secondly, theology draws believers into the rich heritage of faith that has been passed down through the centuries, and thus expands their experience of faith. Thirdly, for those who preach and lead the Church, theology imparts the essence of the message – the *kerygma* – which is to be communicated. Fourthly, theology applies faith to the immediate context in which it is practised, and in so doing makes faith relevant to contemporary society and its questions of faith. Fifthly, theology provides the authority that is needed for effective communication of faith. Sixthly, theology is a necessary apologetic tool, enabling the Church to face its detractors with reasoned defences where necessary. And finally, theology provides a basis for moral conduct; a framework

\(^3\) An Approach to Christian Doctrine, pp.2-5
in which the understanding of faith can be worked out in the practical business of
daily living.

Can these reasons for theology in general give any insight into the need for a
theology of music? Firstly, there is no doubt that the use of music raises questions
in the minds of many – both musicians and non-musicians – and a theology that
enables the Church to deal with these questions intelligently would be of great
assistance. Secondly, Church music has a rich historical and practical heritage
that can inform and inspire the Church’s present musical activities. However, there
needs to be a reflective method – a theology – to enable musicians and leaders to
come to grips with this heritage and its implications. Thirdly, music is a form of
communication. The details of this will be discussed later in this study, but for now
it is sufficient to state this fact. If music is to be effective as a tool of expression
and communication for the Church, then Christians must be clear what the
message is, and how best to convey this message. This is a theological task.
Fourthly, every culture and context expresses itself in some way through music.
Since one of theology’s tasks is to apply faith to the immediate context, music
cannot be ignored. More than this, music must be understood theologically in
order to fulfil this task effectively. Fifthly, as with preaching and teaching faith, a
measure of spiritual authority is necessary, which is derived from theology. Since
music stands alongside these disciplines, and imparts the same message, it
requires a similar measure of authority. Theology gives it this, but if the message
of Christian music is to stand out from the message of “secular” music, theology
must understand music and how it communicates in order to ensure that the
message is authoritative. Sixthly, while the evangelical and apologetic value of
music will be discussed in the body of this thesis, it is sufficient to state here that
music does fulfil these roles, and thus requires a strong theology if it is to be effective. Finally, the role of theology in moral guidance can be no more effectively applied than in music, especially when the contribution of music to moral decay is so openly debated.

It becomes clear, then, both that music is theological, and requires theological reflection in order to fulfil its function in the Church. This is, by extension, true of worship music as well. However, there are some significant reflections outside of the above discussion, that indicate the need for a theology of music that must now be explained.

2) The Need for a Theology of Music

South African theologian and church musician David Pass states strongly that a theology of music is not only justifiable, but is essential to the life of the contemporary church:

The Bible very clearly provides us with the principles needed to solve these controversies. However, there are no prepackaged answers or special verses we can turn to. Only by carefully studying the Bible, theology, and many other disciplines can one attempt to form a coherent theology of music and church music. . . I believe that we must have such a theology. Without it we will never know how music relates to our Christian lives and why it is so important to us as individuals and to us together as the body of Christ.4

4 Music and the Church, pp. 5,6
This study will show the central place that music has always had in the activities, relationships and worship of humanity, the Hebrew people and the Church. It is one of the most important, most consistently present, and most divisive parts of Christian worship, and yet in recent times has not had a developed theology formulated to support it. Martin Luther developed a rudimentary theology of music, but it stood in opposition to the views of Calvin, which undermined its influence. John Wesley had much to say about music, but was not the musical equal of his brother. The result of this was that his views were sometimes more emotional than arising out of informed reflection. In spite of this, the Wesleys saw the importance of music, and made one of the greatest contributions to Church music in history. This evidence alone should convince any person who recognises the need for theology in general to recognise that theological thinking must be applied to the Church's use of music.

David Pass is one of the first people to address this need, and he has made a good case for developing a theology of music. He offers five reasons why a theology of music is necessary.5

Firstly, we need a way to reflect critically on the practice of Church music. The Church has invested much in working out good theological reasoning by which to judge and maintain the practice of much of our liturgical activity, but this has not been the case with music, in spite of its significance. The result of this is that we have no way to test whether our musical practice is valid or not. The confusion that this has wrought is seen in the conflicts that occur when musicians from different

5 Ibid. pp.16-18
traditions and backgrounds try to impose their subconscious beliefs on each other. This is what Pass refers to as "ideological practice" - the belief in some that their practice is pure and untainted by theory, while it is, in fact, just uninformed practice. This is both dangerous and harmful for the Church.

Secondly, music has a place in all of the main aspects of the life of the Church, including evangelism, worship, education and fellowship. When music is absent, these activities are less effective than when music is present. When a "clear rationale" of Church music is missing, the music is unable to fulfil its role in these activities, and becomes uncertain, misunderstood and even abused. This, naturally, affects the impact of the activities of which it is a part.

Thirdly, the Church is constantly at work in situations and periods of history in which there is considerable change and upheaval. Music is often central to these changes. Church music, however, needs a "transcendence", a sense of remaining secure and true in spite of changes, and unaffected by them; as does the Church. A theology of music ensures that this is indeed achieved.

Fourthly, Church music needs to connect with theology in a way that ensures that it is deep and consistent with the truths of the Christian faith. If it fails to do this, it becomes shallow and even misleading. A theology of music ensures that music and theology interact with each other meaningfully.

Finally, in the "global village" of the contemporary world, Church music is moving into new cultures and societies constantly. In order for this to be done effectively
and without harm or misunderstanding, there must be clear, theological guidelines to guide musical practice.

The above discussion outlines very clearly how important a theology of music is for the Church, and how necessary such a theology has always been. However, I would add one further thought to this dialogue. The truth is that many people in the Church are already "doing" theology with respect to music. However it is often not recognised as such, and so is not subjected to usual theological methods or procedures. Also, the theology that is being done, even when recognised, or claiming the name of theology for itself, is largely uninformed, both musically and with respect to the theological significance of music. The result of this is that a lot of emotion is aroused, and little helpful reflection is offered.

An example of this can be given in the frequent questioning of how Christian worship should be conducted in order to be fitting and reverent. Music is, of course, often at the centre of such controversies. This is well illustrated by the debate that was conducted through letters sent to the Methodist newspaper Dimension, which were published in its correspondence pages for a large portion of 1996. While the debate focused ostensibly on the relative value of 'traditional' hymns and contemporary "choruses", much of what was said related more to the actual style of musical presentation, than on the choice of music per se.

What this suggests is that many who are involved in these discussions speak without a solid theological basis for their comments about music. Cultural and prejudicial statements are often made with little theological thought or understanding, but with a claim to the authority of theology. It is clear that
developing a theological framework from which to judge and direct musical usage will go a long way to drawing the many differing viewpoints together, at least in productive reflection and debate.

Some of the issues involved relate to what types of music are acceptable in the context of worship, what instruments may be considered helpful in worship, how worship music should be presented, and who should be permitted to lead worship. How are these questions to be answered if not through a study of Scripture, Church tradition and contemporary church and musical practice? All of these studies combine into what can rightly be called a theology of music.

B] METHODOLOGY

Having established the need for a theology of music, the next step is to determine what methodology is appropriate. What considerations must be included, and what areas of study are relevant? In this sense, the study of music is no different from any other theological undertaking. It requires the same elements of understanding, and similar areas of study, albeit with different emphases and different specific details. These will be explained shortly.

The contribution of David Pass to this discipline has already been noted. He examines the question of a theological method before starting out on his study. His view is expressed in the following way:

As important as biblical references to music and the history of music in the Bible and later times are, one will never derive a theology of church music by simply quoting biblical texts on music and recounting the history
of church music. The reason is simple: there is a difference between descriptive statements (what is or was the case), and normative statements (what should be the case). A description of music in the Bible cannot yield normative statements about what the church should be doing with music today. Neither will the history of church music provide us with such norms. 

While Pass is right that "simply quoting" the Bible and Church history will not yield theology, he takes his scepticism too far. The result is that he develops a theology of music without any recourse to the biblical witness to music usage. He does not completely ignore Scripture, but he does ignore a significant amount of the material that is relevant to the use of music. The question that is raised by Pass's method is one of validity. Is it true that a study of biblical and Church music is irrelevant to a theology of music today? Perhaps this can best be answered by looking at theological method in general.

1) Theological Method

Alfred C. Lamb gives four sources for Christian theology. As a Methodist theologian, he naturally looks to his tradition and finds the "Wesleyan Quadrilateral" to be his guide. The four points of the quadrilateral, the four sources of Lamb's method are as follows. Firstly, he recognises the Bible as a primary theological source, and gives a number of reasons for doing so. He reflects on the connection it gives contemporary theologians with the apostolic church; he notes its value in revelation, and in communicating the words and works of Jesus; its value in the understanding it gives of human nature, sin and God's redemption is

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6 Music and the Church, p.7
7 An Approach to Christian Doctrine, pp.9-12
invaluable in his view; its teaching on the nature and purposes of God are recognised, to mention just some of the ways it contributes to theology.

Secondly, theology draws, for its source, on the Church. In terms of theology, the value of the Church is the tradition that it passes down through the centuries, which have been tried and tested, both theologically and practically.

Thirdly, the significance of personal religious experience has always been affirmed in Methodist theology. Such experience is integral to life, and is, in at least a small sense, revelational. It is also universal in content and meaning, if not in detail.

Finally, Lamb, recognises the world of nature as a source of theology. Perhaps this could be legitimately paraphrased as science, or even loosely as reason, since it is the study and reflection on the natural world that delivers theological understanding.

John Macquarrie concurs with Lamb on these sources of theology\(^8\), but adds some additional contributions. He expands Lamb's discussion on the natural world to revelation in general as a source. The point is that the natural world reveals God, but it is not the only source of revelation. Whatever the source, however, revelation is an important factor in the development of theology. Macquarrie also acknowledges the role of experience, but goes further than Lamb, asserting that any experience can contribute to theology, and not just religious experience. Another point, which is altogether missed by Lamb, is the value of culture as a

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\(^8\) Principles of Christian Theology, pp.4-18
source of theology. Since theology needs to be expressed in the language of the culture within which it is “done,” it needs to be in dialogue with this culture, and to allow itself to be informed by culture. It is impossible for theologians to distance themselves from their own cultural framework, and so “it is better that the theologian should explicitly recognise the cultural factor in this thinking, and come to terms with it.” Finally, Macquarrie adds reason to his sources. While Lamb’s view of the natural world could include this, Macquarrie is more explicit in outlining the role that human understanding has in the development of theology.

Thus there are at least six effective sources of theology according to these two theologians: Scripture, Church and tradition, experience, the natural world, culture and reason. There may be some debate as to the order of importance of these sources, however. Lamb, clearly and deliberately places Scripture and Church tradition at the forefront.

First and foremost is the special revelation given in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

It stands to reason that the Church which produced and preserved these Scriptures should be considered, similarly, of paramount importance. Perhaps the best reason to place these two sources above the others in importance, is that they are objective sources of theology, which arise from outside of the believer, and thus can less easily be manipulated into a self-serving or convenient scheme. Experience, revelation received through the natural world, culture and reason are

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9 Ibid. pp.13-14
10 An Approach to Christian Doctrine, p.10
all subjective sources for theology. They are important, but clearly need an objective guideline to prevent them from moving into fancy or heresy.

These sources of theology are generally accepted and helpful, as Macquarrie states:

These (formative factors) would seem to be almost universally operative in theology, and although we are concerned here with Christian theology, parallels in other faiths will readily suggest themselves . . . \(^\text{11}\)

What remains is to compare Pass’s method with these sources of theology in order to ascertain whether he is, in fact, using a valid method. If his method stands, then it would follow that this is the method to use. If, however, his method falls short, then it would be advisable to return to accepted methods of theological development for this study.

2) **A Method for the Theology of Music**

There is a clear difference in the way Pass approaches his theology of music, and the way the two other theologians we have examined develop theirs. This must mean that either Pass has a legitimate reason for ignoring the strong weight of importance placed on the sources of Lamb and Macquarrie, or he has left his theology open to question at the outset. On the surface, Pass has included Scripture, but only as it relates to understanding the function of the Church, not directly as it relates to music, at least in any significant degree. He tries to develop a model of the Church, and so could perhaps claim to be using this source for his

\(^{11}\) Principles of Christian Theology, p.4
theology. However, here he ignores the great musical traditions of the Church, and seeks only to understand the Church as it exists today. The use of experience as a source is clearly evident in Pass's theology, but it must be stated that experience without the guiding force of Scripture and Church tradition is dangerous, and can lead theology in any direction the writer should desire. Likewise, Pass's theology is strong on reason and relates to some extent to the natural world, but these also require the balance of Scripture and Church tradition. The final element, culture, is almost entirely absent from Pass's theology.

Thus, it is apparent that Pass uses effectively only three of the six sources for theology, and the three he chooses are those that are the most subjective. While subjective sources are valuable for theology, there must be some objectivity in order for theology to be valid and well balanced. A study of Pass's theology reveals the inadequacy of his method, for he recognises only one function of music, that of communication, and describes this only in three ways, worship (leitourgia), fellowship (koinonia) and preaching (kerygma). As will be seen, music is far more than just communication, and even in the realm of communication, there have been some extremely significant uses of music which Pass does not explore (notably, education).

Pass claims that *normative* statements cannot be drawn from *descriptive* statements. However, when dealing with the biblical and Church historical sources for a theology of music, there is far more than description available. There is much which is described, yes, but there is also much in the way of command, teaching and guidance, all of which are *normative*. 
Furthermore, it is not true to say that it is theologically inadmissible for descriptive statements to be used to develop normative ones. This is accepted theological practice in many other aspects of theology. One example of this would be the practice of the Lord’s Supper, or Holy Communion. While the specific details of how this feast is to be celebrated are not prescribed, and various church traditions have developed their own methods, their understanding of what they are doing has been strongly informed by descriptive statements. The Gospel accounts of the Last Supper are descriptive, but we draw our understanding of communion from them. Paul’s teaching to the Corinthian church gives some descriptive input which we use in our normative understanding and practice of this celebration, notably the words of institution:

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

The conclusion that must be drawn, then, is that Pass’s method, while it may deliver some helpful insights and, especially in the areas on which his theology focuses, some valuable guidance, cannot be used as a definitive method for developing a theology of music. Another method, which takes sufficient cognisance of all of the sources of theology, with their relative weights of importance, must be found. I will endeavour to offer just such a method.

12 1 Cor. 11:23-25
3) The Method for this Study

Since the primary importance of the Bible and Church tradition have been explained, these two sources of theology should be the starting point for any theology, including a theology of music. For this reason, the first chapter of this thesis will be a review of the biblical tradition of music for worship. Initially the biblical accounts will simply be explored, in order to gain an overview and an understanding of the development of music within the life of the people of God. Following this, principles can be uncovered which emerge from this account, and which can be considered for application in the development of this theology. The second chapter, then, must follow on from this to examine the role of worship music through Church history. Again, the initial work is to gain an overview of the historical account, and then, out of this, principles can again be revealed which can inform the development of theology. An interesting question at this point is the extent to which the biblical principles and the principles from history are aligned. As this study will show, the principles which emerge are almost exactly the same in both cases.

The next step in the formulation of a theology of music is to take account of the other sources of theology – reason, experience, the natural world and culture. This will be done as the challenges that face the Church in South Africa today are explored in the fourth chapter. These challenges adequately address the issues of reason, since reason is necessary to apply what is known about music to the

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13 While it is recognised that this point is still in debate among theologians, and that some, like those of the Liberation Theology school would look to experience first, this point is valid in terms of my own Church tradition and theological position.
problems facing the Church. Experience, both my own, and that of others will feature strongly in this section, as this gives a clear indication of what is being done with music in the present situation. Culture is one of the largest issues facing the Church today, and so no theology of Church music can ignore it. This issue will raise its head very strongly in this discussion. Finally, the world of nature will be explored as the discoveries and understandings that the sciences have made with regard to music are examined with respect to the challenges facing the Church.

Once this groundwork has been laid, it is then, and only then, that an effective theology of worship music can be developed. This will be the task of the final chapter. This theology must necessarily be shown to apply to the life of the Church, or else it is no more than an academic exercise without value, and some suggestions for applying this theology practically will be given. This method provides a wide and deep understanding of music from a theological perspective, which can be valuable as the Church increases its use of music in worship.

C] THE THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS STUDY

Before the final study can begin, it is helpful to place it in a theological framework which will reveal the presuppositions that will inevitably influence the work which is done, and which will give insight into the particular focus of this thesis.

1) The Focus of this Study

Since a general theology of music would be far beyond the ability of a single post-graduate thesis, this study has had to be narrowed down. The first way in which the focus was fine-tuned was to apply the study specifically to the Methodist
Church of Southern Africa. There are a number of legitimate reasons for doing this.

Firstly, I am, myself, a Methodist minister, and so the benefit of this study will most strongly be felt among those people with whom I work and have influence — the Methodist people. In terms of the value of experience for theological development, this is a significant factor, since my experience is largely (although not exclusively) in the Methodist Church.

Secondly, the Methodist church has traditionally been at the forefront of the development of music for the Church. The old saying “Methodism was born in song” is no exaggeration. While in the contemporary Church, the influence of Methodist music is not felt as strongly as in the past, the Methodist church, nevertheless has a powerful musical heritage which can still make a great contribution to the wider Church.

Thirdly, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa is extremely representative of all the cultures, races, languages and traditions that are present in the nation, while remaining one of the largest denominations in the country. Because of this, a theology of music that is developed for the Methodist church must, inevitably, have value for other church groups, even if only in a small way.

Finally, the Methodist church has a particular need for such a theology at this time. At the present time, a climate of expectation and prayer for revival is growing, and the church has developed a vision and strategy to be part of this. The mission statement, “A Christ-healed Africa for the Healing of the Nations” is a cry for
revival, and as with every revival in history, there is a need for music to be part of the process. This means that a clear understanding of music in the life of the Church is essential at this time. It is, in a sense, a *kairos* for the theology of music in the Methodist Church.

The second way in which this study has been narrowed is to concentrate on the music of worship only. While the Church's activities go beyond worship alone, worship is a legitimate area of focus for the following reasons.

Firstly, worship is central to every activity of the Church. As will be shown, worship is essential to being human, and is part of every human culture and people group. Also, worship, as encounter with God, provides vision and inspiration to every other activity of the Church. Since it has this central place, it follows that a study of worship music will inevitably impact other uses of music.

Secondly, the world is presently in a heightened awareness of worship and its music. The proliferation of “praise and worship” recordings makes it possible for the most unmusical Christians to fill their lives with the music of worship. The new “stars” of the contemporary church are worship leaders and worship songwriters. For this reason, a theology which specifically addresses the needs of the worshipping church is both timely and necessary.

Thirdly, my own ministry is specifically focussed on worship and music, and so I have become increasingly aware of the cries for help in this area which are coming from churches in every part of the Methodist denomination. As one who leads seminars in this area, I have seen the need for this theological study first hand.
For this reason, this thesis is focussed on the role and use of music for worship in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

2) Theological Positioning

It is often helpful to know in advance the theological traditions and influences that have played a part in the development of a particular theologian's thoughts. For a theology of music, the different understandings of the various Church traditions can have a significant impact on the acceptance and value that the work will have. In the case of this thesis, there are three significant theological frameworks that influence my work.

Firstly, I am a Methodist, and so I fall into the group of churches which would consider themselves evangelical. Essentially this influences my theology in terms of the high place which the kerygma of the Gospel holds, and the foundational belief that in Christ people can be restored to relationship with their Creator. Both of these views affect this theology overtly and covertly.

Secondly, in approach to Scripture, I would consider myself one who falls into the conservative school, while distancing myself very clearly from a fundamentalist or literalist position. Essentially, the view of the Bible underlying this study, holds to its inspiration, and value for faith today. My view is, again, basically that of the traditionally evangelical church. While this will not significantly impact on this thesis directly, in that the study does not have to deal with issues of interpretation of Scripture to a large extent, it needs to be noted that the influence is present and will certainly come through.
Finally, I would consider myself theologically and experientially, a charismatic. While this term may mean a number of things to different people, my understanding of it is an affirmation that the Holy Spirit of God is actively involved in the Church in both what we would call “natural” and “supernatural” ways. The gifts of the Spirit as listed in the New Testament, including those of 1 Corinthians 12 are still in operation in the Church today, and are available to God’s people. God is able to be experienced by human beings, and this experience sometimes results in significant changes in the people concerned. Examples of these changes are healings of body, mind or spirit, “manifestations” of the Spirit in physical ways and - the greatest measure of God’s impact – a changed way of life reflected primarily in relationships and dealings with other people. This theological framework clearly flows into my understanding of worship, and thus of music in worship. However, it must be said at this point that much that would in previous years have been considered simply the product of charismatic theology is now being shown to be authentic in scientific terms.

While, as far as possible, I have tried to transcend these influences and gain as wide and objective a view of the subject as possible, I believe it is helpful, as Macquarrie states, to identify my own “cultural” influences at the outset, that their impact on the final theology may be minimised by having been identified.

D] STATING THE CASE:

The foundation has been laid. The need for a theology of music has been clearly shown, and the method for developing such a theology has been outlined. The
framework within which this theology is to be done has been explained, detailing the focus of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, and specifically its worship music.

Historically the Methodist church has been a leader in the use and provision of worship music. However, the issues involved in church music are more complex now than in previous decades, and this calls for a new examination of the problem. Also, much that was done in the past, was simply an outworking of the church's life, with little if any real theological understanding of the reasons and purposes for music. The Bible and Methodism's history give significant insights into God's purposes for music in worship, and into the way that these purposes can be fulfilled. If the call of the church's vision is to be answered, and Methodism is to develop the worship and spirituality of its people, while remaining faithful to its biblical and historical roots, then a theology of music is not just valuable; it is crucial. My prayer is that this work may be a further step to finding such a theology.
CHAPTER TWO: THE BIBLICAL WITNESS

The starting point for this theological study is the biblical account of the use and understanding of music. There is no question that music is significant in Scripture, and the work that many biblical leaders and musicians (notably, David) put into the worship music of God's people was immense. However, our knowledge of this rich musical heritage is limited at best. How then, can we hope to derive any value for the Church's use of music today from Scripture? While it may not be possible to know the details of how the music was produced and used, it is possible to gain insight into the role which music played in the lives of the people of Israel, and the early Church. It is also possible to identify the way in which this music was understood to some extent. All of this is immensely valuable in helping us to know how best to use and understand music in the context of worship in the Church today. For this reason, the scriptural record must be carefully studied at the outset of the development of this theology.

In order to try, as far as possible, to avoid reading anything into the biblical account, this chapter will attempt to outline what the Scriptures say about music, with only limited comment initially. The end of the chapter will review the material, and draw out the principles that can provide the substance of a theology of worship music. However, even the biblical account must be placed in context, and so the starting point is the use of music outside of the biblical communities.

A] EXTRA-BIBLICAL MUSICAL USAGE

1) The Origins of Music

The beginnings of musical expression have been lost in antiquity, and so it is impossible to discuss the time at which music originated. The manner of this
beginning, however, is the focus of much informed speculation, and there is sufficient evidence to draw some conclusions with certainty.

Music is, firstly, the product of the Creator. While this seems to be an obvious statement, it is nevertheless important, especially in the light of the contemporary tendency to attribute certain forms or styles of music to the demonic, to recognise that music is of divine origin, and that it has been recognised as such throughout history. As Kevin Connor explains:

> It seems that nearly all primitive peoples of the earth believe that music was of divine origin. Every civilisation has some kind of legend concerning the origin and creation of music. In practically every case a god discovers it and passes it on to mankind.¹

It is not surprising then, that the evidence suggests that humanity's first attempts at musical expression should be directed back to the deity from whom the music was received. Edward Dickinson notes at the beginning of his book, *Music in the History of the Western Church*, Leon Gautier's history of France's epic poetry in which he describes the first poetic (and musical) utterance of humanity as a religious expression. Dickinson then goes on to look at the evidence, suggesting that this could really only be true for that point in human development at which art can be said to have begun. It must be stressed that art in this context is not the developed and structured commodity which that term suggests in today's world. Nevertheless, the basic principle would appear to hold true, as he states:

¹ *The Tabernacle of David*, p.161
... then we certainly do find that the earliest attempts at song are occasioned by motives that must in strictness be called religious.\(^2\)

Tribal peoples are very religious, and much of their art is devoted to religious expression. If this can be taken as an indication of the origins of humanity, then it would also indicate musical origins.

Whatever the motive for the earliest musical expressions may be, it is certain that music found its beginnings very close to the origins of humanity itself. Evidence of musical expression of some form has been found for every age in which there is evidence of human existence. It is even possible that music originated before language, as Andrew Wilson-Dickson suggests:

> Consider, for example, the fact that children are able to express their feelings by sounds, some of which could be called melodic, long before they learn to speak. Some linguists suggest that is evidence that vocal music came before language in the developing skills of humanity.\(^3\)

Early forms of vocal music would have developed to include the recitation of poetry. This is clear from the fact that early poetry was always delivered in a form of speech that was both rhythmic and “melodic” in that certain words or syllables were accentuated through elevating the voice. This, at times, very closely resembles true singing.

\(^2\) *Music in the History of the Western Church*, p. 2

\(^3\) *The Story of Christian Music*, p. 12
It is most likely, then, that music, albeit in very primitive forms, reaches back to the early beginnings of the human race. It is also most likely that the earliest uses of music were religious. In this respect, music was revered and universal. The natural development of music led to the creation of instruments for music making. Again, the origins of this are lost in the past, but we find evidence of instrumental music from early times. It would seem that the first instruments to be developed were for percussion, but "pipes" or wind instruments were also formed early in music's history. Stringed instruments would have come into being only at a much later stage - as these require a greater degree of sophistication.

What all of this indicates is that even the earliest references to music in Scripture are drawn from a time in which music was already reasonably developed. The first reference to music per se is Gen.4:21:

   His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and the flute.⁴

Many commentators believe Jubal to have been a mythical figure, but whether he was or not, the reference, which includes the harp, reveals that stringed instruments were widely used. Thus, when this passage was written, music had already reached a considerable measure of sophistication. The Bible gives us no indication of what musical activity was like before this.

It needs to be mentioned that in primitive times, music was closely associated with, and perhaps even inseparable from, dance. Even in the Bible, the earliest references to music frequently mention dancing as well. It is even possible that

⁴ Holy Bible: The New King James Version
dance preceded music in the development of art, but it certainly developed faster. The role of the dance was primarily that of producing a state of exhilaration among worshippers, but it also developed a symbolic significance. In worship the dancers would play out a simple drama representing the acts of the gods. Thus, there was a representative and instructive element to it. With this as the basis, the dance performed the functions of thanksgiving, celebration, mourning, appeasement of the god, representation of teaching or story, as well as imitation of the dances which the gods themselves were believed to perform. Finally, among the Greeks, dance reached the status of fine art in terms of the beauty and expression which it achieved. Even in this culture, though, it was still used primarily, if not exclusively, for worship.

It was as a result of this use of dance in worship that instrumental music developed. At first this music was not used as an end in itself, but purely for assistance to the other elements of worship - keeping the singers in pitch and rhythm, or the dancers in time. Edward Dickinson observes the role of instrumental music among the Hebrews in a reflection that can be applied to other peoples as well:

Notwithstanding the prominence of instruments in all observances of public and private life, they were always looked upon as accessory to song.  

Thus, we can begin to draw a picture of the earliest forms of musical expression. Music was at first a purely vocal religious expression, accompanied by rhythmic

5 Music in the History of the Western Church, p.26
movement or dance. This developed into more structured and sophisticated forms, and ultimately led to the development of instruments.

2) **Music in Surrounding Nations**

Ancient literatures reveal that many of Israel's neighbours used music extensively, and were probably far ahead of the Hebrews in musical development in pre-Mosaic times. While it is not necessary to go into great detail of this, it is helpful to explore some of this musical expression, since it would most likely have influenced later musical development among the Hebrew people.

Archaeological discoveries at the site of Nineveh reveal collections of hymns, prayers and psalms which were designed particularly for public worship. Also, Assyrian monuments have carved decorations depicting musicians playing instruments, both solo and in groups. The Bible seems to indicate that music was used by the Assyrians for festivities and worship, at banquets and funerals, and in the courts of kings. There is even evidence which suggests that Near Eastern music theory and practice was far more advanced than is commonly realised, as A.D. Kilmer indicates:

> Assyriological research since 1959 has led to the discovery of four Akkadian cuneiform texts that describe ancient Near Eastern music theory and practice from ca. 1800 B.C. to ca. 500 B.C. Dating to the Old Babylonian, Middle Assyrian, and Neo-Babylonian periods, they demonstrate that the ancient Mesopotamian musical scales were heptatonic and diatonic. Thus, our evidence for the antiquity of Western
music has been pushed back some 1400 years earlier than the earliest Greek evidence.\(^6\)

Thus, the music of the Assyrian people was well developed, and widely used. However, the most important of Israel’s neighbours, in terms of musical development and influence are the Egyptians. It is clear that the extended stay in Egypt before the Exodus impacted the Jewish people greatly, and this is no less true for music, as Alfred Sendrey describes:

...The chapters of the book of Exodus, recounting the life of the Israelites in the desert, testify to the far-reaching Egyptian influence upon them long after their departure from Egypt. This must have been particularly true with regard to the art of music, in which the Egyptians were leaders of that epoch.\(^7\)

Edward Dickinson concurs with this view of Egyptian musical ability, and states its importance in, especially, the religious life of the Egyptians. He explains:

There is abundant evidence that music was an important factor in the religious rites of Egypt.  
... music was in Egypt pre-eminently a sacred art.  
In musical science, knowledge of the divisions of the monochord, systems of keys, notation, etc., the Egyptians were probably in advance of all other nations.\(^8\)

\(^6\) 'Music' in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume, p.610  
\(^7\) Music in Ancient Israel, p.477  
\(^8\) Music in the History of the Western Church, p.12
The instruments of the Egyptians were highly developed and technically well constructed, including all types of percussion, wind and stringed instruments, some of which are shown in pictures as requiring both hands to be used in playing them - which indicates that the Egyptians had knowledge of harmony. There is some debate over how developed the Egyptian musical system was, but it seems likely that it was in advance of the Assyrians, which, as has been discussed, had reached impressive levels of sophistication.

Part of this well-developed musical culture in Egypt was an equally advanced system of instruction in music. This was obviously viewed by the Egyptians as essential, not just in terms of their worship, but also as training in life and etiquette.

We are informed by STRABO about the compulsory instruction of the Egyptians, who, among other subjects, were taught stories, songs, and a specific kind of music right from their childhood. He also relates that the poets and musicians in Egypt considered themselves to be improvers of manners.  

It is in this area that the influence of the Egyptians was most widely felt. It is certain that Moses, raised in Pharaoh's court, would have been trained in music under this system, and also that this highly developed musical culture would have rubbed off on the Israelites during their time in Egypt. What this indicates is that, although, Israel developed a reputation as the most advanced nation in terms of its music, and although Israel has always considered herself a particularly musical nation, she was, nevertheless, a "late-bloomer". Her surrounding neighbours developed far faster than she did, and were probably instrumental in releasing the

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9 Sendrey, A., *Music in Ancient Israel*, p.478
natural musical abilities of the Hebrew people. It is important, however, to focus on Israel's musical development in the years leading up to this, before the contribution of the Egyptian teachers can be fully explored.

B] **OVERVIEW OF BIBLICAL MUSIC**

The earliest biblical reference to music - Jubal - has already been mentioned, and the next reference, just a few verses later, gives us little more information. This poem of Lamech\(^{10}\) addressed to his wives is considered by some scholars to be the first "song" of the Bible. However, it was not a song in any developed sense, but more likely to be an occurrence of the "elevated and rhythmic speech" which we have already discussed.

No further mention of music is found until after the flood. It is here that we begin to be able to trace the development of music in Israel, and in the Bible. However, it is necessary to realise the difficulties of this task:

> The Bible presents severe problems for the student of Israel's ancient liturgical music, not the least of which is the fact that we can only guess what biblical music sounded like. No precise notation indicated melody and rhythm until the thirteenth century. Moreover, music is far from the Bible's center of interest, so descriptions of music are scanty; allusions to instruments obscure\(^{11}\)

The truth in this statement is perhaps obscured by an overstatement of the case. Musical notation may not have been precise, but as has been shown, it did exist from early times, giving a sense of how the music of Israel's neighbours sounded. Israel's

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\(^{10}\) Gen.4:23,24

music would not have been very different. Also, there is some evidence that the musical forms of today's Near Eastern nomadic peoples can be traced back to ancient times, and may give an indication of what ancient music was like - at least in some of its applications.

The study of musical cultures across the world suggests that remote and isolated settlements may preserve musical traditions intact for millennia. It is no surprise, then, to find that the Bedouin Arabs of today share aspects of their music with the nomadic Jews of the Old Testament.\textsuperscript{12}

So, while our knowledge of early music may be limited, and while biblical references may be obscure, there is still a considerable amount of evidence on which statements of probability can be made. Also, the abovementioned difficulties apply more directly to the early stages of Israel's history, and the problems diminish as the later periods are explored.

1) The Patriarchal Period

The earliest stage at which effective study of Israel's music can be begun is the time of the Patriarchs. There are two interesting observations about this period in Israel's history that must be made at the outset. The first is that worship was a personal, not a corporate affair, as is explained by H.H. Rowley:

\begin{quote}
The God of the Patriarchs comes to them in friendliness and promise, and the relationship between them is one of intimacy.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{12} Wilson-Dickson, A., \textit{The Story of Christian Music}, p.16  
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Worship in Ancient Israel}, p.34  
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p.37
The second observation is that there appears to be no distinction between sacred and secular music. This is not to say that there were not different applications of music, some of which may be referred to as sacred, and some of which may be called secular, but rather that sacred and secular were so merged in daily life, that no clear distinction can be made. It must also be noted that developed worship music, or liturgical music, did not exist in this period.

The Bible's description of the patriarchal period mentions no liturgical music at all. Instead, music is either connected to family and folk celebrations or described as a means to invoke divine inspiration.\(^\text{15}\)

The complaint of Laban to Jacob that he left secretly, not allowing for celebrative music and proper farewells\(^\text{16}\) is an example of the way music filled the ordinary events of daily life. Thus, it becomes clear that from the earliest times, the descendants of Abraham were a musical people, and this musical expression found its outlet in all the circumstances of human existence, including celebration and merrymaking, war cries, worship and magic.\(^\text{17}\) Of these, it is probable that celebration and merrymaking were the most common catalysts for music.

The nature of this music is uncertain, but in some instances it seems likely that it was little more than organised noise, especially in its military uses. It would appear that this music was simple both melodically and rhythmically, and was performed in unison.

\(^{15}\) Hoffman, L.A & Walton, J.R., Sacred Sound and Social Change, p.14

\(^{16}\) Gen.31:27

\(^{17}\) See Werner, E., 'Music' in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol.3, p.457
2) From Moses to David

At this point the influence of the Egyptians on Israelite music can be picked up again. As has been noted, the musical culture of the Egyptians was highly developed, and probably influenced the Hebrews during their time of slavery there. The temples of Egypt used music extensively, and the performances delivered in their religious ceremonies were impressive. The evidence points to large choral groups, in which soloists would often sing, with a response from the chorus. Along with this, dance featured prominently, accompanied by instrumental music. This would also at times involve procession around the altar, including music and dramatic enactment.

It is clear from the way the Israelites utilised music that this Egyptian musical culture had been adopted and adapted by them. This means that the seeds of their musical development were planted and began to grow in Egypt, so that by the time of the Exodus there was already a rudimentary form to it.

After the crossing of the Red Sea "sang Moses and the children of Israel" a song of thanksgiving to exalt the Lord and to give thanks for their miraculous rescue (Exod. 15). As the climax of this thanksgiving "Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam sang unto them" (Exod. 15:20,21).

Both these songs of thanksgiving as well as - with some reservations - the song and dance around the golden calf (Exod.32:18,19) are indications that the Jewish people must have had some musical knowledge at the Exodus from Egypt and that, on occasions, the urge for music found its spontaneous outlet.18

18 Sendrey, A., Music in Ancient Israel, p.72
The nature of this music was emotional, noisy and vigorous, and was inextricably linked with dance. Certainly Miriam’s song indicates short simple melodies, possibly focusing on just a few pitches, and very repetitive in nature. The timbrels would have provided a steady beat, and the whole mixture would have resulted in an upward spiral of ecstasy.\(^{19}\) There is some evidence that the song of Moses may have been somewhat more developed, however, and this would have resulted from his training in Pharaoh’s court.

The fact that, following the Exodus, the Israelite wanderings in the desert did not extinguish this embryonic musical culture, must be accounted for by more than the Jewish love of music. As Sendrey describes:

> There must have been a strong will, a driving force in the back of it, a vigilant eye which watched to see that the people’s familiarity with matters musical be preserved undiminished. This will, this force emanated from the greatest hero of Jewish history - Moses.\(^{20}\)

Thus, Moses, who was trained and practised in the priestly music of Egypt, would have kept the musical culture of Israel alive, and even have developed it in the time of the wilderness wanderings. That Moses was an accomplished musician, and schooled in the way of teaching that the Egyptians used is supported by much evidence. Philo refers to Moses’s knowledge of music theory and practice, Justin Martyr refers to Moses’ education among the priests of Egypt, and this would

\(^{19}\) See Wilson-Dickson, A., *The Story of Christian Music*, p. 17
\(^{20}\) *Music in Ancient Israel*, pp. 479-50
certainly have included training in music. Also, there is an Arabic tradition which holds Moses' musical ability in high esteem.

According to ancient belief, only the most expert musicians were able to perceive the harmony of the spheres. The Hellenes attributed this faculty to Pythagoras. Ancient Arabic tradition conferred this honor also upon Moses... It testifies... to the fact that, as a musician, Moses was revered not only in the Jewish but also in the Arabic world. In the Islamic Orient he was even considered the patron of pipers.21

Some instruments were already present in the wilderness as is indicated by the references to horns and trumpets. The trumpet here (Hebrew - hazozerah) was a silver tube of almost two feet in length with a mouthpiece, which would have emitted a high, shrill tone. Similar instruments have also been found made of metal, bones or shell. It is mentioned as a signal instrument for announcing the time to break camp.22 It appears that some regulation of pitch was possible, as explained in the Dead Sea Scrolls references to uses of this instrument. The other instrument which receives considerable mention in this period is the shofar or horn. This was a curved tube usually of ram's horn, but also sometimes made of metal. This was primarily a signal instrument, and was used extensively in later times for ritual functions. It is also the instrument that was used in the overthrow of Jericho.23 The opinion of most scholars, however, is that the shofar cannot technically be referred to as a musical instrument. The pitch could not be regulated, and so...

21 Ibid., p.480
22 Num.10:2-8
23 See Josh.6
we must conclude that the function of the *shophar* was to make noise - be it of earthly or eschatological character - but not to make music.\(^{24}\)

As the Israelites settled in Canaan, more instruments were added, reaching a number of about thirteen instruments mentioned in the Old Testament (not including those in Daniel, whose names are not of Hebrew origin). The instruments used included the two mentioned above as well as the *kinnor*, a type of harp (later used by David in placating Saul); the *nebel*, either a harp which was larger than the *kinnor* or a type of guitar; the *chalil*, usually translated "pipe", but possibly a type of oboe or flageolet; the *ugav*, a type of reed instrument, either in the form of a single pipe, or possibly in a series like the modern pan pipes; the *toph*, a small hand drum or tambourine (used by Miriam in her song and dance after the Exodus); the *asor*, which was similar to the *nebel*; and percussion instruments like the sistrum of Egypt, which was a basic shaker made of metal, in the form of a frame into which metal bars were loosely fitted, causing a jingling sound when shaken.\(^{25}\) The list of instruments above indicates that the Hebrews used musical instruments of all three categories - stringed, wind and percussion.

The use to which these instruments of music were put, and the songs and dance which they accompanied reached into every sphere of life for the Jewish people, and even during the time of the judges there is no clear distinction between sacred and secular music. Folk music dominated Hebrew musical culture, and it was performed by all. The musical professional *per se* only came into being much later. This means that, for the most part, music was played with only basic levels of skill, and was not an end in itself, in the sense of fulfilling a purely artistic function. It

\(^{24}\) Werner, E., 'Musical Instruments' in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 3, p. 473

\(^{25}\) See Dickinson, E., *Music in the History of the Western Church*, pp. 21-23
was simply the accompaniment for whatever event it was associated with, and often aided in heightening emotions and states of ecstasy.

However, it was not long after the settlement in Canaan that the Israelites began to develop the musical culture that ultimately became famous in the Ancient world. The way this culture was fostered and grown is not specifically outlined in the Bible, but it can be inferred from Israel's history, and from the scriptural evidence which we do have.

The first indication that music was intentionally taught and developed among the Jewish people is found in the book of 1 Samuel:

And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying.  

This address to Saul, and his subsequent involvement in the scene, is more than just an isolated incident. Samuel reached the end of his time as leader of Israel with the appointment of the first king. However, he was clearly not going to just step aside and do nothing. Even as he handed over the reigns of leadership to Saul, he assures the people that he will continue to "teach you the good and the right way." At this point he takes on the responsibility to be a teacher to the nation - something which he had done for his whole career anyway.

26 1 Sam.10:5b  
27 1 Sam.12:23
Thus, Samuel merely continued the tradition, established by Moses, that the leaders of the people, the prophets, those privileged by the Lord, had to serve as intellectual educators of the nation.28

The way he chose to do this was to establish schools for the training of those who would become teachers of the people. These “schools of Prophets” as they have been called, would have focused on musical education, as the role of the prophet included composition of poetry, song, and the performance of such on musical instruments. Samuel’s first school was established at Ramah, but it seems that it did not take long for other schools, following Samuel’s model, to be founded in other parts of the land, led by “holy men”. These groups lived in communities with their teachers, and the pupils were drawn from every walk of life. Instruction in music seems to have been a main focus of these schools, and although not all were taught to play instruments, training in singing appears to have been given to all. The result of this is described by Sendrey:

> One cannot help assuming the existence of one or several such “schools,” when one finds, in the biblical text, a sudden and unexplained upsurge of large choirs and orchestras, that is of thoroughly organized and trained musical groups, which would be virtually inconceivable without a preliminary and long methodical preparation.29

Thus, the natural musical nature of the Jewish people, which they began to discover in Egypt, and which was given foundation by Moses in the wilderness, began to be seriously developed under Samuel. Perhaps here the seeds were sown for a separation between sacred and secular music, and for a distinction

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28 Sendrey, A., *Music in Ancient Israel*, p.483
29 Ibid., p. 484
between folk music and professional musicians. However, these divisions only really took shape later, with the founding of the temple worship.

The significant feature of this period in Israel's musical history is the strong link between music and prophecy. It is not by accident that these schools of music instruction were referred to as schools of prophets. The prophets frequently uttered their messages to musical accompaniment. Perhaps the most famous example of this relationship between music and prophecy is the case of Elisha:

   And Elisha said, "...But now bring me a musician." And it happened, when the musician played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.\(^{30}\)

Although this incident comes from a later time period than the one under discussion, it nevertheless demonstrates the way the prophetic tradition developed, and the role that music played within this tradition. As Sendrey describes:

   The affinity between prophecy and music is particularly conspicuous among the Hebrews. It can even be said that Jewish prophecy was born out of the spirit of music.\(^{31}\)

Another important feature of Israelite music prior to the time of David, is the role of women. Women were significant performers of music for almost every one of its functions. Throughout the biblical narrative there are significant moments of musical inspiration and celebration, and many of these were led by women.

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\(^{30}\) 2 Kings 3:14,15  
\(^{31}\) Music in Ancient Israel, p.508
Examples of these are Miriam, Deborah, the daughter of Jephthah, and the women's song in praise of David. This feature is common to the music of the entire Near East, and it continues until today, especially in isolated communities. The nature of this music was usually simple, repetitive, sung in unison, accompanied by the beat of a tambourine or hand-held drum, and associated with dancing, all of which frequently became quite frenzied and ecstatic.\(^{32}\)

A new addition to this pattern first occurred with the chorus welcoming the young hero David. The account in 1 Samuel indicates that the women "sang to one another,"\(^{33}\) which would refer to antiphonal singing. This had not occurred before this, but certainly became a regular part of Jewish music, particularly in the Temple worship.

The Israelite understanding of music, in common with that of their neighbours, was that music had a strong supernatural power. This belief frequently bordered on superstition or magic, but, as science and medicine are now discovering, was based firmly in fact. The most basic use of this power was that of summoning or invoking the deity. As Sendrey describes, the practice in this was to use the greatest volume possible, and when more than just a voice was needed, musical instruments were added.\(^{34}\)

Other uses of this supernatural power of music were to stir up worshippers or celebrants to states of ecstasy in which they would be capable of performing "miracles", chasing away of malevolent spirits, and a vehicle for encounter with the

\(^{32}\) See Werner, E., 'Music' in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, p.457
\(^{33}\) 1 Sam. 29:5
\(^{34}\) Music in Ancient Israel, p.497
deity, as well as a means by which to receive or participate in divine revelation. Music was also used as a powerful "weapon", as in the case of the walls of Jericho. Some scholars are too quick to relegate stories such as these to the realm of myth, but modern science is realising that music, as well as other types of sound, have more power than is often recognised.

The properties of sound can extend beyond music, however, and they can easily be abused. High frequency, ultrasonic sound is used without water or detergent to clean materials. If sufficiently concentrated, somewhat like a laser beam, this sound can be destructive. For example, a ball of cotton placed in the path of such a high-energy sonic beam will ignite, and an insect will disintegrate.

The power of music was also recognised by the Hebrews as a healing tool. The most famous example of this is David's playing of the kinnor (harp) to soothe Saul:

And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him.

While this is a case of psychological "therapy" administered through music, the Hebrews believed firmly that even physical ailments could be healed with the aid of music.

The story of music in the period from Moses to David's accession to the throne of Israel is a colourful picture of a strong musical culture, albeit technically still

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35 Josh.6
37 1 Sam.16:23
38 See Sendrey, A., Music in Ancient Israel, pp.504-505
relatively primitive. Music found a home at every level of Jewish society, and was used for a variety of functions from celebration and folk singing to healing, and worship. While for the masee music was unstructured and undeveloped, the schools of Samuel began the process of refinement, and were probably influential in David's organisation and development of music and musicians under his reign. However, there is a clear distinction between the way music was organised before David's monarchy, and afterwards, even to the extent that some scholars believe that the music before the organised levitical musicians came into being have no influence on music subsequent to it.

It is doubtful whether the early periods of the Bible, before the establishment of the temple worship, have any influence on our liturgical music today.39

However, as shall be seen, the temple music drew heavily on previous traditions for its music, and the influence of this tradition, in turn, can be traced through all ages of biblical and Christian worship music. Perhaps the sound of the music is far removed from its ancient predecessors, but the spirit and principles which governed its use have grown and developed as one brick placed on top of another through the centuries. It is clear, though, that music reached a high point in its history under David, and possibly even more under Solomon, and so the music of the Temple must now be examined.

3) David and the Establishment of the Levitical Musicians

Every study of the music of Israel makes it clear that under David's leadership the worship music of Israel began to strengthen and develop as it never had before.

David, it seems, was well schooled in the musical traditions of his time, and when he became the King of Israel, he consciously and intentionally worked to develop the musical expression, hierarchy, training and organisation of Israel's worship.

That David was himself an accomplished musician is common knowledge. David's playing of the kinnor for Saul has already been discussed, but it must be noted, as Sendrey points out, that David must have been exceptionally skilful for his ability to have come to the attention of the officers of Saul's court. Another testimony to David's ability is the number of Psalms attributed to him. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the authorship of the Psalms, but the simple fact that David's name is associated with so many Psalms, whether he actually wrote them or they were simply given his name to add authority, proves that his musical and song-writing abilities were held in high regard in Israel. Scripture's portrait of David is one of a 'man after God's own heart,' which indicates the close relationship which David enjoyed with his God, in spite of his failings. It follows, then, that much of his musical expression would be in the form of worship, and that worship per se was very important to David. It is easy, then, to see why, when David began organising the new structures and forms of worship after the conquest of Jerusalem, "no detail received more careful attention than the vocal and instrumental music."

It is possible, though, that much of the structure which David introduced was influenced by Samuel, and his 'prophetic schools' of musical training. Sendrey points out that during his flight from Saul, David spent time at Ramah - the location of Samuel's first school. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that Samuel and

40 Sendrey, A., *Music in Ancient Israel*, p.76
41 1 Sam.13:14; Acts 13:22
42 Dickinson, E., *Music in the History of the Western Church*, p.25
David would spend time talking about the subject which was so close to both of their hearts - music in worship. It is even likely that the ideas and plans for what became the Temple music were birthed at this time. However, the music that was to grow from these plans, while based solidly on the already established traditions, was to be something new and more powerful than anything that had come before.

However, the institution to be created henceforth was something higher, loftier: music was planned to be not merely a subordinate element in the ritual, not merely the stereotyped tonal background for sacred ceremonies. It was to be elevated to an integral part of the divine cult and co-ordinated with the other sacred actions. Music was planned to be associated inseparably with the sacrifice; it was, in a way, to become itself a sort of tonal sacrifice.43

David brought worship music into prominence and changed the face of Israel's music culture in some radical ways. The first notable thing is that the division between 'folk' musicians and 'professional' musicians becomes clearly established. Under Samuel, musicians were recognised and developed; their musical gifts were identified and they were set apart for this function, but they were not true professionals. However, with the new order under David, the professional musician becomes a reality. In the account in 1 Chron.15 of bringing the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, the first mention of professional musicians is made. Here, specific people are singled out, and appointed to play instruments, sing, lead etc.

Indeed, not before David's time do professional musicians appear in the Bible. From where did they come? Considering the apparent connection of professional musicians with the institution of monarchy, we must bear

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43 Sendrey, A., *Music in Ancient Israel*, p.488
in mind that in the neighbouring countries, Egypt and Assyria, the professional musician was an old and familiar figure... Hence, we may assume that the systematic import and subsequent training of professional musicians took place in the era of David and Solomon.\(^44\)

The second significant feature of David's innovations was that the line between secular and sacred music became clearer. This is to say, that liturgical music became a genre on its own, separate from the daily life-experience of the people. Certain types of music - most notably the Psalms - were set aside for sacred use, and became distinct from the other types of music 'performed' in the work place, in celebration or mourning. The musical styles and forms were possibly not very different, but the roles of music in the two spheres were poles apart. Two statements from Eliyahu Schleifer serve to illustrate this:

The Bible's few allusions to secular music comment with reproach.

We know little for sure about the relationship between sacred and secular music in ancient Israel, but I think that the two did not differ much in ancient times and that they strongly influenced each other.\(^45\)

It is possible that some sacred lyrics were put to well-known secular melodies - a subject that will be discussed in more detail later. This demonstrates that style and form in sacred and secular music may well have been similar and related, but the application, expression and purpose were so radically different that one is praised and the other condemned. This division only came about after David's new institution of worship music was introduced.

\(^45\) Sacred Sound and Social Change, p.16
The musicians who were appointed under David were disciplined, structured and operated under a definite hierarchy. Only Levites were permitted to perform this office, which ironically meant that even David himself would have been excluded. Quite a bit of detail is given in Scripture about the organisation of the Levitical singers and musicians. This can be summarised as follows:

1) Chenaniah was the “leader of the Levites” and the “instructor in charge of the music” because of his skill. It seems, then, that his was the job of overseeing and directing the entire institution of Levitical musicians. As he was appointed by David, he would have been answerable to the king.

2) The next level of the hierarchy consisted of three leaders of the singers and musicians. These three men were Heman the son of Joel, Asaph the son of Berechiah and Ethan the son of Kushaiah (probably the same person as Jeduthun who is mentioned in 1 Chron.25 as the associate of Asaph and Heman). Interestingly, all three are referred to as operating in some form of prophetic gifting - Asaph “prophesied according to the order of the king,” Ethan/Jeduthun “prophesied with a harp to give thanks and to praise the Lord,” and Heman is called “the king’s seer in the words of God.”

3) Under these three leaders were the “brethren of the second rank” - fourteen men who led through their use of “strings” (nebel) and “harps” (kinnor). Where this rank actually fitted into the hierarchy is not clear, as 1 Chron. 25 refers to the three chief musicians overseeing their “sons” and their “brethren” directly. This may mean that this was a rank specifically appointed for the transportation

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46 1 Chron.15:22
47 1 Chron.15:16,17
48 1 Chron.25:2
49 1 Chron.25:3
50 1 Chron.25:5
51 1 Chron.15:18-21
of the ark to Jerusalem, who then fell into the normal structures once this task had been fulfilled. Alternatively, they may be a separate structure within the organisation with specific roles.

4) The rank and file were overseen by the four sons of Asaph, the six sons of Ethan/Jeduthun and the fourteen sons of Heman. The total number of musicians under these leaders was two hundred and eighty eight - arranged in courses or groupings of twelve. This structure has been arranged in diagrammatic form by Steve Smith as follows:52

The work of these musicians was to make the worship of the tabernacle, and later the temple, as glorious as humanly possible. To this end they were separated out and engaged in stringent discipline, practice and training. The results were a musical institution of the highest degree of expertise.

52 From The Tabernacle of David, p.185
The strict discipline to which the musicians of the sacred service were subject, the continuous practicing required by their office, must have given to their performances an extraordinarily high level of perfection. These musicians functioned, it seems, on a twenty four hour a day basis (possibly each group or course leading worship for one hour each day - hence the twenty four groups), and as a result did no other work. The “schools of prophets” under Samuel had given way to an “Academy of Music” in Jerusalem established under David, and filled with a highly skilled elite group. The work they did was taken extremely seriously, and the preparation was rigorous. A Levitical singer underwent at least five years of training.

By establishing this college of Levitical musicians, David changed the worship life of Israel quite radically. For the first time music became an essential part of the sacred service. In fact, now the service becomes known as the “service of song”- either the old forms of worship were completely transformed by the new role that music played, or a completely new service, identified by its musicality, was developed. Israeliite music grew from this point in leaps and bounds, and ultimately developed an international reputation.

4) The Temple Music from Solomon to the Exile

The achievements of David were remarkable, and his contribution to Israeliite worship music was unmatched, but it was under Solomon that this music attained its greatest heights. Solomon was given the task of building the first Temple, under

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53 Sendrey, A., Music in Ancient Israel, p.78
54 1 Chron.9:33
56 1 Chron.6:31
strict instructions from his father, and it is clear that the organisation and perpetuation of the musical tradition was associated with this. R.J Tournay describes this:

In 2 Chron.8:14 it is stated that Solomon established, according to the ordinance of David, his father, the classes of priests in their service, and the levites in their duties of praise and ministry alongside the priests according to the daily ritual, for such had been the command of David, 'man of God'.

The rudimentary instruments which had been in use, were replaced by Solomon with new ones of superior craftsmanship, materials, and design. The levitical musicians were furnished with everything they needed to provide a musical accompaniment to worship of the highest degree of skill and beauty. Perhaps the most compelling testimony to this fact is the Chronicler’s account of the dedication of the Temple. Once the building was completed, we read of the service of dedication, and the placing of the ark in its place. These ritual acts were accompanied by the music of the Levites, led by the three chief musicians Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun. The beauty of the music, and the quality of the performance reached a unique height at this point, for the account tells that:

...indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying:

“For He is good,
For His mercy endures

\[57\] Seeing and Hearing God with the Psalms, p.43
forever,"

that the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the
priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory
of the Lord filled the house of God.$^{58}$

This expectation of God’s presence with the worshippers through the medium of
music appears to have been, or to have become, a regular feature of Temple
worship. John Eaton’s exploration of the relationship of the cult to the prophetic
makes this point very eloquently. He stresses that Israelite worship was by its very
nature prophetic - not surprising when it is remembered that all of the three main
leaders of worship were considered to have some form of prophetic gifting (see
above). Part of this prophetic understanding of worship was the expectation of a
present reality of God within the ritual acts. In other words, there is here, and in the
experience of Israel a precedent which is set that worship is a real and prophetic
experience of God, in which His word is heard, His will perceived and the
worshipers’ response influenced as sin is dealt with and service is called forth.$^{59}$
As a result of this, prophetic utterance would happen within the context of worship
in which the people would hear God speak through the prophet. Eaton describes
this phenomenon as follows:

So it could happen that at the time of the proclamation of Yahweh’s
kingship by the rites of solemn advent, by the eloquent visionary psalms,
by the blast of the horns and the clouds of incense - so it could happen
that the divine and royal presence of which all the worshippers were
aware could become overwhelmingly visible to one of the visionary
seers. (Italics mine)$^{60}$

$^{58}$ 2 Chron.5:13-14
$^{59}$ See Eaton, J., Vision in Worship. The whole of chapter one is an exploration of this understanding.
$^{60}$ Vision in Worship, p.49
Isaiah chapter six could possibly be an example of this type of worship experience, which can also be seen in the dialogue psalms, in which the prophet becomes an intercessor pleading for God's people, and then uttering His response.

Of course, it is not surprising that Solomon should have provided the environment for such musical excellence to be fostered. He has the reputation in Scripture of being a musician and composer of note himself, the fame of which seems to have spread throughout the ancient Near Eastern world. The account of the Queen of Sheba's visit makes this point dramatically:

Then [the Queen of Sheba] said to the king: "it was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom . . . ; and indeed, the half of the greatness of your wisdom was not told to me. You exceed the fame of which I heard."

In the account of the Queen's gifts to Solomon and his in return, we read of the instruments that Solomon had made, and thereafter his gift to her of "all she desired, whatever she asked." The implication is that there may well have been musical instruments included in the gifts she received, and, since an instrument needs a musician to play it, there may also have been musicians included. Solomon, was not famous only for his musical and poetic gifts, but they were certainly an integral part of the fame that he enjoyed.

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61 See 1 Kings 4:32
62 2 Chron.9:5,6
63 2 Chron.9:12
It is important to note that, by this time, the secular, or folk, music of Israel is almost completely ignored by the writers of Scripture, except, as mentioned before, when condemned. Also, it was certainly not part of the development of music which happened under David and Solomon, as their focus was on the music of worship. Therefore, the music which gained such widespread acclaim was, in fact, the worship music of the Temple, not the simple day to day music of the people. The separation between the two was almost total - except, perhaps for the use of secular tunes as a setting for religious lyrics. This will be discussed in more detail when the Psalms are examined.

The tradition which was started by David and Solomon was continued after Solomon's death, although with varying degrees of commitment. The division of the kingdom, and the succession of good and bad kings meant that the musical excellence achieved under Solomon was never again realised, but Israel's music remained famous, especially under the good kings who encouraged its use in worship. The history of the monarchy is testimony to the flourishing of music under godly kings, as they restored and supported the Temple worship and all that went with it, and the decline of music under unrighteous kings who did away with the worship of Yahweh and allowed music to fall "into the hands of pagan leaders".

The role that music played remained primarily that of worship, although at times the music of the Temple was performed outside of the Temple itself. Jehoshaphat was one of the kings who restored the worship of the Temple and the place of music within it. However, when the combined armies of Moab, Ammon and Mount Seir attempted to invade the kingdom of Judah, God spoke through Jahaziel the

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64 Sendrey, A., *Music in Ancient Israel*, p.79
son of Zechariah and instructed Jehoshaphat to send out his armies with the Temple musicians at the front. This he did, and as they marched forward singing the praises of God, the invading armies attacked and destroyed each other. The role of music in this scene, and the power which was believed to reside within it is clear.

Perhaps the last true high point in the life of the Temple music was under Hezekiah. He instigated a radical reform of the nation’s worship restoring the levitical musicians to service, calling the nation to keep the Passover, and destroying the pagan shrines and places of worship. It would seem that once again the music of God’s people gained international fame, for when Sennacherib of Assyria besieged Jerusalem, he demanded as part of his tribute that the king’s singers should be given to him. It is interesting that, while the biblical account relates the defeat and retreat of Sennacherib, an Assyrian bas-relief indicates that Sennacherib was victorious. Whatever, the real outcome of the siege, this confirms the inclusion of male and female musicians as part of the tribute which the Assyrian demanded.

The witness of the Bible is that the Temple music was never completely deserted in the life of the kingdom of Judah, and the levitical musicians tenaciously continued their task until the final defeat by Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian forces. Only when the Temple itself was finally destroyed, and the people carried into exile did the music become silent, and even then, it seems, it did not completely disappear. This will be picked up again later, but for now, the music of the Temple

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65 2 Chron.20
must be explored a little more deeply, through a brief examination of the Psalms and their place in worship.

5) The Psalms

It is neither possible, nor relevant to the present subject, to deal with the Book of Psalms in great depth, as such a study would necessarily involve an examination of the lyrical and literary value of these poems, rather than a musical one. However, much can be gleaned from the musical detail, and usage of the psalms in terms of understanding the role that music played in the worship life of the Temple.

Much controversy has surrounded the Psalms. There are differences of opinion related to the dating of many psalms, the authorship of many, the titles and other terms which may be musical instructions or references to the melodies to be used. It is certainly not the task of this study to try to resolve or even explore any of these issues, but rather to draw, from what is known, information which can help in understanding the role which the music of these poems played in worship. Waldo Pratt makes a significant observation in this regard:

... very few persons ever stop to consider how much music had to do in giving us the Book of Psalms and in setting it in its canonical place in the Old Testament. Without raising any of the vexed questions as to who wrote all the Psalms and when and under what circumstances, we may safely assert that the editing of the Book into its present form was occasioned chiefly by the fact that music had a recognised place in the Hebrew rituals. The selection of the materials to be included in the completed collection was probably influenced by observing what had
proved in experience to be liturgically useful for musical rendering. Possibly many points in the final redaction and arrangement were determined by musical considerations.  

a) The Use of the Psalms in Worship

It is not clear exactly how the psalms were used in the worship of the Temple. It is certain that they were set to music, and that they were sung. It is possible that some of the singing may even have been antiphonal. This may be the origin of the parallelism in many psalms - the same thought expressed in two, or sometimes three, different ways, possibly sung by a leader or one group of vocalists, and then responded to by another group. That instruments accompanied the singing is widely accepted, but the nature of this music has been debated. Some scholars seem to suggest that there is little chance of knowing anything about the nature of Temple music beyond the most elementary facts. Others, seem to suggest that there is much evidence on which to build an understanding of musical performance. Andrew Wilson-Dickson indicates some definite clues which shed some light on this issue. He refers to the parallelism mentioned above, pointing to various schemes by which it would have operated, but states that, “in few of these schemes does there appear to be room for participation by the people; the temple choir, it seems, sang on their behalf.” (A view which seems to be accepted by a number of scholars, among them Edward Dickinson) He also explains that Hebrew poetry operated on a free sense of rhythm, without rhyme, and so the music probably did not have a consistent beat. Both rhythm and melody would have had to accommodate and follow the text, rather than vice versa,
comparing some of the psalms to Gregorian chant (a theme that will be picked up again when plainchant is explored). Harmony may not have been present, except in the form of drones on the fourth, fifth or in unison. However, as has been discussed above, it is possible that the Hebrew harmonic system was more highly developed than is usually recognised.

One theory which is gaining great acceptance is that the psalms were associated with the ritual of the service, possibly as an accompaniment to specific acts. However, it is likely that they were also used as acts of worship in their own right. Rowley has classified the psalms into four categories: 1) hymns of praise; 2) private hymns of thanksgiving; 3) national hymns of lament; and 4) private hymns of lament. While not necessarily contradicting any other system of classification, Rowley does demonstrate that psalms express the worship of both the individual and of the community. It is probable that both forms of expression frequently occurred simultaneously. Psalms expressing the prayers or worship of an individual were used in the worship of the congregation, and so related both subjective, individual experience, and objective, corporate expression (Ps.51 may be an example of this).

A question of great significance, and great difference of opinion is the origin of the psalms. Without associating specific psalms with specific authors, there is one certainty which becomes clear. Psalms were being written throughout the history of Israel and Judah, and quite probably can be traced back as far as the songs of Moses and Miriam. What this means is that there would very likely have been some “traditional” psalms, which would have been passed down...
from antiquity, and also "contemporary" psalms, written by authors in each age. Both would have existed side by side in the worship of the Temple. It seems probable that some of the, then, "contemporary" writers would have ascribed their psalms to one of the "traditionally" recognised psalmists, as Rowley describes:

We cannot uncritically ascribe to [David] all the psalms that have "To David" at their head, though there is every reason to believe that he was no mean poet, and he may have written religious songs as well as secular... The headings of the psalms provide an unsolved problem, and while it is undoubted that the ascription to David was understood of authorship, as is clear from some of the statements about the particular point in his life when they are said to have been composed, it is well known that there was a tendency to ascribe more and more psalms to him.71

As far as can be discerned, this practice of psalm writing, or song writing, continued even into the New Testament church, and certainly would have served to keep the music fresh and growing.

b) Psalm Headings & Instructions

One of the main ways to ascertain what the music of the Temple was like is through the headings at the beginning of many psalms. This has already been touched on in the discussion about authorship, but these psalm headings offer more than just tantalising glimpses of possible composers. They give an indication, albeit quite obscure at times, of the way in which they were actually performed.

71 Ibid., p.205
The enigmatic superscriptions which occur mainly at the opening of psalms constitute a real musical terminology, which, however, is almost unintelligible to us.\textsuperscript{72}

However, they do give some clues which provide a basis for reasonable speculation. Kevin Connor outlines five different kinds of information which are provided by the headings. These are listed as: 1) Authorship (which has already been dealt with); 2) Instructions to the Chief Musician; 3) The historical setting of the psalm; 4) The style of the music and poetry; and 5) the instruments to accompany the psalm.\textsuperscript{73}

Some of these areas are far easier to interpret than others. The psalms which give the historical settings make it reasonably clear when they were written and by whom (assuming that we can accept the historical information as accurate, which few scholars appear to contest). Examples of these headings are Psalms 3, 7, 18 and others. Those which give instructions to the Chief Musician are accompanied by the specific instruction which he is intended to follow. Whether "To the Chief Musician" is the correct rendering of Lam\textsuperscript{9}nasseah, is the subject of debate, but many scholars seem to accept this translation. While it is clear, in this view, that the Chief Musician was the recipient of the instruction, it is not always clear what the instruction actually means.

The remaining two categories of information are the difficult ones to decipher. These are the indications of style, and the instruments to be used. Where style

\textsuperscript{72} Werner, E., 'Music' in The Interpreters' Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 3, p.459
\textsuperscript{73} The Tabernacle of David, pp.188-94
is concerned there are differing degrees of uncertainty about some of the terms used. Titles like “The Deer of the Dawn” (Ps.22, NKJV) or “The Silent Dove in Distant Lands” (Ps.56 NKJV) are said by some scholars to be the titles of secular melodies to which the psalms have been set.

It has been supposed that certain inscriptions at the head of some of the psalms are the titles of well-known tunes, perhaps secular folk-songs, to which the psalms were sung . . . We cannot on a priori principles reject the supposition that many psalms were sung to secular melodies, for we shall find, as we trace the history of music in the Christian era, that musicians have over and over again borrowed profane airs for the hymns of the Church.\textsuperscript{74}

Again, this has not yet been resolved, and some scholars reject this theory entirely. However, some of the titles appear a little clearer in terms of the musical style which they suggest. This can often be confirmed by examining the text of the psalm itself. An example of this may be Ps. 55, the title of inscription of which is rendered in the NKJV as “A contemplation of David”. This would surely indicate that a contemplative style of music would be appropriate here, for loud and joyful music would, in any culture, be a hindrance to contemplation.

Those headings which mention specific instruments have also caused some difference of opinion among scholars. Some, like Mowinckel, have denied any musical significance for all but a few psalms, preferring to link the inscriptions with cultic acts.\textsuperscript{75} Other scholars give greater musical meaning to these titles. Some of the instruments are recognisable names which are used elsewhere in

\textsuperscript{74} Dickinson, E., \textit{Music in the History of the Western Church}, p.31
\textsuperscript{75} Discussed in Rowley, H.H., \textit{Worship in Ancient Israel}, pp.208-11
the Old Testament, while others are less clear. Some seem to indicate patterns or musical modes, and some may even be choreographical directions for dancers, rather than instructions for musicians. What is clear is that the authors of the Psalms composed them with some sort of musical and possibly also liturgical arrangement in mind. These are then communicated in some cases through the headings. These messages indicate to some extent the style of musical accompaniment, possibly the particular part of the choir to be used in the singing (trebles or basses, women etc.), the particular instruments to be featured, and the melodic pattern or possibly the tune to which the lyrics were to be set. While very little of this can be stated categorically, what is revealed through these headings is that the music of the Temple was extremely varied and the composers and performers were incredibly creative in their musical service to God. Whatever means were at their disposal to glorify the Lord, they were put to work in the service of the Temple, and this may well have included even secular melodies.

One term which appears in the Psalms frequently, although not in the headings, and which has been the cause of much speculation is the word Selah. This has been of particular interest to scholars because it is used about seventy one times in Psalms, and three times in Habakkuk. Most scholars appear to agree that it indicates some sort of musical interlude in the performance of the psalm.

Some terms present special problems of interpretation. Jewish tradition understands the word selah as “forever”. Yet the Septuagint translated it as diapsalma, that is, a sort of instrumental interlude between verses or a

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76 E.g. Werner’s discussion of the term ‘Al mah*lath from Ps.88 in ‘Music’ in The Interpreters’ Dictionary of the Bible, p.459
postlude for the entire psalm; and some medieval Jewish commentators concur.\(^77\)

The word "selah", so often occurring at the end of a psalm verse, is understood by many authorities to signify an instrumental interlude or flourish, while the singers were for a moment silent. One writer says that at this point the people bowed in prayer.\(^78\)

Reflecting on the work of Stainer\(^79\), Connor discusses five different kinds of Selah which are said to be used in the psalms, each type supposedly painting a musical picture which matched the theme of the psalm, and added to the worship experience, much like a modern day instrumental solo. The five types of Selah are as follows:\(^80\)

1) The Flight or Storm Selah: (E.g. Pss.55:1-7; 61:4) The concept here is of a dove flying through a thunder storm. Loud, noisy, percussive instruments, like cymbals would be used here. Habakkuk would probably have used this type of selah.

2) The Death Nell Selah: (E.g. Pss.52:5; 55:19; 57:3; 59:5,13) Used in describing God's judgement and the affliction of people, this selah may well have used reed pipes extensively to "wail" a kind of dirge.

3) The Sacrificial Selah: (E.g. Ps.47:5) This selah would have been the sound of the trumpets accompanying the offering of sacrifice, and blowing the smoke up to heaven.

\(^78\) Dickinson, E., Music in the History of the Western Church, p.32
\(^80\) See The Tabernacle of David, pp.193-4
4) The War *Selah*: (E.g. Pss.60:4; 76:1-3) This may have included the *shophar*, the signal instrument of war, in the midst of the psalm, as an act of praise for God’s victory in war over His enemies, or on behalf of His people.

5) The Triumphant *Selah*: (E.g. Ps.49:15) Here the idea is that of God’s saving of His people, and the victory over the grave.

While the inscriptions of the psalms do not give a clear picture of Temple worship, they certainly indicate the richness of the music, and the depth of the worship experience which was enjoyed by the Israelites. Also, as shall be discussed later, there is much here that can be used to provide theological and musical principles to guide the music and worship of the Church today.

6) *Exilic and Post-Exilic Music*

Ps. 137 demonstrates two points about the music of Israel, both before and in the exile. The first element here is that the Babylonian captors requested a performance of “one of the songs of Zion”, indicating that Jewish worship music had a considerable reputation in the Ancient world. This was certainly not a common occurrence, and is as significant as the request by Sennacherib for musicians in his tribute (see above). The second thing to be noted here is that the Jews seem to be saying that they cannot, in fact, fulfill this request. This would appear to be indicating that the music of the Temple was silenced completely by the exile.
While it is certainly true, that with the destruction of the Temple, no music would have been performed there, it is clear that Jewish music did not come to an end altogether, a fact which is supported by most, if not all scholars.

However, music and singing never actually ceased in the oppression of the Babylonian exile. The practice of music in public might have been abandoned, or restricted to a bare minimum. In close company, however, in the family, perhaps in special reunions, the tradition was kept alive, the ancient precious possession of sacred songs was cultivated with increased zeal.\footnote{Sendrey, A., \textit{Music in Ancient Israel}, p.81}

One thing seems highly likely about the musical experience of the exile, and this is that the Jews were almost certainly influenced during this time by the music of their adopted homeland. How this influence expressed itself, and what effect it had on the music of the Jews is unclear, but it was probably present, and quite significant. Not only did worship music continue, but there is evidence to suggest that secular and folk music was also practiced during the exile by the Israelites. It is also certain that the teaching of music must have continued along with performance.

Little more is known about the music of the exile than this, but, that the tradition was kept strongly alive is evidenced by the return of the exiles to their own country. Among the first group of repatriates were "the singers: the sons of Asaph, one hundred and twenty-eight."\footnote{Ezra 2:41} There were also non-levitical singers - two hundred men and women - who returned with this party.\footnote{Ezra 2:65} Again, with the second
group of returning exiles about eighty years later, both levitical and non-levitical singers were mentioned (the latter implied rather than explicitly stated).

Once the Jews had settled back into their homeland, and provided for their basic needs, they began the reconstruction of the Temple. Probably even before the work began, the levitical musicians had been reorganised and re-established. This is seen in that the priests were available to perform their duties at the laying of the foundation stone for the new temple. 84

The musical culture which was developed for the second temple appears to have been at least of the same standard of that of the first temple, and possibly even better, as Schleifer comments:

The instrumental music at the Second Temple seems to have been richer than that of the First Temple. 85

This increased level of expertise seems to have included the vocalists as well, and the development of the virtuoso singer appears to have been a strong feature of the music at this time. The musicians college was re-established and they began to operate almost like a modern musicians union, protecting their own interests, and receiving special privileges, as well as being paid for their services. The leader over these singers was Asaph's descendant Uzzi.

The music of Israel had not died during their captivity, but rather, it seems, it grew, and developed, so that by the time the second temple was completed, and in its

84 Ezra 3:10,11
85 Sacred Sound and Social Change, p.20
service, the music of Israel attained once again the heights it had known under David and Solomon, and perhaps even surpassed them.

Another feature of the worship life of Israel in this period, is the development of the synagogue. While some sources seem to indicate that its origin lies with the origin of the Jewish nation, dating back to Moses, it is most likely that the synagogue first came into being during the exile, as a result of the removal from the temple, and its destruction. It is natural that, having been used to this form of gathering for some time, the Jews would have continued its practice on returning home.

Jews throughout the diaspora and even within Israel worshipped in synagogues, and the nature of the worship was somewhat different from that of the temple, although, possibly, based upon it. For obvious reasons, the sacrifices and accompanying acts were absent, probably replaced by prayers or readings referring to the sacrifice. This is the beginning of the practice of preaching as part of worship. The worship of the synagogue, in contrast to that of the temple, was lead and arranged by lay people, rather than the levitical priesthood, and so the music had a rather different nature to it. Part of the reason for this was the rabbinic prohibitions on the use of instruments in the synagogue.

Musical instruments and the shofar were considered inseparable parts of the Sabbath service in the Temple; rabbinic law could do nothing regarding their presence there. But the Rabbis could and did prohibit them outside the Temple for fear that playing an instrument on the Sabbath, a permissible act in and of itself, might lead inadvertently to the
musician's tuning it, mending it, or carrying it from one public place to another - all of these being forbidden acts of work.\textsuperscript{86}

The result of this was that vocal expression became the sole form of music in the synagogue, and developed more along the lines of chant than actual singing.

The psalms, prayers and readings would be cantillated, that is, recited in a heightened speech resembling simple song. Its basis was the chanting of the text on a single note, but with simple melodic alterations to indicate the grammatical structure.\textsuperscript{87}

This style of worship necessitated the leadership of a cantor, whose role increased in prominence with time. Over time, in both synagogue and temple, the sexes were separated in singing, and finally only the men sang. The reason for this was the fear of any promiscuity or sexual indecency real or imagined. As shall be seen the development of the chant in the synagogue is a significant feature of musical history as it provides the strongest link between the music of Israel and that of the Christian Church. This theme will be explored in more detail later.

Eventually both the Temple, and the music performed in it were done away with - the temple through final destruction, and the music as a result of this. However, the use of music in worship did not cease. The synagogue, albeit in restricted ways, continued the use of music, and the role of music outside of worship in the social life of the people never diminished. It is at this point that the New Testament and its commentary on worship music makes its entrance.

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid. p.23
\textsuperscript{87} Wilson-Dickson, A., The Story of Christian Music, p.22

Actually the New Testament references to music in worship are very few, but it seems to me that they present a complete charge to the church. 

While there is not much direct teaching in the New Testament about music, there is a lot that can be drawn from what is there, and also from studying other sources. The study of the worship of the New Testament Church is essential for any theology of music, because so much of our theology and practice is based on the New Testament and the teachings and examples set for Christians there.

Perhaps the first important element to examine is the relationship which Jesus had with worship music. It is certain that He used music in His own experience of worship, for when we read of the Last Supper, we are told that He and the disciples sang a hymn before leaving for the Mount of Olives. It is probable that the hymn which they sang was the one which was usually used for the Passover, which was most likely a part of the Hallel Psalms. The indication here is that Jesus and His disciples were fairly consistent with the common trends of worship for their day, and that hymn singing was a regular part of this.

The evidence suggests, however, that Jesus' involvement with music may well have been considerably more than this. Reflecting on Jesus' reading of the scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue, as related by Luke, Virgil Funk makes some

88 Hustad, D., 'Developing a Biblical Philosophy of Church Music' in Bibliotheca Sacra; April, 1960; p.113
89 Mt.26:30
90 Hustad, D., 'Developing a Biblical Philosophy of Church Music' in Bibliotheca Sacra; April, 1960; p.115
91 Lk.4:16-21
significant observations as to what this would have entailed from a musical perspective. He explains that there were different ministerial roles in the synagogue of Jesus’ day, and that among these were the reader and the assistant. The reader was usually a kind of singer, as without any form of public address system, the reading would need to be sung or chanted in a kind of simple melody in order to facilitate the hearing of the text. This means that when Jesus stood up to read, He would most likely have assumed the role of singer-reader. When this thinking is followed through, it seems that Jesus may well have been a musician of some kind Himself.

Nineteenth century devotional theology, still influential in clerical formation, stresses the theology of the book of Hebrews. Hebrews presents Jesus as taking the role of the high priest; the modern priest, therefore, is an alter Christus. It is fascinating to realise that if evidence exists for Jesus’ assuming a ministerial role, it supports the theory that the role was lector or musician.92

The idea that Jesus was a musician, while perhaps not a certainty in terms of His human life on earth, is clearly presented in terms of His pre-incarnate existence. This is a theme which will be developed later.

The next question that needs to be dealt with is the role of music in the Church which was birthed by Jesus. The book of Acts does not reveal much in terms of Biblical history, except that music was certainly present in New Testament worship. Perhaps the strongest reference to this fact is the account of Paul and Silas singing in prison in the Philippian jail.93 What this demonstrates is, first, that

92 ‘Music and the Bible’ in Liturgy; vol.6(3), 1987; p.78
93 Acts 16:16-34
singing must have been as common an activity in the life of the believers as it was in the life of Jesus, and, secondly, that there was a belief that music had a supernatural power. Whether Paul and Silas began singing in the hopes that their music might have some effect or not cannot be ascertained, but in Luke's account there is a strong link between the fact that they were praying and singing, and the earthquake that followed. This might not be simply a belief in the power of music per se, but rather in the power of prayer and worship. However, that music is an integral part of this powerful work is without doubt.

Beyond this, there are two main passages which give a reasonable idea of what the music of the New Testament Church may have been like. The first is Eph.5:18-19:

> And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

And the second, which is similar, is Col.3:16:

> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Both of these passages use the expression "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs", which are clearly three different ways of making music to the Lord. The meaning of these terms needs to be uncovered, however, as they are understood differently by Christians of different traditions.
Psalms provide the least difficulty in understanding, and would certainly have meant the song book of the Old Testament, which had been integral to the worship of God’s people for so long. As Hustad describes:

I wonder if we can realise the predicament of the early Christian church. Here is a new faith, a new Christology, a new group of worshippers, a new understanding of salvation, and no hymnal or song book to express their faith and their experience. Oh, yes, the Hebrews had a song book. They knew it well. And since they knew that faith in the Messiah was simply an unfolding of their Hebrew worship and culture, it was natural that the new church should first of all sing psalms, from the great song book of Israel.94

The second category of music to which Paul refers is that of hymns. The Greek form of this word ‘ωμος means simply a song of praise, an ode. Augustine defined the term as follows:

A hymn is a song containing praise of God. If you praise God, but without song, you do not have a hymn. If you praise anything, which does pertain to the glory of God, even if you sing it, you do have a hymn. Hence, a hymn contains the three elements: song and praise of God.95

Edward Dickinson takes the term to mean songs from the Old Testament which are not included in the Psalter, which have since come to be called canticles, for example the thanksgiving of Hannah, and the song of Moses.96 While this may well be one likely interpretation of this term, it would be unwise to limit the meaning

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94 'Developing a Biblical Philosophy of Church Music' in Bibliotheca Sacra; April, 1960; p.115
96 Dickinson, E., Music in the History of the Western Church, p.43-44
to Old Testament examples. It is generally agreed that certain passages in the New Testament are actually hymns of the early church, whether in part or in whole. A well supported example of this is Phil.2:6-11, which is believed to have been inserted, either by Paul or an editor, into his letter. That this is a hymn is evidenced by the rhythmic quality of the text and the use of parallelism. This, as Virgil Funk states, is "one of our most ancient musical texts."  

The third kind of music mentioned is the most controversial - that of spiritual songs - ἡδαὶς θεωματικαῖς or spiritual odes. Dickinson's view of this term would overlap with the definition of hymn, since he defines a spiritual song as one composed by a Christian. However, since, as has been discussed above, there are some well accepted songs, which are called by the name hymn, in the New Testament which were certainly written by Christians, this alone cannot be the meaning of spiritual song. Hustad refers to "wordless songs, perhaps resembling the prolongation of a vowel sound in the word Alleluia as . . . in the singing of Gregorian Chant." 98 These would have been composed in the heat of ecstatic spiritual experience, and were perhaps very emotional in expression. A simple step away from this is Wilson-Dickson's view that they may well have been songs sung in glossolalia - what some Christians today call "singing in tongues" or "singing in the Spirit." 99 Paul certainly appears to link the use of tongues with musical expression of worship in 1 Cor.14:15:

What is the result then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. (Emphasis mine)

97 'Music and the Bible' in Liturgy: vol 6(3); 1987; p.78
98 'Developing a Biblical Philosophy of Church Music' in Bibliotheca Sacra: April, 1960; p.116
99 The Story of Christian Music; p.25
What this demonstrates is that, as with the psalms of Israel, the early Church used songs of traditional origin, as well as some of contemporary origin. It was only much later that any restriction was placed on this kind of spontaneous singing, or on the writing of new music for worship. This will be explored further in the next chapter.

The music and worship of New Testament times cannot be described and understood only by a study of the New Testament itself. Other questions and issues come into play, the most significant of which is the relationship between the worship of the Church and that of the synagogue. It is well documented that the early Christians continued their relationship with the synagogue until they were no longer able to do so, as evidenced by Paul’s practice of beginning his ministry in any new town by going to worship at the synagogue. When the Church became a truly separate entity, it is natural that the rituals, liturgies and forms of worship should be much the same as what they experienced in the synagogue, because they saw their faith as a continuation and completion of the Jewish faith.

Indeed, all evidence points to the chant and music of the primitive church as practically identical with the customs and traditions of the synagogue.

It is quite likely that this explains the absence of specific musical references in the New Testament - if the practice of worship was well known and understood, there would have been little need for specific teaching in this regard.

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100 See: Acts 13:13ff; 14:1; 17:1-4 (esp. vs.2); etc.
The link with the synagogue would mean that there would certainly have been vocal music in the worship of the Church. Jewish cantors who had converted to Christianity would almost certainly have used their gifts in the worship of the believers. However, it appears that instruments were not used - they were absent from the synagogue; and there is a notable silence in the New Testament (apart from the Revelation) in this regard. Some scholars feel that the New Testament views instruments negatively, but this view depends on reading more into references to instruments than is intended. One example of this is Paul's reference to the "sounding brass or clanging cymbal" of 1 Cor.13:1. The argument is that the use of these instruments is viewed with contempt because they are likened to a person without love. However, it is probably not a judgement on the instruments themselves (and certainly not a blanket condemnation of all instruments), but rather a reference to inadequate or improper use of them. It is very likely that Paul is here referring to the practices of the Greek mystery-cults at Corinth in their worship of Dionysus and Cybele. The use of the instruments in this context was offensive to say the least.

No doubt the streets of Corinth resounded with the noisy gongs and clashing cymbals which were a feature of such worshippers. A chalkos (gong) was a piece of copper; a kymbalon (cymbal) was a single-toned instrument incapable of producing a melody. Both were used in the mystery religions, either to invoke the god or to drive away demons or to rouse the worshippers. They were neither melodious nor capable of producing harmony. Both beat out a heavy monotone and caused as much offense as constantly-barking dogs.\footnote{Prior, D., \textit{The Message of 1 Corinthians}, pp.227-8}
The nature of the music of the Church is difficult to ascertain, but there does seem to be a strong association of the music of New Testament times with the Yemenite Jews of today, and this gives us the strongest glimpse of how the early Church's music may have sounded. The music of this isolated group can be traced back to the early days of the synagogue, and bears a remarkable resemblance to the oldest forms of Gregorian chant. The evidence is compelling which suggests that the music of the early Church drew strongly from its Jewish roots, and so our understanding of its practice must necessarily be based on the practice of the synagogue.

In theory, style, usage, and probably to some extent in actual melodies also, the music of the primitive Church forms an unbroken line with the music of pre-Christian antiquity.¹⁰³

The final word in the New Testament witness to music is found in the Book of Revelation. Any indication that instruments were taboo is absent from this book, as the worship depicted here is accompanied by trumpets and harps, and quite likely other instruments as well. One of the fascinating features of this vision is how the worship of human beings is combined with the worship and musical expression of angelic beings. The picture is one of all of creation, of every different category of being, joined together in joyous worship of the Creator. However, the testimony here is also that music (albeit, perhaps, in an allegorical way) is used by God to exercise His judgement on the world - as in the seven trumpet judgements of 8:7-11:19. Perhaps the most significant point to note in this regard is the continuity of worship, from earthly human beings, to the angelic creatures around God's throne.

¹⁰³ Dickinson, E., Music in the History of the Western Church, pp. 40-1
Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice:

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

"Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever. 104

In this universal worship, music plays a profound role, and this includes both vocal and instrumental music.

3) God, the Musician

It has also been noted in this chapter that Jesus may well have been a musician. This truth - that God is Himself a musician - can easily be overlooked, but it is crucial to an understanding of music in worship. When we recognize God’s musicality, we acknowledge that we offer back to God in worship a gift that originates in Him; an expression in which He is directly involved. This must have a profound impact on the way we understand and use music in our worship, and so it is important to explore this further.

104 Rev.5:11-14
The testimony of Scripture is that God is a Musician. Both Proverbs 8:31 and Job 38:7 link the use of music with creation. Proverbs 8 - the passage expounding the excellence of wisdom - is accepted by most scholars as representing Jesus. It gives a glimpse of His role in creation, which is firmly supported by the New Testament witness:

All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.\textsuperscript{105}

The important point in terms of the present discussion is the use of the word "rejoicing" in verse 31. The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon indicates that the Hebrew word \textit{sachaq} includes laughter and play in the meaning of "rejoicing". The play element is said to include "instrumental music, singing and dancing".\textsuperscript{106}

Job's picture of creation in chapter 38 also indicates the presence of music at creation. In this case it is the "morning stars" (angelic beings) who "sang together", and the sons of God (also referring to angels) who "shouted for joy". Music was clearly an integral part of the celebration, and even the process of creation.

This leads us to a rather interesting conclusion. If music was part of the work of creation, then can it be said to be simply just a part of the created order? In human terms the answer would most certainly be "yes". The music that is produced by created beings can certainly not reach beyond the realm of the created. However, if God is a musician, and used this music in His creation of the universe in some way, then that music must surely have been in His Being for all eternity, and is

\textsuperscript{105} Jn.1:3
\textsuperscript{106} The Online Bible Brown-Driver-Briggs' Hebrew Lexicon - Strong's reference number 7832
therefore, as with all creative works, closely linked to His Person and Nature. The music of humanity, then, is an outflow of this. Even as music is integral to God’s nature, so music is part of the nature of human beings - as is evidenced by the role of music in every society and culture of the world. Music offered to God in worship is thus more than just an offering of humanity’s creativity to God, but it is a resonance of the music within the soul of humankind with the music in the “soul” of God.

This thought can be developed further, for it is certain that the musical expression is not limited to the act of creation. It must be noted that if divine music is an expression of God’s nature, then it should be found to be issuing forth from the whole Trinity, and this in all the work that each Person does. This is certainly the case. Zeph.3:17 indicates the singing of the Father over the people of His love:

The Lord your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you in His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing.

That Jesus would probably have sung the Scriptures has already been discussed. It is also clear that He and the disciples sang together. Matthew’s account of the Last Supper (26:30) indicates that the meal was concluded with the singing of a hymn. This would certainly not have been an isolated occurrence. However, the singing of Jesus goes beyond His earthly ministry, as Heb.2:10-12 indicates. Quoting the Messianic Psalm 22, the writer to the Hebrews speaks of Jesus, and His oneness with His followers, and tells of Him singing praise to the Father in the gathering of believers:
I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the congregation I will sing praise to You.

Richard Dinwiddie explores this further:

He [Jesus] is with the choir in its rehearsal as well as its performance, and he is with the congregation when it sings. If we were actually to realize that Christ not only listens to us but sings with us as well, we would see rehearsal as a spiritual activity in its own right. And we would place greater importance on our congregational music. We might act differently if we really believed that he was present in our rehearsals.\footnote{“The God Who Sings”, in Christianity Today, July 15, 1983, p.19}

This means that music in some way continues in the relationship Jesus has with his Church.

The Holy Spirit is also involved in this musical relationship. Those who believe in Jesus, and are “born again” (Jn.3:1-8) are filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul encourages the Ephesian church not to be filled with wine, but rather to continue to be filled with the Spirit. The result of this is the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, and the making of music in the heart to the Lord (Eph.5:17,18).

Understanding that God is musical is one thing. Applying this to musical practice in a way that is theologically and musically secure is another, and it is in this area that the Church can easily be misled, albeit with the best of intentions. One...
example of this kind of dangerous theology is the argument put forward by South African musician André Kempen. He notes that music is a numerical and mathematical language, and that certain numbers appear to have particular significance in the Bible. In a rather dangerous theological leap, he links the significance of biblical numbers with that of musically important numbers. He has then attempted to use these conclusions to teach on musical practice within the Church.\(^{108}\)

Kempen states that triads ("A chord consisting of three pitches, the adjacent pitches being separated by a third...")\(^ {109}\) represent the Trinity (drawing on the numerological significance of the number three representing divinity) - the first note (the root) being symbolic of the Father, the second note (the third) being symbolic of the Son, and the third note (the fifth) being symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Using this as a basis he tries to show that certain types of chord structures and the music built on them are inappropriate for Christian worship. He illustrates this by pointing to Israeli music, which, he argues, is largely built upon minor keys - achieved by flattening the third note of the scale - and eastern music, which he claims uses only the root and the fifth - leaving out the third altogether. Since in his scheme the third note would represent the second Person of the Trinity he claims that these two musical forms either devalue Jesus (acknowledging Him as man but not God) as in Jewish religion, or ignore Him completely, as in Eastern religion. Kempen would thus allow only very limited use of these two musical forms in Christian worship. This would mean that the only really appropriate form of music

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\(^{108}\) These thoughts come from a teaching tape entitled God in Music by André Kempen, which was given to me to listen to in 1991. Unfortunately I have been unable to track down a copy to confirm the copyright information.

for the Church is the major key and its associated chords, because it leaves all three notes in their proper place, thus representing a correct view of the Trinity.

This teaching may sound authoritative, but it is flawed both musically and theologically. From a musical point of view, this approach ignores vast amounts of music theory, and as a result leaves many questions unanswered. The first problem is the fact that triads are only the most basic form of chord. Kempen says nothing of the theological significance, if any, of more complex chord forms - for example those using more than three notes like major sevenths or polychords (a chord which is formed by combining two or more simpler types of chord).

Even his discussion of triads is incomplete because he does not refer at all to the other two recognised triads - the diminished triad (a three note chord in which both internal intervals are minor thirds or intervals of three semitones), and the augmented triad (with both internal intervals being major thirds or four semitones). These chords would create difficulties for Kempen's scheme, because the diminished triad flattens both the third and the fifth, which could result in a theological understanding that this chord undervalues both Jesus and the Holy Spirit. This would therefore be unacceptable for Christian use as well. However, the augmented triad is a real source of confusion in this framework, because it effectively sharpens the fifth, which in terms of Kempen's understanding would be an "elevation" of the Holy Spirit. What theological significance he would give to this would be interesting to find out, and whether he would allow this for Christian use could also be quite revealing!
The other musical problem which is ignored by Kempen is that even when playing a piece of music in a major key it is musically necessary to use chords other than major chords, because the makeup of a major key demands it. The notes of the key are the building blocks for the chords, and so some of the chords which are required by the key will of necessity be minor triads and possibly even diminished or augmented triads as well.

Another musical stumbling block to Kempen's theory, which he totally ignores is that different cultures have completely different musical systems. His scheme works from a Western diatonic musical system, which is not the only, nor even necessarily the best, system available. Some musicians, notably Leonard Bernstein, have tried to prove that the diatonic system derives from the natural world, but these claims have not been supported.

I think, therefore, that it is right to conclude that there is no one type of music which is more rooted in the nature of things than any other.\(^{110}\)

Kempen refers to the music of Israel, with special reference to the psalms, claiming that it is played in a minor key. The reality is that our diatonic system was not in existence in Old Testament times, and so his claim is extremely rash. Today, Hebrew music may sound similar to our Western minor key, but it is just as likely that middle eastern music has a totally different framework.

This is certainly the case when speaking about eastern music. Kempen claims that eastern music removes the third.\(^{111}\) The music of India, particularly, has a

\(^{110}\) Storr, A., *Music and the Mind*, p.63

\(^{111}\) Kempen supports this by playing chords with only the root and fifth in such a way as to sound eastern. Of course any good musician can make Western music replicate another style, and the use
completely different system, working with twenty two notes, rather than our twelve. None of the intervals Kempen refers to exist in that form at all. His observations are totally absurd in the light of the way eastern music is structured!

Many varieties of scale have been used in different parts of the world, and at different periods of history. A pentatonic scale, which only uses five notes (for example, the black notes of the piano) is the basic scale of music in many non-Western cultures throughout the world, as well as being the basis of Celtic folk music. The whole-tone scale, used extensively by Debussy, consists of six notes within the octave, each a tone apart from the next. Hindu music uses scales in which the octave is divided into intervals less than a semitone. Javanese music uses two different systems: slendro, which divides the octave into five nearly equal intervals, and pelog, which divides the octave into seven, using a mixture of small and large intervals.\footnote{Storr, A., \textit{Music and the Mind}, p.55}

From a theological perspective, this teaching is also flawed. There is absolutely no biblical or theological grounds for assuming that because a chord may have three notes that these notes are intended to symbolise the Triune God. On this basis any use of the number three could be applied in similar ways, which if taken to the logical extreme would result in bizarre practices.

The most dangerous effect of this teaching is that it claims some esoteric understanding of music and God's purpose, and in so doing robs the church of the full richness of God's gift of music.

\footnote{Storr, A., \textit{Music and the Mind}, p.55}
The question, however, which is raised here and which must be explored is whether there is any basis for using numerology to gain an understanding of the biblical approach to music.

Belief in numerology (sometimes called the Science of Numbers) is found in many cultures and ages, and appears to have had some kind of application in ancient Israel.

The rhetorical and symbolic use of numbers is a notable feature of biblical literature and of other ancient Near Eastern literatures as well.\(^{113}\)

Biblical numerology is based on the belief that numbers carry theological significance. F.C. Payne illustrates this:

It has been observed that some numbers in the Bible have a specific significance, they are there to direct our attention to something, or someone, in particular. As a general rule these numbers, with their significance, apply right through the Bible and have been followed with keen interest by students of Scripture for many years, not for any supernatural quality that might be thought to be contained in the number itself, but because they were found to be signposts pointing to God's Hand, or Person, in an event, an occasion, or a person.\(^{114}\)

Ivan Panin, the Russian scientist, was responsible for much investigation into the religious significance of numbers. His findings have given rise to much controversy, but nevertheless need consideration. The most famous example of

\(^{113}\) Pope, M.H., *Number, Numbering, Numbers* in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 3, p. 563

\(^{114}\) *The Seal of God*, p. 110
his work is the study of the original Hebrew text of Genesis 1:1. Remembering that the Hebrew alphabet is numeric, he made, among others, the following discoveries:

1) The verse consists of seven words.
2) These words have exactly 28 letters (4x7)
3) There are three nouns: God, heaven and earth; their total numeric value is exactly 777 (111x7)
4) There is one Hebrew verb, “created”; its numeric value is exactly 203 (29x7)
5) The first three Hebrew words contain the subject; they have exactly 14 letters (2x7)
6) The other four contain the objects with 14 letters (2x7)

Panin found over thirty numeric features in this verse, and calculated that the chance of just fifteen happening by chance is somewhere around one in three trillion.115

Many scholars have supported the findings of Panin, and many have rejected them. However there does seem to be a reasonable amount of evidence to suggest that such a pattern does exist. The problem lies not in the pattern, which is said to continue throughout the whole of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, but in what is made of it. Many have tried to use these features as indisputable proof of the divine authorship and inerrancy of the Bible. Some have seen some esoteric significance in these numbers, and especially in the fact that

115 Information taken from The Seal of God, p.102-104
Panin found the same patterns arising from other numbers which are thought to be significant - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 37, 40.\textsuperscript{116}

M.H. Pope has also recognised a symbolism in biblical numbers:

> The frequency of certain numbers in connection with cultic concerns suggests that these numbers had special significance and importance of themselves, or as symbols of something deemed significant. The reasons for the special importance of some of the sacred numbers are rarely simple or obvious.\textsuperscript{117}

Pope points out that significant numbers were 7, 3, 4, 40, 5, 10, 12 and others. He also points to the Talmud, Midrash and Cabal of Israel in which a type of numerology (called the Gematria) was used to discover hidden meanings of the biblical text. The lengths to which the Cabalists went were often fantastic, but this practice cannot be totally written off in the light of John's use of numbers in a similar way in Revelation:

> Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666\textsuperscript{118}

The many ways that this verse has been abused, as well as the excesses of the Cabalists should be a warning. Acknowledging that numbers have significance is a different thing from using numbers for esoteric and mystical purposes. Writers like Payne give each number a meaning, but these interpretations are difficult to confirm from Scripture.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid, p.110  
\textsuperscript{117} Number, Numbering, Numbers in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, vol 3, p. 564  
\textsuperscript{118} Rev.13:18
It must be noted that some scholars strongly oppose the idea that numbers have symbolic meaning in Scripture. John J. Davis devotes an entire book to the study of biblical numbers, but concludes that there is little of significance in their use.

After careful examination of the data of the Old Testament and the historical development of symbolic numbers in extra-biblical literature, it was the conclusion of this writer that the Bible does not use numbers symbolically to convey theological truths. The only number which seemed to be used symbolically was the number seven and then only to convey the general idea of "fullness" or "completion".  

While those who argue for the use of numbers in this theological way seldom agree on what the meanings of the different numbers are, or even what numbers should be included in such a system, it is impossible to rule out a symbolic use of numbers in Scripture - even Davis has to acknowledge the importance attributed to the number seven. As we have seen, though, many scholars would be reluctant to limit numeric significance to seven.

The most important thing to note about numbers is not the hidden messages they may convey, but rather the indication they give us of order and of the sense of the Creator's purpose. If numbers and Scripture are to be revelational then that revelation should be accessible to all people, or it defeats its own purpose. Therefore, our focus should not be on deciphering some hidden code, but rather on looking for the clear message which these numbers give - Scripture is not merely the product of human reflection, but of Divine revelation and purpose.

119 Biblical Numerology, p. 154
Many have found tremendous significance in the fact that the numbers which are significant in Scripture are also those that are significant in biology, physics and mathematics. The Pythagorean School of philosophy in Ancient Greece gave much weight to numerology, and saw in music strong links to mathematics, physics and other sciences. The old concept of the “music of the spheres” - the belief that heavenly bodies are separated from one another by intervals corresponding to the harmonic lengths of strings, resulting in a musical sound arising from their movement - derived from this belief. This view was also adopted by the Medieval church. As Andrew Wilson-Dickson explains:

The idea of a universe synchronised in every detail by numbers and their proportions is classical and pagan, but through the works of Pythagoras and Plato it was readily accepted by Christians.\(^\text{120}\)

The numbers which are commonly considered significant in the Bible (three, seven, eight twelve etc.) are also the most important numbers in music. Three is significant because there are three notes to the basic chord, the triad; there are three primary chords in any key; each note exists in one of three ways - sharp, flat or natural etc. Seven is the number of notes in the diatonic scale, while eight is the octave, and begins the next diatonic sequence. Twelve is the number of notes in the chromatic scale, the scale produced by using every note in western music in sequence, and so on.

Once again the danger of numerology lies in attempts, like that of André Kempen, to find hidden meanings and rules in the numbers. What the numeric links

\(^{120}\) The Story of Christian Music, p.40
between music and the Bible show is that the same God who speaks through Scripture and orders the universe, created and orders music, and speaks through it to people. In other words the numbers may serve to show us that music is revelational, but not to say what the revelation is. Perhaps, if a theology of numbers developed sufficiently to give us an understanding of their significance we would be able to apply this to music, but for now we must look elsewhere for our theological foundations.

The conclusion of this matter is to acknowledge that God is musical. The music of humanity – whatever the cultural origins or intervallic system – reflects this. Numerology is not, however, a sound theological or biblical basis for understanding music or how it should be used. The Scriptures give us much clearer indications in so many other ways, that we should rather look to these.

C] **BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE USE OF MUSIC**

This final section of this chapter is intended to bring together the material which has been under discussion. It is not enough to simply outline what the biblical practice of music in worship was. From this record principles must be drawn that can reach through time and be useful for application to the use of music in worship today. As has been seen, the Bible gives a large resource from which to draw these principles, and they are extremely helpful in informing our musical ministries. Arising from the discussion of this chapter are seven principles which need to be outlined briefly, before this study can move into examining the history of worship music in the Church. These principles will simply be stated here, as will be the case with the principles arising from the following chapters, and then, finally they will be compared
and developed in order to outline the theology of music for which this study is seeking.

1) **Music is a Divine Expression**

It is crucial for our understanding of the nature of music to realise that all music originates in the Creator God, and that this God is a Musician Himself. We have seen how God performs music in his work of creation. He is also musically active in the incarnation of Jesus, the ministry of Jesus and His work of salvation. Music is present at the final judgement, and plays a part in this work. In God’s ongoing relationship with his people, music plays a significant role. God also chooses to use music as a way to be present with His people, by filling their musical expression with His Presence and His power.

The result of this is a view of worship music which treats it as sacred, originating in the Creator Himself, and offered back to Him in humility through the worship of His people. It also makes music a vehicle for encounter with God, as well as a channel for His saving, healing, restoring power.

2) **Music is a Human Expression**

While it is crucial to understand God’s musicality and use of music, it is equally necessary to understand that music is a very human expression of creativity. When used in the context of worship, it provides an opportunity for human beings to express their love and devotion to their God in a way that is creative and which flows from the inner depths of the person. In this way, music becomes a uniting force between God and His people, facilitating the sense of Spirit touching spirit, and allowing for fulfilment of Jesus’ command for worship to be in spirit and truth.
This indicates that the practice of giving music prominence in worship services is both good and necessary. Since music is central to human life, it stands to reason that it should also be central to the life of the Church. As it has always been used for religious expression, so it must continue to be.

The implication of this theological principle is that church musicians need to be given an outlet for this creative expression of worship in order to benefit the entire church; their musical expression must be allowed to be creative and innovative; and musical expression within the worship context must be treated with intentionality, and not just in a "hit-and-miss" fashion.

A further implication of this principle is the truth that, at least from a human perspective, music is culturally defined, and so our worship has human cultural elements to it. This is part of the reason for different Church traditions, or different worship styles within a single tradition. People who offer music up to God, offer "their" music - the music culture with which they identify - in order to make their worship expression authentic and personal.

3) Music is Neither 'Sacred' nor 'Secular'

Music as a human expression is not, in itself, either sacred or secular. Music is simply music. Its value in spiritual terms is not defined by the music itself, but by the people that compose, arrange or perform it. The role of the lyrics which are set to the music is also significant, as is evidenced by the fact that so-called secular music can be used for sacred lyrics, and thus become an expression of worship (as in the likely case of some of the Psalms). It is also important to note that
instrumental music without lyrics can have a place in worship - something which many churches could develop to their profit.

4) **Music Has A Variety of Functions**

The Biblical witness to music usage gives strong evidence of the variety of functions which music performed in the life of God's people. It was used for worship - expression of devotion to God; it was used for gathering and facilitating fellowship or communion between people - building up the church and encouraging one another; it was used to demonstrate God's greatness to people - even to other nations (implying an evangelical function, although this was not specifically applied in the Old Testament); it was used to facilitate the experience of God's supernatural power - either through the receiving of prophetic messages, or for healing or for victory over evil forces, or human enemies. Many of these functions can be fulfilled within the worship context, and this needs to be explored further by the Church and its musicians.

One of the important facets of this principle is that music does not always have to be used for its own sake. It can be used in a very effective way in a supportive role, facilitating the expression of other art forms, or bringing greater worship value to liturgical events or even preaching.

5) **Music Is Powerful for Both Healing and Destruction**

Flowing from the above principle, and developing it, is the truth that music, certainly from a biblical perspective, contains an inherent power. This is to be expected from something that is so close to God's heart, and so extensively used by Him. However, the testimony of Scripture is that this power is "a-moral". Like
the discussion of Paul about authority - that it is given by God, but the way in which it is used is determined by the person to whom it is given\textsuperscript{121} - so the power in music is given by God, but can be used for good or evil as the person using it determines. Scripture demonstrates sound and music being used both for healing and for destruction. Science is now attesting the fact that music can be healing or harmful. Church musicians need to be aware of this, and treat this power with great care.

6) **Structure & Training is Essential for Effective Music Ministry**

Even a cursory reading of the use of music in worship in Scripture shows that those responsible were subjected to intensive training, and were organised very carefully into clear structures. This is particularly apparent in the case of David's college of musicians. The results of this in terms of excellence of performance, and spirituality are obvious in the Biblical accounts. This principle is one which needs to be taken seriously by the Church where there is often a tendency to take spiritual "novices" who have some musical ability and throw them into worship leadership without adequate (or any) training or structure.

7) **All Musical Forms are Appropriate for Worship**

While it is not always clear exactly what the music of Biblical times sounded like, it is clear that throughout the history of worship music in the Bible, different forms were all included as part of the "repertoire" for worship. The different forms referred to here are the traditional song or psalm - written in times past, but used by modern people for worship; the contemporary song, sometimes referred to as hymn - written by Christians of the era in which the song is being used for worship;

\textsuperscript{121} Rom.13:1; cf. Rev.13
and the spontaneous song, sometimes referred to as "spiritual song" and possibly including the singing of glossolalia, or "singing in the spirit" - a spontaneous expression of worship through music which has not been pre-written, but occurs within the course of a worship event. Perhaps the Church needs to pay greater attention to the last two, and particularly the third, form of worship music, giving greater recognition to them, and greater freedom for their use.

These principles are a summary of the vast wealth of teaching which the Bible gives for the use of music in worship. They give much food for thought in terms of the way music is used in the Church today. The development of them, however, cannot yet be done. It must first be seen whether the same principles arise out of the history of the Church's use of music, or whether any of them need to be changed or redefined in the light of Church practice over the centuries. Then, these principles need to be related to the challenges facing the Church today, and especially in the Southern African context. Only when that has happened can true principles for today's Church be developed and offered. With this in mind, the next chapter will examine the role of music in the history of the Church - particularly, but not exclusively, focusing on the Western Church, and with primary emphasis on the Methodist Church - since this is, in fact, the main focus of the thesis.
CHAPTER THREE: MUSIC IN CHURCH HISTORY

The line which separates the biblical account of music, and the beginning of what might rightly be called church history, is a difficult one to draw. Certainly the biblical accounts contain information about the earliest history of the church, and as far as this pertains to music, this information has already been examined in the previous chapter. The task of the present chapter is to follow the journey of Christian worship music further, from the period marked by the close of the Scriptural witness through to the Wesleyan Revival, and finally making brief reference to more recent developments.

It is certainly not possible in this work to provide a complete and comprehensive study of the history of Christian music, and so this chapter serves as an overview, with specific reference to the most important time periods and contributions. The most important function of this overview is to provide a historical framework and understanding of the journey of music up to the Wesleyan Revival in England, which is, for the purpose of this thesis, the most important period of study - both because this marks a large shift in the way church music was used and understood, and therefore influenced future generations, and because this thesis is intended to be of specific relevance to the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. However, before the work of the Welseys can be usefully explored, the history of music in the church must be traced from its beginning.

A] FROM THE BEGINNING TO GREGORIAN CHANT

The previous chapter noted the link between the music of the synagogue and that of the early Church. Two particularly important musical forms which passed from Synagogue to Church were the chanting of the Scriptures and the solo singing of
Psalms with congregational response.¹ Since the precentor was usually a trained singer (as noted in the previous chapter, many may have been Jewish cantors who had converted to Christianity), the solo parts of these Psalms developed rich and complex musical forms, while the congregational parts necessarily remained simpler.²

One notable feature of this absorption of Jewish musical forms into the Church was the emphasis on vocal music, and the absence of instruments. It has already been noted, that while the New Testament may not explicitly promote instrumental music, it certainly cannot be shown to oppose it. This is not the case in the centuries following. It is clear that the ancient Church was strongly opposed to the use of instruments in worship for a number of reasons. This was in strong contrast to the Hellenistic society in which they found themselves. It is almost certain that Greek music included arrangements of instruments into various parts, as well as the use of instruments for accompaniment of voices which played different parts from those of the vocalists.

There is, however, little doubt that the Greeks had knowledge of instrumental music arranged for several parts.³

The first reason for the Church's opposition appears to be the association of instruments with the pagan worship of idols. Such worship frequently included sexual and other excesses which the Church urged its people to renounce. However, the removal of pagan practices from among Christian people appears to have been easier said than done, as these practices were both familiar to and loved by those

¹ Hoppin, R. H., Medieval Music, p.30
² Wienman, K., History of Church Music, p.2
³ Quasten, J., Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity, p.66
who had come out of pagan religions. It was, thus, seen as an important part of Christian separation from idolatry and paganism to reject the use of instruments.

Dancing and instrumental music were almost universally shunned, because of their powerful associations with debauchery and immorality...Christians were warned not to practice either, even outside the hours of formal worship.⁴

There was a second reason for this prohibition of instruments, which was possibly even more important from the early church’s point of view, and which extended to include the use of vocal harmony. This was the defence of the “primitive Christian idea of the divine unity and the communion of souls.”⁵ The Church held the value of unity in high regard, and opposed anything that was seen to impact it negatively. The singing of an entire congregation in “one voice” or in unison, was a demonstration of their unity, not just musically, but in spirit. The musical foundation to this singing in unison was diatonic. Chromatic music, with its division of voices or instruments into different parts, however, was viewed as a diffusion of this unity, and therefore to be avoided.

There were also strongly defended theological arguments in support of this view. The pictures in Scripture of angelic singing were understood to be indications of music in unison, and this, coupled with the belief that human worship joined with that of the angels, gave further impetus to the belief that harmony should be rejected. It appears that in some cases, it was believed that such united singing gave greater influence with God.⁶

⁴ Wilson-Dickson, A., The Story of Christian Music, p.28
⁵ Quasten, J., Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity, p.67
⁶ Ibid., pp.69-70
This belief was rooted in a profound sense of God's musicality, and in the idea that He had designed all of creation to be involved in a huge symphony of praise to God. This "music of the spheres" as it was known, was deeply intertwined in the fledgling music theology of the medieval church. Thus, human musical expression was seen to be simply one part of this cosmic song of praise, and needed to be synchronised with it.

Thus even the humble *musica instrumentalis constituta* [music created by playing instruments] was linked through the music of the human soul ultimately to the music of the spheres, for all three were part of the same divinely controlled system. [Humanity] had therefore to strive to make music which synchronised with this harmoniously vibrating universe and which would therefore form a worthy part of God's great symphony of proportions.⁷

One thing which, at least initially, strengthened the musical unity for which the Church was striving was the language in which such worship was conducted. While the early Church in Palestine continued to use Aramaic for their services, the spread of the faith necessitated the adoption of Greek - the universal language of the day.

Even in Rome, Greek continued to be the liturgical language of the Church for the first three centuries of its existence. Thus, for a time, Christianity enjoyed a linguistic unity that has never been recaptured.⁸

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⁸ Hoppin, R. H., *Medieval Music*, pp.30-31
One result of this rejection of instrumental music was that in many early Church circles those who were musicians by trade (and this applied also to other artists) were required to stop their musical work or be excommunicated.\(^9\)

The difficulty for Church leaders, however, was how to explain the many references to instruments in Scripture - particularly the Psalms. It appears, as noted by Quasten, that "in order to give those who listened to their homilies on the psalms no grounds for protest against the ecclesiastical prohibition of instrumental music, most Fathers resorted to the use of allegory."\(^{10}\) Wilson-Dickson cites one particularly interesting example of this from a third century writer:

> The musical instruments of the Old Testament are not unsuitable for us if understood spiritually...The harp is the active soul; the psaltery is pure mind. The ten strings can be taken as nerves, for a nerve is a string. Therefore, the psaltery is taken to be a body having five senses and five faculties...\(^{11}\)

While instruments were frowned upon, vocal music was encouraged for its importance in fighting the battle against heresy and paganism. Particularly from the fourth century, the singing of the Church became an important tool for spreading and maintaining orthodoxy.

As the church progressed into the fourth century, hymn writers found themselves engaged in the defence of orthodoxy as they battled heretics in something akin to a theological sing-off. Where the music captivated

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\(^{10}\) Ibid, p.64
the listener, the theologically intricate lyrics communicated solid biblical truths.\textsuperscript{12}

Combating the heretical teachings of the Gnostics and Arians was a primary task for hymn writers of these critical times.\textsuperscript{13}

It was this practice of creating new hymns that ultimately resulted in the music of the Church following a different path from that of the Synagogue. While Psalms and Scriptures were still chanted in much the same way as the Jewish forms, hymns allowed for greater freedom of musical expression, and were more open to the influence of the music of the times and peoples in which they were birthed.

While Christian psalmody carried on the musical forms of the Jews, the musical spirit of heathendom soon entered into the hymns.\textsuperscript{14}

One thing which aided this progression was the development of two types of services, that were common to all Churches. The first centred around the celebration of communion (which much later came to be known as the Mass), and the second focused on the singing of psalms and hymns, the reading of Scripture and prayer (this later developed into the Offices or Canonical Hours). In the beginning both of these services were rather free, with little rigidity. Prayers, including the most important ones, were not laid down, and were frequently offered extemporarily.\textsuperscript{15} However, with time, the liturgies became more fixed. The 'Mass' in particular settled into more rigid forms, and along with this remained more conservative in its use of

\textsuperscript{12} Throop, J. R., 'In Quest of an Ancient Future' in \textit{Worship Leader Magazine} (no page number available)
\textsuperscript{13} Simmons, M., 'Hymnody: Reflections Of Our Faith' in \textit{Reformed Liturgy and Music}, p.139
\textsuperscript{14} Wienman, K., \textit{History of Church Music}, p.3
\textsuperscript{15} Hoppin, R.H., \textit{Medieval Music}, p.31
music. The 'Office', however, allowed far greater scope for creativity, and this was utilised by hymn writers to a large extent.

The hymnody of the early church was seen as a particularly useful tool for teaching the developing theology of the church and for bringing about growth in the faith for individual disciples. The faith that the Church had in the efficacy of this music is demonstrated in the tremendous encouragement they gave to the use of these new hymns in every aspect of Christian living. The influence of this widespread use of hymn singing must have been great, for it caught the attention of those outside of the Church (as had the worship music of the Jews so many centuries before).

Julian [the Emperor] demanded that [pagan] religious hymns be sung not only in the temples but also in private homes, most likely because he saw how great a role the psalms and Christian hymns played in the private life of the Christians.  

A significant historical change allowed for further development of Christian hymnody. In the first three centuries of its history, the Church was strongly persecuted, which meant that resources were limited, and worship was carried out largely in secret. This situation reversed when Constantine, who had ascended to the throne, converted to Christianity. While the nature or authenticity of this conversion may be debated, the change in the state's attitude to the Church cannot. In AD 312 the Edict of Milan was issued, granting freedom of worship to Christians, and recognising the Church as an institution which could own property. This freedom resulted in a significant growth and development in the Church's forms of worship.

16 Dickinson, E., Music in the History of the Western Church, p.43  
17 Quasten, J., Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity, p.89
The increasing number of Christians, the holding of services in large buildings, and the establishment of Christianity as the state religion, all contributed to an elaboration of liturgical forms and ceremonial procedures.\^18

This new-found freedom provided an openness in which creativity could flourish, and the result was that hymnody grew and developed further than in the past, with new poetic texts increasingly becoming a regular and accepted part of the liturgy.

One particularly notable musical development; associated with hymnody, but different in character, which started toward the end of the fourth century was the addition of wordless musical extensions to some of the chants. This began with the popular Alleluia chant, in which some of the vowel sound were extended without the addition of words. This was the birth of what later became known as the *Trope*. This will be explored further later in this chapter, but for now the importance of this new development must be noted, since it had wide-reaching influence on the history of Church music for many centuries.

When Constantine moved the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Constantinople a seed was sown that contributed to the split of Eastern and Western Christianity.\^19 Even after the split occurred, however, the two branches of the faith continued to influence each other. St. Ambrose (c. 340-397), who has been referred to as the “father of Latin hymnody”\^20 played a particularly significant role in this communication. The Eastern Church had developed a form of psalmody in which two groups of voices sang alternately. This began with the voices split into groups of high

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\(^{18}\) Hoppin, R.H., *Medieval Music*, p.32
\(^{19}\) Ibid., p.33
\(^{20}\) Simmons, M., "Hymnody: Reflections Of Our Faith", in *Reformed Liturgy and Music*, p.139
and low, but later developed into groups of two whole choirs. This antiphonal singing, as it became known, spread throughout the East, and was introduced to the Western churches by Ambrose. What is interesting about this, is that it was seen as a new development, whereas, as was discussed in the previous chapter, this practice was very likely used as far back as the Temple of Solomon, in the Jewish singing of the Psalms.

One thing that is clear from this discussion is that, contrary to the opinion of some scholars, music did not cease in the Eastern Church. Perhaps this view developed from the fact that, while there is a vast repertoire of Greek hymns, their influence was not as strong as those of the Western Church, as Simmons points out:

> Although not as vast in volume as Greek hymnody, Latin hymnody extended over a longer period of time and has had a wider influence.\(^ {21} \)

While the hymn never attained a central role in Roman Mass, it nevertheless remained an important part of the musical expression of Christian people in worship, and the Latin hymn provided a foundation which ultimately led to the hymn becoming a central musical feature of worship after the Reformation.

These new developments in liturgical music were received with some ambivalence by some church leaders, and with outright condemnation by others. The concern was that the music would stir the emotions to an extent that the spiritual benefit of the music would be lost, and that the music would replace the prayerfulness of the words which were sung to it. This was a further cause for the ban on harmony, but also maintained a constant call to a simplicity of style in the music of the Church.

\(^ {21} \) Ibid., p.110
However, even some of the great Fathers of the Church struggled to make a definite stand in this regard. Augustine is a case in point:

For sometimes it seems to me that I can give them [the church's songs] more honour than they deserve - when I feel our spirits moved to flaming devotion more piously and ardently by those same holy words when they are sung than when they are not sung, and when I feel that all the affections of our spirit have, according to their diversity, proper modes of voice and song which are stirred up by I know not what strange relationship. But the pleasure of my flesh, which must not be permitted to enervate the spirit, often causes me to fall ... sometimes however, being too cautious of this very danger, I err by overmuch severity - so greatly in fact that I wish all the melodies of the sweet chants with which David's psalter is accompanied would be banished from my ears and from the Church herself.\(^\text{22}\)

The result of this ambivalence about adorning liturgical music resulted in a view held by many of the Church Fathers that singing be unadorned, and that psalms should be recited with only a slight inflection rather than actually sung. The concern that the music would deprive the souls of the worshippers of spiritual value was deeply felt. This was, of course, Augustine's dilemma. While he was suspicious of the emotional reaction which music elicited, he was nevertheless aware of the spiritual benefits which could be derived from it, and it seems that he had a sense that the spiritual value was linked with, rather than in opposition to, the emotions which were evoked.

How I wept at thy hymns and canticles, pierced to the quick by the voices of thy melodious church! Those voices flowed into my ears, and the truth

\(^{22}\) From Augustine's Confessions, quoted in Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity, p.93
distilled into my heart, and thence there streamed forth a devout emotion,
and my tears ran down, and happy was I therein.\(^{23}\)

This has effectively remained an issue in the Church for its entire history. However, it is clear that the creative spirit of musicians could not be kept silent for long, and their influence has been felt in every age of Church music.

Another significant development for Christian music which followed from Constantine's support of the Church was the establishment of schools for the training of Church musicians.\(^{24}\) It is important to recognise that, as with David's development of the musicians 'academy', the need for training of these musicians was recognised early in the Church's history, and had similar effects on Church music as David's school had on the music of Israel. Firstly, this development created an opportunity for worship music to grow and develop to levels of excellence not achieved before. This began the journey which, positively, led to the ever increasing understanding and experimentation of music which left legacies like Gregorian chant; and negatively, resulted in church music being performed only by the clergy, with the laity being forced into the role of passive observer, rather than participant.

These trends will be explored in greater detail later in this chapter, but it is important to note the increasing exclusion of the laity from worship, and the increasingly specialised role that the clergy played in regard to church music. While the singing of the people continued in their homes, and daily lives, with complete freedom in terms of embellishment - which would nevertheless have been limited as a result of limited expertise - the liturgy became the domain of the clergy, and the chant dominated.

\(^{23}\) From Augustine's Confessions, quoted in Music in the History of the Western Church, p.67
\(^{24}\) Douglas, C. W., Church Music in History and Practice, p.12
By mid-fourth century the change in all structures from participative and inclusive of laity to being clergy centred and controlled was complete and this included music...

After this, nothing corresponding to the Protestant church's congregational song can be found...

The history of the music of the Christian Church properly begins with the establishment of the liturgical chant, which had apparently supplanted the popular song in the public worship as early as the fourth century.²⁵

One final element of music in the earliest history of the Church needs discussion. This is the fact that, in spite of the ecclesiastical bans on the use of instruments in worship, they were never completely removed from the Church in practice. Clement of Alexandria was strongly opposed to the use of most instruments, but permitted the cithara and lyre to be used in the Christian community meal, the agape, at which psalms were commonly sung. This would seem to support the idea of a wider use of instruments in Church worship.

Since the lyre and the cithara were tolerated at the agape in Clement's time, the supposition that they were used in the liturgy appears justified, for in his time the liturgy was still very closely bound up with the agape.²⁶

It seems clear, however, that with the passing of time even this limited use of instruments became further restricted, and vocal music was emphasised in its stead.

²⁵ Dickinson, E., *Music in the History of the Western Church*, pp.48;50;51
All of the above trends served to direct the course of Christian music in its earliest years, and ultimately led to the development of what we now know as Gregorian chant. It is to this great milestone in musical history that we now turn.

B) **GREGORIAN CHANT AND ITS LATER DEVELOPMENTS**

Pope Gregory the Great came into leadership of the Church at a time when its power had been established through the weakening and disintegration of Imperial Rome, and the influence of Pope Leo the Great to extend beyond purely religious concerns, and into the political arena. His work in extending this power base was significant, and he is responsible for many important innovations and developments in social welfare, infrastructure and local and international politics.\(^{27}\)

However, as far-reaching as this work was, Pope Gregory's influence in strengthening the faith, and the development of Church music was greater. While recent research has shown that little, if any of the great body of liturgical chant was composed by Gregory himself, and that he did not, as was once supposed, establish the papal choir (it had been in existence for over a century\(^{28}\)), he was responsible for organising and standardising the music of the Church. His work in this regard was of great significance, for it brought together various disparate strands of tradition, and provided structures for training and development of Church music in such a way that it became a strong guiding force for centuries thereafter. Some specific developments which are widely recognised as legitimately belonging to Gregory need to be mentioned. In many churches the singing was being done by the priests and deacons, at, Gregory felt, the expense of their other duties, and so he established the

\(^{27}\) Wilson-Dickson, A., *The Story of Christian Music*, p.31
\(^{28}\) Hoppin, R.H., *Medieval Music*, p.43
Roman seminaries and orphanages to train choir singers. He also regulated and organised the liturgies and rituals of the Church, as well as the chants themselves. Finally, the influence of the Roman liturgy was expanded by Gregory particularly through the spread of papal influence to Britain, which he effected.

The impact of this period in the history of music must not be underestimated. The first few centuries of the Church saw the development and organisation of Church music in such a way that it influenced not just Church music, but all music, for centuries to come. The importance of this for worship and the Church is of the greatest significance.

Within three centuries [after the Edict of Milan] the period of experimentation, assimilation, and codification had ended with the establishment, in the time of Pope St. Gregory the Great, of the first complete corpus of fully artistic music which the world had ever known, in which the enduring principles of relationship between church music and catholic worship were perfectly and permanently set forth.

The influence which Pope Gregory had on the music of the Church can be summarised in the words of Weinmann:

As the gradual growth of the external forms of divine worship produced an ever-increasing demand for the musical element, a definite organisation and systematisation of liturgical functions entailed a similar regulation of the accompanying chants. This regulation was undertaken for the Roman liturgy by Pope Gregory I...

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29 Ibid.
30 Douglas, C.W., *Church Music in History and Practice*, p.12
The material labour of musical codification must...have rested on the shoulders of the singers of the Schola Cantorum, which had already existed for a long time in Rome, but which was roused to more intense activity by Gregory.\(^{31}\)

Having explored a little of Gregory’s contribution to the development of liturgical chant, it is necessary to understand the nature of the chant in greater depth. The first thing to note is that the purpose of the chant was never music for its own sake.

The conception which is realised in the Gregorian chant, and which exclusively prevailed until the rise of the modern polyphonic system, is that of music in subjection to rite and liturgy, its own charms merged and, so far as conscious intention goes, lost in the paramount significance of text and action.\(^{32}\)

Essentially Gregorian chant can be defined as “unaccompanied melodies set to the Latin texts of the liturgy.”\(^ {33}\) In other words, the chant consists of a melodic line, which is unsupported by either accompaniment or harmony. As such, it is both incredibly simple, and yet capable of great musical subtlety.

Gregorian Chant is music in its purest state, fashioned with consummate skill, and perfectly adapted to its liturgical function.\(^ {34}\)

As simple as this may sound, the chants themselves fall into a range of categories. The actual texts of the chants are drawn from three main sources: 1) the psalms, 2)
other parts of Scripture, especially the canticles and 3) early Christian writings or the lives of the saints.

In terms of musical form, the chants fall into two main groups. The first is called psalmodic, of which there are three forms. Antiphonal psalmody consists of two choirs or groups of voices singing the verses of a psalm or text alternately with a kind of refrain - the antiphon. Responsorial psalmody is the singing of the psalm in which a soloist or cantor alternates with the choir singing the verses or the refrain (called the respond). Direct psalmody is when there is no respond or refrain, and the psalm is simply sung directly by the choir or soloist. The second group of chants is that known as nonpsalmodic. This includes the strophic form, in which the same melody is repeated for all verses or strophes; the double versicle form, in which each couplet has repetition within itself, but the couplets differ from each other; repetitive texts, like the Kyrie and Agnus Dei, which bring about repetition in the music due to the repetition in the text; and the nonrepetitive texts, like the Sanctus, the Gloria and the Credo. In addition, some of the psalmodic forms, like response, can be applied to nonpsalmodic chants; and free form chants, in which there is no repetition and no formula, are also included.

The task of setting the words to the music resulted in three basic stylistic forms developing. The first, in which each syllable is sung on a separate note is known as syllabic chant. By nature this is the simplest form of chant. The second form, in which a single syllable could be set to a group or neume of notes (from two to five or more), was called neumatic. When these groups became extended beyond the neumatic form, the longer passages to which a single syllable was sung were called melismas, and the chant form became known as melismatic. The line between neumatic chant
and melismatic chant is often difficult to draw, and some chants may contain mixtures of two or even all three of these styles.

While the system of modes (classification of music according to the relationships of the notes to one another - or intervals) only developed around the tenth century, the plainchant repertory, most of which was in existence long before this, was found to fit into the system incredibly well. It was certainly the minority of chants that could not be accommodated within this system. The actual development of the system will be discussed in the next section, but it is helpful to know that the system developed eight modes, which structured church music for centuries.

One of the greatest difficulties which early church musicians had to contend with, was the absence of any form of notation. Thus, music could only be learned by ear, and then needed to be remembered. However, while this placed restrictions on Church music, the continuing growth of creativity was not daunted. A number of developments evolved from the chant and expanded it, as musicians stretched their abilities and forms. It is impossible to deal with all the liturgical and musical innovations, and all the different regional divergences in this brief overview - that is the subject for whole books on its own. However, a broad understanding of the most important developments in the chant is helpful. Perhaps, it would be helpful to preface this discussion with the following observation from Richard Hoppin:

It should always be remembered that elaboration of the chants does not represent a chronological development; it reflects instead the liturgical function and importance of a given text.  

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35 Ibid. p.68
36 Ibid. p84
The greatest degree of musical innovation was able to be applied to the types of chants which employed free melodies. These were particularly the antiphons and responsories, used with psalmody, and the hymns of the Office. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the development of the Offices and the Mass, it is nevertheless necessary to have a brief understanding of their practice. The Offices, were followed daily and consisted of eight services or offices, performed in the following way: Matins (morning) was after midnight, followed by Lauds (praises) at daybreak. At 6 AM was Prime (first hour), followed by Terce (third hour) at 9 AM. At noon Sext (sixth hour) was offered and then None (ninth hour) at 3 PM. Vespers (evening) followed in the early evening, and finally Compline (completion) ended the day.37

The Offices gave great scope for the development of and expression of musical creativity. There were various forms of chant used in these services - antiphons, responsories (great and short) and hymns. Antiphons were used far more than any other kind of chant, and with time, many of them became separated from the original text which they were intended to accompany. In style they were syllabic, and usually simple, although in some cases, they were elaborated to a large degree, to the extent that some even approached a fully melismatic style.

The responsories, and particularly the Great Responsories, allowed even greater levels of elaboration. In the beginning the responses were sung by the congregation, but later, the choir took over this task - which meant that greater levels of difficulty could be used for this music. The result of this was that the differences in difficulty

37 Wilson-Dickson, A., The Story of Christian Music, p.33
between the solo verses and choral responds eventually became virtually indiscernible. The verses of the responsories also developed to the point where many of them were effectively free melodies - or more accurately, centonised melodies - new melodies made from combinations of previously known musical pieces or formulae.

The third major musical style in the Offices was the use of hymns. Although hymns had always experienced some level of controversy, they nevertheless, found a home in the Offices, albeit in a secondary role. They were effectively barred from the Mass for many centuries, apart from isolated examples.

Except for a few special ceremonies, notably in Holy Week, hymns never gained an official place in the liturgy of the Mass, and their position in the Offices always remained subordinate to psalmody.

The basic definition of a hymn was that offered by Augustine - a "song in praise of God" and the form was that of free melody to which newly composed words, not direct Scriptural texts, were set. The principles which governed the writing of hymns remained those established by Ambrose, which primarily divided the text into short stanzas, which follow the same structure. All the stanzas within a hymn could thus be sung to the same melody. Some melodies were even used for more than one hymn. Of course, the structures of hymns differed from one another, and, it must be noted, the poetic structure did not require the use of rhyme.

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38 Hoppin, R.H., Medieval Music, p.111
40 Ibid, p.36
For musicians, the hymn allowed an opening for creative output which was unmatched by any other musical expression of worship. However, while the creation of hymns was widespread, the use of them was comparatively limited. A hymn was sung with each of the services of the Offices, but this does not come close to matching the number of hymns that were actually available for use.

The Middle Ages alone produced thousands of Latin sacred poems that we may classify somewhat loosely as hymns. In view of this tremendous output, the relatively insignificant role of hymns in the official liturgy of the Western Church is nothing less than astounding.\(^41\)

This limited use of hymns belies the tremendously significant role that hymns played in the development and history of worship music.

While it is widely asserted that the increasing adornment of music, and the adoption of Latin as the official language of the liturgy, restricted the participation of the laity in worship, they were not altogether sidelined. Hymns provided some measure by which they could play an active role in worship, and many hymns were written in vernacular languages.

It is often assumed that, from the time the medieval vernaculars had developed to the point that the average person could no longer understand the Latin of the liturgy, all congregational participation ceased until the reforms of our own time. There is of course some truth in this, but it is not the whole truth...Vernacular singing and even dancing had a place in medieval worship, even in those areas that were exclusively reserved to the clergy. Under certain circumstances, when the laity were

\(^{41}\) Hoppin, R.H., *Medieval Music*, p.110
encouraged to take part in public worship, the use of dances and vernacular songs for this purpose was more widespread than most people now realise.\(^4^2\)

Another facet of this use of hymns which, while not specifically directed at congregational participation, must have encouraged and facilitated it, was the practice of adopting popular secular folk tunes as the setting for new hymn lyrics. Little is known about music outside of the Church during the medieval period, but that music was used extensively outside of the church is certain. This music would have been simple and rhythmic, and would have suited its new use splendidly.\(^4^3\)

Of course the celebration of the Mass was not without its innovations either, and this celebration of communion, which has always been at the centre of worship, provided opportunity for great creativity. In fact, toward the end of the Medieval period, the creativity accompanying this feast was remarkable.

By the eleventh century Mass was often celebrated with sufficient ceremony to justify it being termed ritual theatre. Its many striking visual symbols went hand-in-hand with elaborate music.\(^4^4\)

The impact of the Mass on the development of music was significant, and more music has been composed for it than any other liturgical service.\(^4^5\) What is significant about this, is that, in many ways, the kind of music that could be used in the Mass was more restricted than for the Offices, and so, ostensibly, there was less freedom

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\(^4^2\) Jeffrey, P., *Popular Culture on the Periphery of the Medieval Liturgy* in *Worship*, p.420

\(^4^3\) Hoppin, R.H., *Medieval Music*, p113

\(^4^4\) Wilson-Dickson, A., *The Story of Christian Music*, p.43

\(^4^5\) Hoppin, R.H., *Medieval Music*, p.116
for musicians and composers. However, the importance and centrality of this Liturgy meant that it still called out the greatest efforts of its artists.

It was in the Mass that the trained clerical choirs really came to the fore, with the resultant elimination of congregational singing. This was largely because of the increasing adornment of the liturgical chants used in the Mass, which became far too complex for untrained voices to sing. The Mass of course centred around the celebration of Holy Communion, but in terms of the chants used, can be divided into two sections. The first, known as the Proper, consisted of those chants whose texts changed daily according to the Church calendar, and represent the oldest parts of the Mass. Of these chants, some were antiphonal and some responsorial. The antiphonal chants - the Introit, the Offertory and the Communion - were all made up of a psalm, with an antiphon at the beginning and the end. The point was to provide music for those acts in which the time was not predetermined or consistent, and which could be ended easily at a signal from the Bishop. The responsorial chants were largely responsible for removing the voice of the congregation from the Mass, as the responds became the domain of the choir. These chants were not limited by any accompanying action, but still evolved in such a way that complete psalms were no longer sung - mostly because the additional responses made the singing of psalms extremely long. The chants included in this group were the gradual (following the first lesson), the alleluia (used in many different contexts, but often after the gradual), and the tract (replacing the alleluia during Lent and the time immediately preceding it.)

The second musical group in the Mass was that known as the Ordinary. These chants were originally meant to be sung by the congregation, but also eventually
moved to the choir. Five chants belonged to this group: the Kyrie, the Gloria, the Credo, the Sanctus and the Agnus Dei. These texts did not change, and were used continuously - which made them attractive objects of elaboration, when polyphony began to develop, as well as a focus for numerous new tunes before this.

Vespers and Matins, which were the two offices of preparation for the Mass, also became increasingly ornate with the passing of the years. The musical development in Vespers revolved mostly around the use of the antiphon. The singing of the Magnificat, with antiphons both preceding and following it, was the climax of this service, and additional antiphons, which with time were separated from the original psalms they accompanied, were also used later in the service. Matins found its musical elaboration focusing on the responsory - a response of praise to the reading of Scripture, which consisted of an antiphon, a psalm-verse, and a repeat of the antiphon. These responsories became extremely elaborate as the creativity of musicians went to work through the centuries.

Before moving on to explore the further developments of the chant in its journey toward polyphony, brief mention must be made of the use of the Church's music outside of the liturgy. While the liturgy was the focus of Christian music, it was certainly not the only avenue for musical expression. Outside of the Church building, music flourished, and this ensured that worship was not just a liturgical activity, but also a daily life experience. As the liturgy became more and more focussed on the clergy, it is understandable that the people should find other ways to express their faith through music.
While Latin was the formal language of the liturgy, it is clear that vernacular music still played a role in the worship of, particularly, the medieval Church. Peter Jeffrey stresses three ways (possibly among others) in which this happened. The first is the common practice of medieval preachers to use the texts of vernacular songs in their sermons, and in some cases the indications are that these songs were actually sung as part of the preaching.\(^{46}\) In this way music, used as part of worship, fulfilled a pastoral role.

The second way in which vernacular music was used in the worship of the laity has to do with the common practice of pilgrimage. This was widespread, as many a penitent would undertake long journeys to venerate relics and images of saints as a form of penance. Frequently services were held along the way, and music was, of course, part of this worship.

At the churches that served as stopping places along the major pilgrimage routes, large numbers of pilgrims would congregate and take part in special services, in which dancing and singing often played a part.\(^{47}\)

Thirdly, it appears that women's religious orders had a strong role to play in the use of vernacular music, and were, in many ways, the bridge between clergy and laity, as well as between literate and illiterate. These convents seemed to have fused the Latin liturgical musical texts with vernacular additions or refrains, and thus demonstrate the use of vernacular languages in worship.\(^{48}\)

\(^{46}\) Jeffrey, P., 'Popular Culture on the Periphery of the Medieval Liturgy' in Worship, pp.420-1
\(^{47}\) Ibid. p.422
\(^{48}\) Ibid. pp.426-7
Thus, while the formal liturgy of the Church made use of Latin, and was led and sung almost exclusively by the clergy, the laity found ways in which to worship on their own terms using familiar forms.

Within the liturgy, the continual striving for new creative ways to express worship, and make it more fitting for the glory of God led to further developments and elaborations on the familiar chant forms. The two most significant of these were Tropes and Sequences.

The trope is basically an addition of words or music, or a combination of both, to standard elements of the liturgy. While the origin and nature of the trope has been the subject of considerable controversy, it is certain that the trope was a significant step in the movement toward polyphony. Basically tropes took one of three forms. The first of these was the additions of melismatic musical pieces to existing chants. These were really just musical elaborations of existing musical elements of the Liturgy. This was often the easiest and most readily accepted way for the creativity of musicians to find acceptance in the Liturgy, as entirely new creations were not as warmly received.49 The second class of trope, was the addition of text to existing chants. In this case, the original chants were set to music in which single syllables carried over a number of notes. This allowed for the addition of further words into the chant. The effect of this was to transform a melismatic chant into a syllabic (or more syllabic) one. The final class of trope was that in which both words and music were added to existing chants. This, obviously, did not alter the original chant, but rather added to it - either with a piece at the beginning, or with pieces inserted between phrases.50

49 Hoppin, R.H., Medieval Music, p.145
50 For a more detailed discussion of tropes, see Hoppin, R.H., Medieval Music, pp.144-154
There has been some debate over the classification of the Sequence. Like tropes, sequences were additions to existing elements of the liturgy, and so have been defined by some as simply another class of trope. Others view them as completely different forms of composition. One thing that is clear is that they grew from the same motivation as tropes - that of seeking an outlet for creative expression within the confines of the established liturgy. Most sequences were associated with the Alleluia, and were basically the addition of words to the long melismas that had been added to the end of the existing chant. The significance of this is that it demonstrates how the melisma at the end of the alleluia developed, and then changed. As Andrew Wilson-Dickson suggests, the extended musical elaboration of the end of the alleluia, may have originated as a use of the gift of tongues in music, or as a spontaneous outburst of musical praise. This is one instance in which the music was not a servant to the words or liturgy, but became an expression of praise in its own right. With time, however, this would have become more formalised, and then at a later stage, the sequence (words set to this music) was added.\footnote{Wilson-Dickson, A., \textit{The Story of Christian Music}, p.45}

What is demonstrated here is that musicians were constantly seeking for new ways to express themselves within the context of the liturgy. While attempting to remain within the constraints of the Gregorian chant form, they nevertheless continued to stretch the limits of musical performance. It is therefore not surprising that polyphony eventually broke free of the condemnation of earlier years and found its way into the liturgy. This must now be examined in further detail, along with the other great development in music - that of notation.
C] THE DEVELOPMENT OF NOTATION AND POLYPHONY

The quest for the increasing adornment of the liturgy inevitably resulted in two profoundly significant musical developments. The first of these - the creation of a system for music to be written in order to aid memory - was at first directly linked with the elaboration of plainchant, and so did not follow chronologically, but rather developed alongside the chant.

For centuries, music was passed on by ear, but as chants and their elaborations grew longer and more ornate, the limits of human memory were stretched to breaking point. It became clear that a system was needed in order to aid this memory. Early forms of notation were nothing more than this - they could help a musician who already knew the chant to remember it, but they could not communicate the melody of music which had not been heard before. Notation aided the ear, but was not yet able to replace it, in terms of musical communication.

Notation followed a rather logical path of development, beginning with signs written above the text of the chants, to indicate the rising and falling of the voice. When a single word fell on several notes, these signs (or neumes) became joined into new signs, and the system became more comprehensive. This neumatic notation developed in the eighth century, but was widely used by the ninth. 52

The next important step in this journey, was the introduction of "heighted neumes", which used placement to show both the size and direction of intervals. This required placing neumes for specific notes on the same level within a piece. The natural progression from this was to add lines to represent the notes. The lines had no fixed

52 Hoppin, R.H., Medieval Music, p.58
reference, but were identified by a letter at the beginning of the piece. This was the precursor to the musical staff. This system of lines finally settled into a standard four line staff, which became the basis for chant notation. The person responsible for this is commonly believed to be one Guido d'Arezzo, who lived around 1000 - 1050 AD. Coupled with this fixed staff, the neumes developed into the square shape which is now associated with plainchant notation up to the present day.

The breakthrough which this brought had two elements. The first is that a vocalist who had never heard a chant, could learn to sing it from the notation, and so it was no longer necessary to rely solely on the ear. The second development was in music education. Guido d'Arezzo developed other tools, which along with the staff, enabled him to train a singer in a year or two, as opposed to the previous ten year training period, and the resultant expertise was far in advance of the old system.  

It is important to note that at the early stages of notation there was still no indication of rhythm. This developed much later as a result of the work of the famous School of Notre Dame. This school was established during the period of France's pre-eminence in Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It was during the rebuilding of Notre Dame cathedral under Maurice de Sully, Bishop of Paris, that a large group of composers produced a significant body of polyphonic music. This musical school was responsible for many great advances in musical practice and theory which occurred during this time, and the addition of rhythm to notation was certainly one of them.

What was needed was a system of notation that would show the relative values of notes, both within a single melodic line and in the different voices of a polyphonic composition. The development of such a system,
imperfect as it may have been, was one of the most significant achievements of the School of Notre Dame.\textsuperscript{54}

The essence of this system was the use of patterns of notes of long or short lengths. These patterns were known as rhythmic modes (of which there were six), and the system was referred to as modal notation. It is beyond the scope of this discussion to delve further into the workings of this system, but it was a significant advancement in the communication of music.

It was not long, however, before the limitations of this system became apparent, as the rhythmic intricacies of music began to exceed the capabilities of modal notation. In the latter part of the thirteenth century, a theorist by the name of Franco of Cologne, developed a system in which different note values could be shown by different symbols. The divisions of the notes was based on threes - a long was made up of three breves, and a breve of three semi-breves.\textsuperscript{55} Medieval theorists viewed the number three as of deep spiritual significance, and so it's use in music was seen as important and as a musical reflection of the Triune God.\textsuperscript{56} While this system known as mensural or Franconian notation, was a step closer to the detailed system of modern times, it was still incomplete. Perhaps the biggest problem was that the values of notes continued to change relative to the context in which they were used, as had been the case with notation for centuries. A further contribution of Franco was the development of signs to indicate the values of rests. Ultimately in this system lay the seeds of contemporary notation, which was able to develop from it far more easily than from the modal system.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid. p.221
\textsuperscript{56} Wilson-Dickson, A., The Story of Christian Music, pp.51-2
In the fourteenth century theorists like Philippe de Vitry further developed the rhythmic capabilities of notation, finding ways to represent the increasingly complex rhythmic patterns of composers and musicians. Once the process of using notation to represent music visually had begun, it was inevitable that it should continue to develop with greater degrees of accuracy. This was certainly the case, with many small additional contributions being made, until it finally reached the form we now know in the seventeenth century. For this brief survey, the preceding discussion provides a view of the main contributors to this important process.

In terms of the theological significance of music in worship, these innovations for music are significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, they provide a clear indication of the constant motivation of church musicians to find more fitting and elaborate ways to express God's glory, and worship of Him. This desire to celebrate God's greatness through human art forms, and to do so in the most glorious manner possible cannot be faulted, and is an important foundational principle for all who offer musical gifts for use in the worship of the church. Secondly, it is of great significance that the history of western music in general, and the development of it to the levels of complexity and creativity which it knows today, is completely dependent on the Church. Throughout its history the Church has believed that music is created for the specific purpose of worship, and thus the development of music happened in this context. While music has been separated from this function in many ways today, the truth that worship is the primary function of music, and that the development of music has resulted from worship, cannot be denied.

It is worth remembering, in the first place, that the art of music is what it is today largely in consequence of what religion has done for it. By this I mean that the demands that religion has put upon music, the opportunities and incentives for its development that religion has afforded, and the basis of knowledge and character that religion has supplied for musical culture - I mean that these have furnished to music the necessary occasion and atmosphere and nutriment for its growth to the stature of a great and famous fine art. Music is to a striking degree the creation or child of the Church.  

The third significant value of notation, in theological terms, is the possibility that it has provided for the sharing of music. With the possibilities of communicating music without it being heard first, the spread of music, and the ideas and teachings associated with it, has been made possible. This has enabled the Church to draw on influences from further afield than would otherwise have been possible, with a resultant deepening of spirituality. Also, the ability to draw on the musical tradition of the church has greatly increased the sense of “connectedness” and “rootedness” which the modern Church knows. The great hymns of the faith, which deepen and inform contemporary spirituality in so many ways, would have been lost to us long ago, were it not for notation.

This quest for adornment of the liturgy did not only result in the growth of notational systems. In spite of the early Church’s emphasis on unison, it was inevitable that harmony should find a way to break into the mainstream of Church musical expression. The only surprising thing about this is the fact that it took so long to happen, and be recognised. It is now necessary to explore this process briefly.

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58 Pratt, W.S., Musical Ministries in the Church, p.14
For the first eight hundred years of Christian worship the musical vehicle for the liturgy was melody. It was the advent of notation that allowed polyphony - many melodies together - to develop, in directions that have since made Western music unique.\(^{59}\)

Once again, a detailed account of this process is beyond the scope of this study, but the main developments which led to harmony as we know it can be discussed.

Effectively harmony started as a further elaboration of existing chants. It was thus a kind of trope, but with the music being a simultaneous addition to the chant, instead of added on separately.\(^{60}\) While the idea of polyphonic singing was probably known quite early in the Church’s history, the formal practice seems to have begun only around the ninth century. The first form of harmony was known as organum, and was based on the principle of the duplication of a chant in parallel motion at a fifth, a fourth or an octave. While there were many different forms and complexities of this practice, they all followed basically the same principle. This developed in the eleventh century into what has become known as free organum, in which the strict parallel motion was abandoned, and contrary motion, as well as different musical intervals were introduced.

Once again, the basic underlying motive was the elaboration of the liturgy, and so the quest for fuller and more decorative forms of music led to increasing development in the harmonies created. Free organum moved from note-against-note polyphony, to completely separate vocal lines which were performed along with the original chant or extensions. This second vocal part, or duplum as it was known, often required

\(^{59}\) Wilson-Dickson, A., The Story of Christian Music, p.49

\(^{60}\) Hoppin, R.H., Medieval Music, p.187
considerable skill, as it frequently involved as many as forty notes set alongside a single note of the original. In addition, a third voice (the *triplum*), and even a fourth (the *quadruplum*) were added, which moved music into true polyphonic performance.

As composers expanded their use of polyphony, other polyphonic musical devices began to develop. The practice of *voice exchange* in which two voice parts sang a phrase, and then repeated the same phrase with the parts interchanged, was a simple tool which developed over time into what is now known as counterpoint - defined as “the combination of two melodic lines.”

While composers and musicians celebrated the growth of their art in worship, many within the Church did not share their feelings.

The startling effect of the choir suddenly changing from the lone and sinuous melody of the chant to three- or even four-part music did not please everyone. There are records of an increasing number of complaints from churchmen of this elaborate music.

However, the growth of harmony continued, and was accepted into the mainstream of worship expression. It was this growth of harmony that ultimately led to the decline of the chant, although, fortunately, it was never completely eradicated. One thing which is clear is that through the years, Church music influenced popular folk music, and was, in turn, influenced by it. The relationship between worship music and culture was becoming increasingly strong, as the practices of local churches were less able to be controlled by Rome. However, the hold of the Papacy over music,
liturgy and worship was only really broken by the Reformation. The role of Martin Luther, and the other reformers on the use of music in the Church cannot be underestimated.

**D] THE REFORMATION & THE DEVELOPMENT OF HYMNODY**

There is frequently a tendency to view the Reformation as the true beginning of hymnody in the worship life of the Church. This is probably the reason for Martin Luther's reputation as the "Father of Hymnody." While this ascription is certainly deserved, as shall be discussed in this section, it is false to think of Martin Luther as the originator of the hymn, or even as the initiator of the widespread use of hymns in the Western Church. The tradition of hymnody goes back to the earliest times of Church history, as we have seen. Hymns exist in Scripture, and as early as St. Ambrose, the hymn was popular as a musical expression of worship. This tradition continued throughout Church history.

The German Church had a particularly strong tradition of hymnody, and this was certainly instrumental in Luther's work after the Reformation.

It is, therefore, extraordinary to find still among serious Protestant inquirers the statement that the German hymn did not exist, properly speaking, before Luther, or that Luther was the Father of the German hymn. . . Indeed, Luther himself spares the trouble of refuting these statements, for he says (*Geistliche Lieder*, Wittenberg, 1535): "Here follow some sacred songs composed in former times. These we have collected . . . to serve as a testimony to the pious Christians who have gone before us".64

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64 Weinman, K., *History of Church Music*, pp.57-58
The impact of the Reformers was felt more as a result of their spiritual influence, rather than any new creative input which they brought. The paradox of the period leading up to the Reformation was that the creative life of the Church was thriving and growing, while spirituality was in disarray. Luther was able to tap into this creative energy and develop his own creativity, and use this for spiritual renewal and growth. This gave his musical contribution great power and the results are recognised in the records of history.

Luther was certainly not the first to react to the excesses of the Church. Wycliffe and others had been speaking out for some time. However, the timing of his ninety five theses could not have been better. With the advent of printing, his challenge to the Church was able to be circulated extremely widely, and much support was gained by this. Luther made use of this new development, and published and distributed a large number of tracts over the following years.  

That Luther should value music so highly is no surprise. His culture, upbringing, training and place in history all built into him a sense of music’s power and importance.

For Luther, as for every medieval man, music was not just a beautiful ornament for church festivals; it was an essential ingredient of the life of the spirit and soul. His relationship to music was not incidental but part of his very existence, and since he was a clergyman, the relationship was that of an expert, not of a layman. 

65 Wilson-Dickson, A., The Story of Christian Music, p.58
66 Blume, F., Protestant Church Music, p.6
The significance of this is that, while hymns and creative worship music were widespread before the Reformation, Luther's unsurpassed contribution was that of uniting this music with real and personal relationship with God. Music became once again a powerful physical and emotional expression of spiritual reality, and thus the doorway to true worship. Luther drew on all available musical resources, and by adapting them to the new spirituality and basing them on a solid theological foundation, he restored worship to the people. He understood music technically, and, it seems, was skilled at musical performance, but he was also deeply aware of the spiritual value of music.

Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. She is a mistress and governess of those human emotions - to pass over the animals - which govern men as masters or, more often, overwhelm them. No greater commendation than this can be found - at least, not by us. For whether you wish to comfort the sad, to terrify the happy, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate, or to appease those full of hate - and who could number all these masters of the human heart, namely the emotions, inclinations, and affections that impel men to evil or good? - what more effective means than music could you find?  

It is extremely helpful for this study to explore the sources which Luther and other Reformation musicians drew on for their music, and also the way they used this music in their worship. There were basically four main sources for what became known as the German lied. The first was the traditional Latin hymn and liturgical chants drawn from the Catholic Church. These were translated into German. The second source was the pool of pre-Reformation German hymns. Thirdly German folk
or secular songs were used, with necessary adaptations being performed. In some cases both text and melody were used with the text being changed to align with Reformation theology. In many cases the music was used and new words were provided. Finally, some texts were used, but set to different tunes - either new ones, or those taken from other songs. Some of the lieder went through a combination of these changes. The fourth source of Reformation music was the production of entirely new music, written by "poet musicians" in which the text and melodies were composed together from scratch. Luther himself was responsible for a number of these songs.

Most of the changes which Luther brought into the worship of the German church concerned the German Mass - worship designed in the vernacular for use in small parish churches. He still encouraged the use of the Latin Mass in Cathedrals and Abbeys. The main difference that was introduced was the inclusion of the entire congregation in the whole of the worship service - including receiving the sacrament. The result of this was that the hymn - the vehicle which fostered the corporate nature of Lutheran worship - became the centre of the German worship service. In addition, the hymn was largely responsible for the growth of the reformation movement.

The German hymn was a powerful instrument in the spread of the new doctrine, for it made it possible for the people to take part in divine service in the vernacular: to form, as it were, an integral part therein. This psychological moment must be duly appreciated, if we are to understand the saying of the Protestants that Luther's songs won over whole towns to Protestantism.

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68 Ibid. p.14
69 Weinman, K., History of Church Music. p.66
Luther's devotion to music expressed itself in a number of other ways as well. He was aware of the inaccessibility of books to most parishioners, and so encouraged his people to learn their *lieder* by heart. To aid in this, schools were developed to train young boys to lead the congregational singing. In addition to this, he used music as an educational tool, teaching the youth Christian values and living through musical associations.\(^7^0\) In fact, there are indications that he arranged and composed music specifically with the intention of reaching and attracting the youth to the church.\(^7^1\) Thus, Luther built his theology of music on three pillars - that music is a praise of God; that it is an offering by the congregation (a corporate experience), and that it is a means of Christian education. To this a fourth must certainly be added - proven by Luther's experience, although perhaps not noted in his theology - that of music as a powerful tool for evangelism.

It needs to be noted that this point in history saw the beginning of the organ's rise to dominance as an instrument for worship. The fifteenth century saw the first organs being built into churches, and making a contribution to worship. They were not used as an accompaniment for congregational singing, however. The people still stuck to the basic unison singing of the melody line, but since many of the hymns were rather long, they were often sung in a responsorial or alternating form, with the choir taking every second verse while the congregation rested. In these cases, the choir would sing in four part harmony, and the organ was often used as a support for the choir. There are some musical arrangements of hymns which have been discovered from this period which are intended for instrumental performance alone, but there is some

\(^{71}\) Blume, F., *Protestant Church Music*, p.14
scepticism as to whether these arrangements would actually have been used as such in worship.\textsuperscript{72}

In contrast to the Lutheran theology of music, which included all things save those expressly forbidden by Scripture, Calvin was far more rigid in his view. Only that which was actually prescribed in Scripture was acceptable. For this reason, the Calvinist approach to music differed from Luther's on a number of central points. Firstly, Luther's use of secular folk melodies was completely excluded, and secondly, the use of instruments was forbidden. In fact, the only music which Calvin viewed as suitable for worship were the psalms, and two additional pieces - the Nunc Dimittis and the Ten Commandments. These were sung in unison, without any harmony being allowed. Any music of "human origin" was deemed to be outside of God's directions for worship.

John Calvin banned the use of the organ and other instruments in the church in Geneva, even going so far as to melt down some of the metal pipes for other uses. He even distrusted singing in parts, lest the people have fun and take their minds off the serious business of "making a joyful noise to the Lord."\textsuperscript{73}

This view of congregational worship exerted a strong influence, particularly through the publication of the famous \textit{Genevan Psalter}. This was a collection of the Psalms with a large variety of melodies and rhythmic settings. Unfortunately the creativity of this book did not continue in later times. As Morgan Simmons points out:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{72} Ibid. p.106
\item \textsuperscript{73} Lovelace, A.C. & Rice, W.C., \textit{Music and Worship in the Church}, p.212
\end{itemize}
When the Genevan Psalter was completed in 1562, it displayed an incredible variety of tunes and meters - 110 different meters and 125 tunes, quite a contrast to the dearth of imagination that followed; the entire psalter could be sung to eight tunes by our Pilgrim forbears.

The impact of this work was felt throughout Germany, the Netherlands and Britain. However, as time passed, the Calvinist restrictions on music had a life-sapping effect on the worship of the Church. In England this ultimately set the scene for the great hymn writers of the eighteenth century. Before this can be explored, however, it is necessary to trace the history of the church in England from the time of the English Reformation.

E) THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

While the Reformation in Germany was initiated because of deeply religious sentiments, the same cannot be said for England. In this case, the Reformation was largely precipitated by Henry VIII breaking with Rome in order to effect his divorce from Catherine of Aragon. However, he was not concerned with religious reform, and so he simply replaced the Pope with himself as the head of the Church in England. This move did affect the music of the Church quite significantly, though, primarily as a result of all but a few monasteries and colleges being effectively dissolved. The effect of this over time was that the worship of the Cathedrals and that of the parish Churches became completely separate and different from each other.

While Henry was not particularly concerned with the religious Reformation movements of Europe, they began to take hold in England under the reign of his

Simmons, M., 'Hymnody: Reflections Of Our Faith', in Reformed Liturgy and Music, p.140
successor, Edward VI. Calvinism made a great impact musically on England, with the Metric Psalms becoming widely used, although Calvinist theology did not take root to the same extent. In Scotland, however, both found a home, and the Presbyterian Church is the result of this. In the same year that the *Genevan Psalter* was completed, an English version of the Psalms, *The Whole Book of Psalms*, was also published. This collection, known simply as Sternhold and Hopkins, after the authors, and later as the "Old Version," was, in the opinion of many scholars, musically inadequate.

... the choice of the ballad metre for the English Psalter ... was unhappy, since the meter that sings so well when it is telling a story of kings and battles and chivalry sits less easily on the profundities of Christian devotion. At any rate, the colleagues of Sternhold who after his death in 1549 completed the Psalter did not do it very well, almost certainly because they were not composing freely but manhandling the words of the Psalter until they could fit them into the metre of the old ballads.\(^75\)

Even contemporaries of Sternhold and Hopkins were often unimpressed by this musical collection, as is expressed in verse by John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647-80):

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Sternhold and Hopkins had great qualms
When they translated David's psalms,
    To make the heart right glad;
But had it been King David's fate
To hear thee sing and them translate
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\(^{75}\) Routley, E., *A Short History of English Church Music*, p.17
By God! 'twould set him mad!76

This version was replaced in 1696 with another collection of the Psalms, which was known as either Tate and Brady, or the "New Version." These collections of Psalms dominated English Church music for nearly a century and a half, and their effects were not very positive. The scene was set for change.

One last feature of the use of these psalms must be mentioned. In the light of the fact that most parish churches had no access to organs or instrumentation, the melody was indicated by the parish clerk, who would have had at least a basic grasp of the fundamentals of music. The clerk would sing each line of the psalm, and the congregation would then repeat it. For large parts of these services congregational singing was abandoned altogether, and the psalms were then spoken in alternating form, the congregation responding in turn to the minister. It is clear that this would have given these services a very stilted and unworshipful character.

While the Anglican Church focussed on the metrical Psalms, the non-conformist Church began to develop their worship in new directions, and English hymnody came into existence. The main initiator in this process was Isaac Watts, who has earned recognition as the "father of English hymnody"77

Watts reacted strongly to the poor quality - both spiritual and musical - of the psalms, and was convinced that worship music should be more inspiring and spiritually

77 Simmons, M., 'Hymnody: Reflections Of Our Faith', in *Reformed Liturgy and Music*, p.141
growthful. In his collection *Psalms of David imitated in the Language of the New Testament* published in 1719, he wrote:

Tho’ the Psalms of David are a Work of admirable and divine Composure, tho’ they contain the noblest sentiments of Piety, and breathe a most exalted Spirit of Devotion, yet when the best of Christians attempt to sing many of them in our common Translations, that Spirit of Devotion vanishes and is lost, the Psalm dies upon their Lips, and they feel scarce any thing of the holy Pleasure.  

Watts suggested five considerations that guided his writing and use of music for worship. He desired that the quality of the poetry of the psalms be upgraded; in order to develop the spirituality of congregations, the insights of authors should be reflected in the psalms and hymns; this called for an interpretation of the Old Testament through New Testament theology; in addition, the whole of Scripture should be understood in contemporary terms and finally, congregational singing should include both Scriptural psalms and songs of “free” composition based on biblical themes.

The success of this approach to music is attested to by the fact that Watt’s music had far-reaching influence. His *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* published in 1707 contained 350 pieces, of which many had a considerable longevity. Over one hundred of them can still be found in American hymnals of recent times. Watts also composed a number of ‘new’ psalms. He was not concerned to produce settings for the entire psalter, and did not even feel the need to use entire psalms. Rather, he paraphrases the text, and interprets it in the light of the Christian theology of his day. Amazingly,

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78 Quoted in Leaver, R. A., ‘The Hymn Explosion’, in *Christian History*, p. 15
79 Ibid., p.15
80 Pratt, W.S., *Musical Ministries in the Church*, p. 170
Watts music even found its way into the Church of England - although only for private use.\(^1\) The encouragement which congregational song received from Watts work was deeply significant, and started a new trend in the way music was used in worship. Two notable features of this work was that Watts was the first to include hymns specifically written for children, and (possibly as a direct result of his work) the Presbyterian Meeting of Eastcheap, London instituted a "Friday Lecture" with one of its express purposes being the development of hymn singing.

Watt's hymns made a profound impact on the English church, but they were not perfect. Watts was a preacher, and this caused his verse to fall at times into a "teaching" mode which was experienced as dry. His poetry was deeply theological, although some of this theology has been criticised, and there was an objectivity to his work that was in some ways helpful, but did not inspire the passion which later hymns would. Isaac Watts, nevertheless, changed the course of English Church music significantly, and it was on the foundation that he laid, that the Wesley brothers were able to build their amazing repertoire of congregational hymns.

**THE WESLEYAN REVIVAL**

The story of John and Charles Wesley is well known. Their musical work, and the contribution they made to hymnody is unsurpassed. More than any other, these two brothers brought hymn singing into the mainstream of Church life and spirituality. What Isaac Watts had begun, the Wesleys developed and expanded. As Erik Routley has said:

\(^{\text{Ibid. p.171}}\)
The Wesleys delivered everybody (as Isaac Watts had delivered the people of his own communion) from the tyranny of the metrical psalm. Watts taught his congregations to sing about Christ; the Wesleys taught the whole country to do so.\textsuperscript{82}

A clear influence, and a significant experience for John Wesley and his attitude to hymnody, was his contact with the Moravian Brethren. His first encounter with them was on board the ship sailing for America. In the midst of a storm Wesley experienced tremendous fear, but noticed that the Moravians felt no concern, and continued in worship unhindered. This had a profound effect on him, and the power of their hymns touched him deeply.

In the midst of the psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over, split the mainsail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began among the English. The Germans calmly sang on. I asked one of them afterward, “Were you not afraid?” He answered, “I thank God, no.” I asked, “But were not your women and children afraid?” He replied, mildly, “No; our women and children are not afraid to die.”\textsuperscript{83}

After the miserable time spent in Georgia, John was again influenced by the Moravians in the person of Peter Böhler, with whom he spent much time on his return to England. Böhler was part of the process which led to Welsey's heart-warming experience. After this powerful moment, Wesley spent three months in Germany visiting with the Moravian community there - which obviously had a significant impact on him, and not least in terms of their music.

\textsuperscript{82} A Short History of English Church Music, p.44
\textsuperscript{83} The Journal of John Wesley, p.36
Charles was the better musician of the two, however, and while the repertoire of Methodist Hymnody was the work of both brothers, it was really Charles who was the initiator, writing, it is estimated, an average of ten lines of verse per day for over fifty years.\textsuperscript{84}

Charles' conversion experience happened just three days before John's. One day, while sick in bed praying, he heard the voice of his host's sister, saying, "In the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise, and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thy infirmities." In response to this he got out of bed and opened his Bible, reading first from the Psalms and then from Isaiah. In these passages he found comfort, and the sense of forgiveness and salvation that John discovered at Aldersgate Street not long after. It was only two days later that he began writing a hymn, which was sung around his bed by John and other friends who had come from Aldersgate Street to see him.

The hymns that followed have continued to influence the Church and enrich the worship of Christians throughout the world, and throughout the years. The power of these hymns in the revival is unquestionable. Musically, the hymns were drawn from a number of sources: Some were translated from old Latin and Greek texts and some were German hymns used by the Moravian Community of Count Zinzendorf, and some were entirely new compositions. The Wesley's were even comfortable using popular tunes with new words for their hymns.

\textsuperscript{84} Dudley-Smith, T., 'Why Wesley Still Dominates Our Hymbook' in Christian History, Issue 31, p.9
Like Luther, John Wesley was happy to adapt popular tunes from any source (much to the disapprobation of high churchmen). The primary concern for John was that the tunes be singable for the people, and should express the same feeling as the words. The Wesleys used a vast array of metres for their hymns, and worked hard at training their people to sing. John included strong instructions for singing in the beginnings of his hymn books, and in particular his 1780 hymnal laid out rules for singing.

1. Learn these tunes before you learn any others; afterwards learn as many as you please.
2. Sing them exactly as they are printed here, without altering or mending them at all.
3. Sing all. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can.
4. Sing lustily and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep.
5. Sing modestly. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation.
6. Sing in tune. Whatever time is sung be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it; . . . and take care not to sing too slow.
7. Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing.

While Wesley began his musical journey with a strong resistance to the use of instruments in worship, this view was tempered as a result of hearing the organ well

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86 Dinwiddie, R.D. 'Two Brothers Who Changed The Course of Church Singing' in *Christianity Today*, Sept. 1984, p.32
played, with powerful effect on a few occasions, one of which was at Exeter cathedral in August, 1762. However, instrument use remained scarce, not least because of the lack of availability. Musical excellence, in whatever form it might take was emphasised as an aid to worship, and for this reason they worked hard at training and developing the vocal capabilities of their congregations.

Above all, strenuous efforts were made to educate congregations into singing well, as the Methodist Conference Minutes of 1765 testify:

Teach them to sing by note, and to sing our tunes first: take care they do not sing too slow. Exhort all that can in every congregation to sing. Set them right that sing wrong. Be patient herein.

Accordingly, some hymn-books included sections on how to read music and to ‘tune the Voice’.

When the whole congregation had developed the capacity to sing with heart and soul (in a way that is rarely experienced nowadays) then a number of musical elaborations were possible. Women and men occupied different parts of the chapel and could therefore be asked to sing antiphonally - taking turns to sing. The whole congregation was often capable of singing in full harmony, obviating the need for any instrumental accompaniment. Hymns developed with repetitions of text and independence of parts which are still well known today.\(^7\)

In order to further develop this musical training, Wesley also wrote “The Gamut, or Scale of Music” with Thomas Butts. This was a short course in music theory and notation which was placed before the tunes of hymns in some hymn books. This was designed so that unskilled musicians could learn to read notes without the assistance of a music teacher. This was replaced in 1765 with “The Grounds of Vocal Music”

\(^7\) Wilson-Dickson, A., *The Story of Christian Music*, p.117
which simplified the technical language of the Gamut still further, and reduced the number of musical illustrations. He also included seven vocal training exercises. It is no surprise, in the light of this, that the Methodists gained a strong reputation for the power and beauty of their congregational singing.\textsuperscript{88}

It was not just the music which made the hymns of the Wesleys so powerful. Their lyrical skill was also immense. Charles Wesley, in particular, had a tremendous ability to merge the objectivity of Watts with a sensitivity which touched the emotions, and the inner experience of the congregation. The poetry of his hymns employed a number of patterns which served to draw singers into worship. Three main forms can be outlined which helped this to happen. Firstly, the lyrics of Charles Wesley drew on, and had deep relevance for, human experience. The hymns relate to the life which human beings live, and the experiences which form part of this life, and so there is a ready identification in the heart of the worshipper.

We would not have to look very far in the 1780 hymnbook to find headings intrinsically connected with the themes of original sin, prevenient grace, repentance, justification, regeneration, sanctification, and perfection. Rather than drawing these connections out in a formal way, however, the hymns embody and dramatize what it means to be persons who have these experiences.

Always, in the Wesley hymns, when people come to the activity of worship, they do so as persons at some place in experience between the poles of fallenness and glory.\textsuperscript{89}

\textsuperscript{88} See Young, C., \textit{Music of the Heart}, pp.74-78.
\textsuperscript{89} Gallaway, C. B., 'Patterns of Worship in Early Methodist Hymnody, and the Task of Hymnal Revision' in \textit{Quarterly Review}, Fall 1987, p.16
The second pattern which made Wesley's hymns so powerful was the imagery which he used. His hymns are filled with images of the Godhead, and theological pictures, which rooted human experience in the truths of Scripture. In this way they avoided mere emotionalism, or introspection, and had the effect of interpreting the lives of the worshippers in the light of the sacred.

In the 1780 hymnbook, for example, there are more than two hundred different images (figures, names, titles, etc.) that bear upon the portrayal of Christ, his person and work, and his relationships to the other persons of the Trinity.  

The third form which gave Wesleyan hymnody such power, was the way worship was expressed - the pattern of address. Wesley had a way with words which enabled worshippers to address God as in prayer, to encourage one another in community, and to learn from Scripture.

The hymns of this source present a remarkably sensitive pattern of personal and communal prayer, involving the community of faith and the persons of the Trinity in a rich and complex drama of dialogue in worship.  

However it was not just these patterns or forms which made the Wesley's hymns so significant. The wealth of experience and training that they brought into these songs gave them depth, spirituality, and sensitivity in such a way that worship was transformed, lives were changed, and truth was assimilated by all who participated. Timothy Dudley-Smith outlines a number of attributes which Charles Wesley

90 Ibid. p.18
91 Ibid. p.21
possessed which enabled him to be the hymn writer which he was. He had a natural gift for verse, with the ear of a musician and a poet. He had a solid classical musical education, which his father made sure of, in spite of their financial struggles. He had a deeply literary nature, writing verse for every occasion or experience. He had a personal and passionate knowledge and experience of the forgiveness of Christ, and was wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord. Wesley’s mind was immersed in the Scriptures, and he was convicted of the need to reach and serve people in pastoral ministry. In the production of his hymns, he was supremely creative, and set himself a high standard which led him to work hard at his art. Coupled with this was the tremendous humility which caused him to submit all of his work to his brother for editing and adjustment.92

The result of all of these qualities was that the Wesleyan Revival had, in its hymns, a tool which was useful for building community among their people, for reaching the lost, for Christian education and for inspiring their worship. As John Wesley wrote in the preface to the 1780 hymnbook:

In what other publication of this kind have you as distinct and full an account of Scriptural Christianity? Such a declaration of the heights and depths of religion, speculative and practical? So strong cautions against the plausible errors, particularly those that are now most prevalent? And so clear directions of making your calling and election sure: for perfecting holiness in the fear of God?93

92 For further detail on these qualities see Dudley-Smith, T., ‘Why Wesley Still Dominates our Hymnbook’ in Christian History, pp.9-13
93 Quoted in Warren, J. I., O For A Thousand Tongues, pp.17-18
The old saying that Methodism was born in song is certainly true and evidenced by the way its music pervaded every part of their life.

Early Methodists sang their faith - their belief, their life practices, and their worship.  

Of course, this powerful influence of Wesleyan hymnody was not just limited to Methodists. Its effects were felt throughout England, and ultimately, throughout the world. The power of these hymns to draw people to faith, and particularly Methodist faith, has been widely recognised.

Miller wrote: "It is well known that more people are drawn to the tabernacle of Methodists by their attractive harmony, than by the doctrine of their preachers . . . Where the Methodists have drawn one person from our communion by their preaching, they have drawn ten by their music."

John Wesley was, himself, deeply aware of the power of music. He expressed this at length in his *Thoughts on the Power of Music*, the writing of which was finished at Inverness on June 9, 1779. The opening paragraph of this article reads thus:

"By the power of music, I mean its power to affect the hearers; to raise various passions in the human mind. Of this we have very surprising accounts in ancient history. We are told the ancient Greek musicians in particular were able to excite whatever passions they pleased; to inspire love or hate, joy or sorrow, hope or fear, courage, fury, or despair; yet, to"

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94 Ibid. p.66
95 Leaver, R. A., *The Hymn Explosion* in *Christian History*, p.17
raise these one after another, and to vary the passions just according to the variation of the music.\textsuperscript{96}

While Wesley expresses in this article his belief that it is melody without harmony which caused such power, and that the introduction of harmony was the reason for contemporary music’s failure to have the same affect, he did grow to allow harmony in choir presentation to some extent.

One of the primary uses of this power was in developing and maintaining the theology of the people. The combination of words and music was a powerful way to ensure that people learned the Scriptures, and an understanding of them. Ensuring that musical practice was of a high standard was seen as a way to ensure that theology was likewise excellent.

Wesley had come to understand the power of the wedding of text and tune as the most vital way of celebrating and remembering faith, scripture, theology, and the task of social service. The hymns had become the “theological memory” of the Methodist movement, and if the singing of them were imprecise and nonchalant, so would be the theology of the church.\textsuperscript{97}

Thus, the music of the Church was changed once again, and its use in worship firmly established. Following from this revival, the place of music in releasing congregations of believers to worship, in drawing unbelievers into faith, in growing and strengthening the fellowship of Christians, and in teaching the doctrines of the faith

\textsuperscript{96} Quoted in Young, C., \textit{Music of the Heart}, p.84
\textsuperscript{97} S.T. Kimbrough Jr. in correspondence to Carlton R. Young, June 1992. Quoted in \textit{Music of the Heart}, p.74
has remained firmly acknowledged. It remains for this chapter to briefly highlight major developments which have followed the pioneering work of the Wesleys.

G] **Worship Music from the Wesleys to the Present**

Perhaps the most immediate effect of the new revival of hymn-singing was the flood of hymn-books which began to appear. While the quality varied widely, the constant production of individually produced books finally led to a clear need for a hymn book to be published which was the product of a joint effort by a group. The most famous and influential of these collectively compiled hymn books was the definitive *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, which first appeared in 1859.

The collection incorporated the old and the new, hymns associated with "dissent" and those which reflected high-church polity. It has been judged to be the most influential hymnal ever published. It created a style and format still felt in the present.  

This hymn-writing trend has continued unabated through to the present day, with a tremendous repertoire of hymns being contributed by male and female composers, from every tradition and nation across the world.

Along with the composition of hymns, the training of God's people for hymn singing has, at times, continued the pattern begun by the Wesleys, notably in America:

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A phenomenon of the early 18th century was the establishment of singing schools whose purpose was to improve the calibre of congregational singing.⁹⁹

Along side the development of hymnody has been a powerful growth of new worship songs, which are not usually considered hymns in the traditional sense, although they should probably be categorised as such, in terms of the original biblical definition of hymn. A remarkable feature of these songs is that they are frequently associated with particular spiritual awakenings or revival movements. It is not possible to examine every occurrence of this phenomenon, but it needs to be noted that:

Every high moment of spiritual awakening in the history of the Church has been accompanied by a revival of song, for singing is as close to worship as breathing is to life itself.¹⁰⁰

. . . it is not unlike the past, where music and worship were at the centre of revival. Charles Wesley was the counterpart to John Wesley, the preacher in the English Revival. The “Singing Sisters” worked with Evan Roberts in the Welsh Revival. Ira Sankey worked with D.L. Moody.¹⁰¹

These new songs have grown in popularity and influence, although their presence in the Church has often been the source of much controversy (not unlike other musical innovations in the Church’s history). Along with these songs, has come an increasing use of contemporary instruments with which to accompany them, and a new understanding of the power of worship to impact the lives of people.

⁹⁹ Ibid. p.143
¹⁰⁰ Lovelace, A. C. & Rice, W.C., Music and Worship in the Church, p.12
¹⁰¹ Helland, R., Let The River Flow, p.241
While this overview of the use and understanding of music in the Church's history is cursory, it nevertheless serves its purpose — to draw out principles which, knowingly or unknowingly, were at the basis of musical practice through the ages. These principles can become significant signposts for the way music is developed and used in the church today. While the final chapter of this thesis will develop these principles in detail, it is important to draw out the principles here. It should be noted that many of the same principles emerge in this study as those that were found in the previous chapter, although there are also some additions which must be included.

1) **Music is a Divine Expression**

The understanding of God as musician is clearly not as well developed in Church history as it is in the Scriptures, but it is, nevertheless, present. While some of the conclusions which may have been drawn from their beliefs are questionable, there is no doubt that the early Church had a clear sense of God's musicality, and of music as an experience in which divine and human interacted. The negative view of harmony and call for unison singing was rooted in a belief that music symbolised the unity of the Trinity. A little later in history, the concept of the music of the spheres indicated a clear understanding of the musicality of the Creator, and of His building of music into the fabric of the universe. Thus the truth that God is musical, has been a foundation for Church music from the beginning.

Of course, the logical extension of this has not been missed through the ages either. That a musical God, makes Himself present and available to His people through musical expression. It has been clearly expressed, particularly in Luther's
into meaningful corporate expression of faith and devotion. When music is neglected or abused, an important feature of our human make-up is overlooked and the result is a decline in our ability, both to experience, and to express spirituality.

3) **Music is Neither ‘Secular’ nor ‘Sacred’**

The significance of this principle has already been explored in detail in the previous chapter, but it is sufficient to note here that the trend, which began early in the history of Israel's music, and was apparent in the psalms, and in the hymns of the biblical Church, continued, unbroken, throughout the history of the Church. This trend is the adoption of so-called 'secular' music for 'sacred' purposes.

The importance of this principle is the recognition that music is not, in itself, "bad" or "good", from a theological perspective, but becomes spiritual or not by virtue of the lyrics attached to it, the use to which it is put, and the people who engage in its practice. This links strongly with the previous principle which stresses the need to recognise the human element in musical expression.

It is important to balance this principle with an observation which is made about Wesley’s use of music.

It is well documented that [John Wesley] attended and apparently enjoyed Handel's oratorio, but not all forms of popular music were acceptable to him.\(^{102}\)

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\(^{102}\) Young, C., *Music of the Heart*, p.104
This recognises the truth that music, whatever its source, must be tested for suitability before adopting it for worship. Of course, appropriateness differs from person to person and situation to situation.

4) **Music Has A Variety of Functions**

Again, this principle is simply a continuation of what has already been discussed in the previous chapter. However, it is important to note that throughout the history of the Church music has been seen as valuable for more than just the expression of worship.

The efficacy of music as an educational tool has been sorely neglected in contemporary times, and needs to be revived. From the early days of counteracting heresy, through Luther’s Reformation, to the Wesleyan Revival, the doctrines of the Church have been communicated and taught through the music that the Church has sung.

Music has also been used as a means to draw unbelievers into the household of faith. Perhaps the Wesleys are the best example of this, but certainly Luther, and others before him, recognised the power of music as a tool for evangelism. It is of deep significance that Luther particularly targeted the youth for evangelism through music. This is something that will need to be developed in terms of the ability for the arts to reach what is today known as Generation X.

Another well documented use of music throughout the life of the Church is that of “community building.” Music has a way of developing corporate identity, and drawing people into a sense of belonging and sharing of that identity. The use of
music during pilgrimage journeys was certainly more than just a communication to God, but also had the effect of recognising the shared faith and experience of the pilgrims, resulting in celebration, and fellowship.

The function of music as a pastoral tool has also been mentioned in this chapter, and must not be overlooked. As an aid to preaching, it enables the preacher to identify more closely with the culture of his people, but also, in its function as an integral part of the rites of passage of any community, it brings comfort, healing and a sense of care and God's presence. Again, this is an aspect of musical usage which must be further developed.

Perhaps the last element that needs to be mentioned here is the truth, often overlooked, that music has a role to play "for its own sake." Music is most often associated with other elements – particularly words for singing – and the power it can have as a simple expression in its own right, without playing a supporting role to any other thing must be recognised.

5) Structure and Training are Essential for Effective Music Ministry

It is significant that throughout the ages of Church history, the need for organisation of musicians, and training of them in their tasks has been stressed. From the earliest days of the Church, schools for Church musicians have been established in order to develop the abilities of those responsible for the music of the Church. John Wesley, in particular, emphasised the need for training – and it is significant that he not only trained musicians, but also congregation members, in order that the musical expression of worship be fitting for the glory of God.
The underlying principle here is a call to excellence. The challenge to the Church is to recognise that God deserves the best we can bring in our offering of worship, and that requires training and organisation.

6) All Musical Forms are Appropriate for Worship

The Church is constantly in tension with regard to the preservation of its traditional expressions of worship, and the introduction to the new. This tension is reflected throughout the centuries. However, the one clear principle that has remained, whether accepted by Church authorities or not, is that both traditional and contemporary forms will find a place in the Church.

This is as it should be, as God's gift of creativity to human beings implies that He expects it to be used constantly in offerings of love to Him. If creativity is accepted as a God-given human attribute, then acceptance of new innovations in worship must follow logically.

Alongside this, though, the value of tradition for contributing depth and continuity to the faith must also be recognised and accepted. In every significant spiritual revival, there has been, not just an introduction of new music, but a rediscovery of the riches of music from times past. The psalms, for example, have always been the basis and measure of worship music.

At the heart of Christian hymnody lies the Jewish Psalter; historically it is the basis on which hymnody is founded, pragmatically it remains the repository of human emotion measured against the yardstick of the divine.103

103 Simmons, M., 'Hymnody: Reflections Of Our Faith' in Reformed Liturgy and Music, p.139
Both Luther and the Wesleys drew on musical forms from times past for their repertoire of congregational song. This marriage of contemporary and traditional ensures that the worship of the Church remains both grounded and able to fly.

7) The Music of Worship Belongs to the Worshipping Community

While this principle can be found in Scripture, it comes through most clearly in the history of the Church. One of the great dangers of musical usage is the increasing desire of trained musicians for challenging expressions that match their expertise. While it is important for the Church to recognise this and make room for it, there is also a pitfall in this. Throughout the history of the Church, worship music followed a cycle which began with simplicity, in which the entire congregation could participate, and then developed to the point where the music was outside of the range of untrained participants. Thus, the music became increasingly elaborate and exclusive. When this begins to happen, many of the other functions of music begin to lose their effectiveness, because the people are lost to its impact.

A common feature of this kind of musical exclusion is that, while the music becomes increasingly elaborate, the spirituality with which it is associated becomes increasingly shallow. This is particularly evident in the period just before the Reformation in which creativity was thriving, but spirituality was in disarray. The reason for this is the ability of music to generate emotion which resembles devotion, without true spirituality being developed. Augustine was aware of this danger, and agonised over it. So too, was John Wesley:
In stanza five of a poem in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1749, [John Wesley] joins his brother's warning against music's power to distract the faithful:

Still let us on our guard be found,
And watch against the power of sound
    With sacred jealousy;
Lest haply sense should damp our zeal,
    And music's charms bewitch and steal
    Our hearts away from thee.\(^{104}\)

It is not insignificant that all of the spiritual revivals in history brought with them a restoration of music to the Church. Both Luther and Wesley, for example, reverted to simplicity in music, and worked hard to increase congregational participation in worship.

The work of tracing music through Scripture and history has been done. The principles which have emerged have been explored. However, the true benefit of a theology of music must be seen in its ability to deal with the challenges which the Church faces today. If these principles are true, they should help the Church find a way forward in developing and using music so as to better fulfil its mission today. Before the principles we have discovered can be applied, however, the challenges of the contemporary world, and of the issues which confront today's Church must be understood. This is the work of the next chapter.

\(^{104}\) Young, C., *Music of the Heart*, pp.169-70
CHAPTER FOUR: CHALLENGES FACING THE SOUTH

AFRICAN CHURCH

It would be very easy for a theological exploration of music to become little more than an academic exercise, with no relationship to the realities and practicalities which the Church faces on a daily basis. As such, it might still have some value, but for theology to be truly informative and transformative it must be rooted in reality. This has long been the cry of theological writers like the Liberation Theologians, but as Gutierrez points out, is not a new understanding of the role of theology.

The function of theology as critical reflection on praxis has gradually become more clearly defined in recent years, but it has its roots in the first centuries of the Church's life. The Augustinian theology of history which we find in The City of God, for example, is based on a true analysis of the signs of the times and the demands with which they challenge the Christian community.¹

Of course, one does not have to be a liberation theologian to recognise the need for theology to take into account the challenges of its context, and to seek to respond to these challenges from a biblical and church historical perspective. This principle remains when reflecting theologically on music. As a central expression of the life of the Church throughout its history, music has always been seen in relation to the world within which the Church dwells and witnesses. Thus, for the Church's music to be effective in impacting that world, or even in giving expression to the worship of the Christian people who live in

¹ A Theology of Liberation, p.5
that world, it must be ordered and practiced with the needs and challenges of the world in mind.

Thus far, this thesis has sought to draw theological principles out of Scripture and Church history. However, before these principles can effectively be applied to the musical practice of the Church, the challenges facing the Church must first be understood. In order to do this, the principles which have begun to be explored will be laid aside for the moment.

The task of the present chapter, then, is to identify the challenges facing the wider Church in South Africa, and begin to explore in a general sense, the ways in which music can possibly address these challenges. The next and final chapter, will then draw all of the pieces together, and relate them specifically to the music of worship, providing a theological framework for Church worship music practice which is biblical, true to the tradition of the Church, and relevant to the needs of our society and Church today.

The challenges with which the South African Church must contend can be grouped under three main headings. The first – Social Issues – will look at the issues of Crime and violence, HIV/AIDS, education and the fragmentation of society and family. The second heading – Cultural Issues – will deal with the problems of bringing different race and language groups together in a nation which has been divided for so long, as well as the age old problem of fostering understanding between different generational groups. Linked with these issues are those of musical style. The third heading – Relevance and Church Growth Issues – will explore the dominant value systems and mindsets of society today, and relate these to the witness of the Church.
It is significant that in the work of the Church, the role of music has usually been underplayed and even misunderstood, but, as shall be shown, music is able to be an effective instrument in helping the Church minister in every one of these areas. In fact, the power and significance of music is such, that the Church's ministry will be seriously impeded unless it learns to make use of music more effectively. To this end, each of the headings mentioned above will now be explored, along with the contribution music can make to the Church's ministry in that area.

A] **SOCIAL ISSUES**

1) **Crime and Violence**

The following quotes from the *South African Christian Handbook 1999/2000* serve to illustrate the importance of the crime issue in the lives of South Africans:

South Africans are depressed about crime. Everyone knows someone who has been a victim or has been a victim themselves. Few trust the police and many believe the situation is going to deteriorate over the next five years.\(^2\)

South Africa remains the murder capital of the world.\(^3\)

South Africa has the highest rape incidence in the world.\(^4\)

There is no question that the issue of crime, and the violence with which it is frequently perpetrated, is one of the greatest causes for concern in this nation. It is an issue which impacts, and is impacted by many other factors of our national life.

Of course, no discussion of crime can ignore the realities of a struggling economy,

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\(^3\) M. Froise (Ed.), *South African Christian Handbook 1999/2000*, p.28

\(^4\) Ibid. p.30
and the poverty and unemployment which result from this — one of the legacies of the artificial prosperity of the apartheid years. In a cyclical pattern, crime also affects the economy through loss of skills as a result of emigration of professionals, as well as loss of revenue from tourism and foreign investment. This in turn increases the economic difficulty of the nation, and results in further unemployment and poverty, which then impacts the crime rate, and leads to further emigration and loss of investment.

In what way, if any, can music help to address this need? There are at least four applications of the power of music which, while perhaps not alleviating the causes of poverty and unemployment, can possibly help to draw attention to them, while also providing a helpful and socially acceptable outlet for the anger and fear that they bring. In addition, music has a strong role of ministry to play to the victims of crime, as well, as bringing healing to communities. These uses of music, as addressing the crime and violence of South Africa must now be explored in greater detail.


In his book, *The Sound of the Harvest*, J. Nathan Corbitt does an excellent job of examining the various roles that music plays, both in society and in the Church. He places what he calls Kingdom Music, under six headings, relating to these roles. One of these headings explores the use of music as Prophet. This role of music is one which is frequently overlooked, but which can have a powerful impact on this, and every nation.
As has been seen from our study of Scripture, Old Testament prophets were frequently musical, or made use of music in their ministries. Contemporary prophets need be no different. Corbitt quotes:

... gifted musical prophets write and perform topical songs bringing attention to specific deeds of unrighteousness and injustice within the world.5

Where are the musical prophets of South Africa? During the apartheid era, it seems, there were the voices of musical groups like Friends First who called the nation, and the Christian community in particular, to repentance and unity. Since the 1994 elections, however, these voices have become silenced, possibly feeling that their task is ended. However, there is a clear need for voices to sing out against the continuing racism and suspicion in South Africa. There is a need for singers who will confront the consumerist and capitalist spirit which is increasing among this nation's people, causing an individualism and greed which leaves the rich amassing wealth, while ignoring the needs of the poor. There is a need for songs which will shun the belief that crime is a solution to poverty, and which call the nation to righteousness and justice.

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa has announced their sense of call to be a missionary church. Their slogan is "A Christ Healed Africa for the Healing of the Nations." This vision cannot be accomplished without prophetic musical voices, supporting the preaching and action which calls this church to answer the call of God.

The impact which the Welseyan revival had on England was discussed in the previous chapter. Their music not only helped in reviving worship, but was also an integral part of the call to their followers to Christian service; to meeting the needs of the poor, and a commitment to holiness and justice. There is no question that a prophetic voice was heard, which may even have been instrumental in averting an English revolution. Can the same not happen in this country today?

b) The Prophetic Voice of Music – The Song of the Poor

Alongside the prophetic call for justice, there is another prophetic function which music fulfils. Again, J. Nathan Corbitt writes:

... prophetic music inspires and encourages the marginalised, poor, and oppressed, who sing in and of their struggle for justice within their own historical context.\(^6\)

As those who feel the pain of their lives and circumstances, begin to express this pain in song, they are able to work through the feelings of anger, aggression and hatred which so often arise. Along with this, they are able, in the mould of the Psalmists lament, to cry out against injustice, while still grasping God’s call to holiness firm. Since the 1996 census report indicates that 74.1% of South Africans of all race groups consider themselves Christian,\(^7\) the power of this form of prophetic music cannot be underestimated. Musicians who can express their community’s pain in lament and prophetic song, can strongly influence the

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\(^6\) The Sound of the Harvest, p. 87

way these people see themselves, their struggles, and their options. As Claus Westermann has stated:

Something must be amiss if praise of God has a place in Christian worship, but lament does not. Praise can retain its authenticity and naturalness only in polarity and lamentation. 8

One example of how this kind of “emotive song” can diffuse anger and bring healing in difficult circumstances is described in The Sound of the Harvest. This story needs to be quoted in full for its effect to be clearly seen.

Few people enjoy conflict and most avoid it by looking for ways to diffuse and redirect the anger and hostility that leads to open conflict or physical violence. Music [in the prophetic role] as a mediator is an indirect form of communication. First, the language of music is often metaphorical and, therefore, meaning is not immediately understood by the listener. Second, melody couches and softens harsh words. Anger, anxiety and fear are redirected into the emotional energy of singing. Finally, when sung in the right context, music can lead to surprising results, demonstrated in the following example, where the emotions of conflict diffused into humor.

The tensions were high in a North African remote outpost. Drought had stolen every bit of grain and left people eating roots and berries. Tom led a small group of American volunteers to help distribute food in this outpost, and had carefully planned for equal distribution of donated grain. It was not easy. Thousands of people, many near death, joined a snaking line near the makeshift center. Their next week’s meals beckoned them from a locked building behind Tom’s table. They were hungry, tired and anxious.

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Tom didn’t speak the local language, so he was forced to use a translator. Everything he said was received through the filter of a local chief. Tom carefully explained the need for orderly distribution; he really wanted to avoid a food riot. People began to form a line and things appeared to go well until an old grandmother worked her way from several hundred yards away and placed herself squarely in front of the line.

Now, a young man can be handled with some force, but who would touch a grandmother? Tom explained the rule and the need for order. There were many young children in the front of the line; some had been waiting for food for a week. The old woman would not hear it. She began to argue and, before Tom could control his own emotions, the argument escalated into a shouting match. The old grandmother was becoming more and more belligerent ad pulling the crowd in with her.

Unbeknownst to Tom, the country’s security forces, who were quietly observing from the side, decided to take action. From behind the mask of napping ragtag military, they sprang forward, arms loaded, cocked, and ready to fire – and all pointed at Tom. This was a life-and-death situation!

While saying his last prayers before meeting his Maker, Tom was given inspiration. From deep in his memory and with all the voice he could muster, he prophesied using a old Elvis Presley song, “You ain’t nothing but a hound dog, just cryin’ all the time.”

No one could translate this message, and if they did, the old woman may have been even more offended. But the shock was so great to hear this angry American sing that everyone – nervous soldiers, anxious crowd, and belligerent old grandmother – began to laugh. They began to re-establish order and food was served.6

6 Corbitt, J.N., The Sound of the Harvest, pp.87-88
In a similar way, the pain of the American slaves was expressed through their music, and as such enabled them to deal with this pain in ways that were extremely helpful for them.

The "negro spiritual" was born of the Kentucky Revivals of 1797-1805 consequent on the evangelisation of the negroes, and of their great sufferings in the days of slavery. They were evangelised just early enough for their sufferings to be expressed in this sublime and primitive music.¹⁰

This prophetic function of music is sorely needed, both by those who suffer from the poverty and unemployment of our nation, as well as those who are victims of crime and violence. If this kind of emotional release was provided more generally, it is possible that the expression of hatred and anger through violence could be diverted in at least some instances. The implications of this in terms of the use of lament in worship will be further developed in the next chapter.

c) Music the Healer

From a different perspective, music has a powerful role to play in terms of the way it can minister to those in pain. J. Nathan Corbitt describes this role of music in his chapter on Music as Healer. He writes:

Suffering is universal. In every culture, tribe, and city, people struggle for liberation and healing from poverty, sickness, and injustice. In the New Testament there are two concepts of healing or liberation. One is of social liberation from suffering and evil, the other of illness... Healing,

¹⁰ Ellsworth, D.P., Christian Music in Contemporary Witness, pp.89-90
the restoration of wholeness, takes place on four different levels: body, mind, soul and community (relationships).\textsuperscript{11}

A melodic and harmonic salve, music used in times of grief alleviates suffering of the mind, body, and spirit.\textsuperscript{12}

While still a relatively unknown discipline in South Africa, Music Therapy has been studied in the USA and the United Kingdom for many years, now. The role of music in bringing healing to sufferers of all kinds of pain has been well documented. This aspect of the role of music in the social issues facing the Church will be returned to more than once in this discussion. The healing power of music cannot be underestimated, for both the individual and for communities.

The role of the musician as an active healing force in society is not new.\textsuperscript{13}

Throughout history, the use of music for healing has been documented. It has been used in the treatment of every kind of disorder, from physical sickness and injury, to mental illness and psychological distress. As Leslie Bunt points out:

Many of the early pioneers [in music therapy] cited, as supportive evidence, sources from mythology, biblical stories and the uses of music in tribal medicine and other cultures. There is a large literature on this historical use of music.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{11} The Sound of the Harvest, p.142
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid. p.141
\textsuperscript{13} Bunt, L., Music Therapy, p.185
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid. p.10
Obviously, if music can bring healing, or aid in healing, then its role in the treatment of victims of crime and violence needs to be explored. Both the physical and mental wounds which such traumas bring can be ministered to through the use of music. The results of the research conducted around the world indicate that music affects human beings profoundly, in ways that increase wholeness and well being.

Studies showed or suggested that music can

- reduce blood pressure and heart respiration rates;
- decrease pain perception, levels of fear, stress, and anxiety;
- increase feelings of self-worth and reduce depression;
- occupy some of the brain’s neurological pathways and reduce the number of neurotransmitters that are available to transmit pain messages;
- reduce feelings of helplessness by giving the patient a sense of control in a setting that is often depersonalizing.\(^{15}\)

By helping victims of crime find wholeness and reduced levels of anxiety and fear, music can help to reduce the cycle of violence and crime. Those who have been healed after trauma are less likely to yield to feelings of depression about the country, which so often result in emigration and the accompanying problems outlined above. It is possible that they would also be less likely to seek restitution or protection through methods which increase the levels of crime and violence such as fire arm purchases, vigilantism and racial or faction conflict.

Another way in which the healing power of music can work against crime and violence, is in helping people cope with the stress and anxiety which is caused

\(^{15}\) Lane, D., *Music as Medicine*, p.144
as a result of poverty or joblessness. When this is linked with the way music stimulates creative thinking, these people may well start seeking socially acceptable and helpful solutions, rather than the easy option of crime. This will be explored and expanded further in the next section.

One last point needs to be made here. The role of specialised music therapists has been mentioned, but in the application of the healing power of music which this section explores, it is not the specialist that is required, primarily. As J. Nathan Corbitt points out:

It does not take a music therapy degree to sing to a sick friend at home or in the hospital or to select music that ministers to a grieving family. Christian healing begins in the local kingdom community. Whenever the community relegates the gifts of the Spirit totally to a professional class of therapists, or virtuoso healers, they miss the blessing of ministry.  

**d) Music as Community Builder**

The final way that music can address the social problem of crime and violence, relates to the way it builds community. Both in the chapter on Music as Priest – focussing on the role of music in the community “work” of worship (liturgy literally means “work of the people”) – and in the chapter on Music as Healer, J. Nathan Corbitt emphasises the role of music in building strong bonds within a community. This view is supported by many other writers, among them Anthony Storr:

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16 *The Sound of the Harvest*, p.16
17 Willimon, W., *Worship as Pastoral Care*, p.19
Music brings about similar physical responses in different people at the same time. This is why it is able to draw groups together and create a sense of unity. It does not matter that a dirge or funeral march may be appreciated in a different way by a musician and by an unsophisticated listener. They will certainly be sharing some aspects of the same physical experience at the same moment, as well as sharing the emotions aroused by the funeral itself.¹⁸

One of the ways music does this is explained later in the same chapter by Storr:

Music structures time. By imposing order, music ensures that the emotions aroused by a particular event peak at the same moment. It does not matter that the kind of emotions excited in different individuals may vary. What matters is the general state of arousal and its simultaneity. Because of its capacity to intensify crowd feeling, music has a power akin to that of the orator.¹⁹

In her discussion of music therapy, Leslie Bunt refers to the way music can bring unity, thus building a sense of community. She is responding to statements from Plato, warning of the uses of certain musical modes, because of the effects they have on the hearers, and she writes:

I have not found that our present Dorian mode generates warlike reactions, but on more than one occasion it has been very appropriate in helping group cohesion and provoking movement and dancing.²⁰

¹⁸ Music and the Mind, p.24
¹⁹ Ibid. p.31
²⁰ Bunt, L., Music Therapy, pp.67-68
All of this should be sufficient to demonstrate the way music builds community. It creates a sense of unity, and draws people together. It follows, that people are less likely to perpetrate acts of crime and violence on those with whom they feel a strong kinship, and so this community building ability of music can positively affect these issues in our country.

It is important to understand the way in which music aids this community building. J. Nathan Corbitt outlines four main effects of music on community. He says that music, first of all, creates a "friendly space." It builds nondefensive postures through singing, and creates a sense of inclusion. Secondly, it creates rapport within a community. Particularly in situations where the music is a common language, there is a sense of oneness or sameness. However, even when this is not the case, music can build bridges, often when nothing else can. Joyce Scott confirms this truth through her own experience:

I will never be able to sing Xhosa exactly as my Xhosa friends do, nor pray as well in their complex and beautiful language, but as I sing their songs and they sing mine, however imperfectly, we meet at a profound level. We have tried something new. We have made mistakes and laughed and tried again and been allowed into one another's hearts. There respect can grow, which can lead to understanding, and in time a real enjoyment may come. Music is a magic bridge builder. And besides, it's fun!\(^2\)

The third way that music builds community is that it creates order. This links with what Anthony Storr says, about music ordering time, and creating a structure, in which consistency and a framework for community can be found.

\(^2\) *Tuning in to a Different Song*, p.13
Finally, music provides an opportunity to co-operate and relate to others. As people sing or play together, they find a place within the musical community. When the whole community is the musical community, each one finds a place of relationship and co-operation with others.\(^\text{22}\)

The importance of this community music making, and the healing effect it has on community is stressed by Leslie Bunt:

> Our churches may not be as frequented as in previous centuries, but at Christmas we can still recall the words of many of the favourite carols.
>
> The oppression of a television-dominated culture has distracted us a great deal from this kind of celebratory musical expression. But there still seems to be a thirst for such experiences, and music therapists can contribute in channelling some of this in a positive and creative way.
>
> Joint action seems to be one key for understanding the organisational and temporal nature of music. Such action occurs in the communal musical activity of a religious festival; as an incitement to work, dance or play; as a prelude to love-making; or in a planned musical performance such as a concert or an opera. These musical experiences are functionally different but are shared and communal. Perhaps one of our deepest satisfactions from music results from the emotional support gained in such collective action.\(^\text{23}\)

South Africa is a nation which is torn by the divisions of years of enforced separation. For crime and violence to be addressed, a sense of community among all the people of this nation must be fostered and developed. As long as this nation sees itself as distinct groups, rather than as one cohesive whole, the

\(^{22}\) For a deeper explanation of these four community-building functions of music, see Corbitt, J.N., The Sound of the Harvest, pp.157-158

\(^{23}\) Bunt, L., Music Therapy, p.71
rivalries and conflicts will continue. However, music can make a strong contribution to bringing the cohesion that will knit this nation into a single, albeit diverse, community.

Thus, it becomes clear, that music can have a powerful role to play in helping our nation face the challenge of crime and violence. Since music is so central to the life of the Church, it stands to reason that the Church can help to meet this challenge through its music. How this applies specifically to the worship music of the Methodist Church, as has been stated, is the subject of the next chapter.

2) HIV/AIDS

Perhaps one of the biggest issues facing the nations of Sub-Saharan Africa is the AIDS pandemic. There is no question that in South Africa, AIDS is a serious issue, and one that the Church cannot afford to ignore.

AIDS is the number one cause of death in Africa. South Africa is in crisis. According to the World Health Organisation, South Africa has the fastest accelerating rate of HIV in the world.24

Once again, the power of music must be considered as the Church seeks to find answers to the AIDS crisis. There are two main ways that this can happen.

a) AIDS Education

The whole issue of education needs to be explored on its own, but specific mention needs to be made of the role of education in terms of AIDS. One startling reality helps to emphasise the importance of this.

Most teenagers know how the AIDS virus is transmitted, yet this knowledge does not seem to translate into changed attitudes or behaviour. Lifeskills training programmes in the schools, being conducted by many youth ministries, are playing a valuable role in reaching and challenging young people to consider a Godly and healthy value system.  

We have already seen how music was used throughout Church history to teach the doctrines of the Christian faith. The early Church contested heresy by putting doctrine to song, and the Wesleys used their hymns to teach Scripture to illiterate workers. This educational role of music can be applied outside of the faith, however, and has been believed to be effective for centuries.

The Greeks of Plato's day considered that the right type of music was a powerful instrument of education which could alter the characters of those who studied it, inclining them toward inner order and harmony.  

Songs can be seen as major repositories of knowledge that can be passed on from one generation to the next.

A key feature of the fight against AIDS is the need for education. Music has already been used along with other art forms to this end, and can continue to be so used. Again, the rich musical heritage of the Church, and its role in community music making must not be underestimated in this education process. In an application far beyond just AIDS, Joyce Scott outlines the way music can be used for developing community health.

25 Ibid. p.26
26 Storr, A., *Music and the Mind*, p.41
27 Bunt, L., *Music Therapy*, p.72
A preventative and basic curative health programme has been recognised in recent studies as possibly the most valuable, and desirable aspect of medical work in developing countries...

But how does one get the message about preventative health care, nutrition, immunisation programmes, AIDS prevention and suchlike to people who have little or no formal education? The obvious answer is to do this in a traditional way. A communication system which works on the ground for everybody, high and low, rich or poor, educated or not, is the good old oral tradition. Stories, songs, drama, proverbs, even dances or children's singing games – these methods work. And by far the most accessible of the methods is the teaching song.28

The main area of education, as indicated by the above reference to the youth, must be among young people. Since youth culture in South Africa, in every race group, is a musical culture, music can and must be one of the primary AIDS education tools utilised.

b) Healing

The use of music for bringing healing to victims of crime and violence, as well as those suffering under poverty has already been explored in depth. Mention has been made of the important work of music therapy. Whether or not any long term research has been done as to the specific effects of music on AIDS sufferers is uncertain, but there is certainly enough research into other chronic and terminal diseases to support the view that music therapy can be an effective treatment for those with AIDS as well.

28 Tuning in to a Different Song, p.107
The focus of such treatment need not necessarily be on cure, but rather, as is the case with any treatment, on increasing the well-being and wholeness of the patient. This is highlighted by an understanding of the way music therapists view their work.

Music therapy is the use of organised sounds and music within an evolving relationship between client and therapist to support and encourage physical, mental, social and emotional well-being.\(^\text{29}\)

The way music does this is the subject of a great amount of research, and many theories abound. One description that is helpful comes from an article about the use of the guitar in healing.

Physically, music allows us to experience vibrations as they pass through our bodies. Harmonious sounds alleviate stress, and stress is the root of much illness, physical and mental. Soothing music also assists us to quiet down and turn within to establish greater self-awareness. This process, often deemed "spiritual," results in our becoming more "in touch," conscious of our needs, and better able to make wise choices. People who make such informed decisions probably stay healthier than those who don't. So it follows that music can serve as a medium for personal growth or healing, which, in turn, makes possible a preventative approach to health care.\(^\text{30}\)

The well-being which music therapy hopes to attain can involve the cure of whatever ailment is being treated, but, as implied in the quote above, it can just as well mean the attainment of a sense of purpose and wholeness in the midst

\(^{29}\) Bunt, L., *Music Therapy*, p.8

\(^{30}\) Turner, J.B., *Good Vibrations in Acoustic Guitar*, December 1996, p.62
of disease. Perhaps one of the biggest hindrances to using music in the treatment of illnesses like AIDS, is the sense of hopelessness that easily pervades any attempt to bring a cure. However, when the ministry can be seen as an empowerment of sufferers, allowing them to find a fullness of life in the midst of their illness (most likely in emotional, mental or social ways), while leaving open the possibility of some physical improvement (even the possibility of the miraculous), then the task seems far more attainable. The benefit of such ministry is clear, and the challenge to the Church is to begin using its music in this way. As the Christian music therapist, Deforia Lane, describes:

My work has been simply this: to believe in the Son of God. To believe, against all odds, that He can work through me. And that, in this broken world, is no small task.\textsuperscript{31}

And so, the issue of AIDS presents wonderful opportunities for the Church to use music as part of its ministry. This is an area that will certainly require further investigation if the Church is to face this challenge seriously.

3) Education

The use of music in education has been mentioned above, but of course, the issue of education reaches far wider than simply the AIDS issue. This is brought into focus by the Christian Handbook:

More than R40 billion a year is being spent on education, making it the second biggest recipient of state funding, yet outside of the crowded school classrooms, up to 400 000 African children of school going age do
not attend school. Just under half (47%) of those writing the school leaving matriculation examination failed and what education was imparted was largely irrelevant to future needs of children for whom jobs in the formal economy are simply not available.\textsuperscript{32}

The need for education is heightened when the so-called "lost generation" of children whose schooling was either severely disrupted or non-existent during the struggle against the apartheid system are remembered. The Church has a strong role to play in dealing with this critical issue, and many churches have already begun work in this area through literacy programmes, and the beginning of private Christian schools. However, the use of music in this ministry has largely been overlooked. The way music can be used to teach, as well as the main areas in which this will be effective need to be explored in detail.

a) **Music as Teacher**

In Africa the idea of music as a teacher should come as no surprise. As Joyce Scott points out:

> Music is well-tried African teaching methodology.\textsuperscript{33}

J. Nathan Corbitt does an excellent job of focussing on the different issues involved in using music as a teaching tool in his chapter on Music as Teacher\textsuperscript{34}. His focus is on music as the teacher of religious belief and cultural values. In exploring the way music can do this he notes that the world can be divided into literate cultures and illiterate ones. The way music functions, and the way

\textsuperscript{33} *Tuning into a Different Song*, p.10
\textsuperscript{34} *The Sound of the Harvest*, pp.197-225
teaching functions, in these two cultures is very different (although, as shall be seen later when dealing with cultural issues, some of these differences are being dissolved by the new culture which is emerging). Perhaps because of the high degree of illiteracy in Africa, music has been more effective as a teaching tool among African peoples.

Another issue which must be considered is the different “styles” of learning which people use. Corbitt outlines four: *activists* who learn through life experience; *reflectors* who learn through thought and observation; *pragmatists* who learn through active experimentation; and *theorisers* who work with theoretical concepts and conclusions. Each of these groups would need to use music differently as a learning aid.

Once these different styles are understood, they become a guideline for further applying music to the process of education. This needs to be done intentionally, and must include knowing the needs of the students through listening to them and their music, and developing an understanding of them. Participation by the students in the learning process and the music is essential. The music must also be integrated into a wider teaching strategy, which includes interpretation of the concepts taught through the music and application of the music to the concept being taught. Song selection must be done carefully in order to assist, and not hinder the education process, and the use of other media which can be supported by music must not be overlooked. Finally, good education needs an evaluation procedure, and this also applies to musical education.
Corbitt draws on the work of Professor James Pollard and adds his own thoughts to give eight reasons why music is effective in teaching. Firstly, it makes learning fun. Secondly, it reinforces the major point of the learning experience by keeping it central. Thirdly, it engages the mind, and keeps the learning from being boring. Fourthly, it stimulates the body in a physical response, which awakens interest. Fifthly, it takes away the fear of the subject matter. Sixthly, music is a mnemonic device, which by attaching melody and rhythm to the material makes it easier to learn. Seventh, music provides a structure for memory, and finally, it complements other teaching methods.

In the light of all this, it seems strange that the Church in Africa has not made use of music to teach more extensively.

b) Areas in which Music can be Effective

i) Christian Discipleship

The way music has been used to this end has been mentioned above. Joyce Scott has made a wonderful contribution by giving some practical suggestions for using music in discipleship for all ages. She writes:

Recognising the power of music to teach and preach, to comfort and inspire, to warn and encourage, it is surely worth the time and effort to work on this issue.\(^{35}\)

She then explores the use of music in training children through all of the stages of development using music. This is done both by incorporating them into the life of the Church through “all-age” worship, as well in the Sunday

\(^{35}\) Tuning into a Different Song, p.55
School or Children’s Church. Gearing the words to the level of the children is crucial, as well as ensuring their participation in the music making.

The use of music for training new mothers, or in growing adults, both men and women, into ministry is also encouraged. Even senior citizens are included in her ideas of music teaching. Her suggestions combine the Church’s work of pastoral care with the task of education in the faith.

ii) Literacy and Language Learning

Many churches around South Africa have already begun adult literacy training. The value of this kind of education is not to be underestimated. However, this work is generally done in a western “teacher-tell” manner. Perhaps it would be a good idea to explore learning a lesson from Africa here, and using music as a basis for literacy teaching. At the very least, combining music with other teaching methods could help with the memory of letters, numbers, vocabulary and sentence construction.

The discipline of music therapy has been used to help children with language difficulties or learning difficulties learn to speak.

There are parallels with the stressing, phrasing and timing procedures involved in both musical processes and stages in language development.36

36 Bunt, L., Music Therapy, p.167
It follows that music can also be used effectively to help in the learning of a new language – something that becomes increasingly important in our nation of eleven official languages!

iii) Skills Training

Agricultural advisors would do well to get the farmers they work with to make songs about deep-trench gardening, caring for the soil, preventing erosion, contour ploughing, tree planting and many other useful skills.37

Joyce Scott here indicates the way music can be used to teach skills to farmers. It follows that if agricultural skills can be taught through music, so can other skills, from sewing, to cooking, to brick-laying.

In South Africa it is becoming increasingly clear that neither government nor the formal business sector will be able to provide the jobs that are needed to bolster our economy.

Economist Azar Jammine believes that small business would ultimately save the day. It is here that churches can make a difference. Local church buildings can be used to train in skills that can be used to benefit the community and earn income for families.38

For this to be done effectively, the traditional African method of teaching through song and music will need to be considered.

iv) Music as Part of School Curriculi

37 Tuning into a Different Song, p.108
It is unfortunate that music education has been all but removed from many schools, and in most others it remains an optional extra. Even Christian and Church schools have ignored the value of music as part of the standard curriculum, at least in the early years of schooling. However, the probable value of musical training in terms of heightening abilities in other areas of learning must not be ignored.

Indeed, a study of New York children aged between two and six who had played in Alexander Blackman’s Orchestra claimed that all the children who had had this opportunity were well ahead of their classmates when they entered school.\(^{39}\)

In the light of this it would seem obvious that churches should include some kind of music programme in their schooling, and possibly even that pressure be put on government to include music training or experience in the general teaching, at least in primary school.

The benefits that this might have in motivation of students, raising learning abilities and generally improving the standard of education cannot be known until it is actually tried.

The Church has always had a deep concern for education, both formal and informal. It has also always had access to music – often of the highest standard. At times it has seen the value of combining these two assets, and the resulting benefits to both Church and society are clearly recorded. South Africa at the

There is no question that the Church has a significant role to play in addressing this issue. Both in its nature as community, as well as in terms of the influence it can have on society, in upholding ethical and spiritual values which unite and build, rather than divide, the Church is a powerful force for healing. The role of music in fulfilling these functions is clear. Many of the ways that music can aid in the building of a cohesive society have already been referred to, but it is necessary to briefly apply these musical ministries to this specific need.

a) Understanding and Sharing

The relationship between music and culture will be discussed later on, but for now, it must be noted that one of the main ways that a culture expresses itself is through its music.

A society without an expressive nature becomes cold and uncreative.

Music is often used to maintain the identity and cultural boundaries of earthly societies.\(^{41}\)

Thus, an understanding of the music of a culture, brings an understanding of that culture. The ethnomusicologist, Andrew Tracy, has shown in his paper on *African Values in Music* the way that African music reflects both African culture, and the ideals which Africans long to achieve in their society. As an illustration of this, he writes:

\[\ldots\text{ African music demonstrates a dynamic balance between the individual and the group, between dependence and independence, that is} \]

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\(^{41}\) Corbitt, J.N., *The Sound of the Harvest*, p.38
not always there in society, but which I believe African musical structure holds up as an ideal to society. One can compare this with the way in which a balance of liberty and quality, two equally opposed values, is held up as the basis of democracy.\(^4^2\)

In South Africa society is fragmented along cultural lines; the cultures of race, age, economic status and religion each have their own musical expressions. For these divisions to be overcome, attempts must be made to understand each other's music, and learn to understand the people who make and enjoy these different musical expressions. Shared music making is a powerful way to begin to do this. In previous decades music making was a normal pastime, both within families and socially. This activity has died down in more recent times, and music is more and more the domain of the professional, with most people taking the role of spectators, rather than participants. The Church is one place where communal music making still occurs. What a powerful opportunity this presents us for finding unity and understanding through sharing and exploring musical expression.

b) Community Building

The use of music to build community has already been discussed. This can happen as outlined above in shared music making, but also in communicating the ideals and values of the community in such a way that people begin to embrace them for themselves. We can learn here from advertising. This whole industry is built on the belief that the behaviour of people can be changed through short, powerful messages. The role of music in doing this can be seen by turning off the volume on a television set while watching a commercial. The

\(^{4^2}\) Scott, J., Tuning in to a Different Song, p.149
impact is considerably lessened, if not entirely removed, when the music which
accompanies the image is unheard. In the same way, a community building
message, communicated through music, could deeply impact the way people
view their community, and how they act towards others in their community.

As mentioned above in the discussion of crime and violence, music can often
have a peacemaking effect, sometimes in surprising ways. This, too, helps to
restore unity and remove division.

Finally, the role of music in evangelism and calling people to faith will be
explored later, but it needs to be mentioned that as this happens, and the hearts
of people are changed by the positive influence of the Gospel, the divisions
among them are (or, at least, should be) diminished.

Thus, the Church and its music clearly have powerful roles to play in addressing the
basic issues that face this country on the social level. This general discussion of
music as a tool for the Church's mission in this area will serve to inform the narrower
discussion of the next chapter when a theology of worship music is developed.
However, before this can happen, there are two other areas that must first be
explored.

B] CULTURAL ISSUES

A country like South Africa has a wide variety of cultures that seek to exist side by
side. There are racial and linguistic differences. There are age differences. There are
social differences, and, of course, there are church differences. While enabling all of
these groupings to co-exist is a struggle in society, it is no less a challenge to the
It may be painful for a Westerner to learn that our beloved music, so important to our aesthetic enjoyment and security, causes culture shock to many non-Westerners, but nevertheless this is demonstrably true. Conversely, of course, some types of non-Western music cause serious culture shock to a vast number of people in America and Europe.  

This is, perhaps, the centre of the challenge facing the Church, especially in terms of the music of worship. People are rather emotional about “their” music, and are often convinced that theirs is the only music which is truly suited to worship. To attempt to lead them into worship using the music of another culture, then, is a difficult task, requiring a deep maturity and openness among the members of a culturally mixed congregation.

As the Church increasingly seeks to be prophetic and reflect to the world the possibility of different races and cultures sharing life together, there will need to be ways found to overcome the divisive influence of culture as it is expressed in music.

The problem with music, especially as it relates to Christian groups wishing to come together inter-culturally and inter-racially, is that it causes division instead of unity. Behind this lies a deeper problem – misunderstanding of the cultural values of other people which are expressed in their music. And at an even deeper level, the problem is that church leaders in training are not encouraged to recognise the powerful effect of music in all aspects of Christian ministry, and how best to understand music and use it.  

Scott, J., *Tuning in to a Different Song*, p.9
b) Culture can be “Overcome”

It is important, however, before exploring the role of culture in music in depth, to recognise that culture can, and frequently must, be overcome. Firstly, there is no culture that conforms totally, or even, perhaps, closely, with the requirements of the kingdom of God, and so, from a Christian perspective, every culture needs review under the light of the Gospel.

All cultures are imperfect, however high their ethical mores are.47

Secondly, in attempting to bring Christians together, it is impossible, and simply unloving, to attempt to do so within a single cultural framework. This requires that Christians demonstrate the love of Christ in striving to transcend their own cultures, and embrace something of the cultures with which they are unfamiliar. If Christians can begin to move toward one another in this spirit, then culture and music, rather than dividing, can be a joyful celebration of unity and diversity offered to God in praise.

It is fairly easy to get used to a novel sound-spectrum, given enough exposure over a period of time. We notice how people fairly quickly adapt to electronically generated sounds, or to the folk instruments of South America or Africa, or to the scales of India or Arabia, or to an Indonesian or perhaps a Chinese orchestra; it is simply a matter of, so to speak, slightly retuning the ‘ears’.

Educationally, this potential impediment is fairly easily overcome by repeated immersion until some of the novelty and strangeness of the sound wears off without conscious effort.48

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47 Ibid. p.44
48 Swanwick, K., Music, Mind, and Education, pp.98-99
With the certainty that culture can be overcome and transcended, and indeed, must be, so far as the Church is concerned, it is now possible to explore the two primary cultural struggles which face the South African church.

2) Racial and Linguistic Cultural Differences

In a country of many different race groupings, and eleven official languages, it is not surprising that the issue of culture is a huge challenge to the Church. Of course, each of these groupings have their own musical expressions. The work of bringing these cultures together, particularly in worship, is both difficult and important, and needs patience, wisdom and understanding.

Joyce Scott does an excellent job of analysing the difficulties inherent in bringing cultures together. Recognising the different values that different cultures place on their music, she points out the areas in which understanding must be developed.\footnote{For a deeper treatment of this subject see Joyce Scott’s book, \textit{Tuning in to a Different Song}, pp.17-20}

a) The Western mind tends to look for a lot of theological content in the music of worship. The African mind, however, generally requires a much lower text load. African worship is based on the repetition of truth until the soul is satisfied that it has drawn every ounce of value from it. This leads to a repetitive musical expression which is often misunderstood, and uncomfortable for Westerners. However, non-Westerners, struggle with moving through a quantity of theological ideas, without stopping to digest any of them in depth. This struggle is emerging in another form in the debate over the use of ‘traditional’ or ‘charismatic’ worship styles, since the ‘charismatic’ is much like the African, repetitive style.
b) The issue of movement is another place where cultures clash. The traditional Western mould is one in which music is sung, but movement, even the simplest of gestures like clapping or raising of hands, is sometimes frowned upon. For the non-Westerner this is extremely uncomfortable, and the need for worship and music to be expressed with the whole body is deeply felt.

c) The communal nature of African music is also deeply significant – in which the community expressing the music is more important than the music itself. Another issue is the “improvisational” nature of African music, which is not, of course, based in notation. Western music, generally, has more of a spectator element to it, and of course is largely based in the written form of music in notation.

This simply serves to highlight the problem of bringing the different racial, linguistic and cultural groups in our church and country together in meaningful ways. Music has the power to heighten our fragmentation and bring division, but it also has the power to unite powerfully, and enable us to transcend our differences. This is akin to the way music can address the larger fragmentation of our society, as discussed above.

3) “Traditional” and “Contemporary” Differences

It is one thing to talk about different cultures, but it is important to realise that within cultures are smaller sub-groupings, which can be just as difficult to bring together. Perhaps the most obvious of these is the clash, experienced in many churches, between the older traditional styles of worship and music and the newer contemporary styles. While this has been predominantly a “white” issue up to now, churches in the “black” segment of the population are beginning to experience this
same struggle. There are a number of issues at work here which need to be understood to get a grasp of how to bring these “cultures” together.

a) Acceptable Music for Worship

Some of the debate around the issue of what music is acceptable for worship relates to the way the Church sees its role in evangelism. This will, however, be picked up at a later stage. For now, it is sufficient to recognise that there are often heated conflicts over the style of music which is used within the Church, and these conflicts often arise out of misunderstanding of one another. Donald Ellsworth had summarised this situation well:

> It is unlikely, however, that in any previous time the question of popular music in the church was as problematic or divisive as it has been since the mid-sixties. Philosophical and practical standpoints range from orthodox conservative church music tradition to unlimited permissiveness. Many feel that music which is to approach God or lead [people] to Him should have its own distinctive idiom. Others maintain that the church would be far better off if the musical differences between the church and the secular world could be minimized.\(^{50}\)

Although this is not exclusively an age related issue, it appears that division between those who support traditional musical styles and those who call for the use of the contemporary falls along age related lines, with the former being mostly supported by older church members, and the latter by the younger members. The basic question revolves around what music is acceptable for the church, and especially for its worship. Are there some types of music which are

\(^{50}\) *Christian Music in Contemporary Witness*, p.147
simply unacceptable, or can anything be used? Are there certain chord sequences or rhythms which are inherently evil or demonic?

There is some truth to the argument that certain types of music express different emotions and messages.

Deryck Cooke, in *The Language of Music*, attempted to show that within the Western tradition there is a consensus between composers as to which musical devices are used to represent particular emotions. For example, the interval of the major third commonly expresses joy; whilst the minor third is generally associated with grief. The augmented fourth, called by mediaeval theorists *diabolus in musica* because of its 'flawed' sound, is often used by composers to depict demons, hell, or other horrors. Cooke's examples of its use include works by Mozart, Wagner, Liszt, Berlioz, Gounod, Busoni, and many others. I don't think that anyone reading Cooke's book could fail to be convinced that there is a good deal in what he says; but there are also so many exceptions that his views have been sharply criticised.  

However, it is clear that this communication is not direct and unequivocal, in the way that language is. Much of the meaning which music contains is given it by those who write it, perform it or hear it, or by its context.

Music is a symbolic language of communication and expression. The meaning of music is less specific than the meaning of words, and is added by the culture in which it exists. It will, in fact, change from culture

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51 Storr, A., *Music and the Mind*, p.73
to culture and from age to age. In one, it will be secular and anti-church, and in the next, it may be pro-church. It is not absolute.  

... music is bound to a context. Music has no meaning in and of itself apart from the context in which it is used and the culture that makes it. Music is a magnet that draws meaning from people. "The more music is used in a context the more the music means that context" (Best, Harold M. 1993. *Music through the Eyes of Faith.* San Francisco, Calif.: Harper. p.54)  

This would seem to indicate that some caution needs to be exercised in the adoption of certain kinds of music, and musical styles for the Church. However, as has been seen already in our study, there is ample precedent, both within Scripture and Church history, to support the use of contemporary and secular musical styles for the Church's purposes.

Nevertheless, to deny that secular musical influence can be adaptable to church use is to deny the clear evidence of history.  

An important observation about the use of contemporary musical styles is made by Tim Stafford in his reflections on Christian music in the article “Has Christian Rock lost its Soul?” (Christianity Today, November 1993). He writes:

CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) is a part of a parallel Christian culture, enabling kids to be normal, blue-jeans-wearing, music-loving American teenagers without abandoning their faith. In fact, it enables

52 Ellsworth, D.P., *Christian Music in Contemporary Witness,* p.165  
53 Corbitt, J.N., *The Sound of the Harvest,* p.34  
54 Ellsworth, D.P., *Christian Music in Contemporary Witness,* p.18
them to celebrate both their faith and their culture; it is contemporary but not corrosive, devout without being nerdy.

He continues:

There is a danger in (all this) of course: the possibility that in getting so close to our culture, degraded and commercial as it is, Christians will lose their souls. I am willing to bet, however, that when you put the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the age in the same room, the Spirit of Christ will manage to get his work done.  

Is there any way to discern what music is acceptable for Church use, and what music is dangerous, or even to be totally rejected? A number of authors have tried to offer suggestions here, with varying degrees of helpfulness. J. Nathan Corbitt offers three ways in which most people deal with this problem. First, some reject all new music as basically evil. This often leads to alienation, and an underground musical movement which is totally unhelpful. Secondly, some people accept all music as good. This is equally dangerous, and can lead to syncretism. The third way, which is suggested is to use critical contextualisation with new music. This means we analyse the meaning of the music within its culture, recognising that music can be both good and evil. This requires leaning on the knowledge of those who are inside the culture, learning from them what the purposes and results of the music are. This is particularly important when certain musical styles or instruments have strong meanings which could hinder the message of the Gospel, or prevent people from entering into worship. It stands to reason that this needs to be applied both to contemporary music and to the older “traditional” music. The reality is that much has been included in our hymn books that should perhaps not be there, and that can cause serious

55 Quoted in Scott, J., Tuning in to a Different Song, p.92
culture shock, or hindrance to ministry for large groups of people who fill our churches. A friend of mine pointed out the problems of using the following words in worship for a congregation today, particularly where young people are present:

Hobgoblin nor foul fiend can daunt his spirit ... 57

Perhaps the last thing that needs to be said here, is to echo again what was said about cultural musical forms above. Through patience and education, Christian people need to be taught to understand one another's music, in order to accept it as valid for worship or ministry for the group that uses it. The problem occurs when one group rejects the spiritual value of another's music through dislike or misunderstanding. When bringing the groups together, the principle of accommodation can again be applied.

b) The Commercialisation of Christian Music

In talking about "age" related cultural issues, another concern arises, which while not specifically cultural in orientation, does impinge on the way music is used by the Church. This has to do with the recent trend in marketable worship music which has flooded the world. While not a new phenomenon, the marketing of worship music, in particular, has become a huge international industry over the last decade or so, with a number of implications for the Church, not all of which are positive. Since, as any record company will confirm, most music is bought by young people, this does appear to be a "youth culture" phenomenon. In reference to the music of evangelism, Harold Best makes a

57 Methodist Hymn Book, Hymn 620, verse 3
statement which can just as easily be applied to today's contemporary worship music marketing.

I can't help feeling that much of the evangelistic witness phenomenon is tied up with financial outcome. When I talk with evangelical publishers or those who manage Christian groups, they're very much concerned with what will sell. If a person's going to earn his bread by being a witness musician he's got to think of that. Granted. But I am offended by the theological and artistic concessions that are made to guarantee the bread.58

One blessing which comes as a result of music being so widely available, is that Churches can have a constant resource of new music to use. Much of this music has become popular around the world, and much of it is of very high quality, both musically and theologically. This also means that, at least initially, a commonality was fostered which allowed Christians to find a lot of music in which they could participate irrespective of what church they were attending. However, over the last few years, the huge amount of material that is being made available means that only a very few songs are widely sung, and most churches develop their own repertoire out of those groups or movements that they particularly enjoy.

Another feature of this worldwide marketing of contemporary worship music, is that the requirements for the music to sell, especially in the light of the growth of competition between different companies, have resulted in the musical and production standards of the recordings becoming the central focus. In a

repetition of the cycle of Church music which has recurred throughout history, the artistic excellence of worship music is reaching new heights. But, alongside this, the theological depth, and the ability of church congregations to actually sing these songs, is diminishing drastically. The result is that church music groups around the world are emulating what they hear on the various worship recordings, without consideration of the impact this may have on their churches. I am convinced that we are in the process of breeding congregations of spectators who look on while their musicians have a wonderful time playing highly creative, but spiritually thin, music. This may draw some people in to the church, but the worship value is doubtful. In the light of this, it is understandable that many of our older folk look back to the theological depth of the hymns, and long for a return to the traditional worship they remember.

One last feature of this trend, is the impact it has on the writing of new “in house” music for churches. Aspirant song writers and musicians in the local church will often deny or neglect their gift, because they feel that they cannot hope to attain the excellence of the songs they are hearing on their recordings. As a result, they fall back on the commercial music available, often uncritically, and rob both themselves, and their congregations of the joy of using more local and communal expressions of worship.

Again, it must be stressed that, while the companies who make these recordings are, I am sure, trying to offer a service to the church, they have to ensure that what they produce will sell. This inevitably means that much which could be extremely valuable for the local church in its worship, will never find its way into wide circulation, at least not until it has proven itself as a financially
solid investment. The necessity for this trend to be addressed, and hopefully reversed to some extent is clear.

One of the tragedies of the late twentieth century and the introduction of technology has been the loss of music making in the community setting. Music making has all but been relegated to a professional class of musical stars delivering music on demand through an electronic synthesiser, music video, or personal computer. While many congregations are preparing musical productions on Sunday mornings, believers are passing the time without a creative outlet.

Fortunately, in many parts of the world, young musicians and communities still make their own music and want to use their creative gifts for the kingdom. New song workshops are used by a growing number of ethnomusicologists and composers with local musicians to encourage the writing of music for the church. They provide an excellent resource in both research of local music systems and can serve as a catalyst for music-making. This is not intended as a substitute for advanced composition or study in music. It does provide an excellent avenue for congregations who have not found an authentic voice for praise.  

The church in South Africa is facing these cultural issues, and unless she works hard to overcome them, she may well face a disintegration and fragmentation as painful as those experienced in society. The challenge for musicians is to offer themselves as part of the solution, rather than driving a wedge of music between the different groups which make up our congregations and denominations.

C) RELEVANCE AND CHURCH GROWTH ISSUES

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Table 54, which presented the percentage of Christians in South Africa from 1911 to 1996, discloses how the typical Western pattern of a declining Christianity, which struck Europe after the Second World War and the USA after the sixties, became visible in South Africa as from 1980. The growing percentage of people who indicated “No religion, Refused, Not stated” thus is typical.60

The reality described in the above quote is one that many churches would rather ignore. After decades in which attendance was something that people “just did”, and which was often a matter of loyalty, to now face the prospect of empty pews, and the hard work of evangelism is not easy. But, the world is changing, and one of the results is that, while in many ways spirituality appears to be on the increase, the Church does not seem to be part of the equation for many people.

Amazingly, the shock waves of that “crisis” [the spiritual crisis of the 60s] are still rumbling through Western society, cutting a crevasse between religion and spirituality that runs wide and deep. People today are looking for God in an intensely personalised way. More than ever before, they want to be directly “in touch with their higher power.” And they’re not very confident that is going to happen in church.61

This situation, which is as true in South Africa today as in the USA, is a tremendous challenge to the Church. The new philosophical frameworks which guide society need to be understood, and the Church needs to find ways to become relevant in the face of the realities of life in the 21st century. Of course, this involves a new look at the old work of evangelism. All of this has strong implications for Church music, and provides wonderful opportunities for musicians to be part of the solution.

61 Morgenthaler, S., Worship Evangelism, p.57
1) The Challenge of Post-Modernism

The world of the latter part of the twentieth century has been in transition. The rationalistic, "scientific," individualistic worldview, based so strongly on reason and literacy, that was the product of the Enlightenment, and which has been the foundation of Western thinking for so long has been slowly getting undermined. Perhaps the first major symptom of this change was seen in the hippy movement of the 1960s.

As young John F. Kennedy was inaugurated as president in 1961, Western society had already begun to depart from the cerebral, rationalistic, Enlightenment base upon which it had functioned for nearly three hundred years.

The precise origins of the new worldview are debatable, although some point to the overthrow of the following scientific premise: We can understand the world entirely through objective means. Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum physics are prime suspects in this paradigmatic upset, particularly the discovery that atomic functions are unpredictable and enigmatic rather than orderly and mechanistic.62

This new philosophy, commonly known as "post-modernism," is a very different way of thinking from that outlined above; although what we will refer to as post-modernism here is probably a popular version of the philosophy which goes by that name. This is fast becoming the prevalent view of the world, and it is one which is experiential, anti-rational, anti-intellectual. Post-moderns react to the view that there is any absolute truth, preferring to believe that essentially each person discovers their own truth. This view of the world is multi-sensory, largely as a

62 Ibid. p.63
result of technology moving communication beyond the realm of the written word only, and making it a "multi-media" experience. Post-modernism tends to shun traditional "pigeon-holing" and embraces a sense of the common bond of humanity, while allowing individual personalised expression to a large degree. Perhaps one of the most significant aspects of this view has been mentioned above – that the world is no longer largely sceptical in its approach to spirituality and the reality of spiritual beings and existence. Rather, spirituality is accepted as both normative and necessary, but not necessarily linked to any institution. The influx of Eastern religions packaged for the Western mindset, along with the spread of New Age eclecticism, has meant that spirituality is definitely in fashion.

The Church clearly has to respond to these changes. The wonderful truth about this, though, is that there is little that is really new that needs to be done. Rather, a new approach to the old, and a restoration of much that has been lost over the centuries is what is needed.

In worship we proclaim and enact God's mighty deeds in history and offer our prayer of praise and thanksgiving to the Creator and Redeemer of the world.

The postmodern world is fertile ground for this classical understanding of worship for two reasons. First, postmodern people are turning away from their faith in reason to recognise the mysterious nature of the world in which we live. .

Second, the postmodern shift in communications from the verbal to the symbolic allows evangelicals to recover the classical Christian approach to communication and to creatively apply it to worship renewal.63

63 Webber, R. E., Ancient-Future Faith, p.94
One thing that is sure is that people are looking for spiritual reality, and the Church has a golden opportunity to offer them that. Christian worship has traditionally been the place of meeting between God and human beings. As this understanding of worship is restored, along with the recovery of many of the “tools” which the Church has used over the centuries to allow this to happen, the postmodern worldview should cease to threaten us. While there is much in this new way of thinking that must be rejected by the Church, it is nevertheless an exciting opening for the Church to recover its relevance in the world.

There are a number of writers offering suggestions for ways that the Church can respond to the challenge of postmodernism. These give the Church clear guidelines for the way forward. Essentially, the kind of Church that touches a postmodern person is one that engages the whole person – their body, all of their senses, their spirit and emotions – not just the mind. The following are some suggestions for how this can be done effectively.

a) Recover the Classical Forms of Worship

In this age of heady irreverence, recaptured reverence may seem as paradoxical as seashells at fourteen thousand feet. But it is precisely this paradox, this jarring juxtaposition of abandon and awe that both enchants and re-engages the postmodern human.64

Many of the old traditions of worship have fallen by the wayside over the centuries since the Reformation. Many churches today are low on liturgy, and even those that are used are frequently contemporary shadows of the depth

64 Morgenthaler, S., Reverence in an Irreverent Culture, in Worship Leader Online, Vol.9, No.4, Jul/Aug 2000
and mystery of the great prayers of the Church. Increasingly people are wanting the Church to be the Church; a place where the mystery and holiness of God can be experienced.

In the last few years, however, we see a hunger for something more. What is it? The word we often hear is “transcendence.” Many worshippers are looking for a more structured liturgy. They want to go beyond the sounds of CCM and recognise a richer aesthetic...

It is hard to identify all of the reasons for this transition. One factor is the vacuum left by the typical boomer culture of the 1980s. We got tired of feeling good about ourselves and longed for something more heavenly. The surprise success of the Spanish Benedictine Monks' CD Chant is a clue. Its lofty modal sounds are far removed from the simple chords of praise music.65

Traditional elements of Christian worship like the Sacraments, responsive and liturgical prayer, passing of the peace, and so on, are beginning to touch a chord in people’s hearts, and they are responding. The Church has long been a custodian of the experience of the transcendence of God. It is time to reclaim this role.

Further, the advent of the computer age, and the increase in technology means that our world is one in which communication and experience are “multi-media” activities. When it is realised that the communication and experience of the early Church before the advent of the printing press, was filled with symbol, art, movement and music - in other words, a multitude of media - it makes sense...

that a recovery of this style of worship will touch the heart of the postmodern world. This will be developed further in the following sections.

b) Reverent and Creative Use of the Arts

In this way, the postmodern world is much more medieval. The church was a major patron of the arts. We forget this – there was a time up until the 19th century that some of your major art dealers and traders were clergy. Then something happened. Right now is a major renaissance for the arts in the church as we make worship multi-sensory and experiential.66

It is an interesting study of history to realise that the arts, which were so strongly developed and fostered by the church, have, over the years, been moved out of the realm of worship. In the light of the truth that one of the ways in which the imago dei manifests in human beings is in their creativity, and that creative expression through the arts was originally used, and I believe intended, for worship, it is ironic that the church has treated the arts with such suspicion in the last century.

Ingmar Bergman in an interview said, "It is my opinion that art lost its basic creative drive the moment it was separated from worship. It severed an umbilical cord and now lives its own sterile life, generating and degenerating itself. In former days the artist remained unknown and his work was to the glory of God. . . . Today the individual has become the highest form and the greatest bane of artistic creation. . . . The

66 Have You Heard the One About the Missionaries?: An Interview with Leonard Sweet, from The Ooze: Catalysing the "Church in Transition" into Linking Communities Web Site.
individualists stare into each other's eyes and yet deny the existence of each other..." 67

However, the way people communicate and perceive the world has changed to the extent that the church dearly needs to recapture the arts, and begin to bring them back to their original purpose, both in the service of worship, and in reaching out to the world. Of course, music, as one of the arts, has an important part to play in this process.

It needs to be noted that the arts have never been completely removed from the church. Stained glass windows, and more recently, banners, have provided some visual stimulus to worship, and of course there has always been music of some form. So, it is not just the presence of the arts that must be noted, but the way in which they are used. This primarily means allowing the arts to become a larger focus of our worship, in such a way that people are drawn into worship through their use. In the past, the arts have been on the periphery, but it is time for them to move back to the centre. Leonard Sweet uses the acronym EPIC to guide the use of the arts: E – Experiential; P – Participatory; I – Image-based; C – Connected. 68 Thus it is not the use of art for art's sake, but in order to heighten the worship experience of the congregation.

In many ways, music is the primary art for worship. All other art forms are somehow representative or static. Music is neither. Rather it is fluid and

67 Quoted by Donald J. Drew, in Images of Man: A Critique of the Contemporary Cinema (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1974), p.76. in turn quoted in Eugene Peterson, Five Smooth Stones For Pastoral Work, Footnote 12, p.19

68 Have You Heard the One About the Missionaries?: An interview with Leonard Sweet, from The Ooze: Catalysing the "Church in Transition" into Linking Communities Web Site.
dynamic, constantly in motion, constantly changing, and incapable of being replicated.

Music is a temporal art. Its patterns exist in time and require duration for their development and completion. Although painting and architecture and sculpture make statements about relationships between space, objects, and colours, these relationships are static. Music more aptly represents human emotional processes because music, like life, appears to be in constant motion.69

In the book Music and Worship in the Church, Austin Lovelace and William Rice outline four ways in which music and worship are alike and connect in ways that other art forms do not. Firstly, there is an element of mystery which surrounds both. Again, this has to do with the truth that music alone, of the art forms, is not representative of any other thing. Secondly, both music and worship are inextricably intertwined with the emotions. Thirdly, both music and worship are constantly creative, and finally, music and worship are both strongly linked to language.70

The arts need to become a stronger feature of our worship, and the use of music needs to be organised in far more creative and participative ways. The arts interact with human beings in worship, drawing them into deeper encounter with God.

Worship is a means through which we can see, hear, smell, taste, feel, and come into contact with the infinite. Therefore the arts can mediate the message of Christ and minister to me in the depth of my being. We

69 Storr, A., Music and the Mind, p.79
70 Music And Worship In The Church, pp.17-18
evangelicals are just now beginning to discover how God can meet us through the arts.  

This, albeit briefly, is an attempt to indicate the ways in which the arts, and particularly music can assist the Church in meeting the challenge of the new postmodern culture which is gaining in influence.

2) The Challenge of the Great Commission

The church's concern for outreach has come and gone throughout its existence. The pendulum has swung toward a feeling of concern and compassion, countered thereafter by a swing toward a feeling of complacency. Then the whole cycle begins again. In every complete cycle there is a merging of the "sacra" and the "profana." Each time the church has expressed its beliefs in a contemporary way it has surged forward in evangelistic outreach, bringing scores of people into the church.

Over the last few decades, in response to the decline of the church discussed earlier in this chapter, many churches have begun to seek ways to reach out evangelistically in more effective ways. It is significant to note the central role that music has played in most of these efforts. While there may be many other options for reaching the lost, including the large evangelistic campaigns (which, by the way, have also always relied heavily on the use of music to enhance their effectiveness), there are three relatively new phenomena in outreach which have emerged with special application to the issue of the church's relevance and the postmodern mindset.

71 Webber, R.E., *Worship is a Verb*, p.200  
72 Ellsworth, D.P., *Christian Music in Contemporary Witness*, p.18
a) The Praise March

The name of Graham Kendrick is well known to many church musicians, and most Christians would recognise some of his better known worship songs. However, he has also been the catalyst in developing a good idea for increasing the church's visibility into a world-wide movement. The "March for Jesus" movement has gained momentum and popularity over the last few years, and has seen a growth in new styles of worship which are particularly suited to the streets, as well as new songs to accompany them. Essentially this is the purpose of the praise march – to take worship out of the church and into the streets where people can see it and respond.

The church has rarely been on display in such festive light. To very many people the church hardly exists because they never see it. Rare visits for christenings, weddings and funerals plus the images conveyed by television programs may only serve to create an unhelpful caricature. People assume that what goes inside a church building has very little to do with them . . .

The church needs visibility to be a body of opinion and a group of significance in the life of the nation. Surely one of the best ways to become visible is in the activity to which God has called us and which is our eternal destiny – worship.73

Beginning with a spontaneous and poorly organised march of believers in Soho in the West End of London in 1985, the praise march has developed to the point where world-wide marches have been held, and are in the process of planning for the new millennium.

73 Kendrick, G., Public Praise, pp. 13&15
On May 23, 1992, we will have seen Christians uniting from more than thirty nations, spanning North America and Europe, stretching from Vancouver to Moscow, from Iceland to Albania, totalling in the region of 180 separate marches, filling the streets of cities great and small. In some cities we are seeing as many as 100,000 praising, praying Christians gathering in one place with one supreme motive, to worship Jesus, the King of the nations.\textsuperscript{74}

Needless to say, the use of music to draw attention, as well as in its role as a vehicle of praise has been an important feature of these marches, with Kendrick himself, and many others, responsible for writing new music specifically suited for use on the streets. While the march is not seen as a method for evangelism as such, it is nevertheless a powerful catalyst to that end, and also helps the church express her worship in a visible and relevant way, which impacts those who observe – often with evangelistic effect.

While the church is busy answering questions that nobody is asking, she has forgotten how to be an event which demands an explanation. . . The event is a Person, a Person who demands an introduction. . .

A praise march is not essentially an evangelistic method. If such a method is being sought, there are many to choose from. But its effect in the end may be to prepare the way for great harvests of souls to be reaped. The key to its success in this regard is the preservation of its purity as a bold and extravagant display of love for Jesus, a joyful and confident celebration of the truth about Him. As such it can create a climate for evangelism.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid. p.172
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid. pp.114-115
b) The Seeker Service

In 1975 a new church was born with a passion to win people for Christ. A lot of work and research had been done to determine the best way to do this, and from the beginning Willow Creek Community Church was determined to do things differently from other churches, not for the sake of difference, but because they were convinced that the traditional ways of "doing church" were no longer working.

Before starting the church, the founders asked the following simple question to thousands of people who did not attend church: "What are the reasons why you don't attend church?" Their responses were very frank. They found that people with no interest in church gave five general reasons for their indifference:

1. Churches were always asking for money (yet nothing perceived as personally significant seemed to be happening with the money).
2. Church services were boring and lifeless.
3. Church services were predictable.
4. Sermons are irrelevant to daily life in the "real world".
5. The pastor made people feel guilty and ignorant, so they leave the church feeling worse than when they entered the doors.

With the survey data in hand, the founders of Willow Creek focused their attention on building a service organisation that continually attracted new "customers" and empowered regular attenders to bring in more new "customers." The results speak for themselves.\(^7\)

As a result of this desire, the "Seeker Service" was born. This service is step three in the seven step approach which Willow Creek uses to reach unbelievers. Essentially the seeker service is a church service designed in

\(^7\) Mellado, J., *Harvard Business School Report for Class Discussion on Willow Creek Community Church*, p.1
every aspect with the unchurched person in mind. The services are intended to remove all of the obstacles to church attendance which keep people away. The service leans heavily on the arts, especially music and drama, but these are used in different ways from a "traditional" church service. The music is non-participative, essentially because Willow Creek believes that seekers are not able to worship, being spiritually unregenerate and ignorant. Therefore, they work with a highly skilled band of musicians who perform music related to the theme of the message.

The use of drama is to raise questions and highlight issues, but does not give answers. This, they believe is the work of the sermon. A common phrase heard among Willow Creek leaders is "the arts do not preach." 77

Rick Warren, pastor of another large "Seeker Church" in California, USA, describes the philosophy behind the seeker service approach:

Most evangelical churches conclude their worship service with an altar call. This indicates that, functionally, we connect worship with evangelism. But many do not realise that it is a self-defeating strategy to focus the first fifty-eight minutes of the service on believers and suddenly shift the focus on unbelievers in the last two minutes. Unbelievers are not going to sit through fifty-eight minutes of a service that isn't in the slightest way relevant to them. The entire service, not just the invitation, must be planned with the unchurched in mind. 78

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77 I was able to attend the Willow Creek Arts Conference in June 2000 with my wife. Both of us heard this phrase used a number of times in workshops that we attended.

78 The Purpose Driven Church, p.254
In attempting to design a service with seekers in mind, the music is one of the central areas of focus, involving the use of highly skilled musicians and vocalists, sophisticated sound equipment, and theatrical lighting. The music is generally proclamatory, rather than liturgical, but the underlying belief is that music communicates at a level deeper than words, and prepares hearts for the message which will follow.

A term which relates to the way the music, in particular, is chosen is “cultural relevance.” This is meant to indicate that the music which is used is familiar in style, if not in content, to the hearers.

Unchurched people come to a service hesitantly. Their mind-set is “you’re not going to get me.” Their defenses are up. We felt that a style of music that would get them moving in a physical way (nodding heads and tapping feet) would help break down their defenses.

One problem here is that Willow Creek and other Seeker Churches have focussed on the “culture” of 30-50 year old white, Western people. While cultural relevance is a helpful guideline, it must be remembered that different cultures need different styles of music for relevance.

It is interesting to note that leaders at the 2000 Arts Conference at Willow Creek have recognised that their normal “seeker” approach is beginning to wane in its effectiveness. The new postmodern worldview is not as attracted to this model of ministry as people of the previous generation. As a result of this they now speak about the “new paradigm” of service which they are beginning to develop.

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79 Dobson, E., *Starting a Seeker Sensitive Service*, pp.42-43
and experiment with. A strong influence on this change has been the writing and work of Sally Morgenthaler, and the “worship evangelism” movement.

c) Worship Evangelism

Worship evangelism is simply letting God do with us and through us what God intends. It happens when we allow ourselves to be the passionate, adoring people of God we were created to be, when we allow seekers to experience the wonder of true worship and, most importantly, when we allow God to be God.\(^{80}\)

The Seeker churches are beginning to realise that new ways of “doing church” are now necessary. People are no longer so cerebral in their orientation, and in their quest for spirituality, they are looking for more than just true words or concepts. They are seeking true experience of God.

Out of this disillusionment has arisen a movement, predominantly in the USA at this stage, which has, perhaps unfortunately, been dubbed “worship evangelism.” The basic premise is that “worship that edifies, witnesses; worship that witnesses, edifies.”\(^{81}\) A lot of the principles that have been discovered through the seeker service are retained, but often redefined. The idea that the church has a strong responsibility to fulfil the Great Commission is central, but along with this is a commitment to the belief that “[Humanity’s] chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him for ever.”\(^{82}\)

\(^{80}\) Morgenthaler, S., *Worship Evangelism*, p.280

\(^{81}\) Quoted on the sleeve of the cover to Morgenthaler, S., *Worship Evangelism*.

\(^{82}\) From the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, quoted in Kendrick, G., *Worship*, p.15
Essentially worship evangelism is about restoring the full range of worship expression that the church has enjoyed through the centuries, on the understanding that this will deepen and renew the worship of the church. Flowing from this, then, and as a consequence of it, people are drawn to God, because He is made manifest through the worship of His people.

Once again, the role of music is crucial, since it is crucial to worship generally. Cultural relevance is still considered, but in a far wider way than in the seeker churches. While “repackaging” worship forms in ways that the contemporary world understands is important, it is crucial that the essential nature of these forms as acts of worship is retained, and that seekers are moved from what is familiar to what is unfamiliar in loving ways.

The Church in South Africa today has a wonderful opportunity, and an immense challenge ahead of it. Socially, South Africa is in turmoil, and the church which seeks to fulfil its God-given calling, must strive for ways to be relevant and healing in the midst of this crisis. On a cultural level, a divided population is beginning to move together into the “Rainbow Nation” referred to by Desmond Tutu. This will require much patience and love, as the different cultures are brought face to face with each other, and are taught to understand and rejoice in each other. Finally, the Church has the calling of the Great Commission to fulfil, and we need to take this seriously if we are to be faithful to our Lord. In a world that is increasingly secularised, the Gospel must be made known.

In the face of this challenge, music is one of the most powerful tools in the Church’s armoury. However, much of its effectiveness is diminished by the lack of understanding of music and its purpose, and by the lack of a well developed theology of music. While this
chapter has indicated the wide scope which such a theology needs to have, dealing with all of these issues directly is beyond the range of the theology which will be developed here. The reality is that worship is the arena in which music is most used in the Church. A theology of music for worship will serve the Church greatly in being a Church which touches the issues mentioned in this chapter, and so, the final task of this thesis is to attempt to do just this.
CHAPTER FIVE: DEVELOPING A SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP MUSIC FOR THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

As was required by the methodology which was outlined in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the biblical account of musical usage and understanding has been explored, followed by an overview of the Church's history as it relates to music. In the last chapter, the discussion was rooted in the realities of life in South Africa at the present time, and the challenges which this presents for the Church were examined.

This chapter, then, is the final step in this process, drawing together of all the principles that have emerged into a systematic whole, which can be a theological guide for the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. It must be noted, however, that the Methodist Church is not essentially different from other churches, and so the issues that it is dealing with will certainly be present in other denominations as well. Also, the challenges of this country affect more than just the Methodist people. This means that, while this study is intended for Methodists in particular, and the needs of this denomination are uppermost in my mind, it will not be necessary to continually single this church out.

Before the theological framework itself can be outlined, however, there are three preliminary comments that must be noted.

A] FOUNDATIONS TO THE THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP MUSIC
1) The Nature of Worship

Worship is a difficult thing to define in some senses, because it is intangible. Conversely, it is also an inherent human activity, as natural and compulsive as breathing. In spite of this, the worship of the Church has frequently been misunderstood or redefined according to the spirit of the age, or the preferences of the participants. It is therefore necessary to provide a clear definition of worship, in order to establish the framework within which this discussion will take place.

As Graham Kendrick points out, the origin of the English word "worship" derives from the Anglo-Saxon worth-scipe or worth-ship, meaning to express "the value placed on someone or something."⁠¹ Picking up on the Greek word most often translated as 'worship' in the New Testament (προσκυνέω) he notes that it means "to come forward to kiss (the hand), denoting both the external act of prostrating oneself in worship, and the corresponding inward attitude of reverence and humility."² He goes on to describe the implications of this for Christians today:

This gives us a beautiful picture of worship as we approach the King of kings and Lord of lords; with open face, eye to eye, our hearts full of love and thanks, our wills set firmly to obey him, enjoying an intimacy and a mutual affection that the watching angels find astounding. Considering that in heaven's eyes we were once rebels and sworn enemies, originally made in God's perfect image yet twisted into grotesque parodies by sin, this is incredible!³

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¹ See Worship, p.23
³ Worship, pp.23-24
Certainly, my own understanding of worship would concur with this. The testimony of Scripture and of Church history is that worship is intended to be a meeting of human beings with their Creator. It is a supernatural event, and yet the most natural experience, bringing God’s Spirit, and the human spirit into the kind of connection hinted at in Psalm 42:7:

Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and billows have gone over me.

In this connection, God is recognised in His transcendence and in His imminence simultaneously, and the worshipper offers expressions of praise, gratitude, love and submission in response. This experience of worship is essentially an act of faith, but there are times when God breaks into our experience in some humanly perceptible way. The significance of this divine/human encounter in worship must not be underestimated. The dignity it brings to the human race is akin to that given us in the incarnation. It must be stressed, however, that these experiences are necessarily real, and of the greatest importance.

If this [spiritual] realm can only be thought about and not experienced, then it had better be left to the philosophers and the theologians while we get on with the business of adjusting our lives as best we can to the materialism in which we are irretrievably caught.4

The testimony of the people of God throughout the history of humanity has been, and continues to be, that true encounter with God is both possible and available, and we call it worship.

4 Kelsey, M., Encounter with God, p.171
2) God is the Focus

In the light of the above definition of worship it may appear strange that all sorts of other considerations come into play. We have seen how worship and evangelism have long been associated, both in Scripture and in Church history. We cannot help but recognise that in worship the people of God express something of their identity as a community. In addition, the value that many people place on the worship event as a source of well-being is often mentioned. It is clear, then, that there is a lot more going on in worship than simply God and the believer in some kind of escapist 'bubble' from which the rest of the world is excluded. How is this reality included in an understanding of worship, without the whole exercise being relegated to a striving for certain end products?

The answer must surely be located in the grace of God, and in His deep love and longing for His people. When human beings worship God, the Creator is Present, and His creative power is at work. The consequence of this is that lives are touched and changed, and people are conformed in ever increasing measure to the loving, community-building, image of Christ. As described by Sally Morgenthaler in terms of evangelism:

> Whether evangelism through worship was direct or indirect, the cause-effect relationship of New Testament worship and evangelism is undeniable. Gerrit Gustafson observes: “One fact stands out to me... those early Christians evangelised almost by accident. Evangelism sprang out of throne-room encounters. They were more conscious of God Himself than of evangelising, and yet they evangelised.”

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Thus, in worship, the goal is not evangelism, or healing or community-building. The goal and focus, and object of worship is the triune God. However, when God is present, we can expect that all of these things and more will be by-products that result from the worship of the Church. Perhaps one of the clearest examples of this is the worship of Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail, but the power of the Presence of God in the worship of His people is shown throughout the Scriptures.

A theology of worship, and consequently a theology of worship music, must take account of these additional factors, and understand their role and place. This is not to shift the focus from God, but to acknowledge His gifts of grace.

3) Worship beyond the Sanctuary

The final foundational proposition that needs to be made, is that worship as described above is not exclusively experienced in the sanctuary. While the Church building, set apart for worship, is debatably the place where this encounter with God happens most easily and most frequently, it is certainly not the only place in which God chooses to make His Presence known. Jesus confirmed this in Matthew’s Gospel:

“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

That this was the experience of the New Testament church is evidenced by the fact that they “[continued] daily in the temple, and [broke] bread from house to house . . .” Their worship was one of the temple and of the home, and there is
nothing to suggest that their experience of God was at all diminished in either venue.

This is a crucial issue to note, because when referring to the music of worship, it is easy to fall into the trap of only identifying that which happens in the sanctuary. However, if worship legitimately occurs outside of the sanctuary, then a theology of worship music must take this into account. We have already discussed the practice of taking worship into the streets in the praise march. Much has been written in books on Christian families about bringing worship into the home. The class meeting of the Wesleys, which has evolved into the present day "home cell" has worship as a necessary and central element. In the light of this, there is nothing to stop us taking worship into the counseling room, the classroom, or any other place where the opportunity is afforded. The point is that worship does not need to be shut in to the sanctuary, but must be allowed to flow into every aspect of our lives. The music of worship, then, will accompany worship wherever it may go.

B] A PROPOSAL FOR A THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP MUSIC

Now that the foundations have been laid, as far as worship is concerned. It is possible to proceed with the work of developing a systematic theology of worship music. Based on the principles which have emerged in this study, it would appear that three overriding categories would provide a helpful framework for this theology: First, Worship Music as Sacred Sound; Second, Worship Music as Sacred Act; and Third, Worship Music as Sacred Word. With this framework in place, a theology of worship music with specific reference to the Methodist Church of Southern Africa can now be developed.
1) **Worship Music as Sacred Sound**

... in the Hebrew tradition you always chant the torah, You never say the torah, you chant it. Whenever Leonard Bernstein conducted his mass, he would turn around to the audience and say, "We get this wrong. God did not say, let there be light. The real Hebrew meaning is God sang, let there be light." Then, he would give them a little sample of God's song, Dun, dun, dun, duuu ... as only Bernstein could do.\(^9\)

Leonard Bernstein's Hebrew scholarship may be questionable – I have been unable to verify his claim about the right translation of Gen.1:3 – but his point is certainly accurate. That music was an integral part of creation, and that the Word of God sang creation into being has been established already in the chapter on the biblical witness. There is no question, God is a musician, and thus, music ultimately has its source in Him. This is both profound, and an essential starting point for a theology of music. It places music in its proper context and perspective.

However, as has been observed through the Bible and history, music and worship are both inherent activities for human beings. They are central to our humanity. Our musical God has filled creation with sounds and "music," and this is most profoundly expressed and experienced by people. While not wanting to go to the extreme of the medieval "music of the spheres" theology, it is nevertheless important to remember that when people make music, they are never initiating. The music is already in motion, and we simply participate in the wider, eternal symphony of worship which creation and the heavenly beings engage in continuously.

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\(^9\) *Have You Heard the One About the Missionaries?: An Interview with Leonard Sweet*, from *The Ooze: Catalysing the "Church in Transition" into Linking Communities*, Web Site.
This sets the scene, but the description of music as Sacred Sound must go deeper than this. Essentially, we need to understand the divine activity in music on the one hand, and then, alongside this, the human activity. It goes without saying that most of this chapter of theology will develop around human music making in worship. However, the beginning point, is certainly the divine activity in music.

a) **Divine Musical Expression**

God makes music. How He does this must remain a mystery for human beings this side of heaven. There is a danger of becoming overly anthropomorphic, and so the details of God's music making must remain a mystery. Essentially how God creates music is far less important than the fact that He does so. Again, the biblical witness to this has already been established.

I am convinced that there are two main reasons why God creates music, and they make it clear why music was so central to His work of creation. This can then inform our use of music in worship, by making us aware of the kind of activity that God may be engaging in through it.

i) **God's Self Revelation**

It is a well accepted theological truth that God cannot be known outside of His revelation of Himself to human beings. What is also clear is that God has been extravagant in the ways that He has made knowledge of Himself available.
Paul demonstrates in Romans 1 that God has revealed Himself through the created world.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

The testimony of the Scriptures is that they are God's word spoken through human beings to humankind, in order that God and His ways may be known. Jesus, of course, claimed this in application to Himself in John's Gospel:

"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me." 11

This claim of Jesus also relates to the final and most extravagant revelation of God – that of sending His own Son to reveal Himself, and to bring salvation, to humanity. The claims of Jesus, which are so outrageous if false, need not be defended here. Rather, their truth, accepted by believers through the ages, demonstrate the lengths that God goes to in order that human beings may know Him and be in relationship with Him.

It is interesting to note that music is present in all three of these revelatory expressions of God. We have spoken about the presence of music at

10 Rom.1:18-20
11 John 5:39
creation; we have seen how many prophets uttered their message in song, and how the Scriptures were generally sung (chanted) rather than read as we would today. And thirdly, we have noted the likelihood of Jesus' musical ability. Thus, we can say with confidence that God reveals Himself, and that He does so through music. It is necessary, however to grapple with the way in which this may be accomplished, and the value which it would have for us today. To begin with a brief discussion on the nature of revelation would be helpful.

Revelation as it is understood by the Christian Church has two elements. Firstly, there is general revelation. There are times when God's revelation is simply a kind of statement of the fact of His Being, and an indication of His glory. It is in this sense that the Psalmist speaks of God's revelation in Ps. 19:

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork.¹²

Second, there is special or specific revelation. At times God's revelation is intended to evoke some response from the person or persons to whom it is given. An example of this is the incident at Caesarea Philippi when Jesus asks the disciples who they say He is. Jesus' response to Peter's confession is significant:

Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.¹³

¹² Ps.19:1
This kind of revelation happens every time a person is brought to belief in Jesus, although the way it happens differs greatly from person to person.

Alfred C. Lamb refers to these two types of revelation as general revelation and special revelation, and he adds inspiration - the work of the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of revelation - as a third kind.\textsuperscript{14} Inspiration is really just another form of special revelation, though, as it enables the revelation to be personally apprehended. For our purposes, the twofold understanding of revelation is both adequate and preferable.\textsuperscript{15}

Music is able to provide revelation in both of these ways. Firstly, it is included in the psalmist's expression that God reveals Himself through creation. There is no logical reason why music should be excepted from this truth. We have noted the "transcendent" nature of music, its fluid and dynamic character. In this is a sense of the world of the spirit that is intangible, ever changing and transcendent. Music has a similar quality to that of the wind and the Spirit, as mentioned by Jesus in John 3:8.

Perhaps it is exactly this sense of music that prompted Claude Levi-Strauss to say:

\textsuperscript{13} Matt. 16:17

\textsuperscript{14} An Approach to Christian Doctrine, pp. 5-7

\textsuperscript{15} See for example Macquarrie, J., Principles of Christian Theology, pp. 88-89, and Berkhof, H., Christian Faith, pp.56-61. Some deny this distinction by saying that there is no real revelation unless it is perceived, and so all revelation is specific or special revelation. However, the Psalmist's assertion that God reveals Himself through creation is a statement of fact which holds no essential element of perception. It is a divine act which can become special revelation, but even if no person ever acknowledged this revelation of God, it would not therefore cease to be.
Since music is the only language with the contradictory attributes of being at once intelligible and untranslatable, the musical creator is a being comparable to the gods, and music itself the supreme mystery of the science of [humanity].

What conclusion can we draw from this? Simply by virtue of the fact that music exists, we humans gain a sense of something greater than ourselves. This kind of thinking naturally leads us into an awareness of a Creator; a Being, greater than ourselves, which has the capacity to originate both the music and our ability to perceive and appreciate it. It is not a large step to take from there to an understanding that He is also transcendent and yet imminent, "at once intelligible and untranslatable." Music quite easily, it seems, offers us a general revelation of God. Perhaps this is why listening to a skilled musical performance is sometimes described as a "religious experience."

In a more directly Christian way, Robert Webber describes his experience of transcendence as a result of music.

The organ music swelled into full volume and the congregation sang with great conviction: "For all the saints, who from their labours rest, for thee by faith before the world confessed, the Name, O Jesus, be forever blest. Alleluia, alleluia!" Heaven seemed to open up, and there I was, with my loved ones and friends who have gone on to glory, standing as it were around the throne, worshiping and praising God.

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17 Worship is a Verb, p.185
Although this experience is described by one who is already convinced of the existence and love of God, it nevertheless demonstrates the way that music can lead us into a greater understanding of God – a revelation.

Music orders time, and it orders sounds. As such it helps us to order our world. It also enables us to believe that this transcendent God is truly capable of bringing order into chaos, and calling forth life. The sense we gain of God's nature as it is revealed in music, is one of an orderly Creator, who puts things in their proper place and orders them according to a system, even if we do not understand the laws and rules which may govern His creation. The beauty of music enables us to perceive this God as beautiful, and the variety of musical styles and expressions illustrates His love of variety.

These are just a few examples of the way music might provide general revelation for human beings. Of course, as with all revelation, there will be those who will miss it, and some will experience revelation of different attributes or truths of God. That is part of the wonder of music and of revelation.

Secondly, music is often used by God to give special revelation to a person or group of people. The reality of this is that music, as we have seen, is not a direct form of communication. This means that special revelation is usually experienced because of a text that is set to the music, or because of an association with a specific piece of music, or a musical style or movement which then stirs up a new insight. While it may well be possible for a completely unfamiliar, instrumental piece to suddenly awaken a person to
some truth or message of God, this would truly be miraculous, and would need to be supported by the testimony of Scripture or the doctrine of the Church. The following story is one example of such a special revelation being apprehended through music:

Mark Garfield (not his real name) was an empty, rebellious man without any real purpose or meaning in his life. His wife and three children had prayed for him for years, but his aimless, godless existence finally got the best of him, and Mark committed a crime that put him behind bars at a correctional facility in South Carolina.

While Mark was in jail, someone gave him a praise and worship music tape, “In His Presence.” Words such as [those] from the song “Crowned with Mercy,” from Psalm 103, touched Mark deep inside...

Right there in his cell, Mark got down on his knees and asked God to forgive his sins and make his life new again.

Today Mark does indeed have a new life. He has a new relationship with his wife, children, and parents, and regularly attends church services in prison while he’s waiting to be released.18

This story illustrates how God can use music to drive home the message – the revelation – of the Gospel. Music is used by God to reveal Himself and His ways to human beings. Nothing that has been said in terms of revelation is the exclusive domain of music, but there seems to be a consistency about the way revelation is received through music that is unique, and there is also a power in the way revelation is communicated through music that is unmatched. Of course, part of this revelatory power must also be in the ability of music to remind us of revelation that has been received through other

18 Coleman, M. & Lindquist, E., Come and Worship, pp.58-59
means, and reinforce its message. Although the power of music is a mystery which is not fully understood, part of its power can perhaps be described as follows:

Music is an art of human expression which *directly* voices the human soul in tone governed by rhythm. It can really utter the voice of the spirit through the flesh; and make the spoken word more intensely vital, more sincere, truer. In its combination of the sensible and the spiritual, it corresponds to the nature of [humanity], and to the sacramental idea characteristic of the religion of Jesus.\(^\text{19}\)

Thus, what becomes clear, is that music is, at its source, a divine activity, both performed by God, and given by God to human beings. Clearly one of the reasons for the existence of this gift in the life of humankind is for God to reveal Himself through it.

ii) The Experience of Transcendence

Music brings a sense of transcendence, and this can turn our minds and hearts toward God. However, it becomes apparent with any extended study of music that its power frequently goes far beyond that of simple communication or even revelation. Music not only makes us aware of the possibility or existence of transcendence or a Transcendent Being, but in some amazing way, it seems, music has the ability to bring us into a real experience of this Transcendent God. It is a “vehicle” for divine/human encounter.

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\(^{19}\) Douglas, C.W., *Church Music in History and Practice*, pp.6-7
"The chief function of church music (sacred music or liturgical music) is to add a deeper dimension of involvement to worship," writes James F. White, but it is difficult to imagine that all the psalmists and musicians in the Bible were doing was increasing congregational participation. Psalm 22:3 affirms that "You [God] are holy, Who inhabit the praises of Israel." (Italics mine). This indicates a presence of God in the worship of people.

We need to stop here for a moment and deal with a central question which Sally Morgenthaler raises.

What exactly has to happen before we can experience God's "nearness" in worship? Is God's manifest presence automatic? In other words, is it just there for us to enjoy and celebrate? Or does God "show up" in our worship centres in relationship to the amount of enthusiasm we muster? Conversely, is God's divine glory bequeathed randomly and mysteriously, independent of anything humans do or say? Who is ultimately responsible for the experience of God's presence in worship, the worshiper or God?

Of course, God's Presence is not really something that "comes and goes", as Psalm 139 demonstrates.

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.

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20 Introduction to Christian Worship, p.110
21 Worship Evangelism, p.100
If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea,

Even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me...

22

God is always present, and does not need to "come in" to our churches and sanctuaries. He is also present with us outside of the Church, so in one sense we do not even need to "come in" to God's presence. The reality, though, is that from a human perspective this presence is not always perceived, and when it is, this can vary in degree, from time to time, and from person to person. Morgenthaler quotes C.S. Lewis's assessment of this dynamic:

"It is in the process of being worshipped that God communicates His presence to [humans]."23

Thus, God's presence becomes available to our perception as we engage in worship of Him. When this happens, music almost always seems to be at the centre, giving voice to our worship, and opening our "spiritual senses" to the presence which is being revealed. He "fills" or "inhabits" our praises, usually lifted in song, or with some other kind of musical activity, and enables us to know and experience this presence among us.

The biblical account seems to show that God's people certainly expected to experience His presence in some "conscious" or perceptible way. One

22 Psalm 139:7-10
example of this is when Elisha called for a musician before he was able to prophecy in 2 Kings 3:15:

And it happened, when the musician played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.

In this passage, God’s presence and the prophetic “word of the Lord” is invoked through music. Since God’s people in biblical times had a valid expectancy of His revealed presence, there seems to be no reason why a similar expectation should not be legitimate in God’s people today. Certainly, there are those who testify that both the expectation, and the experience of God’s presence has indeed been part of their worship.

What is it about music that touches people everywhere? Not only across cultures but throughout the ages, praise music has brought people into a right relationship with God.24

There is no doubt that, as has been stated, the act of worship, and the belief that God is present among His people, is an act of faith. However, faith does not necessarily preclude experience, and is often the prelude to it. Scripture seems to indicate that God frequently makes His presence known, often in life-changing and even dramatic ways, and somehow the music of worship is significant in this divine/human encounter. Many Christians today testify to such encounters during times of worship, among them the writer, Colin Urquhart:

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24 Colson, M. & Lindquist, E., *Come and Worship*, p.42
At a camp last summer we had quite an amazing time. The climax of the week on the last evening was remarkable in a number of respects. It reached its peak with us clearing out all the chairs. There were 3 500 people dancing for joy because of what God had done.

As this was happening the people out in the camp who were looking after the small children saw the cloud of God’s glory passing through the camp with angels preceding it. The angels came and stood over the meeting place and the cloud of glory came right into the meeting area. I think those of us who were inside were hardly conscious of exactly what was happening except that a mist filled the whole place. People were getting up out of wheelchairs and dancing, throwing crutches and sticks away and dancing.

It was a sovereign work of God. All we were conscious of at the time was the Lord. It was only afterwards (except for a bit of spontaneous applause here and there as various things were taking place) that one discovered the kind of things that had been happening. Everybody was so taken up with God and with His glory.

One was so aware that God was in the camp, that it was not just a meeting together of Christians but it was a meeting with the Lord. We truly discovered that there is no substitute for a meeting with God.\(^{25}\)

The role of worship in bringing the presence of God to bear on human experience, and the resulting life-change, and increased depth of relationship that this brings is undeniable. Richard Foster affirms this strongly when he says that “if worship does not change us, it has not been worship,”\(^ {26}\) and that

\(^{25}\) Colin Urquhart, *The Open Door*  
\(^{26}\) *Celebration of Discipline*, p. 148
worship is "kindled within us only when the Spirit of God touches out human spirit." It is perhaps the famous quote of William Temple's, however, that really sums up the truth about divine-human encounter in worship:

To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.

In some mysterious way, that we can only begin to understand in a very small way, music facilitates this act and experience of worship. Inherently, music has the ability to draw people into an awareness of God, a recognition of His glory, and evoke both heartfelt and expressed worship, which can only be called a meeting with God. This is a miraculous and supernatural phenomenon.

Music is in some strange and mystical way a credential of God. We come into some place where sacred songs fall upon our spirits, and a transformation begins within us. We do not argue. We seek no syllogism. But there comes a sense of God, a consciousness of his holy presence. What does this? . . . is it the inevitable creed of music, recited in the temple of the soul? Is it the confession of faith, set in the harmony of God's own making? The theologian, without being dogmatic, will not hesitate to reply affirmatively, and to declare that the song of God is an evidence of the God of song.

27 Ibid. p.138
28 Quoted in Foster, R., Celebration of Discipline, p.138
Thus in music, we have a “spiritual meeting place” where the transcendent God makes Himself known and available, and where the human spirit can rise to encounter Him.

Thus, we have seen that God is active in music. In His hand, it becomes a carrier of revelation, communicating truth about Him and His ways to those who will hear. Further than this, music is used by God as a way for His presence to become known and experienced by human beings.

God is musical. Creation was birthed in music, it is sustained in music, and through music God interacts with His creation. In this sense music is truly Sacred Sound. This has profound implications for the way music is used in our churches. It is significant to note, that there is an almost instinctive awareness of the impact of God’s presence in worship that is being felt in many churches, and it is causing them to reconsider many aspects of the way their services are “designed” and led. Of course, this will impact our music as well.

There are a number of important results that flow from an understanding of music as the Sacred Sound of Divine Activity. The first three are outlined by William Edgar30, but there are two others which need to be added as well.

First, we are rediscovering the great power and authority of the Holy Trinity. God’s awesome power, and transcendence are being recognised in ways that the older forms of worship – both contemporary and traditional – were missing. It has become almost fashionable to focus on the grace and “friendliness” of

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God. While this is good, it must not overshadow the fact that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” An awareness of God’s transcendence and power, though, leads us into the true worship of extolling His glory.

In terms of our music, our choices need to be those which enable this sense of God’s transcendence to be experienced. Song writers need to be challenged to focus less on the “I” word in their songs and more on “You” with a capital ‘Y’. Of course many of the great hymns of faith have this element of transcendence firmly in place. Hymn 34 in the Methodist Hymnbook comes to mind:

> Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
> In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
> Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days
> Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.

This would be a strong argument for retaining hymns even in our contemporary worship. However, even the new songs that are being written need to keep this truth in mind.

The second implication of our discussion of Divine Activity in Music is that the Scriptural requirement for high standards in aesthetic matters is becoming more evident to people. The word excellence is so often associated with the artistic endeavours of biblical worshipers, and most Christians are familiar with the Psalmist’s exhortation to “play skillfully.” Although less so, today, it was not too long ago that the church had a reputation for doing things in a “make-do” kind of way. People whose abilities, particularly in the arts, were questionable,

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31 Heb.10:31
32 Psalm 33:3
were nevertheless received in worship, under the guise of being faithful, and the church giving them love and support.

This is one contribution that stands out in the ministry of Willow Creek Community Church. In their quest to reach seekers, they realised that half-hearted efforts would not achieve the desired results. As they developed their values, they included a call to excellence. The seeker service was built on six principles of which one was:

Excellence reflects the glory of God and has a positive effect on people.33

Excellence as it applies to the church, means looking at the way our arts ministries, and particularly our music ministries are managed and utilised. A call for work and the developing of skill in order to reflect, in some small measure, the glory of God, must be sounded. This issue must be developed further a little later in this theological framework, but needed to be addressed here, also. While the issue of excellence needs to be balanced so as not to become a damaging “perfectionism,” it is nevertheless a strong value to emerge out of the understand of God’s activity on the Sacred Sound of music.

Third, the role of tradition is being re-examined. As we become more aware of God’s greatness, we begin to realise that our mono-cultural expressions of worship do not adequately reflect the glory of the God who created with such extravagant variety. While this issue will also be addressed further later in our

33 Mellado, J., Harvard Business School Report for Class Discussion on Willow Creek Community Church, p.9
discussion, but for now it must be noted that in the growing communicational networks of our world, cultures are coming into contact with each other far more than ever. The impact of this on our worship is both a challenge, and a source of great joy. For those who work with the music in our worship, this requires an openness and readiness to learn which will enable them to draw out of the richness of all the traditions available, and combine them into a musical tapestry which befits the worship of God. As William Edgar writes:

What this means is a far greater awareness of the practices of God’s people outside of our immediate cultural horizon. We are discovering hymns from the early church, prayers from the Puritans, choral music from the African-American community. Our worship has been too homogenous and needs to become more multi-cultural. 34

A further implication of recognising music as the Sacred Sound of Divine Activity is that worship leaders and musicians need to be extremely careful not to “steal” God’s glory. One feature of contemporary worship has been the focus on the platform, and the increased prominence of worship leaders. The “stars” of today’s church are more likely to be those who lead worship than any other person, including the pastors. This is heady stuff, and it can be a strong temptation to get caught up in the respect and adulation of the people, while forgetting to direct their attention to the One Who is meant to be the focus of our worship. Essentially, this is nothing short of idolatry. As Sally Morgenthaler explains:

If we are really going to give people opportunities to encounter and interact with God in our sanctuaries, those of us who facilitate worship will have to overcome two major hurdles. First, we have to set aside some of our control issues and get out of the way. The reality that Chuck Smith, Jr., and other leaders have come up against is this: It is not the people in the pews who are inhibiting supernatural contact with God. It is those of us who stand behind the lectern and the microphones — we who have been charged with the responsibility of leading people into “throne-room encounters.”

The final implication of recognising music as the Sacred Sound of Divine Activity, is that we ignore the presence of God in our worship and music at our own peril. All too often our worship is an anthropocentric celebration of ourselves, with little reference or recognition of God’s presence or glory. When we come together in a place of worship, and ignore the reality and presence of God in our music, our prayers and our messages, it is nothing short of blasphemy. Robert Webber describes a significant conversation he had with a friend, Pastor Neil Garrabant, around just this issue:

You know, Bob, last week we celebrated Mother’s Day in our church. Everything in the service was geared toward honouring mothers. Our hymns, Scripture, sermon, and special music assisted us in the celebration of motherhood. When I got home, I sat down and started to think about that service. And I said to myself, ‘We didn’t worship God today; we were worshiping motherhood.”

I thought for a moment about Neil’s comments. Then I recalled the first principle of worship: worship celebrates Christ. I had to agree with my friend.36

35 Worship Evangelism, p.67
36 Worship is a Verb, p.158
It is crucial that God and His glory retain the central focus and energy of our worship. If we fail in this, our worship music ceases to be Sacred Sound, and is just sound. For God to reveal Himself and to encounter His people in worship, He must be at the centre of our expression of worship.

b) Human Musical Activity

It would be easy to fall into the trap of believing that only the Divine activity in music qualifies to be called Sacred Sound. However, this is not the case. Music as we know it, is never only a Divine expression. The truth is that if it was, human beings would never have any perception or knowledge of music at all. The grace of God is that while He is musical beyond any human ability or understanding, all of the above ways in which He is active in the music of worship are related to human music making. It is not God who plays the instruments used in worship. It is not God Who has written the songs we sing (although some songwriters might like to have us believe it is). It is an incarnational reality that God takes the efforts of people and fills them with Himself and His glory, and meets with people through them.

The consequence of this is that human musical activity can also be understood as Sacred Sound. This must be explored further, and falls into two main sections.

i) The Imago Dei

In a gift of dignity which is often missed by the human race, God has created us in His image. Whole volumes can be, and have been, written about the
theological implications of this truth. However, for the purposes of this discussion, one particular aspect needs to be developed.

It is interesting that the biblical account begins with a revelation of God that is so often the first understanding that people have about God's nature.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (italics mine).  

It seems to me that most people begin their spiritual journey with an understanding that there is a Creator. It is certainly true to say that God's nature as Creator is one of the most central and foundational theological realities for humanity to understand. Perhaps this is why the creeds traditionally begin with a recognition of this: "We believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

In this lies a clue to one of the ways in which this God's image is present in humanity. Of all the beings created by God, it appears that only human beings are able to bring into being an "original" creation. Even were this not true, the reality that humans reflect their Creative God in their own creativity certainly is. Carol Beeman explains it as follows:

We live in an age of technological ontology in which living and being are contradictory states of affairs. An inherent drive for balance and aesthetic satisfaction pushes us into a process that will hopefully be discharged in a creative rather than a destructive fashion. It is at this point that I view

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37 Gen.1:1
every human being as essentially creative, made in the image of the Creator of life itself.\textsuperscript{38}

Thus, in the creativity of people, God can be seen. The ability to create reveals the One who created the ability and bestowed it. That creativity was so important to God that He not only created humanity, but made us with the ability to share in His creativity, tells us much about God and His love for human beings. Also, as with any work of art which tells something of the artist that made it, so humanity can tell us about God. This is certainly nowhere more true than in our creative abilities.

In a strict sense that art work never leaves its point of origin, for it carries with it the truth, or beauty, which acquires a sensuous form on the hands of the artist and with the seal of his approval.\textsuperscript{39}

It is in this reflection of God that the music making of humanity becomes Sacred Sound. In worship this is even more powerfully true. Not only does human musical expression reflect God's creative nature, but as it is offered back to God, the creation of humanity becomes the dwelling of God, and the vehicle for Him to manifest Himself. Again, the power of this truth, and the dignity that God has given to humanity in it is awesome.

Music is God's best gift to man;
The only art of heaven given to earth,
The only art of earth we take to heaven.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{38} Just This Side Of Madness, p.14
\textsuperscript{39} Mitias, M.H. (Ed.), Creativity in Art, Religion, and Culture, p.63
\textsuperscript{40} Walter Savage Lander, quoted in Lane, D., Music as Medicine, p.206
It is crucial to recognise that all people have creative ability. Perhaps some are viewed culturally as more creative than others, and perhaps the ability to do that which is usually considered creative comes more easily to some than to others, but nevertheless all people carry within them creative ability. In worship, it is important to give opportunity for this rich wellspring of creativity to be released and offered to God from the community, much like Paul's description in 1 Cor.14:26. This requires a high degree of congregational participation in the expression of worship. This will be developed further later in our discussion.

A further implication of this creative image of God relates to the responsibility of the creator. As people who create, be it music, art, poetry or whatever, for the purpose of worship, there is a care that must be taken in order to ensure that the expression is a worthy offering of worship to God. This means that we cannot be saying things about Him that are untrue. The theological foundation for our art must be deep and strong.

If spiritual experience is to be anything more than existential self-indulgence, it is essential that it be moulded and guided by theological constants.41

The third way in which God's creative image in humanity relates to human musical activity and enables it to be Sacred Sound, is in the creation of new songs. “Sing to the Lord a new song” calls the psalmist.42 And throughout the history of God's people, musicians have provided the new songs for God's

41 Morgenthaler, S., Worship Evangelism, p.68
42 Psalm 96:1
people to sing. This is not a call to throw out the old. This study has clearly called for the Church to retain the traditional depth of the centuries of Christian worship, including the music. However, even the old traditional music was new when it was first sung. New music is necessary for the worship of the Church to take the creative image of God seriously.

A mandate exists for the saints to continue the Imago Dei process by creatively composing new songs of praise.

Through the end of the age, humankind is exhorted to fulfil the process of creation. For the use of music in worship, this means that worshipers are to continue to create new musical compositions.

Thus, in the creativity of people there is a fulfilment of God's creative purposes. The purpose for humanity is fulfilled in the sense that we do that which we were enabled to do – that is create. This creativity, offered back to God in worship, especially in new songs, brings Creator and creative creation together in a union of creativity that is powerful, supernatural, and saving.

ii) The Sacred/Secular Debate

An issue that inevitably arises out of the discussion of human music making as Sacred Sound, is the question of whether all music can be considered sacred, or whether some is secular. This then leads into an exploration of which music is appropriate for worship.

43 Seel, T.A., Toward a Theology of Music for Worship Derived from the Book of Revelation, p.196
We noted earlier in this thesis that both the biblical witness and Church history indicate that Christians took so-called secular music, and "converted it" for sacred use. Methodists should remember, as we have noted, that . . .

During the revival under John Wesley in England, Charles Wesley took popular tunes from the streets and bars as settings for some of his best-loved hymns. 44

Does this mean, however, that any music is acceptable for use in worship? The first caution that must be voiced here, is that members of one culture or grouping can all too easily single out the musical expression of other groups and claim that they are unacceptable. We need, therefore, to have some clear direction in order to know what human music making can truly be called Sacred Sound. J. Nathan Corbitt helps to make a first, foundational principle clear:

_The meaning of music resides in people, not in sounds._ In a general sense, our evaluation of music has more to do with the people who make it, perform it, and respond to it and the context in which it is performed than the music itself. 45

David Pass concurs:

... the music, doesn't intend anything or mean anything by itself. The people who produce the music and the people who interpret the music intend and find meanings in it. 46

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44 Scott, J., Tuning in to a Different Song, p.99
45 The Sound of the Harvest, p.33
46 Music and the Church, p.42
Ostensibly, then, this would seem to indicate that music is neither secular nor sacred in itself. It is the intention of the music makers and hearers that cause it be one or the other. It should follow, then, that when Christian people make music for worship of the Trinity, this is Sacred Sound. However, it is not as simple as this. Sometimes, even when the music makers are offering their music from a heart of devotion, the hearers apply a different meaning, and this prevents it from being Sacred Sound for them. This is particularly the case when the music being used is in a style that has strongly anti-Christian associations for the hearers, as can be true in some cultural musical forms.

For example, certain drum rhythms in Africa are traditionally used for the summoning of spirits. To bring these into worship would certainly offend many, and would generally be considered profane, even if the musician was attempting to make them sacred. In some cultures, even the instruments that have been used in such rituals are inappropriate for Christian worship. They either have to be destroyed, and new instruments made for the musicians, or, in some cases, through prayer, the instruments can be considered to have been "converted" in the same way as the musician has been. J. Nathan Corbitt gives many examples in his book which illustrate this principle. One of these is given here:

... several years ago a musician friend of mine set one of his traditional tribal circumcision songs with Christian words. In the city, where this is performed, the congregation enjoyed the lively rhythms and melody. However, when he tried to sing the same song in his village church, many were offended because of the associations to the earthy lyrics to which it was originally wedded.47
Thus, the human activity of making music can be either secular or sacred, depending, not on the music, but on the meaning which the people who perform, and the people who make the music put on it. What, then, can be done to ensure that musicians offer their congregations, and God, for that matter, music which is truly Sacred Sound?

Since the meaning of music is determined by the “producer” or the “recipient”, it makes sense that this is where the work of “sanctifying” worship music must begin. First, it can probably be assumed that in most cases where a music maker is offering music in worship that the intention is for it to be sacred. However, it is important that this intention be seen, and that there be nothing else about the musician which could hinder the sense of sacredness about the music being “produced.” This essentially requires an integrity of message through the music, and the life of the music maker. If the music evidences one intention, but the life of the person making the music contradicts this message, then it could well cause the music to fail in its sacred intention. Perhaps an example of this would be the fact that many top “secular” recording artists have sung the hymn “Amazing Grace,” among them Elvis Presley. However, in the light of Elvis’s life, and his subsequent death, there was clearly a mixed message being sent. So, even though in a myriad of situations, “Amazing Grace” is truly sacred sound, at an Elvis concert, I would hesitate to call it that. This is not to say that God, in His grace, cannot use such a musical performance, but that its value as worship music would be lost. The danger of this is described below:
Musicians in most societies entertain and provide accompaniment to high cultural events at court, political events, and social functions. These entertainment and accompaniment functions often free the musician from the same behavioural expectations of people of a higher status. People expect musicians to excite and invigorate, even manipulate or excite emotions. As part of a "special" class, society members often tolerate musicians' behaviour, in a way they would not with other members. They expect that musicians are prone to inappropriate behaviour with drugs, sex, and other lifestyle issues (Merriam, 1964). These same expectations and tolerance are often carried into the church and present a snare in ministry.48

One of the snares, is the impact a “fallen” worship musician or leader can have on the spirituality of their church, and the worship experience of the people. The problem of Christian musicians whose lives and message do not correspond is further described in this quote from Christian musician Steve Camp:

Os Guiness is “spot on” when saying “[we have seen a change] from the emphasis on ‘serving’ God, to an emphasis on ‘serving the self’ in serving God.” The object of faith is no longer Christ, but our self-esteem; the goal of faith is no longer holiness, but our happiness; and the source of our faith is no longer the Scriptures, but our experience. Christian music currently reflects this. We are producing a generation of people that “feel” their God, but do not know their God.49

Unfortunately many churches entrust the work of leading worship, writing worship music and teaching about worship to musicians who are untrained in

48 Ibid. p.329
49 Steve Camp, A Call For Reformation in the Contemporary Christian Music Industry. Article published at Worship.com Web Site.
theology or the Scriptures. The result is an artistically excellent ministry, an emotionally charged worship experience, but a disconnection of this with life and faith. Since, it is not music itself which can give us the necessary meaning to bring about true, life-changing worship, it must be those who make the music. And this means their lives must back up their message—especially in terms of worship music.

It is probably true to say that the impact that the “producer” has on the “sacredness” of the music is related to their prominence in the ministry. For example a worship leader would need to have a high level of integrity of life and music, and people would need to see this. A background musician, on the other hand, would probably impact the meaning of the music less directly. The advantage of this is that the church can safely keep a door open for spiritual seekers to participate in worship ministry without feeling that they negatively impact the worship experience of the congregation. Certainly Nancy Beach, programming director of Willow Creek Community Church, expressed at their Arts Conference in June of 2000, that they place higher standards of spirituality, integrity and leadership on the “up front” members of their arts ministry than on those who are “behind-the-scenes.”

The second way in which the meaning of worship music can become that of Sacred Sound has to do with the “recipients.” As has been noted above, it is often the meaning that the recipients place on the music which will determine for them what is sacred and what is not. To ensure that musicians do not present as sacred music which the people will reject as profane, requires a deep sensitivity on the part of the musicians and worship leaders, and an
understanding of their cultural “filters.” It is simply a matter of ensuring that the music used fits the cultural framework of the people for whom it is intended. To attempt to move a congregation of senior citizens into an experience of worship using the latest techo hip hop worship style would be disastrous. They would clearly not perceive or receive this music as sacred. However, for a group of early teens, this may well be a profound worship experience. As Joyce Scott advises:

The safe way of finding out whether the music style of another culture is acceptable to be used for the Christian message is to ask sensitive Christians in that culture.⁵⁰

Of course, it is also a good idea, and a demonstration of Christian character, for worship musicians to develop this kind of sensitivity to those whom they lead.

One final word needs to be added here. It is important to understand the “direction of address” of the words of the music, if it is to fulfil its sacred function effectively. This is basic common sense, in many ways, but is so often ignored by worship leaders, that it needs to be mentioned. Some songs address God directly, and are very effective, therefore, as expressions of worship. Other songs are exhortations to the church or oneself to praise God. These often make good calls to worship, and the congregation can be encouraged to sing these songs to each other. Other songs take the form of God addressing the Church. These songs need to be used with caution, their

⁵⁰ Tuning in to a Different Song, p.94
message carefully checked against Scripture and sound doctrine, but can be wonderful moments of encounter.

Thus, it becomes clear that human music making in worship can also be considered Sacred Sound. This is because humanity is created in the image of God, and our creativity reflects His, and facilitates the experience of encounter with Him. It is also because music is not inherently sacred or secular. It can be given the meaning and use of Sacred Sound as those who “produce” it and those who “receive” it see fit. This requires integrity on the part of musicians, and a sensitivity to the recipients, in order that music that is intended to be sacred does not inadvertently become profane. However, that humanity can make music which is Sacred Sound is a profound and gracious gift from the Creator Who, Himself, is a producer of Sacred Sound.

2) Worship Music as Sacred Act

The music of worship is not about the sound it makes, and the encounter with God that this brings. It is offered not just by musicians, but by communities – congregations – as part of a whole range of symbolic, sacramental and liturgical acts. It also has other effects on those who worship. We mentioned at the outset of this chapter that God is the focus of all worship, and thus of all worship music, but that there are other “by-products” of worship that are important to consider. In this section we locate worship music in the acts which are part of the practice of worship. It is something that Christians do in their worship, and as such it has a number of results that are sought through the action. It is in this context that the music of worship can be referred to as a Sacred Act.
a) Liturgical Act

Worship music as a sacred act is part of the “liturgy” of the church. As William Willimon explains, *liturgy* in the Greek literally means “work of the people.” While the above discussion may have created the impression that worship music is worship, this is not the case. Keeping the motif of worship music as liturgical act in mind helps to balance this, because it demonstrates that music is a *servant* to worship. “The purpose of music,” writes Robert Webber, “is to serve the message.” This is true, but it is equally true to say that music serves the people as well. There are three ways in which worship music serves the “work of the people” as liturgical act.

i) Order and Excellence

The message that music serves is essentially the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Robert Webber asserts, the first principle of worship is that it celebrates Christ. The “excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus” requires an excellent vehicle for its communication. Whether this is in the form of a congregation singing praises to their Saviour, or a soloist singing out a testimony of God’s work, or a band sharing the call of the gospel on the streets, this excellent message will be judged, often by the quality of its transmitter – the medium is the message as the saying goes. Part of the success of Willow Creek Community Church has been attributed to their attention to this detail.

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51 Worship as Pastoral Care, p.19
52 Worship is a Verb, p.185
53 Ibid. pp.21-41
54 Phil.3:8
Looking for anything that would discredit what they were to experience, unchurched Harry/Mary scrutinised all aspects of a church including the facility, the grounds and the actual service. For this reason, the staff members and volunteers were dedicated to total service excellence.

The issue of excellence has already arisen in relation to our discussion of worship music as Sacred Sound. It is no less important in the role that it plays as an act of worship for the people. Thus, the medium in which the message is packaged, in this case, music, must be fitting for the message. In the case of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and worship of Him, excellence is the least we can offer.

It has been noted by scholars that in the offerings brought to God by Cain and Abel, there seems to be a difference in quality which may explain why one was rejected while the other was accepted. Abel’s offering was “of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat” — the best that he could give, and it was acceptable. Cain, on the other hand, brought “an offering of the fruit of the ground” — with no indication that this was his best — and this was rejected. Surely, the act of worship that God’s people bring him needs to be the best they can bring. This, of course, includes both the quality of the "gift" that is offered, and the quality of the "heart" that offers it.

The work that David put into ensuring excellence in the act of worship performed in the tabernacle was enormous. We explored in chapter two the

55 Mellado, J., Harvard Business School Report for Class Discussion on Willow Creek Community Church, p.9
56 Gen.4:4
57 Gen.4:3
musical colleges that he established, and the in depth training that was required of his musicians. The height that was reached at the dedication of Solomon's temple has also been noted, with the resultant manifestation of God's glory. Excellence will always require this kind of order. Ministry that is effective does not happen by accident. It is prayed for, planned for and worked for. One of the biggest stumbling blocks, in my experience, to music being an effective act of worship in many churches is that the ministry is not well organised. We have mentioned David's work in the Old Testament in this regard. We can note also, Paul's guidelines for order in worship in the New Testament, and in Church History, of course, John Wesley was a master at order, and this included Methodist musical practice.

This point need not be laboured, but it should be noted that order and excellence involve training, both musically and spiritually, for those who do the leading of worship music (and if we are to follow Wesley, even for our congregations!) When the training that is required for a minister or a preacher is laid next to that required for those who lead our worship, it is easy to see that we have undervalued this ministry, and failed in equipping our music leaders.

The excellence and order which we have been stressing, flows out of this training, but it also comes from an intentional structuring of the ministry of music, with clear expectations and guidelines established for those who are involved. How the structure is organised is not prescribed by either Scripture.

58 2 Chron.5:11-14
of history, but that it needs to be there for music to fulfil its role as liturgical act, certainly is.

ii) **Music out of focus**

In worship music so easily becomes the focus of our activity, and this is a danger to be aware of. Worship and music are inextricably linked, but music serves to enable worship to happen, it does not exist for it's own sake. This means that the work that music can do in support of other liturgical acts must always be kept in mind.

The power of music to enhance other activities has already been mentioned, but can be remembered here. As Anthony Storr notes:

> What seems certain is that there is a closer relationship between hearing and emotional arousal than there is between seeing and emotional arousal. Why else would the makers of moving pictures insist on using music?\(^59\)

This leads us into an important, but frequently overlooked, use of music in worship, that of illustration and atmosphere. When music is not the primary focus, but plays a secondary role, for example as the accompaniment for a dance, it is “illustrative.” What is meant by this is that the music enhances the dance in such a way that it would lose impact if the music was not there, in much the same way that pictures illustrate a child’s story book, or stories enhance the power of a sermon. The music is not the central element, but its power increases the effect of the central act.

\(^{59}\) *Music and the Mind*, p.26
Closely aligned with this is the ability of music to create an atmosphere – to set a scene or a mood. Music touches people's emotions deeply and this can be a good thing, as David Boyden has said:

Physical and intuitive pleasure is the first and most natural reaction to music – and perhaps the most powerful.\(^6^0\)

It is this reaction that enables music to be used to prepare people for, or assist them in whatever activity or event they may be involved in.

There are those who would react against the use of music in this way because of the emotional reaction it can engender. However, the emotions are probably not allowed sufficient space in our worship anyway, and there is certainly no danger in bringing them to God.

From time to time the Church has been fearful of the emotional power of music and has attempted to curb its ecstatic moments. Yet the emotions are a powerful force for good and cannot be divorced from the total \[\text{person}\].\(^6^1\)

And as Howard A. Johnson has remarked, "... gooseflesh is nowhere more properly at home than in church."\(^6^2\)
So, music can play a supportive role, either directly linked with specific liturgical acts, enhancing their power and meaning, or simply used in a general way to create the atmosphere in which the worship experience of the people is deepened. Many acts of worship can be greatly enhanced by the support of worship music. The use of music for processions can be extremely dramatic. The intensity of meaning and the sense of sincerity in prayer can be heightened through soft music played quietly under the voice of the prayer. Communion can be a wonderfully worshipful experience when it is joined with the expression of worship through music.

Quiet organ music played as people enter the church has been a traditional use of music to create an atmosphere of worship in which the congregation can prepare themselves for the service to come. However, this same effect can be wonderfully meaningful when associated with other parts of our worship events. The use of music to create a meditative or quiet atmosphere in a Good Friday or Tennebrae service is one example of this.

It is unfortunate that we easily fall into the all too familiar habit of viewing congregational song and choir anthems as our only musical options. However, when we understand the function of music in a supportive role, we realise that it can be a wonderful liturgical act, which supports and deepens the rest of our worship activity.

iii) Worship Belongs to the People

Having laid the foundation of order and excellence, and having established that music has a wide range of uses which can be illustrative or atmospheric,
it is necessary to return to worship music in its most common use, congregational song. It seems that because music has been used in this way for so long, that we too easily assume that we know how to do it. As was noted in chapter three, the use of music in congregational singing has not always been effective, and there is a cycle that seems to repeat itself from time to time. However, worship that does not allow the congregation to participate is not worship.

Spectator worship has always been and will always be an oxymoron.  

WORSHIP IS A VERB. It is not something done to us or for us, but by us.

There is a tendency in many churches today, attested to by a number of authors, for the "professionals" to do the work of worship, and for the people to watch. Part of the problem is in our understanding (often not voiced) of worship as some kind of performance. Our church has three services on a Sunday morning, and it is distressing to sometimes hear congregation members refer to the last of the three as the "late show."

The seating plan of our churches, the attitudes of our choirs and the clergy-centric activity of our worship has created the sense that the minister and leaders are the performers, and the congregation is the audience. The Seeker Service format has, unfortunately often confirmed this understanding. This view of worship has filtered into our musical practice as well. We have

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63 Morgenthaler, S., Worship Evangelism, p.49
64 Webber, R.E., Worship is a Verb, p.2
become all too familiar with allowing a group of "experts" on the platform to "perform" the music while we, as congregation look on. This may be pleasant for the people, and it may even create a sense of God’s presence (although it is more likely to be simply the "gooseflesh" which music is so famous for generating), but this is not, and never will be, worship.

Kierkegaard tried to provide a different understanding of the "worship performance".

Although evangelicals would not endorse all aspects of Kierkegaard’s theology, in recent days they have been influenced by his statement that in corporate worship

- The people should be the *performers* of worship
- The pastor and worship leaders the *prompters* of worship
- God, the *audience*65

While this is meant to stress the role of the congregation as participants, the picture of God as the audience breaks down the central meaning of worship – encounter between God and humans. The audience, as we know it, sits passively by and watches the "action" without being involved. What has become increasingly clear in our study is that neither God nor the people are inactive in true worship. The whole concept of worship as a performance should probably be rejected.

Church history, however, indicates that the performance model of worship far too consistently rears its head. While the origins of Gregorian chant were

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65 Liesch, B., *The New Worship*, p.123
congregational singing, the increasing elaboration that the artists – musically trained clergy - attached to and developed within these chants, ultimately left the congregation out of the picture. Worship moved into a clergy-centred activity, watched by the people. The Reformation broke this tendency down at the point in history at which the Roman Church was at its artistic height, but spiritual and liturgical depth. One of Luther’s most powerful achievements was the restoration of worship music to the people, simplifying it enough, artistically speaking, that untrained congregation members could participate freely.

A similar cycle occurred in England, and was reversed by the hymnody of the Wesleys. Of course, John Wesley, taking the value of excellence seriously, is famous for his instructions on congregational singing which were published in the front of his hymnals, and for the work that was done in teaching congregations to sing well. Unfortunately, the same increasingly performance oriented tendency appears to be happening today. In a chart depicting the development of church music through the ages, J. Nathan Corbitt makes this observation about the worship music of the present Church:

While orthodox traditions continue, music of the emerging church is congregational. However, with the advent of electronics and commercialisation, a new class of “priestly” musicians threatens the participative nature of worship.⁶⁶

A quick study of the new commercial “worship music” recordings that are available today will show that the musical arrangements are far too complex
for any local church worship band to emulate, and even if they could, no untrained congregation would be able to sing to this accompaniment. What is unfortunate, in addition, is that many of the so-called "praise and worship" companies and movements that were producing true resource recordings (with songs that worked extremely well in congregational worship) a few years ago, are now offering products that are good to listen to, but the songs are musically unattainable for congregations, and so their value as a worship resource has gone. Worship music is moving back into the hands of the "professional."

If music is to be a liturgical act, this tendency must be resisted. Musicians and song writers must be called to serve the congregation, and produce music that enhances and enables congregational participation, rather than stifling it. We need to hear the strong call of Robert Webber:

I believe we want to break the tradition of a nonactive, passive, and routine worship. As we continue to recover the dialogic nature of worship, and as we learn to increase our participation individually and collectively, our churches will become stronger . . . So let's return worship to the people. 67

Music, perhaps more than any other element of our worship services has the capacity to birth or kill congregational participation. If it is to be a liturgical act, however, it must not be allowed to do the latter.

67 Worship is a Verb, p.152
This calls for a servanthood and humility on the part of those who minister through and with music in the Church. They need to use their abilities to draw the congregation into God’s presence, in such a way that they become less “visible,” as God’s glory becomes more evident. This is the attitude of John the Baptist, which seeks to decrease that Jesus may increase, and it is the only appropriate goal of those who lead worship. This enables artists to submit their art to the Church so that it fosters participation, rather than placing the art on show, in order that the artist is exalted, and the congregation look on. Worship, and its music, as liturgical act, belongs to the people.

Worship music is sacred act, first of all in that it is a liturgical act. However, it also fulfils two other sacred functions in our worship.

b) Therapeutic Act

Music is a powerful medium that impacts human beings in a number of ways, some beneficial, and some harmful. This power of music must not be underestimated in the practice of music in worship, since it is felt at every level of our beings. First, it touches our bodies with a physical power.

When we become aware of how music alters particular physiological functions in our bodies, many people begin to notice changes in their pulse rates, their muscle strength, or their circulation.69

68 John 3:30
69 Merrit, S., Mind, Music and Imagery, p.103
It has been shown again and again that music affects the human body. Different types of music cause different responses in the body, but the body always responds to the sounds that it hears and feels. This effect of music can be either constructive or destructive, depending on the circumstances in which the music is played, and the type of music concerned. What cannot be ignored is the relationship between music and the body, and the way the body is affected by music.

Man's body can be considered as a resonant as well as a rhythmical instrument, sensitive to music. The musical instruments he has invented are in essence a prolongation of his own body and activated by his physical impulses. His body and his instrument are not separate entities, they complete one another. 70

Secondly, music touches people with an emotional and "mental" power. As much as music is able to affect people physically, it can also reach into the area of the soul, stirring emotions, touching the memory, aiding or hindering intellectual processes and strengthening or weakening the will.

Rhythmic patterns and melodic shape, harmony and timbre - all reach our emotions. 71

Music stimulates imagination, intuition and creativity - all aspects of the right hemisphere (of the brain) - and can therefore help complement the dominant left hemisphere functions which characterise western intellectual behaviour patterns. 72

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70 Alvin, J., Music Therapy, p.102
71 Merrit, S., Mind, Music and Imagery, p.115
72 Watson A. & Drury, N., Healing Music, p.28
The effects of music on the emotions is readily experienced and acknowledged. Even the most musically untrained person is aware of emotional changes when listening to different pieces of music. That music affects the intellect is less well known, but no less true.

Thirdly, music touches us with a spiritual power. Much has already been said about the power of music in the spiritual life of people. The most obvious area in which this is seen is in the area of worship, where music becomes a vehicle for God’s self-communication, as well as for the encounter between God and people. However, there are many other ways in which music has power to affect humanity in its spiritual experience. Some of the areas which need to be mentioned here are meditation, spiritual warfare and spiritual upliftment.

It has been shown that music is able to enhance wellbeing. The question, however, is whether this has any application for the music of worship. If worship music is Sacred Act, can this act be legitimately seen to be therapeutic or healing in any sense? Not only can this be the case, but as the music of worship, and the Spirit of God unite in their work, it is to be expected.

Music is a language of prayer in which words are inadequate to express our deepest thoughts. A melodic and harmonic salve, music used in times of grief alleviates suffering of the mind, body, and spirit. Music is a key to unlocking the realm of the spiritual world, when rhythm transports the inner realm to external experience. In music we find the potential to minister to a basic human need: alleviation of suffering.73

73 Corbitt, J.N., The Sound of the Harvest, pp.141-142
Certainly, the witness of Scripture is that God is for healing, and that an outcome of God's presence with humanity is wellbeing. The theological foundations for this are beyond the scope of this study, but it is sufficient to note that healing was clearly included in Jesus' proclamation of the imminence of the Kingdom of God. Thus, the use of worship music to minister healing and wholeness to people is certainly legitimate. There are two ways that worship music can function as therapeutic act.

First, in the sanctuary, worship music can have an effect on the health of congregation members. This can happen both intentionally, and as a "side-effect." The intentional use of music for healing would be as part of the healing ministry that many churches practice as part of their services. As prayer is happening, music can accompany this act either as the congregation worships, or as a part of the prayer itself. In the evening services of the church of which I am a minister, we have found that worship during the time of prayer ministry, greatly enhances the response of people to this ministry, and seems to relate to the effects of the prayer as well. What is interesting to note, is that we have found that even using a recording on tape or CD of worship music does not have as positive an effect as the worshipping congregation.

An indirect ministry of healing would occur within the context of a normal experience of worship. One example of this was when I was leading worship in a small group meeting. I felt that it would be appropriate to sing the song "Oh Let the Son of God Enfold You," and led the group in the singing. While this was happening, one of the women began crying, and then slowly became more
peaceful. She shared with me afterwards, that she had had a deep sense of God's presence, and that a number of painful memories had come to mind as we were singing. As the song progressed, the pain of these memories had subsided, and she was able to recall them without sorrow. She believed that God had touched her with a gift of inner healing. The use of music both directly and indirectly for healing is possible and available. This is not to divert worship from its legitimate focus, which is God, but to allow God to do the work that His grace and power inevitable bring.

In its most basic sense, worship has no other function than the joyful, ecstatic, abandon that comes when we meet and are met by God. Any attempt to use worship to educate, manipulate, or titillate can be a serious perversion of worship...

The pastoral care that occurs as we are meeting and being met by God in worship is a significant by-product that we have too often overlooked.74

Worship music is therefore, legitimately a sacred, therapeutic act. It must also be remembered that preachers supported their messages with music in medieval times, utilising the pastoral effect that this had. There is no reason why similar pastoral musical practice cannot be employed today.

However, this therapeutic function of worship music need not be confined to the sanctuary. Some Christian counsellors are discovering that worship in the counselling room can be a powerful therapeutic act.

74 Willimon, W., Worship as Pastoral Care, pp. 47-48
We are convinced ... that the inclusion of prayer, Bible study, the singing of Christian songs, and testifying to the goodness of God within the counselling session offers counselees a God-ordained, modified worship experience which serves as an inspiration to them to worship God on a regular basis outside of the counselling sessions. In addition, the inclusion of worship components in counselling sessions becomes an instrument of inspiration, instruction, guidance, uplift, and spiritual transformation in the lives of our counselees.75

The benefits of this approach are similar to those that are experienced by Judith Kate Friedman taking community singing into old age homes, as described in the article Good Vibrations.76 It would appear, then, that there is no reason why worship music cannot be taken out of the sanctuary and made available to people who clearly need the touch of God’s Presence. As this is done, it can be expected that the benefits will be more than just spiritual, but will be therapeutic as well. Worship music, then, is therapeutic act.

c) Koinoniac Act

Worship is a corporate act, and as has been discussed above, the music activity in worship is mainly a congregational endeavour. The ability of music to draw people together is well described by J. Nathan Corbitt:

However, its [music’s] function, or how it works within the kingdom community, is to unify separate voices into a single voice of purpose – praise ... Music provides an opportunity to create, participate in music as a form of community experience, and express group sentiment.77

76 Turner, J.B., Good Vibrations, Acoustic Guitar Magazine, pp.60-69
77 The Sound of the Harvest, p.54
David Pass's theology of music focuses on koinoniac music as one of the three modes of communication which music utilises\textsuperscript{78}. It is unfortunate that Pass only views music in terms of communication, since as we have seen it goes far beyond that. In terms of music's role as koinoniac act – drawing God's people into fellowship – the communication is important, but the expression of community is more an act, than a word; more something that we are and do, than something which we say. Pass's model does contribute to this discussion, however.

Koinoniac church music, being the musical expression of the koinoniac mode as the affirmation of fellow believers, exists to articulate every aspect of our common life in Christ as a unity-in-diversity. It is imbued with a spirit of unity, a finding of consensus among people who differ, more or less widely.\textsuperscript{79}

The point of music as a koinoniac act is to express the fellowship of Christ's body, the Church, and in so doing, strengthen the bonds of the Spirit. Every time believers gather for worship, the potential for an experience, as opposed to only an expression, of unity is there. However, the expression, unfortunately, often occurs far more easily than the experience, and the music of worship can become divisive, rather than uniting. This is the central issue in understanding music as koinoniac act.

When music serves to increase the unity of believers, and bring them into a common experience of worship, in spite of whatever differences may seek to

\textsuperscript{78} Music and the Church, pp.112-119
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid. p. 112
divide them, then it has successfully been a sacred, koinoniac act. However, the
difficulties of doing this are not to be underestimated, as Graham Kendrick
emphasizes:

It seems that much of our worship has lost its most vital and life-giving
quality, the thing that should set Christians apart as remarkably different
from the fragmented society around us. That quality, which should be
affirmed and celebrated whenever we meet, and should characterise our
daily life, is what Paul describes in Colossians 3:11-17. \(^{80}\)

It is truly tragic when one or other group in the church becomes attached to a
particular musical expression, and equates this with worship. Their music then
becomes divisive, and brings much pain and conflict to the Church. Not only is
this not koinoniac music, but it is also not worship.

Conversely, one of the profound and miraculous experiences which music
brings, is when believers from different cultures come together, and in a spirit of
openness and acceptance, worship as one congregation. The music of such
celebrations becomes a powerful testimony to the unity which the Spirit of God
brings, but more than this, it becomes an instrument in God's hand to bind His
people to one another. It has been my privilege to participate in a number of
these worship events, and even to lead a few, and the power of music to unite,
even across cultures, is amazing.

Our task is to find the common denominators of our belief and try in our
expressive worship, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to transcend

\(^{80}\) Worship, pp.42-43
our cultural differences while recognising our uniqueness. It is possible.\textsuperscript{81}

As music fulfils its role in bringing the people of God together, the act of worship is completed – God united with His people, and they united with one another. Worship music that accomplishes this task is truly Sacred Act – koinoniac act.

As was discussed in depth in the previous chapter, the challenges of bringing different cultures together, whether they are defined by race, culture, age or tradition, is not to be taken lightly. J. Nathan Corbitt has indicated four ways of dealing with cultural issues as they relate to worship. Firstly, there are those who seek unity through diversity. Effectively this entails allowing each culture to remain untouched and distinct, being understood purely on its own terms. Ultimately this approach will always result in division, rather than unity, causing each cultural grouping to "find their own space", without ever moving towards unity with others.

The second approach is that of accommodation. This is the attempt to bring cultures together through eclectic worship, in which each culture is represented. Corbitt acknowledges the value of this approach, in that it teaches people to respect one another's cultures, while also learning about them, and how to participate with them in their cultural expression.

The third approach is really linked with the second, and is a variation on it. This is to use songs which are common to all cultures. Many hymns and songs have

\textsuperscript{81} Corbitt, J.N., \textit{The Sound of the Harvest}, p.78
been written or translated using a number of different languages. These can be used effectively, since everyone of whatever culture knows the music, but the lyrics can be sung in each language – either in turn, or even, possibly simultaneously.

The above two accommodating approaches have been found to be extremely effective in the experience of Joyce Scott, having worked in multi-cultural, or cross-cultural worship situations for over twenty-eight years. She champions the cause of accommodation in worship because of the richness it brings in terms of learning to stretch cultural boundaries, and experiencing different cultural expressions. For this reason, she supports using songs with the same music using different languages, but seems sceptical about singing the different simultaneously, because it removes the challenge of stepping into a different culture’s worship.

Perhaps the most important principle of all is to recognise that inter-cultural worship does not mean moving away from one culture to another, as an either/or option, but always as a both/and. . .

A good way to get inter-cultural singing going is to have a well known hymn or chorus sung in two or three languages, one after the other. In some places all are encouraged to sing their own language only, everybody at the same time. Well, this may work, but it does not help people to try something new, to learn new things. To try one’s best to sing in another language more or less correctly, is to make the statement – ‘I respect your language, and I want to try and sing it’.

Scott, J., Tuning in to a Different Song, p.36
The final way that J. Nathan Corbitt mentions in bringing unity in the midst of diversity is to create a new (his word is third, assuming only two participating cultures) worship culture. This involves the creation of new songs, and is therefore probably out of reach of most Christian communities, since this would require skilled musicians of many cultural backgrounds to work together to achieve the desired end. However, the community of Taizé is held up as one example where this approach has been very successful.

In my own experience of leading worship at multi-cultural events of the Methodist Church, like ministers' retreats and Synods, I have instinctively worked with the accommodation approach which Joyce Scott explains. This has been growing in success, especially as leaders of different cultural backgrounds have begun to participate in the worship leading, and as I have grown in my understanding of different musical expressions.

The challenge here for musicians in the Church, is to be agents of this koinonia, rather than stumbling blocks. This will require the work of learning to understand the different musical expression of the people we minister to, and how to work with them. It will demand the humility to learn from others, and to make mistakes. The servanthood required is one that seeks to serve, and not be served – it is a true Christlikeness. David Pass demonstrates what is necessary:

Koinonia music can only be produced and appreciated by those who know their community and by those who really care about music which edifies and affirms everyone in that community: the young and the old,
the poor and the rich, the wise and the simple, the faithful and the faithless.

For musicians to learn this art of musical accommodation, requires moving out of their own cultural framework, to experience the music of other cultures. It also means talking with and learning from people and musicians of other cultures.

"Please teach me your song", is the magic formula. Shared laughter over the learning process is only part of the benefit of honouring one another and being enriched by other cultures.

To be bilingual is good, but not enough. To be bicultural is better, but to be bimusical as well, is ideal.

Finally, it requires a commitment to the Body of Christ, to serve it, and build it, even at the cost of one’s own “artistic” expression. This can truly be painful, but is deeply worth the effort, and more, is a calling of Christ.

Bishop Peter Storey made this insightful comment: "The pain of togetherness is less than the pain of being apart."

It is a challenge, but music has the capacity to be sacred, koinoniac act, if only we will use its power to do this. The vision of worship in Revelation is both the goal and the inspiration:

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53 Music and the Church, p.112
54 Scott, J., Tuning in to a Different Song, p.86
55 ibid. pp.72-73
56 ibid. p.11
After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honour and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen."87

Music, then, is not just Sacred Sound, but is also Sacred Act – liturgical, therapeutic ad koinoniac act. Finally, the whole use of music in communication must be explored to complete this system.

3) Worship Music as Sacred Word

A word spoken has power, but put that word to music, and its power is increased, often dramatically. The power of music to communicate has long been known and experienced by human beings, but it is a supportive one. Music on its own communicates, but the content of that communication is unclear.

But what use is music? Music can certainly be regarded as a form of communication between people; but what it communicates is not obvious. Music is not usually representational: it does not sharpen our perception of the external world, nor, allowing for some notable exceptions, does not generally imitate it. Nor is music propositional: it does not put forward theories about the world or convey information in the same way as does language.88

87 Rev.7:9-12
88 Storr, A., Music and the Mind, pp. 2-3
However, when music becomes the carrier for words, the communication is not only clearer, but it also comes across more powerfully than if the words were spoken alone. It is for this reason that most music, and especially that used in the Church, is accompanied by words. The function which the message of the music performs, differs in terms of who the recipients are, and the context in which the music is being made. Essentially, there would be six ways in which music would seek to communicate in the life of the Church.

The first three – liturgically, therapeutically and koinoniacally, are all more than simple communication, and so have been dealt with in detail under the previous two sections. However, the communicative aspects of these three forms of communication can briefly be examined here. Firstly, we communicate liturgically when we express our worship in a “vertical” direction “upward” to God. Secondly, we communicate therapeutically, when we allow the supernatural power of God to flow through us with the intention that wellbeing, wholeness and healing should result. This is a “horizontal” communication which is empowered “vertically” in a “downward” direction from God to human beings. Thirdly, we communicate “koinoniacally” when we express our unity and build up the fellowship of the Church. This is a horizontal communication. The important feature which set these three forms of communication apart, and essentially has meant that they have fitted more naturally into Sacred Sound and Sacred Act, is that none of them is essentially an attempt to pass on information of any kind.

The second three forms of communication which music can be used for in the Church are all forms of transmitting information in some way or another. This is the
use of music with which we are most familiar, and which we most easily understand and utilise. Firstly, music can be used for prophetic communication. Secondly, music can be used for didactic communication, and thirdly, music can be used for kerygmatic communication. These three forms are the substance of understanding music as Sacred Word.

a) Prophetic Word

Musical prophets stand on the edge between the sanctuary and the street and provide a vision of God’s future reign. Music is prophecy when it leads people to truth and justice. Music is not a fortune-telling device, but a sonic tool that foretells future consequences based on present realities. At times, this musical truth lies outside the boundaries of a just and righteous kingdom. Yet at other times, it is the voice of the kingdom to an unjust world.  

Any theological or biblical student will be familiar with the prophets of the Old Testament. The ministry of these servants of God was essentially to understand history in a way which “accepts meaning only in terms of divine concern, divine purpose, divine participation.” It is not the purpose of this study to explore in depth the ministry of the prophets, or the way their ministry was understood in Scripture. However, to gain a clearer understanding of music as the sacred word of prophecy, it is necessary to give a brief overview of the nature of the prophets’ message.

The questions of God’s dealings with Israel were questions consciously and subconsciously addressed by the classical prophets, questions the

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89 Corbitt, J.N., The Sound of the Harvest, p.82
answers which are conditioned and shaped by the great prophets’ understanding of a number of concepts, notably: (a) Word and symbol, (b) election and covenant, (c) rebellion and (d) judgement, (e) compassion and (f) redemption, and finally, (g) consummation.\textsuperscript{91}

Essentially, these prophets understood themselves to be speaking the “word of the Lord,” reminding God’s people of their election as His chosen ones, and His covenant with them, admonishing them in the face of their disobedience to the covenant and rebellion against God and proclaiming God’s judgement. They also expressed God’s love and compassion, and the promise of His redemption, with the final vision of the consummation of God’s purposes in the establishment of His kingdom, including the appearance of the Messiah. At the centre of this message is God’s reaching out to humanity in love, His warning and judgement of sin, and His promise of restoration.

Prophecy, of course continued into the New Testament, and the ministry of the prophet is seen by Paul to be foundational to the life of the Church.

\begin{quote}
Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone . . .\textsuperscript{92}
\end{quote}

Debatably, there does not appear to be a significant difference between the New Testament and Old Testament versions of this ministry. “The NT prophet is in essential function like that of the OT: he conveys to them who will believe the

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid. p.912
\textsuperscript{92} Eph.2:19-20
divinely imparted meaning of history." This last statement is the significant one in terms of prophecy – communicating the meaning of history from God’s perspective.

Does this ministry continue into the present time? It is widely accepted in the Church that it does. The way this ministry functions is variously understood. There is the sense of a prophetic message or ‘word’ that is spoken to a group of people, often in the context of worship. This is particularly evident in the charismatic churches and is generally understood to have the function outlined by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:3:

> But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

There is also the understanding of a wider prophetic ministry which speaks to both the Church and society, sounding God’s call to relationship, speaking out against sin and injustice, and promising God’s redemption for those who repent.

> The primary purpose of prophecy is to make apparent the truth and ultimate will of God in each generation, person, and society...
> The gift of prophecy calls both the world and the church to the ultimate will of God in redemption.

There was definitely a sense during the apartheid era in South Africa that the Church, and particularly the Methodist Church, among others, felt a calling to be a prophetic voice to this nation and its leaders. There seems to be no logical

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94 Corbitt, J.N., *The Sound of the Harvest*, pp.84-85
reason, or accepted theological reason, why the ministry of prophecy should not still be functioning in and through the Church today.

The final question, then, is whether the music of worship can be a legitimate prophetic voice. Firstly, we explored, in chapter two, the ministry of the prophets, and the prophetic schools that existed in Israel, and saw that music was often an integral part of this ministry. This indicates that music was certainly considered a vehicle of prophecy in the Bible. When the prophetic nature of many of the psalms is noted, this can be further understood to include the music of worship. Secondly, we mentioned above the fact that music heightens the power of any message which it carries. There is no reason to suggest that this is any less true for the message of the prophet. Thus, worship music can clearly fulfil the function of the sacred word of prophecy.

Before exploring the practicalities of how today’s worship music can be prophetic, a word needs to be said about lament. As with the book of Lamentations in the Bible, which is traditionally believed to have been written by the prophet Jeremiah, prophecy today includes this important form of communication and worship. The psalms, of course, are full of laments, indicating that they were an accepted feature of Hebrew worship. These “songs” have six different components, as outlined by Claus Westermann. Firstly, they take the form of accusations or complaints against God because of situations which seem incompatible with His promises. Secondly, they contrast God’s past actions with the present situation. Thirdly, they complain against the enemies of the people. Fourthly, there is a sense of solidarity which sees the threat to apply to the people as a community, and not just individuals. Fifthly, There is the
continuance of praise for God's past favours, which enables them to be the basis for future hope. Sixthly, There can sometimes be an accompanying confession of sin.\textsuperscript{95} The lament kept the worship of Israel rooted, and authentic, and can do the same for our worship today.

If there is no place in worship for lament, there is no way in which churches can wrestle with God over human suffering, and hence no accepted reaction to suffering other than to endure it with resignation. On the other hand, the promise of liberation cannot be anaesthetised as though it meant waiting for God's good time. There needs to be a stronger cry against suffering if the promise of liberation is to have substance.\textsuperscript{96}

In what ways can the worship music of the Church be prophetic. How does it become the sacred word of prophecy, while still retaining its function as the music of worship? In a general sense, music easily fulfils the prophetic ministry. J. Nathan Corbitt describes two ways that it does this. Firstly, it “inspires and encourages the marginalised, poor, and oppressed, who sing in and of their struggle for justice within their own historical context.” The struggle for justice does not, of course, only apply to political or social justice, although this is certainly part of it. It also refers to the cries of the sick and suffering who long for God's touch of healing. Secondly, music is prophetic when “gifted musical prophets write and perform topical songs bringing attention to specific deeds of unrighteousness and injustice within the world.”\textsuperscript{97} In what ways can this prophetic ministry be applied to worship, without losing the central purpose?

\textsuperscript{96} Power, D. N., \textit{Worship, Culture and Theology}, p.157
\textsuperscript{97} \textit{The Sound of the Harvest}, p.87
Firstly, in the "charismatic" sense, it is clearly possible for the "word of prophecy" to come through song, rather than just in words. In this way God's message of comfort, edification, exhortation, or even rebuke can call the people to deeper expressions of worship, to prayer for specific needs and situations, or to repentance. Secondly, there is a deep need to cut through the "froth and bubbles" of much of our worship music. The words of many of our songs, particularly the more recently written songs for contemporary worship, give the impression that Christians have no struggles, have a clear and cheerful understanding of all God's ways, and submit to them, and have some kind of immunity from the pain of the world. It does not take a prophet to know that this is not the reality of life. The prophetic function of the lament responds to this need. When our people are permitted, or rather encouraged, to bring not their joys, but also their pain into worship, it becomes true, deep and authentic worship. The challenge is to song writers and worship leaders to bring new songs in to worship which allow this lamentation to happen.

There seemed to be a feeling that religious situations too often lack authenticity. The truth is not told; people are not "real." Christian sermons, books, and conversations too often seems to avoid the "bad stuff." Indeed, religion sometimes seems off in a world of its own. Yet my interviewees felt that if the faith is to make any difference in people's lives, it has to face cold, hard reality. It also has to get under the surface to a person's real self, to one's sin and pain and the things one wants to hide.98

98 William Hendricks, Exit Interviews, pp.260-261. Quoted in Morgenthaler, S., Worship Evangelism, p.110
The third way in which music can be prophetic, is in simply telling the truth. If we ensure that the songs we sing speak the truth about ourselves, and our sin, and God, and life, then this is prophetic. We cannot allow our worship to ignore or condone our prejudices or sin.

We cannot escape the power of the worship experience itself in shaping either our compassion or our prejudices... Worship cements our perceptions of God and of the world around us. In short, it sacramentalses our worldview. 99

One good example of the way worship music can be prophetic in challenging our prejudices, is in the language that we accept in our music. Many hymn books and worship songs contain words that are not gender inclusive. Many of these hymns are well-known and well-loved, and so changing the words can draw attention to this issue. If we ensure that we do not sing only about “Christian men,” but include “Christian women” we make the statement that all people are equal, and this shapes the worldview and attitudes of the worshippers. The same effect can be created by using lyrics that include different languages.

Finally, worship music can be prophetic in the way it addresses situations of injustice in society. J. Nathan Corbitt offers four motifs that explain music's prophetic function: mediation, call to arms, banner of war and leaven in bread. In the first – mediation - anger which would be directed at other people is released through music. Perhaps this is why songs of spiritual warfare which allow people to release anger at the devil are so popular. Worship music can

99 Morgenthaler, S., Worship Evangelism, p.29
also mediate when it draws conflicting parties to worship together. The second motif describes how music instills courage and inspires. By giving us a vision of God’s Kingdom as we sing, music enables us to experience the freedom from earthly oppression which we long for. The third motif reflects how music can rally people together, like a banner on a battlefield. As Christians are strengthened in their identity as Christians, through the music of worship, they are better able to stand for the values and standards that they believe in and subscribe to. In this way, music prophetically encourages the believer, who then becomes a prophetic statement through the life they live “out in the world.” Finally, the call that worship music voices to people to live according to God’s standards is also a powerful prophetic ministry. This can include songs which describe the holiness of Jesus, and those which enable us to express our repentance. I have been amazed at the way the words of one song that I wrote recently has been able to touch people with a sense of God’s holiness and has enabled them to come to Him in worshipful repentance.

Lord in Your life I see
Everything I want my life to be
And I pray for Your light to fill my ways
To cleanse my heart, and guide my days

So much of what I do
Falls so short of my promise to You
So I pray You would strengthen what is weak
And help me live the truth I speak

Oh, Jesus, I admire You
And I long for Your passionate life to shine through
Shine a light on all that's dark in me
Then, let me shine for the world to see
Your beauty

The worship of God's people has always had a prophetic element to it, although it has not always been evident. South Africa today clearly needs prophets to be speaking out against the decline in morality, the rise of commercialism and greed and the hatred and suspicion between people. Worship leaders and musicians have a calling to fulfil through their music, but as they accept the challenge, the music of our worship can truly become the sacred word of prophecy.

b) Didactic Word

Enough has been said, already in this study about the way music communicates and teaches for it not to be necessary to lay this foundation again. It has already been shown how music was used in Scripture and throughout the history of the Church to teach central truths, to fight heresy and to aid in the memorisation of the Bible. It is clear that the value of music as a teaching tool is increasingly being seen today.

It has also already been established that the music of worship can be useful as the sacred didactic word. The Wesleys, who used their hymns to teach their doctrines and the Scriptures, have been referred to more than once, and have special relevance to Methodists. The effectiveness of music's teaching abilities in worship may well come as a shock to many preachers:
The hymnal is also a ready means of presenting and teaching Christian doctrine, even though as an instructional tool it is often overlooked. The basic beliefs of most Christians have been formulated more by the hymns they sing than by the preaching they hear or the Bible study they pursue.\textsuperscript{101}

The main issue, then, for the present discussion is how this teaching power of music can be released in the worship of the church today. Firstly, to borrow the idea from the Wesleys, hymns are a wonderful source of Christian theology and doctrine. The way the hymn book is arranged is systematic, and there are hymns which cover most aspects of Christian belief. As these hymns are sung over time, the truths which they contain sink in and become part of the belief system of the singers. Coupled with an observance of the church calendar, a clear systematic theology is built into the worshipping community.

An excellent tool for teaching is a church hymnal.\textsuperscript{102}

In addition to this, J. Nathan Corbitt suggests five areas in which music can function effectively as teacher. One of these, teaching about specific community needs, like hygiene, health care or farming techniques, would be difficult to do in the context of worship, but the other four demonstrate the wonderful teaching by-product of the singing congregation. These areas of teaching are self-evident, and so they need only be listed here. Music can teach Scripture; it can educate about specific theological issues; it can facilitate personal spiritual growth; and it expands general kingdom awareness.\textsuperscript{103}

\textsuperscript{101} Eskew, H. & McElrath, H.T., Sing with Understanding, p. 59
\textsuperscript{102} Corbitt, J.N., The Sound of the Harvest, p.216
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid. pp.217-218
The responsibility that this places on ministers and music leaders is large. There is, at present, a tendency to use whatever music gets people “going.” If the congregation enjoys singing a song, and the band can play it well, and it stirs up the right kind of emotion, then it must be good for worship, we believe. However, this inattention to theological detail results in faith that is shallow and ill-informed. Those who chose the music for worship services need to pay attention to what is being taught through the music.

The application that this has for song writers is also clear. It is not enough to be able to create moving melodies, and poetic lyrics that touch the heart. Song writers, whether they like it or not, are often the church of today’s theologians. However, many of them are untrained in theology, or biblical interpretation. Christian musicians need to be informed about more than music. Training in theology should be a pre-requisite.

A final word needs to be offered in terms of the way teaching music can reinforce teaching which has been presented in another way. The most common application of this is the hymn which follows the sermon in a worship service. It is all to easy to choose one of the “old favourites” to ensure the service ends on a high note. However, the effect of this is to undermine the teaching which has been done, and to devalue the teaching role of the music. When a well-chosen hymn or song which expresses the central theme or idea of the message follows the preaching, the congregation leave with a tune in their minds, which, in all likelihood, will be sung over and over during the coming day, if not the week, with each repetition reinforcing the message.
It is probably true to say that much of this teaching through music is already happening in the Church. The problem is that most of it happens without any guidance from leaders and theologians, and often without any awareness of its effects. If music in worship is to be the sacred, didactic word which can grow and strengthen Christian people, it will need to be utilised intentionally.

c) Kerygmatic Word

One of the most recognisable uses of Christian music today is for the purposes of evangelisation. Many will have seen Billy Graham crusades on television, or even live. It is interesting that in his preaching-centred approach, he nevertheless makes space for music. Essentially the origins of what has come to be called contemporary Christian music is in attempts to reach non-Christians with the Gospel in ways that are both attractive and effective.

Once again, the power of music in aiding communication has already been established, and therefore does not need to be discussed again. The main question to deal with here is whether the music of worship can evangelise. Willow Creek Community Church was built on the premise that worship and evangelism are separate activities of the Church, and that worship cannot, and should not, be used for evangelism. For this reason they do not include worship music in their seeker services. The fundamental belief underlying this is that “Seekers can’t worship. It’s offensive to them. Seekers and worship are like oil and water: They don’t mix. Worship is a believers-only activity.”

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104 Morgenthaler, S., Worship Evangelism, pp.80-81
The praise march which was referred to in the last chapter, is expressly not an attempt at evangelism, but as was noted, it does often create an "evangelistic climate." This immediately begins to indicate that the music of worship can have evangelistic impact. It certainly appears that there was no problem with bringing spiritual seekers into the worship environment in the Old Testament. Numbers 15:14 seems to be one of the clearest examples of this:

For the generations to come, whenever an alien or anyone else living among you presents an offering made by fire as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, he must do exactly as you do. 105

This is being born out in churches today. The worship evangelism movement is demonstrating that the music and activity of worship can reach unbelievers with the kerygma -- the message of the Gospel. This was certainly the experience of the Church in history, and it needs to be taken seriously today. The distinction which is often created between worship and evangelism is a false one.

One of the strong, historical distinctions of the evangelical church is its practice of mingling the ministries of worship and evangelism. This has been true at least in most of the preaching, if not the music of the services.

Unfortunately, the tendency exists in many churches to divide musical styles and intentions into categories of worship and evangelism. Many music leaders (and ministers as well, for that matter) place themselves in either the worship ministry or the evangelism ministry; they do not combine styles which could complement both. By doing so they prevent people from experiencing the totality of worship.

105 New International Version
Christian ministry is not a matter of putting evangelism into a worship service or making worship part of an “evangelistic” service. The two should be indivisible, evangelism being an outgrowth or result of true worship.

It is significant to note that even Willow Creek is beginning to question its basic assumption that seekers and worship do not go together. At their June 2000 Arts Conference they spoke about the “new paradigm” of making their seeker services more like their believers services, with worship an integral part of the activity of the service. They are still experimenting with the details of this, and testing it for themselves, but they have clearly moved from their original dichotomous premise.

If the music of worship can function as sacred, kerygmatic word, it must be understood how this can happen. Sally Morgenthaler explains this very clearly.

The purpose or intent of worship is not evangelism. Glorifying God in spirit and truth — responding to God for who God is and what God has done for us, especially in Jesus Christ — is the purpose of Christian worship...

Just how does evangelism take place in a service that is “fully worship”? It happens in two ways: first, as unbelievers hear the truth about God (through worship songs, prayers, Communion, baptism, Scripture, testimonies, dramas, and so on); and second — and more importantly — as they observe the real relationship between worshippers and God.

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106 Ellsworth, D.P., Christian Music in Contemporary Witness, pp.182 and 184
107 Worship Evangelism, p.68
This, obviously has implications for the use of worship music in our services. The preparation and planning of worship that will reach seekers is really no different from any other service. The real work is in beginning to realise that all of our worship should have the potential to touch seekers for Christ.

Good worship is just by nature evangelistic. That's why I don't think to myself, "I want to design worship to be evangelistic." In other words, I don't design worship primarily with unbelievers in mind. But I design it with them in mind.¹⁰⁸

There are three guiding principles for the use of music in worship which can help the church be more conscious of its kerygmatic power. Firstly, worship music must employ the use of "familiar forms." We have seen how music is influenced by culture, and seekers come from a particular cultural framework. If we can "touch base" with them culturally, we can make them feel more comfortable, and thus more open to the message which is being communicated. Of course, cultural relevance means different things to different people, so it is important to be sensitive to the needs of those who are being reached. One way to apply this principle is to use familiar "secular" tunes, and write new lyrics. This makes the songs singable, even for the unchurched. If the entire lyric is rewritten, and not just a word or two here and there, the association with the original song is usually sufficiently broken for it not to hinder worship. Of course, there is good precedence for this practice both in the psalms and in Church history – especially the Welseyan revival.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p.89
The second principle is to tap into the "religious residue" which resides in most people, particularly in the western world. Even in the "secularised" United States, the surveys show that most people have memories and experiences of church.

Eighty-three percent of the adults in the United States were churchgoers at some time in their lives, including a walloping 95 percent of boomers who received a religious upbringing. What that means is that most people in this country born before 1963 have had some experience with traditional forms of worship. And contrary to what we have been telling ourselves, not all of their experience was negative.  

It was mentioned earlier that the statistics for South Africa are somewhat similar. The Church's influence has been felt by many people at some stage of their lives, and when they return to the church there is an expectation that the church will be "churchy." This gives their experience of church a sense of "rightness." The use of hymns, and even the organ can touch these deep memories and cause people to feel like they have "come home." Hymns that are particularly well known, like "Amazing Grace", work very well, as do those which are sung to well known tunes, like "I Cannot Tell Why He Whom Angels Worship," set to the popular Irish tune, the Londonderry Air, used for the song "Danny Boy."

The third principle is that "worship witnesses." This should perhaps be the first of the three, because it is a reminder that worship is the focus, not evangelism. However, the point here is that when believers come together and express their

\[109\] Ibid. p.128
worship through music, this can be a powerful thing to observe for a spiritual seeker. The presence of God which manifests during worship can also be sensed by unbelievers, and be a disturbing and life-changing experience. This means that songs which draw believers into worship can safely be used, even in services which are specially designed to reach the unchurched.

The conclusion of all this is that worship music can be truly kerygmatic, communicating the message of the Gospel to a lost world. As such it becomes a sacred word, filled with the power of the One Who gave His life for the salvation of humanity.

Music communicates, and when words are used with music, the transmission of truth which occurs is an intensely powerful force. This power is certainly released through the music of worship, meaning that worship music clearly becomes Sacred Word, in service to the Living Word of God.

C] CONCLUSION

This study has covered a wide scope. It has shown the need for a developed, systematic theology of music as it is used in worship, and has given guidelines for how best to achieve this. The biblical record has been searched for principles which can be applied to the Church's use of music in the present time. The use of music in worship throughout Church history has also been examined, and the principles which arose here have been laid alongside those of the biblical account. The current state of the Church, and the nation of South Africa has been discussed, and specific reference has been made to the difficulties which this raises for the worship and musical practice of the Church. Finally, the principles which have been developed,
and the challenges have been used a foundation for the development of this systematic theology of worship music. It has been shown that the music of worship can be described in terms of three motifs: Worship Music as Sacred Sound; Worship Music as Sacred Act; and Worship Music as Sacred Word.

While this theology has been developed with the specific needs of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in mind, and recognising that it is my specific knowledge and experience of working with these needs that has been the underlying framework, it is hoped that these principles will nevertheless be useful for other Church groups and denominations.

In conclusion, I am reminded of a conversation that I had a while ago with the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church, Rev. Mvume Dandala. He was commenting on the vision of the church of “A Christ Healed Africa for the Healing of the Nations,” and reflecting on the lessons that are being learned by looking back at the Wesleyan revival in England. There was a disturbing question that he posed, which was certainly a subject of prayer in his heart: “Revival always has music. Where is the music? Where are the Charles Wesleys?” This call certainly spoke into my heart, and is instrumental in the production of this work. My prayer is that somehow this work may help to stir up the Charles Wesleys that may be out there, that they may take their musical gifts and ministries and submit them to the service of the Christ who died for Africa and for the World, that “the earth [may] be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”

\[\text{110} \text{Hab.2:14}\]
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