**IN TUNE WITH GOD**

**THE QUEST FOR MUSIC MIRACLES**

**By Grantley Morris**

Copyright: All rights reserved, Grantley Morris www.net-burst.net/music.htm

CONTENTS & OVERVIEW

[**INTRODUCTION** 4](#_Toc498684151)

[**Section 1: BEYOND THE HORIZON** 6](#_Toc498684155)

[**Chapter 1: THE ORIGIN OF MUSIC** 6](#_Toc498684156)

The foundation on which to build a Christian appreciation of music.

[**CHAPTER 2: CELESTIAL CHOIRS** 12](#_Toc498684166)

Accounts from people in different times and places who claim to have heard heavenly music.

I sympathize with conservative Christians who prefer to keep to solid Scripture. If this describes you, please go straight to Chapter 4. After enjoying that chapter, and discovering my high regard for Scripture, you might venture at least into the introduction of Chapter 2.

[**CHAPTER 3: THE CULMINATION OF MUSIC** 24](#_Toc498684185)

Using Scripture and prayerful consideration to gain further insight into music in the life to come.

[**SECTION 2: TERRESTRIAL TUNES** 29](#_Toc498684196)

[**CHAPTER 4: MUSIC’S FACETS IN SCRIPTURE’S LIGHT** 29](#_Toc498684197)

Delving deep into God’s Word to discover a staggering range of divinely approved purposes for music. A fascinating goldmine of 20 different roles Scripture finds for music. Surprisingly entertaining for such a thorough study.

[**CHAPTER 5: MUSIC’S POWER CONFIRMED BY HISTORY** 51](#_Toc498684225)

Instructive, astonishing and inspirational accounts of how God has used music. Not only fascinating but highly encouraging and moving for everyone longing to use music to touch lives and impact this planet for the glory of God.

[**CHAPTER 6: GOD’S MUSIC GOD’S WAY** 60](#_Toc498684245)

[**CHAPTER 7: MUSICAL EXCELLENCE – THROUGH CHRIST** 72](#_Toc498684262)

[**CHAPTER 8: THE IDEAL MUSICIAN** 79](#_Toc498684269)

The beautiful qualities Scripture inspires us to look for in Christian musicians.

[**CHAPTER 9: A CHALLENGE** 99](#_Toc498684291)

A quiz, with a touch of humor, to help you assess the effectiveness and Christlikeness of your service

[**CHAPTER 10: THE SPIRIT’S ENABLING** 103](#_Toc498684292)

[**CHAPTER 11: MORTAL MUSIC’S PINNACLE** 114](#_Toc498684310)

Should we look to the past or the future for earth’s greatest music prior to Christ’s return?

[**APPENDIX** 122](#_Toc498684327)

Grappling with matters usually glossed over. These are the notes referred to in the book.

[**BIBLIOGRAPHY** 139](#_Toc498684363)

My sources: all the books cited in the endnotes of the book.

# introduction

I’ve prepared a banquet. Some dishes – especially the Appendix – have plenty of meat. Others are much lighter. Some have sugar. Chapters differ so much that even the most finical of us should be satisfied. Please select that balance that most satisfies you.

This feast is for everyone. Whilst those directly involved in the music ministry comprise my target audience, I believe that everyone who loves God, irrespective of musical interest or ability, will find something of worth within these pages.

Throughout the book, I have broken the bounds of normal language to use the term *musician* as a compact way of referring to anyone whose service to God incorporates the use of music, whether as a composer, lyricist, singer, instrumentalist, conductor, creative ministries’ director or worship leader.

In some Scripture quotes, words appear in capitals (and occasionally italics) to draw attention to pertinent aspects of the verse. It in no way reflects the structure of the underlying Greek or Hebrew.

## music’s fashion parade

Though music has great power to unify, it is so subject to differing tastes that, sadly, there is probably no type of music I could mention that some readers would not regard as inferior. I’m the jittery dude standing in the cross-fire. Illustrations add power and interest, but when they wander far beyond your favorite music style I can only beg your mercy, asking that you look below the surface to see that the point of the illustration applies to your type of music. Accessibility to information has forced far more references to older music than I would have preferred.

Mention of specific people or musical styles does not imply my endorsement, but Christian musicians face enough hostility outside the church without turning against each other. I long to bandage wounds, not make new ones. When I refer to individuals my prayer is not that you be inspired by the style of their music, but by the Lord of their music.

Because I cover so many topics and I long to serve Christians of all persuasions, you might find me arguing for something that you have always unquestioningly accepted without seriously considering how spiritual and biblical it is. Feel free, if you wish, to slip to other parts that you feel more needful or fascinating. But even as you do, you will know that if ever you meet someone who has doubts about that matter, you now have a resource to help them and reassure yourself.

## a preposterous goal and how to achieve it

I have sought to sculpt a book that will grip and thrill readers who have no interest in music, and yet a book that, especially in the footnotes, is so crammed with information that it will be treasured as a valuable resource book by Christians devoted to music. My prayer flies much higher, however. If your ministry involves music, my goal is that your ministry will be more inspired by God and more blessed by Him than anything you have so far experienced. Passive reading of anything I write is unlikely to achieve such a preposterous goal. For the miracles I have cited, your prayers must empower this book. I beg you to pray right now – and regularly as you proceed through the book – that you will soar beyond my words into the presence of Almighty God and that He will open to you new realms, transforming both you and your ministry for His glory.

## SETTING THE SCENE

‘How I long to glorify God through music!’ In his fervent cry was a plea for help. ‘If only my music were fully empowered by God. Sure, the Lord has used me, but the results are hardly indicative of God’s infinite love and power.

‘I’ve feared the corrupting power of worldly music. I’ve preached against it. I’ve even destroyed albums. Yet the world doesn’t fear my music. Something must be wrong.’

Someone of this intensity needed no reminding about the obvious essentials of practice and prayer. So I tried something deeper.

‘Do you see your music in its true perspective?’ I wondered aloud.

‘Do you know why music exists?

‘How does human music fit into God’s entire creative program?

‘Where is God taking music?’

Silence spoke loudly.

These basic questions seem so unanswerable that few of us even ask them. Yet would the Light of the world[[1]](#footnote-1) leave us in the dark? Answers could give us fresh inspiration and new direction in the challenging task of magnifying God through music. They could boost our faith concerning God’s interest in our chords and quavers, propelling us into a new realm of Spirit-empowered music.

Let’s lift our eyes from the music sheets of present-day earth and, Bible in hand, scan the horizons of time and space in search of answers.

Our search will take us to the very limits of divine revelation. But although we might plot tentative ventures into the unknown, we will always quickly return to the reliable landmarks of Scriptural truth.

At first, our exploration will seem to produce little fruit, but as we proceed, we will pick up momentum, and apparent trivia will gain fresh significance. Don’t worry if it begins to seem up in the clouds; we’ll come back to earth with a thud in later chapters! Returning with a broader vision, we will face head-on the thorny issues involved in musically serving the Lord today on this needy planet.

# Section 1: BEYOND THE HORIZON

# Chapter 1: THE ORIGIN OF MUSIC

## GOD’S GLORY AS CREATOR

Our Creator, the origin of every good and perfect gift[[2]](#footnote-2) is the source of all knowledge.[[3]](#footnote-3) He deserves – but seldom receives – full credit for all human ingenuity. The perversion is our own, but the gift is God’s.

Scripture acknowledges God as the source of even humanity’s most rudimentary understanding of agriculture.[[4]](#footnote-4) The Bible asserts that without insight that is ultimately traceable to God Himself, none of us could even recognize the foolishness of forever ploughing a field and never stopping to plant. This dependence upon God for knowledge is a staggering concept. It means that not even a militant atheist or a devil-worshipper could produce music were it not for God.

It is He ‘who gives songs in the night; who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, and makes us wiser than the birds of the air’.[[5]](#footnote-5)

In the words of Paul, ‘What have you that you did not receive?’[[6]](#footnote-6)

So credit for the development of music ultimately belongs not to man but God.

However, divinely given ability can be put to trivial use. Is music some freakish human fad, on the level of Rubik’s cubes and hopscotch, or is it something far nobler? The answer to this question has the potential to revolutionize our attitude to music. It could be like discovering that the rock in your back-yard is not just pleasant to look at – it’s solid opal!

At stake is the basis for our entire estimation of music and its future.

Let’s attempt the ultimate time-warp to the genesis of music. We’ll start by tackling reports of music outside the human race. If non-human music exists, then something more fundamental than human genius must be behind it.

## SUB-HUMAN MUSIC

### 1. GENERAL

Enjoy with me the beautiful words of George Parsons Lathrop.[[7]](#endnote-1)

*Music of Growth*

‘Music is in all growing things;  
And underneath the silky wings  
Of smallest insects there is stirred  
A pulse of air that must be heard;  
Earth’s silence lives and throbs and sings.’

Perhaps they don’t know the words, but bees at least hum!

As a poet I’m a good tuba player, but I couldn’t resist this:

The bumble-bee   
May humble be,  
And its fumbling flight  
Not reach melodic heights;  
Yet deep inside  
A tune resides.

As it roamed,   
Its sleepy drone  
Just fell and rose.  
Yet inspired  
By what transpired,  
A man composed.[[8]](#footnote-7)

Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Flight of the Bumble-bee* is but one of many musical compositions inspired by nature’s sounds.

A Christian example is *Golden Hill*, the early tune of an Isaac Watts’ hymn. This melody, once sung in countless churches, was apparently directly influenced by the song of an English wood thrush.[[9]](#endnote-2)

To say that someone sings like a nightingale is high praise.

So even a casual glance at the world around us, without any special spiritual insight, suggests there may be something musical about nature’s sounds. Interestingly, there are snippets of Biblical support for this view.

### **2. SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE**[[10]](#footnote-8)

#### SOLOMON’S BIRDS

The King James Version of Psalm 104:12 speaks of birds which ‘sing’. However, ‘give voice’ is a more literal translation. In this instance, the original text carries no musical connotations.

However, a Hebrew word, which Scripture elsewhere applies exclusively to human music, is used in Song of Solomon 2:12, apparently to describe the singing of birds.

Furthermore, in Zephaniah 2:14, we read of birds which ‘sing in the windows’. Here, the underlying Hebrew word is different to the one used in Solomon’s Song and yet it again is a term usually reserved for human singing.

The expression ‘daughters of song’[[11]](#footnote-9) may also be relevant. According to the scholarly Hebrew Lexicon by Brown, Driver and Briggs, it is probably a reference to birds.

It might be going too far to conclude that the above Scriptures put certain bird calls in exactly the same category as human music. It seems, however, the divinely inspired writers wished us at least to see the similarity.

#### NATURE WORSHIP

All of nature seems more involved in praising God than most of us would have guessed.[[12]](#footnote-10) The stars declare God’s glory.[[13]](#footnote-11) Sun and moon, wind and hail, hills and trees, beasts, birds, fish and insects are all urged to praise Him.[[14]](#footnote-12) Wild animals honor Him.[[15]](#footnote-13) Moreover, Scripture speaks of pastures, trees, hills and skies singing. In the original language, the clearest example is Psalm 65:13:

‘The pastures are clothed with flocks;  
The valleys also are covered with corn;  
They shout for joy and SING.’

Other references abound, though their musical implications are not as obvious as some English translations imply.[[16]](#footnote-14)

‘Sing O heavens;  
For the Lord has done it:   
Shout, you lower parts of the earth:   
Break forth into singing, you mountains,   
O forest and every tree therein.’[[17]](#footnote-15)

Perhaps we would miss something significant if we dismissed all of this as poetic expressions that tell us nothing about sub-human creation. The link between human music and the sounds of even inanimate creation might be stronger than we think. Behind the design of wind, trees and animals is the same Person who created man with the ability to produce music.

If flowers were planted to spell out an Arabic word, we could easily miss the significance. We would not recognize the language and, since flowers are mindless, we might assume the arrangement was simply random. We would see things in an entirely different light, however, if the gardener – the intelligence behind the design – explained.

Similarly, creation would take on a whole new meaning if God revealed that what we have mistaken for mindless sounds are a symphony of praise orchestrated by the One who sustains them. In the words of Edith M. Thomas, ‘The God of music dwelleth out of doors’.[[18]](#endnote-3)

Confirmation that this view of creation is a product of special revelation, rather than human imagination, is found in the spiritual experiences of a host of Christians, for whom a divine encounter has edged them closer to seeing sub-human creation musically exalting its Creator. Several accounts of these experiences, ranging for the common to the spectacular, are cited in Note 1.3 of the Appendix. They make fascinating reading. Of primary importance, of course, is that we gain a thoroughly biblical conception of nature. This is dealt with in the Appendix, Note 1.4.

Perhaps we suffer from a narrow musical appreciation, snobbishly rejecting forms of musical expression other than our own, and so failing to recognize the musical qualities of nature’s sounds. Meditating upon the relevant Scriptures and prayerfully seeking the One who inspired them might open our ears to nature’s melodies.

‘Let the sea roar, and all that is in it:  
Let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein.  
Then shall the trees sing before the presence of the Lord,  
For He comes to judge the earth!’[[19]](#footnote-16)

Verses similar to the above appear in a total of three of the Bible’s songs.[[20]](#footnote-17) Let’s examine the context of one of them, Psalm 98. The psalmist urges ‘all the earth’ to audibly praise God.[[21]](#footnote-18) He then expounds what he means by addressing human instrumentalists and singers *and nature*. The psalm begins with a call to sing a new song to the Lord. It builds up to a plea to human musicians and climaxes by appealing to nature to complete this orchestra of praise. The first half of the psalm explains *why* a new song should be sung and the second half answers the questions *how* (with harp, trumpet, clapping rivers etc.) and *who* (‘all the earth’ – an expression the psalmist subdivides into man and nature). At the very least, this psalm suggests a strong link between the worship of God’s musicians and the sounds of God’s sub-human creation.

#### SINGING STAR

Job 38:7 speaks of the time ‘when the morning stars sang together’.[[22]](#footnote-19) This probably refers to heavenly intelligences, rather than stars, because it appears in a poetic couplet paralleling ‘sons of God’. However, the possibility of a strictly literal interpretation alerts us to something significant: God’s music in nature need not be confined to what is audible to us.

‘See deep enough, and you see musically: the heart of nature being everywhere music, if you can only reach it,’ mused Carlyle.[[23]](#endnote-4)

#### CELESTIAL MUSICIANS

The sounds of lower forms of creation may seem so primitive that we hesitate to regard it as music. But who can deny the possibility that angelic music may be equally superior to humanity’s highest attempts?

##### 1. THEORETICAL

We know with certainty that angels worship.[[24]](#footnote-20) We also know that at least some heavenly beings are superior to us in many ways, including ‘might and power’,[[25]](#footnote-21) mobility,[[26]](#footnote-22) and ability to disappear.[[27]](#footnote-23) They have a greater capacity to afflict,[[28]](#footnote-24) protect[[29]](#footnote-25) and deliver.[[30]](#footnote-26) Their power over nature astounds us,[[31]](#footnote-27) and they are superior in wisdom, intellect,[[32]](#footnote-28) knowledge,[[33]](#footnote-29) physical appearance,[[34]](#footnote-30) dazzling brilliance,[[35]](#footnote-31) size,[[36]](#footnote-32) name,[[37]](#footnote-33) and proximity to God.[[38]](#footnote-34)

With a list as impressive as that, it is difficult to believe heavenly creatures would lack our musical ability. Indeed, it would be surprising if their musical powers were merely equal to ours. Imagine what skills could be developed by sinless beings unaffected by aging who have been living since the creation of the universe.[[39]](#footnote-35)

Moreover, there is much Biblical evidence that angelic beings have greater than human vocal abilities.[[40]](#footnote-36)

According to Thomas Fuller, music is simply ‘. . . wild sounds civilized into time and tune’.[[41]](#endnote-5) Certainly, from a heavenly perspective, our music might be more like the unsophisticated sounds of nature than we wish to admit.

##### 2. SCRIPTURE

If logic suggests superior heavenly beings would be musical, is it confirmed by direct Scriptural reference?

Most of us would immediately think of the angelic choir announcing to awe-struck shepherds the most significant birth in human history. Heaven seems so excited that it sent the world’s first inter-galactic singing telegram.[[42]](#footnote-37)

There are also recorded instances of angels blowing trumpets.[[43]](#footnote-38)

Job 38:7 is strong evidence:

‘When the morning stars sang together

and all the sons of God shouted for joy.’

But for the hard to convince, Revelation 5:8-9 is the clincher:

‘The four beasts and the twenty-four elders . . . every one of them having harps . . . sang a new song . . .’[[44]](#footnote-39)

## THE COMMON FACTOR

Even our brief examination of creation – from the chirping of insects to the harp playing of heavenly beings – reveals that music is far more than a merely human activity. Music, in all its various forms throughout creation, has as its common factor, not human idiosyncrasy, but the Creator Himself.

## THE CREATOR’S MUSICAL ABILITY

### THE DIVINE SONG-WRITER

As significant as it is, God’s involvement in music extends far beyond creating creatures with musical potential.

1 Kings 4:29ff implies that it was a direct result of the wisdom God supernaturally gave him that Solomon wrote over 1,000 songs.

Psalm 42:8 speaks of ‘His [i.e. God’s] song’. In Psalm 40:3, the psalmist rejoiced that GOD had given him a new song.

In excess of one hundred and sixty songs so much had their origin in God that they now form part of Scripture.[[45]](#footnote-40)

Although the Lord has let the music fade, the lyrics of Scripture’s songs will remain for eternity.[[46]](#footnote-41) This shows more than divine approval of poetry. (Though even this is significant, since the Bible is about one third poetry and some musicologists regard poetry as falling between language and music.[[47]](#endnote-6)) At least initially, the Lord meant the Psalms to be sung. There was little point in retaining the music for posterity, however. Words intended for all cultures and languages could hardly be expected to fit one tune. (Translators have enough problems as it is.)

Nevertheless, the fact remains that God has been directly involved in the composition of many songs.

### THE SON SINGING

When on earth, the Son of God apparently sang.[[48]](#footnote-42) However, there is an allusion to our Savior’s singing which is even more riveting. Hebrews 2:12 suggests the ascended Lord of Creation sings praise to His Father. Jesus says to God, ‘I will SING praise to You’. This is a quotation from Psalm 22:22, a Messianic Psalm. An examination of the original context confirms that it refers to the triumphant Christ praising God after His resurrection.[[49]](#footnote-43)

Moreover, the Father Himself exalts over us with ringing cries.[[50]](#footnote-44)

So not only does musical ability come from God; He had directly inspired many songs. Moreover, He apparently produces music Himself.

## CONCLUSION

Our quick flight through Scripture has taken us to the very the origin of music and to one thrilling conclusion: music began in the heart of God. Declared composer Igor Stravinsky, ‘Only God can create. I make music from music.’[[51]](#endnote-7)

In its broadest sense, music is far more than a human art form. It is an inseparable part of creation. More than even this, however, it seems an integral part of God’s own nature.

We could define music as man exploring the wonders of two of God’s creations – time and sound.[[52]](#endnote-8) This definition is in line with much Christian music: God gets a mention, but thereafter it’s all in the hands of men and women. God is in the soul saving business, not in musically assisting the church organist.

I have a different view. For now, however, it is sufficient to note that our initial investigations suggest that a definition of music should include something like this: music is the whole of creation following in its Father’s footsteps.

This is not to imply we should downgrade the uniquely human aspects of our music. We are still the jewel of earthly creation. Nevertheless, as ecologists warn us not to view ourselves in isolation from the rest of creation, and Christians realize the folly of disregarding God, so our music is likely to reach its God-given potential only when we understand how our music relates to God and fits into His created order.

Don’t panic. This book isn’t about to become philosophical. In the next chapter, you’ll think I’ve lost my marbles. In chapter four, you’ll see me as a straight-laced, Bible-based conservative. In chapter five, you’ll find an amateur historian. Behind this diversity (the reason they cancelled the padded cell) is my determination to unearth every possible clue to the full potential of Christian music in our era. Then we will ascertain how we can achieve this exciting potential for the glory of God.

# CHAPTER 2: CELESTIAL CHOIRS

## INTRODUCTION

Some Bible scholars find the Scriptural evidence for angelic music less than compelling. We are indeed exploring the very frontiers of revealed knowledge. That’s what makes this chapter important.

We will examine the realm of human experience to see how it conforms to some of the Biblical expositions given in chapters one and three.

Down through history there have been innumerable reports from reliable Christian witnesses of angelic visitations. A number of these are particularly relevant to musicians. Though this subject seems bizarre, reports are too numerous and the implications too profound to be ignored in a serious work on the Christian view of music.

Our final authority is Scripture alone. Yet few would deny that testimonies of conversions can help our dull minds see with greater clarity what Scripture means by being born again. Similarly, Christian testimony may help sharpen the image of music drawn from our Biblical research.

Even if the phenomena described were a mere trick of the human mind (and I don’t believe they are), they could still be indirect evidence for the existence of music in the next world. The possibility of such music seems so strongly stamped upon the human psyche as to invite the conclusion that it was placed there by the One who made us. If so, I cannot imagine God placing within us expectations that will never be satisfied.

The conviction that heaven is a place of music has practical implications. Our beliefs remarkably influence our music. John Cage’s belief that the entire world is the product of nothing but chance caused his music to degenerate into literally random sounds.[[53]](#endnote-9) As another example, consider a musician whose general attitude to life is that what’s new is best. Such a person will almost inevitably produce quite different music to someone who believes in ‘the good old days’. Likewise, a Christian’s belief in heavenly music is likely to affect his or her musical composition. In fact, heavenly strains have apparently directly influenced some Christian music.[[54]](#footnote-45)

The material presented in this chapter has the potential to increase our faith in the possibility of receiving heavenly inspiration or heavenly interaction with our music. The result could transport our music from the mediocre to the miraculous. In addition, this survey should strengthen our conviction that music is very much more than a temporal amusement. The more we grasp the full significance of music, the higher will be our motivation to bestow upon it the prayerful dedication it deserves.

I have agonized over this chapter. I feel a responsibility to take on this expedition Christians with totally opposed views of the supernatural. Some will find it the most thrilling part of the book. Others, especially those who need it the most, may initially have a very different reaction.

I ask no-one to compromise his or her convictions. If you feel the urge to burn me at the stake, I simply ask for a fair trial – and a rainy day. Hopefully, as you read further, your fears will prove unfounded. If the atmosphere becomes too rarefied, temporarily abort this part of the mission and go to the security of regions more thoroughly charted by Scripture. This you will find in subsequent chapters, especially chapter four.

Alternatively, if you have no qualms about this subject, I ask your patience with those who require what may seem superfluous explanations.

Though this chapter meanders through background information to help you better evaluate the authenticity of each report, don’t lose sight of the goal: to expand our knowledge of music beyond planet earth to better equip us to view music from God’s glorious perspective, and then to allow this fresh vision to impact your life and your music as the Spirit leads.

If your faith in the reality of heavenly music increases by a fraction of a mustard seed, it will be more than worth it. If, moreover, your understanding of the nature of heavenly music increases, it is priceless. And if heaven’s music begins to influence your own music. . . . Words fail.

## INDIA

I sat enthralled as a humble Indian man addressed a large congregation in Adelaide, South Australia. Rev. Larno Longchar was describing an amazing revival sweeping the length and breadth of his home state of Nagaland. His local church alone now had 15,000 members. Four times in one year its building had to be extended to accommodate those who were being saved.

The ‘outpouring’ began in 1976 after the ‘Baptist’ churches in Nagaland had kept their pledge to pray for revival. Their twenty-four-hour-a-day prayer chain had continued unbroken for an entire year.

As a direct result of the revival, the state’s smoking, drinking, cinema attendance, divorce and suicide rates all dramatically fell. A flabbergasted magistrate reported that in six months only one criminal case had appeared before his city’s courts. Repentance was so widespread and genuine that precautions like locking houses became quite unnecessary. Former Hindus and head-hunters joined the ranks of fervent Christians confessing their sins and praying for hours at a time.

I could detect no boasting in Rev. Longchar’s address. He spoke of himself surprisingly little. A major recurring theme was that there was nothing unique about his state’s experience. He insisted that we could have the same type of revival.

The following is a slightly condensed transcript of part of the message I heard on March 8, 1981.[[55]](#endnote-10) The incident described would have occurred no more than five years previous. Rev. Longchar told us:

‘In one of the district capitals, near Burma, we had [a] revival meeting for four days. There were 35,000 people in a crusade.

‘One of our friends was preaching. God used him in a very wonderful way that morning. About 10,000 people rushed to the pulpit to confess their sins – to acknowledge the lordship of Jesus Christ in their hearts. There was a deep confession of sin going on. We were helping the people – about five hundred of us – as counsellors. When we were praying, we heard a sound of angels singing – a huge group of people singing in the sky above. [It was a] very lovely song:

“Jesus is coming soon:  
Troublous times,  
Jesus is coming soon.  
Repent, repent, repent.” [[56]](#footnote-46)

‘It was so lovely.

‘For ten minutes the angels continued to sing. We didn’t see them, but we heard the sound. Oh, it was so wonderful!

‘One of my friends took his tape recorder and recorded this song.

‘Our people love to sing that song – all over Nagaland today. They receive much blessing through singing it.’

Rev. Longchar’s description of the angelic singing as ‘so lovely’ should not be taken lightly. After visiting Nagaland, Pastor Des Short, of New Zealand, described the Naga people as ‘exceptionally musical.’ He claimed that, in marked contrast to western people, the majority of Naga people are born with perfect pitch. Even children at play sing in four-part harmony.

## WALES

Commencing at Beddgelert in 1817, a powerful move of God resulted in the salvation of multiplied thousands of Welsh people. From the midst of this move comes a report of people transfixed by what seemed to be massed heavenly choirs in the air singing songs of praise.[[57]](#endnote-11)

Decades later,[[58]](#footnote-47) in a small Montgomeryshire village, angelic singing signaled the commencement of a local Welsh revival. It was heard by a few disheartened Christians leaving their church after a seemingly fruitless week-long series of prayer meetings for revival. The ‘indistinct’[[59]](#footnote-48) but melodious sounds seemed to come from high above the church they had just left.

Next day, they discovered that many others in the district had heard the same beautiful music. Some had even gone outside to hear it and concluded it must be angelic. No other explanation was ever found.

Soon hundreds were flocking to the churches and experiencing the prayed-for outpouring of the Spirit.[[60]](#endnote-12)

## FRANCE

A remarkable parallel occurred across the English Channel, nearly two centuries earlier.

A revival in ‘the valleys of Dauphiny,’ amongst Protestants in late Seventeenth Century France, was cited by John Wesley as proof that God acts in a supernatural way.[[61]](#endnote-13) This Cevennol revival was preceded by widespread reports of ‘strange sounds in the air: the sound of a trumpet and a harmony of voices.’ And in Orthès it was said that in every house resided at least one person who had heard heavenly music.[[62]](#endnote-14)

## NUMEROUS REPORTS ASSOCIATED WITH CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP

Angels are moved by human activities. They long to see persecuted saints avenged.[[63]](#footnote-49) They serve us,[[64]](#footnote-50) responding to our physical needs[[65]](#footnote-51) and our prayers.[[66]](#footnote-52) They protect us from danger[[67]](#footnote-53) even in situations requiring almost instantaneous reaction.[[68]](#footnote-54) Scripture leaves us in no doubt that our actions greatly influence heavenly beings. Paul even urged women to cover their heads ‘because of the angels’.[[69]](#footnote-55)

Moreover, terrestrial events and celestial music are frequently intertwined. If angels rejoice over the salvation of the lost,[[70]](#footnote-56) it is hard to imagine such sophisticated beings celebrating without music.[[71]](#footnote-57) The angelic Christmas carol heard by startled shepherds focused upon earthly events.[[72]](#footnote-58) Note also the earth-centered lyrics of the song of heavenly beings in Revelation 5:9-10, praising the Lamb who redeemed people from ‘every tribe and language and people and nation’ to ‘reign on the earth’. Earth-bound psalmists urged angelic hosts to bless the Lord,[[73]](#footnote-59) and in Revelation 5:13 we find angels uniting with people in praise that is quite possibly musical. Scripture even speaks of the exalted Son of God singing in our midst,[[74]](#footnote-60) and of God the Father singing ‘over’ His people.[[75]](#footnote-61) Clearly, heaven’s music often focuses on humans or is a response to human activities.

So it seems consistent with Scriptural revelation that many people insist they have heard angels singing above the sound of congregational musical praise. These claims – too numerous too innumerate here – often originate from people whose extensive familiarity with the building and congregation render it unlikely that they could be deceived by acoustics or by the musical ability of the congregation. Taken individually, one may wonder just how objective these reports are. However, their number, consistency and the range of sources, render them difficult to dismiss.

These accounts suggest the possibility of our musical praise inspiring heavenly beings to join us in worship. This seems to fit nicely the above-mentioned pieces of the jigsaw Scripture provides.

We recognize that our musical praise ascends to heaven. So it is hardly surprising if the reverse sometimes happens, and heaven’s strains reach human ears. And the time when this is most likely to occur is when a whole congregation is focusing upon heaven, engaged in what must be the favorite activity of heavenly beings – musical praise. If these beautiful creatures get excited about our initial coming to the Lord, it must thrill them to see us unitedly pouring out our praises to the One both we and they love so deeply. Surely, at such times, they must long to mingle their song with ours as it ascends to heaven’s Throne.

Rev. Colin Urquhart announced the hymn: Wesley’s ‘O for a thousand tongues.’ There certainly weren’t a thousand in the congregation. Encouraging them, the Anglican priest said they were joining heaven’s hosts in praising the Lord. They should ask God to make them conscious of this, he suggested.

During the second verse, trumpet-playing was heard. Rev. Urquhart was unmoved. It must be the church trumpeter. As the music continued, however, he discovered the trumpeter was not even present. Moreover, it was not one, but several trumpets melodiously merging with the organ. Others in the congregation heard it too.

The organist also had a fascinating story to tell. Inexplicably, the organ trumpet stop had refused to work throughout the hymn. It functioned perfectly before and after.[[76]](#endnote-15)

This incident bubbles with stimulating concepts.

Perhaps few took it seriously, but the congregation actually prayed for a revelation about heavenly music. I wonder of how many Christians it could be said, ‘You heard not because you asked not’.[[77]](#footnote-62) With such things, we expect heaven to take the initiative. But heaven has already taken the initiative, two thousand years ago, when Jesus said, ‘Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.’[[78]](#footnote-63)

Skeptics will say the fact that they prayed for an awareness of an angelic presence proves the phenomenon was due to auto-suggestion. But note that Rev. Urquhart’s mind immediately leapt to a natural explanation. Further, most Christians are preconditioned to expect, if anything, a heavenly choir, not trumpets. Moreover, auto-suggestion would produce individual differences: some would see angels, some hear voices, others hear harps, and so on. Then there’s the mystery of the trumpet stop to explain away.

Rev. Urquhart’s description suggests heavenly trumpets are capable of far greater precision than those of Bible times.[[79]](#footnote-64) We must not imagine that just because heaven is described in the Bible, heaven’s ‘technology’ is stuck in the horse-and-chariot era.

I think we can all feel rather flattered by the fact that in this instance, heavenly musicians were content to quietly accompany earthly music, rather than dominate the whole event. Truly, such glorious, angelic beings are ‘all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation’.[[80]](#footnote-65)

As we leave this incident, we should note that it didn’t occur in just any church service. It was in the midst of a significant revival.

Just twenty days into the 1980s Mrs Rhonda Walters, engaged in short-term ministry in India, attended a church service on the flat roof of a house on the outskirts of Coimbatore, out from Madras. There were no musical instruments. The congregation had only their clapping hands and overflowing hands to embellish their singing. ‘A wave of holiness’ was one of Rhonda’s attempts to describe the Spirit-charged atmosphere as those Indian Christians worshipped their Lord in song. Though words failed her, she was sure of one thing – those Christians had something she had never experienced in her homeland of Australia.

With eyes closed, engulfed in wonder and worship, she became conscious of instrumental music. *Some of them must have gone home and returned with instruments*, she thought. She assumed one instrument was a guitar. She could also hear what might have been a harp and violin. There was no percussion or wind instruments. The music, which had started so softly and unobtrusively in harmony with the singing, began to crescendo. The orchestra of stringed instruments grew louder and louder. Rhonda opened her eyes to see who was playing and to her amazement there was no-one. The music came in waves and finally faded away.

The experience shook her, being so contrary to anything she had ever known. It was several weeks before she dared mention it to anyone. When I interviewed Rhonda several years later the experience was still vivid in her mind.

I’ve heard of a report that above the sound of congregational worship was once heard the singing of a beautiful male voice. Frank Longino writes of something similar. ‘A few times, I have been in services where we rose to such heights [in worship] that we began to be conscious of a tremendously overwhelming note rising out of the mass of sound; higher than any I’d heard, richer than any I’d experienced.’[[81]](#endnote-16) In both reports the phenomenon was interpreted not as being angelic, but as the singing of the Son of God Himself. What Bible-believer could deny the possibility?

We should note, however, that a heavenly musical response to our music need not necessarily be audible to our ears. Just as angels probably intervene in our lives more often than we realize, celestial music and our music might be more interwoven than we imagine.

## GRACE MURPHY

In 1937, Grace Murphy had a fascinating experience: she died.

Billy Graham[[82]](#endnote-17) states that many Christians on the verge of death report hearing heavenly strains. Unfortunately, he does not elucidate. An example of what he may have had in mind is given in the Appendix, Note 2.4 concerning August Hermann Francke.

Mrs. Murphy, however, having been raised from the dead, was able to provide us with a fuller account.

Medical technology being what it is, an increasing number of people are being revived after clinical death. I am very skeptical of so-called out-of-body experiences sometimes associated with this. Medical studies suggest that whatever this phenomenon is, it cannot be categorized as hallucination or drug-induced. However, Satan goes to considerable lengths to give people a false understanding of life-after-death through such things as séances. I believe non-Christians are wide open for similar deception nearing death.

We should be careful, however, not to allow a commendable eagerness to reject Satan’s sludge become so intense that we discard God’s gold as well. Blind faith in the spiritual experiences of non-Christians is foolish. But neither is blind, unthinking rejection of the testimonies of people redeemed by the blood of the Lamb the epitome of wisdom.

Reports from committed Christians at a time when they were being earnestly prayed for, are worthy of closer examination, especially when the results seem to be glorifying to God and align with Scriptural revelation.

Nevertheless, non-Christians have so distorted and perverted this subject that I can deeply identify with anyone on the verge of converting the following pages into paper darts. For many of us, exposure to non-Christian accounts of life after (clinical) death has either eroded our confidence even in Christian accounts, or has raised doubts as to the reality of hell. Note 2.2 should prove beneficial to readers who have suffered either of these reactions.

It is hard to imagine an experience more deeply branded with the marks of God than Mrs. Murphy’s. The following facts, drawn from her daughter’s book, strongly argue for the authenticity of her amazing claim to have heard music in Paradise.

1. She had definitely been born again. The genuineness of her conversion is clearly confirmed by her daughter’s detailed account.[[83]](#endnote-18)

2. The Lord revealed to Mrs. Murphy that she would suddenly die that very day. So certain was she, that she told her stunned pastor and made funeral arrangements, even though there was no physical indication that death was imminent. She had complete peace about it all.

3. From start to finish, the whole episode was immersed in prayer. The revelation that she would die occurred while she was in prayer. Being a Sunday morning, she was able to attend church twice, share with her pastor and devote more time to the Lord than would otherwise have been possible. She died in the evening, while in prayer with her daughter, Jean. Finally, she came back to life as a result of Jean’s fervent, faith-filled prayer.

4. She was pronounced dead by a registered nurse who would have dearly wanted to detect signs of life.

5. Her doctor, arriving after she had revived, examined the damage done to her body and could not understand how she could have undergone such a major heart-attack without dying.

6. There was no possibility of a drug-induced hallucination. No anesthetic or medication was used.

7. The Lord Jesus predominated in her visit to paradise. He appeared to her just before she died, escorted her to heaven and, in response to Jean’s prayer, led her back to earth again.

8. In her heavenly visit, she met biblical characters whose names she had never heard of before. By consulting a concordance, Jean confirmed that they were godly people mentioned in the Bible. This astounded Jean because she knew her newly converted mother had only recently commenced church attendance and had very limited Bible knowledge.

9. Mrs. Murphy gained the impression that her father was not in Paradise – thus indirectly supporting the Christian conviction that not all of Adam’s descendants will receive eternal life.

10. Orphaned when only three days old, Grace Murphy had no recollection of her mother’s likeness, yet she claimed to have met her in her journey to the next world. Some months later, her mother’s sister gave her a trunk that had been stored away from before Grace’s birth. Sifting through the contents for the first time, Grace instantly spotted her mother in a group photo, saying she was the one she had seen in heaven. Her aunt was stunned. As far as is known, that was the only photograph of her mother ever taken.

11. She had no desire to brag about her peep behind death’s veil. Indeed, she regarded it as too sacred to speak about. She spoke of it once to Jean and gave her permission to share it if she thought it would glorify God, but determined never to personally mention it again.

12. As might be expected if the Lord were in it, Grace fully recovered from her serious illness.

Music assumed high priority in her description of Paradise. The whole atmosphere seemed to be music. She described it as sounding something like an orchestra and organ playing together. Pastel colors moved and merged in harmony with the thrilling sounds.[[84]](#endnote-19)

It is noteworthy that several times afterwards, Mrs. Murphy would become conscious of music that she recognized as being the same as she had heard in her heavenly encounter.[[85]](#endnote-20) Could it be that at times some of us hear such music and dismiss it without realizing its source? After all, we are even now spiritually seated with Christ in the heavenlies.[[86]](#footnote-66) Perhaps we are more in tune with heaven than most of us dare think.

## BETTY MALZ

Twenty-seven-year-old Betty Malz had been teetering in the edge of death for six weeks. Though this pastor’s daughter seems to have known the Lord from the age of thirteen, her spiritual life had significantly deepened over those critical weeks, causing her to repent of her past ways and enjoy closer fellowship with her Savior.

Now she was dead. A hospital sheet was pulled over her head. Her family was notified.

For half an hour, medical personnel by-passed her room. The first to re-enter was a black nurse who screamed in terror. But it wasn’t a ghost. Not only had the Lord raised Betty to life, He had miraculously healed her. Within minutes, she was refusing medical attention and doing things which, even if she hadn’t died, should have been medically impossible. The startled doctor wanted to operate immediately. He didn’t. She scoffed down a full meal intended for another patient, something that should have been so dangerous the staff feared the hospital she would sue the hospital over it. Betty should have had eyesight problems. She should have suffered from drug withdrawal and depression. She should never have been able to have more children. And in addition to physical miracles, she found herself instantly cured of racial prejudice.

Mrs. Malz’s after-death experience was first made widely known by Catherine Marshall in *Guideposts*, May 1976. Later, Betty wrote her own account. We will mention only the musical aspects of her twenty-eight minute ‘glimpse of eternity.’

She heard singing in eight-part harmony.[[87]](#endnote-21) Many different languages blended simultaneously in song, yet she understood them all. The words fitted together with awe-inspiring perfection. It seemed she would never forget it. Regrettably, she afterwards could recall neither melody nor lyrics, except for the words ‘Jesus’ and ‘redeemed’.[[88]](#endnote-22)

The singing induced many positive emotions within her, including a feeling of creativity.[[89]](#endnote-23) She even joined in. To her delight, instead of her earthly, deep voice, Betty sang high, clear notes like she had always wanted to.

## DR. EBY[[90]](#endnote-24)

In 1972, termite-infested railing gave way and sixty-year-old Richard E. Eby, D.O., D.Sc (Hon.), D.Ed (Hon.), F.A.C.O.O.G., plummeted to the ground. When paramedics arrived, they seemed to concur with his wife’s evaluation of the grey-white body, the large pool of blood, the horribly torn scalp, the ceased flow of blood, the unresponsive pupils: he was dead.[[91]](#endnote-25) Even prior to the paramedics’ arrival, however, his wife, and soon an entire prayer chain, had commenced fervent intercession.

Meanwhile, Dr. Eby found himself in Paradise. With the curiosity of a scientist he examined his new body and his surroundings. He noted the trees, flowers and hills. Heaven’s light and fragrance also fascinated him. Several times in his book he refers to the new ability he had there to think clearly and with lightning speed. There was also a sense of timelessness and an awareness of God’s unseen presence.

From the moment of his dangerously premature birth, dramatic answers to prayer were commonplace in his devout Baptist family.[[92]](#footnote-67)

As a schoolboy, he diligently studied and practiced music. He later entered Wheaton College at a time when not only he, but the entire institution, had to trust God for financial provision.

At the college, he was heavily involved in music as a singer, horn-player and manager. Only in obedience to God’s leading, did he join the gospel group, the Melodious Messengers. This, added to his band, orchestra and Glee Club commitments, meant that he had three hours of rehearsals every night.

With this in mind we return to the doctor’s heavenly encounter.

Throughout his stay in Paradise he heard ‘the most beautiful, melodious . . . background music’ he could possibly imagine. It seemed to emanate from everywhere and from everything. He described it as neither instrumental nor vocal, neither major nor minor. Linking it with the fact that he was in eternity, he said the music had no beat or tempo. Like Grace Murphy, he saw no musicians.

‘Where does the music come from?’ he asked Jesus.

‘My son,’ came the reply, ‘in heaven everything I created has never been cursed and therefore it all resonates with me. I am the Composer of the new song that you are hearing.’

Dr. Eby says the whole experience drew him closer to the Savior who suffered for our sins.

That’s not quite the end of the story. Almost five years later, the doctor was given a vision of hell which the Lord linked with his earlier experience. In this vision (not associated with unconsciousness or death) Jesus said that He had shown him heaven; now he must briefly visit hell in order to more effectively inform people that because of Jesus’ death they could choose heaven rather than hell.

For our study, the most notable thing about hell was the nightmarish silence.

## EXPERIENCES while conscious

When falling from a great height, disaster may be only seconds away, but for those brief moments, a person is quite healthy. He has not begun to die. In this sense, it differs from experiences so far described. In such circumstances, an enormous number of thoughts and experiences are often compressed into a few seconds. It is widely known that one’s life is likely to flash through the mind. What is less well known is that ethereal music is also likely to be heard. The net result is that the victim is often more at peace and more able to cope with the situation than on-lookers.[[93]](#endnote-26)

Dr. Maurice Rawlings treated a patient who had been severely electrocuted. The man remembered hearing beautiful music and a feeling of peace long before he regained consciousness. After waking, however, he could still hear the music. He even asked a bemused visitor where the music was coming from. ‘There were several other details that he could not recall,’ writes Rawlings, ‘but this experience profoundly affected his whole life. Why music should have such an impact, I do not understand . . .’[[94]](#endnote-27)

When Betty Malz was so ill that she was lapsing in and out of consciousness for days, she heard the singing of hymns. She thanked the nurse for the ‘wonderful background music,’ but there was none.[[95]](#endnote-28)

## SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCES

An entire army was sent to capture one man. ‘Those who are with us are more than those who are with them,’ Elisha told his trembling servant.[[96]](#footnote-68) Now that was hard to believe! So the servant was supernaturally allowed to see the invisible. The angelic host did not suddenly ‘materialize.’ Presumably, they would have still been invisible to anyone else. It was a miracle of ‘opened eyes’[[97]](#footnote-69) – a private, unverifiable revelation.

The Bible records many instances of the Lord giving people a glimpse of the heavenly realm. The usual means was either visions or dreams.[[98]](#footnote-70) Scripture mentions surprisingly few instances when the spirit world was simultaneously observable to several people. Consider Daniel’s experience:

‘I, Daniel, alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves’.[[99]](#footnote-71)

Saul’s Damascus-road experience is of particular relevance to our interest in the audio aspect of the supernatural:

‘Those who were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice that spoke to me’.[[100]](#footnote-72)

In fact, some visions were so private that the person involved was forbidden to divulge what transpired.[[101]](#footnote-73)

Obviously, we must totally reject any ‘revelation’ that is inconsistent with Scripture.[[102]](#footnote-74) However, Scripture clearly teaches that an experience is not automatically invalidated just because it is visionary in nature. An angelic visitation can be of God irrespective of whether it is recorded on audio tape with tens of thousands of living witnesses, as in Nagaland, or whether it occurs only in the privacy of one’s mind.

The obvious problem with visions is that we are at the mercy of the truthfulness, sanity and spirituality of the observer. For fear of offending cautious readers, I had originally planned to restrict reference to such subjective experiences outside of the Bible. Yet such selectivity is without biblical foundation.

The following instance, whilst lacking the exceptional objectivity of the Nagaland example was, nevertheless, considerably more observable and verifiable than most instances.

### CHINA

A Protestant, missionary-run children’s home in pre-Communist China was the scene of an amazing move of God. It was characterized by strong conviction of sin and repentance, followed by assurance of salvation. From the youngest (six years old) to the eldest (eighteen years), the result was transformed lives, fervent intercession, evangelistic zeal, powerful preaching and intense interest in Bible study.

An eyewitness account of these remarkable events forms the bulk of a delightful book by H. A. Baker.

A main feature and cause of the revival was a large number of visions, which took the Bakers by surprise. The missionary couple never had any of the visions themselves. They simply observed and cross-examined the forty ex-beggars involved. Occasionally, several children simultaneously had the same vision, even when they were in different rooms. After careful consideration, the missionaries concluded that the visions, spread over a period of several months, were beyond any psychological explanation and were completely consistent with the Word of God. The spiritual transformation in the children’s lives was so profoundly a work of God, and the visions were such an integral part of the revival, as to render it almost inconceivable that they could have been a delusion.

Although usually not the main theme of the visions, the children frequently saw angels in Paradise joining companies of the redeemed dancing, singing and playing harps and trumpets.[[103]](#endnote-29) Occasionally, a solitary angel would stroll by, singing to his own accompaniment.[[104]](#endnote-30)

The children learned through visions that after death they would each be given a room in the celestial city. In every room was a golden harp and a trumpet.[[105]](#endnote-31) (I gather from this that everyone in the city was endowed with the musical ability to play both string and wind instruments.) In other visions the children were taught to sing and play these instruments like the angels. Sometimes they would join in with the music of the angels and the redeemed.[[106]](#endnote-32)

While in trances the children often moved and spoke in a manner consistent with what they were experiencing. They were frequently seen by objective observers singing and going through the motions of playing instruments. At times, several were seen unitedly singing the same song. They even danced together with closed eyes, keeping time to music outsiders could not hear. Occasionally the children would decide to sing a hymn ‘they used to sing down on earth.’ Otherwise, both the language and the tunes coming from the entranced children were unknown by the missionaries.[[107]](#endnote-33)

### PAKISTAN

It was a revival in the fullest sense. A few weeks previous, the Spirit had begun to move in a very special way in a rural area in Pakistan. Now, in June, 1966, Rev. Geoffrey Bingham was conducting his last service before returning to Australia. Throughout that open-air meeting, the Lord was touching people in remarkable ways.

In a later chapter I will relate a musical miracle occurring this same evening that involved everyone present. This particular experience, however, is one that the missionary assumes no-one else shared. For several minutes, Rev. Bingham heard singing that was far superior to any human music. It was in harmony and pitched fairly high, though not extra-ordinarily so. The lyrics were apparently in an angelic language. They were certainly not English or Urdu. The song seemed to emanate from a specific location in the meeting and seemed to be directed to God in worship. He could sense an angelic presence but could see nothing.

Most witnesses indicate that celestial music is indescribably beautiful. I’m sure the actual experience would be beautiful, but I wondered whether ‘awe-inspiring’ might be a better description of the actual music. Theoretically, such music could be so alien and above our own that we fail to discern its beauty. Even with earthly music, many of us fail to appreciate the music of a different culture. Many of us even have difficulty having a musical appreciation that can span both the classical and popular music of our own society.

Rev. Bingham allowed me to question him closely on this point. He assured me that the western ear would find both the ethereal music and voices exquisitely beautiful, far surpassing any other music.

Nevertheless, appreciation and ability to describe are vastly different things. Anything from another realm would most likely be so foreign to all previous experience, that we would be at a loss to comprehend much of it. As would be expected from an authentic experience, especially one that had occurred very many years before, coupled with a desire to be totally accurate, Rev. Bingham was unable to confidently respond to many of my questions. A lack of musical expertise made it doubly difficult. So this man of God was unable to say with certainty whether instruments were accompanying the singing and whether, if human singers heard it often enough, they could master the music. Definitely, fallen humanity could not match the quality of the voices. The celestial strains were ‘powerful, beautiful, edifying . . . so glorious.’ The unforgettable experience left him with a feeling of peace and an assurance about God’s nature.

Geoffrey Bingham, highly regarded in evangelical circles, has an outstanding teaching ministry. The former Anglican missionary and Bible College Principle has published many books.

### FANNY AND FRANCES

Blind, childless and over forty, Fanny Crosby longed to find more fulfilment. In 1864 a pastor told her of Bradbury’s need for someone to write Gospel lyrics for his music. At home, as she pondered this possibility she had a vision in which, though blind almost from birth, she peered through a telescope at stars. An angel told her she must return to earth and work there but, he said, she would be allowed to hear ‘one burst of celestial music’ before she left. It was more beautiful than anything she had ever heard and with it came the conviction as to her calling. She wrote Gospel songs for the next fifty years.[[108]](#endnote-34)

On rare occasions, Fanny’s beloved pen pal across the Atlantic experienced what she called ‘curious musical visions’.

Anglican hymnist Frances Ridley Havergal (1838 – 1879) has enriched the hymn-books of numerous denominations with such songs as ‘Take my life and let it be.’ Not only have her words brought blessing to many, this godly lady was a composer and performer of no mean ability.

‘I hear strange and very beautiful chords, generally full, slow and grand, succeeding each other in most interesting sequences,’ she wrote in a letter to her mother. ‘I do not invent them, I could not; they pass before my mind, and I only listen.’

One instance occurred while she was travelling in a train. For about half an hour she seemed to have a transcended ability to hear music which in pitch extended far above and far below the normal hearing range. In volume, too, the range was immense, sometimes being of ‘infinite softness’.[[109]](#endnote-35)

### MARIETTA DAVIS

I hesitated for months. Finally, I weakened. I’d been searching high and low for material suitable for this chapter, but never had I stooped this low. The bookshop might be reputable, but to my way of thinking, a book purporting to be the ‘visions of Marietta Davis’ (whoever she is) had an eighty to ninety percent chance of being either the work of a crack-pot or a heretic. But I’m committed to thorough research. Someone has to brave shark-infested waters to bring home the pearl; to prospect trackless wastes for gems to brighten civilization. (It’s not that I’ve got a big head, it’s just that my halo keeps getting caught in my pith helmet and snorkel.)

I read the book, and to my surprise, I lost my claim to being the world’s greatest martyr. I actually enjoyed it. Certainly, if you want a book stressing the centrality of the cross, this is it. And it must be the book par excellence for parents grieving the loss of young children. It quotes Scripture liberally. It affirms the divinity of Jesus, the goodness of God, the reality of heaven and hell, and the necessity of faith and repentance.

I’m not putting my imprimatur on it. All I can say is that were it marketed as an inspirational Christian book like Pilgrim’s Progress, I expect it would be almost universally appreciated. The mere mention of ‘vision,’ however, sends chills down many a Christian spine. We want to shrink from it simply because heretical groups have peddled their poison under such a label. Yet well over a century has passed and to my knowledge this book has spawned not even a Christian denomination, let alone a sect.

In 1848, Marietta Davis went into a coma from which doctors were unable to arouse her. Nine days later, the twenty-five year-old Baptist lady awoke with a remarkable story. She believed her spirit had ascended to Paradise and there she had experienced many wonderful things. Like both Dr. Eby and the Chinese orphans referred to earlier,[[110]](#endnote-36) she was convinced she had also seen hell.

Respected theologians examined her account of what transpired and pronounced it doctrinally sound. They were at pains to differentiate it from such heresies as Spiritism.

Marietta saw both angels[[111]](#endnote-37) and redeemed humans[[112]](#endnote-38) singing and playing various stringed instruments.[[113]](#endnote-39) She even heard her Savior sing.[[114]](#endnote-40)

She spent most of her heavenly visit in the ‘Infant Paradise.’ There she saw a children’s choir, enveloped in love, harmoniously singing praises in ‘manifold’ parts and accompanying themselves on harps.[[115]](#endnote-41)

A number of the songs, whether sung by the Son of God, angels or redeemed humanity, contained direct quotes from Scripture.[[116]](#endnote-42) Lyrically, we would today call them Scripture choruses, though Marietta gives us no idea of the melody.

She was invited to join the redeemed in song, but was too overwhelmed to do so.[[117]](#endnote-43)

An angel showed her the place where the redeemed ‘first attempt’ to sing heavenly songs – perhaps hinting at a learning process.[[118]](#endnote-44)

Though she mentions loud music[[119]](#endnote-45) and speaks of the sound echoing,[[120]](#endnote-46) it was usually the softness of the music that fascinated her.[[121]](#endnote-47) Her book implies she was granted an enhanced ability to perceive and appreciate heavenly music.[[122]](#endnote-48)

At one point, heavenly music exposed to Marietta her discordant, unsanctified nature; her unfitness for Paradise.[[123]](#endnote-49) Apparently, the music was so holy and harmoniously perfect that, though she longed to unite with it, she was totally incapable of doing so. The result was excruciating, making heaven seem like hell to her. She needed a transformation of her very nature, made possible by the atoning work of her blessed Savior.[[124]](#endnote-50)

In times of great sorrow in heaven, associated with Christ suffering on earth for humanity’s sins, music ceased.[[125]](#endnote-51)

She described chanting demonic voices as ‘hoarse.’

### REBECCA SPRINGER

Pain-racked day followed pain-racked night. Days crawled into weeks of loneliness and serious illness. Rebecca Springer cried out to the Lord.

Heaven’s response was remarkable. She was granted a lengthy vision, experiencing comfort and refreshing beyond this world’s power to impart. It seemed she had been transported to heaven. Though Rebecca found no way to measure time in her celestial surrounds, what transpired there would have filled very many earth days.

Afterwards, the memory remained indelibly etched upon her mind enabling her to convey to us a very detailed description. Assuming Mrs. Springer did not set out to deliberately deceive her readers, I know of no explanation for such a lengthy, consistent vision, other than a supernatural one.

The modesty of her claims regarding her experience points to the genuineness of her account. She even indicates an uncertainty as to how much what she saw corresponds to heavenly reality.[[126]](#endnote-52)

In her vision, Rebecca discovered a lake that enabled one to hear music produced a great distance away. Non-musical sounds were filtered out.[[127]](#endnote-53) On one occasion, these waters responded antiphonally to the chiming of a distant bell. ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,’ they seemed to chant. The result was a thrilling experience, beyond the powers of earthly language to describe. She seemed a part of it, even before adding her voice to that magnificent music.[[128]](#endnote-54)

Rebecca mentions other music-producing instruments. There were long, slender trumpets of gold,[[129]](#endnote-55) radiant harps and viols,[[130]](#endnote-56) and types of musical instruments she had never seen on earth.[[131]](#endnote-57)

She considered the Savior’s voice as He spoke far surpassed the melodic beauty of the angelic choir.[[132]](#endnote-58)

Reference is made to musical training. A full reading of Rebecca’s account vaguely hints that whilst all of the redeemed enjoy heavenly music, only some specialize in it.[[133]](#endnote-59)

There was background music sometimes[[134]](#endnote-60) and also musical concerts.[[135]](#endnote-61)

Singing took many forms. Some was antiphonal, with the redeemed responding to the child-like voices of a cherub choir.[[136]](#endnote-62) There was singing interspersed with chattering and laughter while engaged in a heavenly craft.[[137]](#endnote-63) Another type commenced in response to her query as to the appropriate way to pray in heaven. A man led her in song. They had been alone in a celestial mansion, yet immediately the whole place seemed filled with invisible singers. In the unseen choir she recognized the voices of people she had known on earth who had entered glory. Cherubs also joined in. Never has earth heard ‘such a grand hymn of praise,’ she remarked.[[138]](#endnote-64) Another time, she speaks of joining ‘the solemnly joyous notes of the angel’s choral song’.[[139]](#endnote-65) She heard both soft and loud singing.[[140]](#endnote-66)

Like the Chinese orphans, Rebecca discovered that, whilst heaven was rich in new music, sacred music learnt on earth was not discarded.[[141]](#endnote-67) For instance, Edward Perronet’s, ‘All hail the power of Jesus’ name’ was sung with unearthly unity, harmony and volume.[[142]](#endnote-68) Perhaps because it was one of her favorites, angelic harpists elected to praise their God in Rebecca’s presence with Heber’s, ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.’[[143]](#endnote-69) (Imagine composing in your present life, music that is sung in eternity!)

This use of songs composed on earth had the stated purpose of forging links between the glorified existence of the redeemed and their former, earthly lives. Nevertheless, few things that on earth delighted God and His people, are likely to be slighted in heaven. Rebecca learnt that we bring to heaven the same tastes, desires and skills that we had on earth.[[144]](#endnote-70)

I burst out laughing at some of the things she saw in her vision. They seemed too much like this life – too human – to have a place in heaven. Upon reflection, I realized that when picturing the next life, we sometimes err in the direction of imagining almost no similarity to our present existence. Some of us were even shocked when we first heard of the resurrection of the body, and of angels and the risen Christ consuming food.[[145]](#footnote-75) Even such Scripturally-based phenomena initially seem too earth-like to be true.

Obviously, upon entering heaven, we leave behind everything defiled, but we each take our humanness and distinctive personality with us. If some committed Christians like playing a certain type of music now, they will probably enjoy the same in heaven, though they may well discover music there that they like even more.

### A CHILD’S RESPONSE

In 1973 eight-year-old Roberts Liardon was about to commence his daily Bible reading when his spirit left his body and visited heaven. He believes he was granted the experience because of the fervent prayers of his devout grandmother. It was another eight years before he told anyone of his experience, though he sees nothing unique in it and he thinks other people will have similar heavenly visits. He ends his short account with an invitation for readers to pray a standard prayer for salvation. That eases my skepticism a little.

He claims to have seen in heaven a choir of 500 to 600 of the redeemed. He does not mention their singing. What struck the little boy was that they lifted their hands as well as their voices and they danced. ‘It was a hundred times better than our praises on earth! They went *wild* praising the Lord. Then the audience joined in. . . . Everything within them was praising the Lord. . . . And there was never a dead crescendo. . . . it always *grew* in power and momentum.’[[146]](#endnote-71)

### REV. VALDEZ

God spoke to the apostle Paul through a vision in which a Macedonian called him.[[147]](#footnote-76) A. C. Valdez, Jr. experienced something similar, only he was awakened from sleep by the sound of suffering humanity singing a plea for help in a minor key. After being healed, they sang a new, triumphant song of joy.[[148]](#endnote-72) Rev. Valdez went on to have a healing ministry.

This demonstrates a quite different aspect of heaven’s use of music.

## CONCLUSION

Some things we are not yet permitted to know.[[149]](#footnote-77) Some aspects of angelic music might fall into this category. Moreover, angels probably modify their song for the benefit of their audience. For example, the angelic song in Nagaland, India was directed specifically at the people. The impact was further magnified by the song being sufficiently simple for congregational singing. Perhaps accommodation was even made for Indian musical tastes, to ensure the popularity of the song.

Though I have no reason to suspect any of the instances cited in this chapter, I concede the possibility that some might not be authentic. It is beyond my powers of skepticism, however, to imagine that all reports of celestial music – only a fraction of which are mentioned here[[150]](#footnote-78) – are spurious. We have gathered ample evidence to confidently declare that heaven is a place of music.

Especially when heaven seems particularly ‘close’ – whether it be in times of revival, when engaged in genuine worship, when receiving a heavenly revelation, or when near the gates of death – we may be permitted to hear heaven’s music. Perhaps the Lord has allowed you to be a heavenly eavesdropper or you may know of reports I’ve missed. If so, I would dearly love to hear from you, with a view to adding to this book.

I trust you have allowed the accounts in this chapter to deepen your conviction that music is important to heaven. Let this belief reach its logical conclusion: if music is important to heaven, then heaven probably longs to influence not just in the spiritual results, but in the actual production of your music.

Scripture promises great things, however, not to those who are intellectually aroused, but to those who passionately ask, seek and knock. Let’s not let spiritual lethargy stop us from presenting to this needy world music that has more of heaven in it than we previously dreamed possible.

# CHAPTER 3: THE CULMINATION OF MUSIC

The aim of this chapter is to reaffirm our view of music in the hereafter, this time by using logic and Scripture.

## INTRODUCTION

More than perhaps anywhere else in Israel, the temple pulsated with music. It was here that professional singers and instrumentalists, financially supported by tithes from the entire community, lived and gave their greatest performances, day and night.[[151]](#footnote-79)

Now the temple was more than the holiest building on earth. It is a clearly stated Biblical fact that the temple symbolized heaven itself.[[152]](#footnote-80)

Even the temple rituals had heavenly counter-parts. The sacrificial victims portray the once-slain Lamb now seated upon heaven’s throne.[[153]](#footnote-81) The temple incense is like prayers that soar beyond our world and permeate heaven’s atmosphere.[[154]](#footnote-82) Moreover, John saw actual incense and a censer in heaven itself, along with a golden altar complete with horns and fire.[[155]](#footnote-83) The ‘temple of God . . . in heaven’ is so like the earthly one that it even houses ‘the ark of His testament’.[[156]](#footnote-84)

It must surely be significant that the place, which above all others, represented heaven, was a place filled with music. If the perfect High Priest ministers in heaven’s temple,[[157]](#footnote-85) perhaps the perfect choir also resides there. If dead sacrificial animals are not worthy to be compared with the risen Lamb of God; if real cherubim are vastly superior to lifeless representations in wood and fabric,[[158]](#footnote-86) and the size of the temple where ‘ten thousand times ten thousand’ minister[[159]](#footnote-87) make the earthly one seem microscopic, it would be astounding if the music in Jerusalem’s temple outclassed heaven’s sounds.

(See Note 3.1 for a discussion of Ezekiel’s temple.)

One of the most thrilling scenes from the Bible’s most spectacular books is where ‘a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes and tongues,’ clothed in blood-washed robes, stand ‘before the Lamb.’ Joined by angels, beasts and elders they praise God and ‘serve Him day and night in His temple’.[[160]](#footnote-88)

The exact nature of our future ministry is not detailed. A vital clue, however, could be locked within the expression ‘serve Him day and night.’

For anyone steeped in Biblical thought, these words have musical overtones. The book of Revelation almost constantly alludes to the Old Testament. So we are justified in looking for a possible Old Testament allusion in this expression. The closest biblical parallel is a reference to Levitical singers who served in the temple ‘day and night’.[[161]](#footnote-89)

Certainly, Revelation 7:9-15 strongly suggests that praise will feature in our eternal ministry and it is not unlikely that this praise will be musical.

## THE ULTIMATE

There is a rabbinical tradition that the wind used to play tunes on David’s lyre when he hung it by his bed at night. As the wind continued, David would be inspired to write psalms to the music.[[162]](#endnote-73) This Jewish thought, though almost certainly fictitious, is significant in that it apparently reflects a desire for God, nature and man to make music together. It is understandable that such a desire developed in the minds of people immersed in the thought-patterns of Scripture.

Psalm 148 expresses a God-inspired yearning for the whole of creation – sub-human, human and celestial – to unite in a gigantic symphony of glorious praise to the Creator. In this oft-repeated Biblical theme, no part of creation seems excluded: whether in sea, land or air; on earth, in space or in heaven; animate or inanimate.[[163]](#footnote-90) God’s revelation to John even includes a description of this ultimate combined choir actually functioning.[[164]](#footnote-91)

Since mankind’s first sin, everything on our perishing planet has been in shameful disharmony and chronically marred.[[165]](#footnote-92) From birth, our degenerating, sin-scarred bodies have been part of this. At the resurrection, when perfect bodies supersede our worn-out ones, the whole of creation will also be renewed.[[166]](#footnote-93) Creation’s resultant torrent of exquisitely inspired praise will surely be beyond anything we could now imagine. And we will be part of that grand finale, praising God forever, with vibrant new bodies glowing with celestial splendor, radiant with God’s glory; in harmony, at last, with the whole of creation.

## MUSICAL IMPLICATIONS OF TRANSFORMED BODIES

Perfect bodies pulsating with the power of God would have amazing abilities. Even mortal bodies have sometimes been divinely endowed with supernatural strength,[[167]](#footnote-94) sight,[[168]](#footnote-95) endurance and speed;[[169]](#footnote-96) they have defied physical laws by being instantaneously transported[[170]](#footnote-97) or walking on water[[171]](#footnote-98) or through fire.[[172]](#footnote-99)

Our resurrection bodies will be as superior to our present ones as a building is superior to a tent.[[173]](#footnote-100) In the twinkling of an eye, mediocrity will be replaced by excellence. Every physical part of us that determines the quality of our music will be new.

### 1. VOICE

The intimate connection between one’s voice and the body that produces it, suggests we could think of our future voices in the same terms Scripture uses to describe our new bodies, namely: like Christ’s,[[174]](#footnote-101) changed,[[175]](#footnote-102) redeemed,[[176]](#footnote-103) incorruptible,[[177]](#footnote-104) immortal,[[178]](#footnote-105) spiritual,[[179]](#footnote-106) heavenly,[[180]](#footnote-107) powerful,[[181]](#footnote-108) glorious.[[182]](#footnote-109)

### 2. HEARING

Can you imagine anyone still being deaf in Paradise?[[183]](#footnote-110) Well, neither can I imagine anyone being tone-deaf.

When world-renowned English pastor, David Pawson married, his wife was tone-deaf. She later had a beautiful spiritual experience that had an unusual side-effect – she is no longer tone-deaf. ‘She’s got a lovely singing voice now,’ says her husband. Surely this is but a distant echo of the wonders God is preparing for His people.

Note the musical implications of Isaiah 35:5f:

‘The ears of the deaf shall be unstopped . . . and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.’[[184]](#footnote-111)

But will only those presently handicapped have improved hearing in the new age? We could possibly all have superior hearing ranges, both in pitch and volume. Perhaps our new hearing would even allow us to divide the octave into a larger number of meaningful intervals.

Glorified ears will be caressed by an endless array of aural delights; each strain a symphonic masterpiece of incomparable beauty, supercharged with heavenly perfection. Constantly exposed to heaven’s best, we will surely be endowed with a heightened musical appreciation.

### 3. HAND AND MOUTH

A transformed body also implies new fingers and a new mouth with which to play musical instruments.

A greater manual dexterity, quicker reactions, improved co-ordination, and superior breath-control, seem thrilling possibilities.

### 4. INTELLECT

A vastly superior knowledge and insight await us.[[185]](#footnote-112) Yet we cannot even handle the store of knowledge presently available to us! So it seems likely that God will give us a greater intellectual capacity in the new age. Many people near death have reported experiencing enormously speeded thought processes. Associated with this could easily be an unprecedented capacity for creativity. Perhaps we will reach hitherto inconceivable heights of inspired musical creativity. The supernatural praise on the day of Pentecost[[186]](#footnote-113) gives us an inkling of just some of the astounding abilities God can impart to us.

The details may be hazy, but all the evidence suggests we will be well equipped to express our delight at the awe-inspiring beauty of the Sovereign Lord of glory, who sacrificed His life so that we might share His incomparable joy forever.

## HEAVENLY INSTRUMENTS

Most musical instruments in Bible times were appallingly primitive. The music they produced would probably horrify modern musicians. (We should note, however, that God was pleased with what we might smugly consider a raucous din.) Over the centuries, earthly instruments have undergone remarkable development in quality and sophistication. Yet our most highly developed instruments must still be pathetic by God’s standards of perfection. So it is fascinating to speculate about the musical instruments of the age to come. If we have made great advances in a few centuries, imagine what we could achieve throughout eternity, even if we had no more abilities, resources and divine assistance than we have had on earth.

When I first read about *harps of God*,[[187]](#footnote-114) I was sure I’d found a misprint. I had always thought we would have harps of gold, but there is no *l* in my Bible. You would not believe the number of times I have checked this reference, fearing I might be the victim of a typesetter’s negligence! But it’s no misprint. No wonder the heavenly angels sang ‘no “l”‘ on that first Christmas!

People victorious over the beast have, not harps of gold, but ‘harps of God’.[[188]](#footnote-115) Does this suggest, not the finest instruments earthly riches can acquire, but instruments of infinitely greater purity and quality?

See these conquerors triumphantly standing on the fiery sea of glass, overwhelmed with gratitude to the One who made them victors. We can expect God to have perfected them in every way. Surely, they will also be given perfect instruments with which to praise their perfect Creator and Redeemer. No more ‘horse-hair scraping cat-gut!’

As to what ethereal instruments would sound like, we can only wildly speculate. Unfortunately, I haven’t heard of a careless angel leaving his harp behind after visiting this planet.

Nevertheless, a divinely made musical instrument has been subjected to scientific analysis. It was found to be capable of an estimated 173 million different sounds.[[189]](#endnote-74) I’m not qualified to comment on the latest advances, but at least until recently, the versatility of this instrument was unrivalled by any human invention.[[190]](#endnote-75) I refer, of course, to the human voice; a divinely crafted instrument that we perhaps take too much for granted. Though it may have cracked when humanity fell, human vocal capacity gives us an inkling of the Creator’s ability to produce sophisticated instruments.

## NEW SONG

Basking in eternal glory, united in infinite love, the 144,000 redeemed from the earth form a mass choir unlike any we have ever heard.[[191]](#footnote-116) There is a supernatural element in their ‘new song’ – no outsider could learn it.

Is this ethereal song unlearnable because it contains no repetition? This would make it a continually new song, with possibly the words and music constantly changing under the inspiration of the Spirit.

Perhaps this is the ultimate fulfilment of humanity’s longing to praise the Lord with a new song.[[192]](#footnote-117) The obvious problem with previous attempts is that once a song is sung, it is no longer new.

The sound of music came from heaven, while the redeemed stood on ‘Mount Zion’.[[193]](#footnote-118) Some commentators locate ‘Mount Zion’ on earth.[[194]](#footnote-119) This interpretation would imply their song was linked either with God Himself, or with celestial musicians.

Of particular significance is the singers’ moral purity and devotion to the One who redeemed them.[[195]](#footnote-120) The Lamb is the Source of their sinless perfection.

We can expect every aspect of heavenly music to be Spirit-inspired and Spirit-controlled, both originating from, and proceeding to, the Creator of all beauty, the Source of all perfection.[[196]](#footnote-121) Our future music will be freed from time’s limitations, untainted by deceit, rivalry and pride; undistracted by worldly pressures, unhindered by fallen man’s inability to attain musical perfection. In the splendor of His holiness, with divinely exquisite music cascading through glorified lips, we will worship the majestic Lord of creation with never-ending inspiration and fulfilment, in a world of indescribable beauty.

## CONCLUSION

‘Music is another planet’, declared Alphonse Daudet.[[197]](#endnote-76) We have to agree that there is much that is other-worldly about it.

It exists because the eternal King is musical. He originated it and endowed His creation with musical ability. Music’s ultimate function, like that of the whole of creation[[198]](#footnote-122) is to glorify its omnipotent Creator.

Perhaps it will be as a grub becoming a butterfly, but human music will survive the passing of this planet. Music bears the divine seal of approval; now and forever.

Viewed from eternity, many fundamental human institutions seem like passing fads. Births, deaths and marriages will all cease.[[199]](#footnote-123) Evangelism, prophecy and spiritual warfare will come to an end.[[200]](#footnote-124) So will baptism, visiting the sick, and denominationalism. But music will endure.

Mark Twain claimed to have enjoyed an opera ‘in spite of the singing’. Aural delights beyond the grave, however, are unlikely to be so easily dismissed!

To heaven’s ears, the latest sound synthesizer might seem as sophisticated as a child’s broken whistle; a Steinway piano little better than a stone-age product. No wonder our Father is more impressed by heart attitudes than our musical finesse!

Human music is far from being the lone instance of cultivated sound in a universe of wild noise or bleak silence. Nor has it yet reached its highest pinnacle. It will ultimately become a divinely perfected medium with which to extol the glorious majesty and endless virtues of its Creator. We will then, with sweeter voice, unite with the transformed musical powers of the entire creation, in worshipping the King of kings in purity, forever.

Imagine, if you can, music worthy of our matchless King!

# SECTION 2: TERRESTRIAL TUNES

# CHAPTER 4: MUSIC’S FACETS IN SCRIPTURE’S LIGHT

It’s now time to re-enter planet earth’s polluted atmosphere. But lest we crash upon the harsh realities of modern life, let’s slow our descent by gliding through the Biblical era.

Our projected destination is clearly defined: achieving through music the highest possible for God in our generation. But, as illustrated by the following, our challenging objective can only be reached via the Bible.

We Christians tend to use music as bait, to allure; a novelty, to entertain; a sedative to soothe, a stimulant to whip-up emotions: or a glimmering orb to mesmerize the wavering wayward into a decision.

Is this all our Lord intends for earthly music? Or is it like thinking God gave us Bibles to use as church door-stops, kneeling pads and hand-held fans? Is our use of music pleasing to the Lord? Or is it a virtual prostitution of His precious gift ?

We must determine how God expects us to use music. The most crucial thing in the entire universe is involved – God’s will. So we need something much more concrete than an educated guess. Emotions, traditions, worldly trends, love of music and commendable intentions must all bow to God’s will.

The will of God, however, always agrees with the Word of God. An exploratory Bible probe is therefore imperative; Scripture’s evaluation of music must be determined with precision.

Time-wise, we may be closer to the sparkling new heaven and earth, than to the era when the Bible was penned. In character, however, our shabby world is far closer to that of the Bible than to the new age. So we can take our Biblical findings and apply them to our era with little or no modification.

Ancient musical instruments may have been rudimentary, but the Bible’s approach to music is so sophisticated that it makes some of our modern attempts seem simplistic. This is to be expected from a book that claims to be not just God’s history book, but His guide book for all generations.[[201]](#footnote-125)

Facts gleaned from our Bible discovery tour will provide us with significant guidance and confirmation in our effort to set precise, divinely directed goals for our music.

## THE OLD AND THE NEW

When seeking Biblical guidelines for our music, Old Testament references tend to predominate. But should Christians be led by pre-Christian Scriptures?

Music receives significantly less emphasis in the New Testament. Does this indicate that the Lord meant music to play a lesser role in the Christian era?

We need to resolve these issues before proceeding with our Biblical exploration.

The amount of space Scripture allocates to a subject does not necessarily reflect God’s view of its importance. The New Testament’s attitude to musical instruments is typical: little mention is made of them, and yet it gives them the highest possible status, speaking of ‘harps of God’ and revealing that musical instruments are played in heaven itself.

The casual way the New Testament mentions the singing of hymns shows that it regards music as a normal part of a Christian’s life.

‘And, having sung a hymn, they went out . . .’[[202]](#footnote-126)

‘And at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God . . . And suddenly . . .’[[203]](#footnote-127)

‘When you come together, every one of you has a hymn . . .’[[204]](#footnote-128)

‘. . . speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs’[[205]](#footnote-129)

‘Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing hymns.’[[206]](#footnote-130)

These New Testament Scriptures give the impression that for the Christian, hymn singing is as natural as breathing. The centrality of such music to Christian living is taken for granted.

Little wonder that when reporting to the Roman emperor the activities of Christians in about AD 110, Pliny the Younger zeroed in on hymn singing.

‘They are accustomed to meet on a fixed day before daylight to sing a hymn of praise to Christ as God. They read from their own sacred writings and partake of a very simple meal consisting of bread and wine . . .’

In about 125 AD a Greek described to his fellow pagans a typical Christian funeral. The Christians would escort the ‘body with songs and thanksgiving as if he were setting out from one place to another nearby’.[[207]](#endnote-77)

The New Testament speaks of singing under the Spirit’s influence[[208]](#footnote-131) and implies that singing is a natural consequence of being filled with the Spirit.[[209]](#footnote-132) Twice in the chapter on spiritual gifts, singing is mentioned.[[210]](#footnote-133) Clearly, music is linked with one of the most fundamental aspects of the New Testament era – the outpouring of God’s Spirit.

Jesus sang. Indeed, He still sings.[[211]](#footnote-134) And it is the New Testament, rather than the Old, that gives the greater insight into music beyond this world.[[212]](#footnote-135) Furthermore, there are possibly more hymns and remnants of early Christian hymns locked in the New Testament text than most of us realize.[[213]](#footnote-136)

It is hardly surprising that something that will out-last our planet, had no difficulty surviving the passing of the old covenant!

If the entire Old Testament had been made obsolete by the New, we would have to gloss over the Bible’s earlier musical insights. But the earlier Scriptures were not a crumbling ruin that had to be demolished to make way for the new. On the contrary, they are the very foundation upon which the New Testament stands.

When Jesus confidently declared, ‘It is written’, He quoted from the pre-Christian Scriptures that, He said, ‘cannot be broken’.[[214]](#footnote-137) And it was these that Paul was referring to when he wrote:

‘ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly equipped for every good work’.[[215]](#footnote-138)

The Old Testament was written for people belonging to the New Testament era.

‘Whatever things were written previously, were written for OUR instruction . . .’[[216]](#footnote-139)

The Lord didn’t go to the lengths He did in giving musical instructions in the Old Testament, only to ignore it and laboriously repeat it all in the New. The Old Testament’s hymn book[[217]](#footnote-140) is the most frequently quoted book in the New Testament. According to one calculation,[[218]](#endnote-78) of the approximately 287 Old Testament quotes in the New Testament, more than forty-four percent are from the Psalms. The God who inspired the Old Testament is the same God we serve today.

Since singing in tongues occurred in the New Testament period, it is likely the other verbal gifts of the Spirit were also commonly set to music. Singing in tongues is mentioned unambiguously in only part of one New Testament verse – just three Greek words.[[219]](#footnote-141) Had the Corinthian church been a little more orderly, we would lack even this insight into early church worship. But we don’t need more. The use of music in delivering utterances of the Spirit is already established in the Old Testament. Further confirmation in the latter part of Scripture is not necessary.

Some pre-Christian practices have been superseded, but music is obviously not one of them. Christian musicians can learn from the Old Testament as readily as from the New.

## INSTRUMENTAL INTERLUDE

One final thing before commencing: when reading Bible references to singing, there is no reason for instrumentalists to feel left out.

Paul and Silas were probably not permitted to bring their grand piano and drum set into the cramped Philippian jail to accompany their singing.[[220]](#footnote-142) Nevertheless, singing to the accompaniment of instruments is the norm in Scripture.[[221]](#footnote-143) Harps, alone, are mentioned some fifty times. References to trumpets are twice as frequent. David appointed 4,000 instrumentalists for sacred music.[[222]](#footnote-144) David himself was renowned not only as a song writer, but as a highly skilled harpist[[223]](#footnote-145) and a maker of fine musical instruments.[[224]](#footnote-146)

## SCRIPTURAL WAYS OF USING MUSIC

### 1. WORSHIP DIRECTED SOLELY TO GOD

If music began in the heart of God, it is only fitting that it be offered back to Him. And so we find such Scriptures as:

‘I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live:  
I will sing praise to my God while I have any being.’[[225]](#footnote-147)

Scripture abounds with such exhortations to sing God’s praises. They occur up to four times in one verse[[226]](#footnote-148) as the Bible seeks to drive home the importance of musically worshipping our Creator.

However, there are two ways of singing God’s praises: we can direct our song solely to God, or we can use music to tell others how praiseworthy God is.

Expressions like ‘sing unto the Lord’ clearly indicate when the former type of praise is in focus.

Flick through the Bible. After finding about *sixty* such references to singing to God, you might get the impression God is trying to tell you something!

We shall see later that it is quite Scriptural to sing *about* God, but the emphasis is upon singing *to* Him.

Worshipping the majestic Lord of heaven and earth is the highest use anything can ever be put to. The fact that the Almighty has ordained that music be used for this exalted purpose indicates how highly esteemed earthly music is.

It is customary to place musical worship at the beginning of church services. This is consistent with Psalm 100:

‘Come before His presence with singing.’[[227]](#footnote-149)

‘Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,  
and into His courts with praise.’[[228]](#footnote-150)

It would be wrong, however, to conclude from this practice that musical worship is a mere preliminary. On the contrary, it is first priority.

Until we have adequately used music to bless, honor and express our love to the One who gave us the gift, we have no right to use our God-given gift for any lesser purpose. Do we give worship the primacy that our Lord deserves? We can put music to trivial uses that carry no eternal reward. But we will be thankful forever for the earthly time we spend worshipping our Creator and Redeemer. Communing with the sovereign Lord of glory is our highest calling. May we never lose sight of this.

Making melody to the Lord is a good and delightful thing.[[229]](#footnote-151)

The Levitical musicians lived in the temple chambers ‘free from other duties’ because they were in service ‘day and night’.[[230]](#footnote-152) However, the temple was – at least usually – closed at night.[[231]](#footnote-153) Our information is scanty, but perhaps these musicians worshipped the Lord not just when other worshippers were present, but at times when only the Lord was listening.

That the Lord appointed these Levites, confirms what by now must be obvious: music is no gimmick. It is a holy ministry of the highest order. In fact, as we have seen, it is about the only temple ministry to survive the revolutionary consequences of Christ offering the ultimate sacrifice. So much has been superseded; Levites, priests, ceremonial cleansing, unclean food, burnt offerings, sacrifices and the veil to the holy of holies have all gone. But music remains.

‘Open my lips,’ prayed David, ‘and my mouth will show forth your praises.’[[232]](#footnote-154) David recognized that only with God’s enabling can we effectively praise God. This prayer, however, follows an even more critical one for those desiring to minister to the Lord:

‘Create in me a clean heart, O God . . .’[[233]](#footnote-155)

A God whose mercies are ‘new every morning’[[234]](#footnote-156) is continually worthy of new songs.[[235]](#footnote-157)

He whose works are innumerable[[236]](#footnote-158) should be praised in innumerable ways, including the use of a great variety of musical instruments.[[237]](#footnote-159) Worship Him whose greatness is indescribable in ways that go beyond words.[[238]](#footnote-160)

A God of infinite abilities is worthy to be praised skillfully by accomplished musicians.[[239]](#footnote-161)

A God who has given us His very best[[240]](#footnote-162) deserves our best.[[241]](#footnote-163)

Worship the Creator creatively  
Skillfully praise His Excellency  
Fanfare the conquering King  
Serenade your Lover  
Make melody to your Maker  
Mightily praise His majesty   
Glory in His splendor   
Joyfully greet your Source of joy   
Shout to the One who makes the sea roar  
Whisper to Him who calms the storm  
Sing endlessly to the endless Lord   
Sacrificially praise the crucified Christ   
Triumphantly exalt the risen Lord   
Sing an old song to the Ancient of days   
And a new hymn to Him who made today   
Love the One who loves us all  
Give to Him who gave His all.   
Bless Him in harmony  
Delight Him with symphony  
Amplify His praise  
Trumpet His fame  
Applaud His perfection  
Hail His holiness  
Harmonize with His children  
Synchronize His praises  
Reflect His beauty  
Joy in His power

The scope of praise is as vast as God Himself.

### 2. TO EXPRESS A PRAYER

‘. . . In the night His song shall be with me,  
My prayer unto the God of my life.’[[242]](#footnote-164)

I’m led to believe that down through the centuries, music has inspired many prayers. During King David’s reign, I can imagine Mrs. Asaph praying, ‘Lord, please stop my husband from practicing his cymbals so late at night.’

Perhaps hour after tortuous hour of his neighbor’s singing lessons inspired someone like Hudson Taylor to pray, ‘O Lord, send me to China!’

Then there’s little Tommy’s prayer, ‘Lord, please may my violin break today.’

And let’s not forget Mary, nervously awaiting her exam results: ‘Dear God, please may Beethoven have composed the *Messiah*.’

Yes, music has done much to encourage prayer.

The book of Psalms is not only Scripture’s hymn book; it is its prayer book. Of all the prayers recorded in God’s Word, a large proportion, perhaps nearly half, were originally set to music. Many of these prayers were associated with worship. In this section, however, we will widen our horizon to include other types of prayer.

According to my fairly careful calculations, two-thirds of the Bible’s songs are either entirely prayers or contain prayers. Each of these songs has such expressions as ‘unto THEE, O Lord,’ clearly indicating that God is being personally addressed.

Irrespective of how many categories we divide prayer into, we can usually find Biblical examples of each type being sung to the Lord. References cited below are merely representative of the Bible’s vast collection of melodic prayers. Were I to attempt a full list of Scriptures for each type of prayer, I’d probably still be writing!

Examples of worship, adoration, praise and thanksgiving are too numerous to miss. In addition, we find prayers of supplication,[[243]](#footnote-165) confession,[[244]](#footnote-166) lament,[[245]](#footnote-167) intercession,[[246]](#footnote-168) communion,[[247]](#footnote-169) faith[[248]](#footnote-170) and recounting to God His past acts.[[249]](#footnote-171) The numerous petitions offered in song include requests for healing,[[250]](#footnote-172) forgiveness,[[251]](#footnote-173) holiness,[[252]](#footnote-174) enlightenment,[[253]](#footnote-175) guidance,[[254]](#footnote-176) God’s blessing,[[255]](#footnote-177) prosperity,[[256]](#footnote-178) joy,[[257]](#footnote-179) vindication,[[258]](#footnote-180) deliverance,[[259]](#footnote-181) protection[[260]](#footnote-182) and imprecation.[[261]](#footnote-183)

And the above is not even a full list! Obviously, there need be nothing shallow or limiting about melodic prayers. How do your prayers compare?

Frequently the Psalms’ prayers contain a commendable declaration of faith and praise in the midst of adversity. Psalm 13, for instance, commences:

‘How long, O Lord?  
Will you forget me forever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?  
How long shall I take counsel in my soul,   
Having sorrow in my heart daily?  
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?’

A few lines later, however, this once-dreary psalm triumphantly concludes,

‘I will sing unto the Lord, because He has dealt bountifully with me.’[[262]](#footnote-184)

Biblical prayers set to music are not restricted to the Psalms. Consider Habakkuk chapter 3. The first verse clearly states that it is a prayer and the last line of the chapter proves that it was intended to be set to music.[[263]](#footnote-185)

In Nehemiah’s time it was a musician[[264]](#footnote-186) who was chosen to have a special ministry in prayer.[[265]](#footnote-187)

In a surprisingly high proportion of New Testament references to music, prayer and singing appear side by side.[[266]](#footnote-188)

I have brought to you but a few strains from the Bible’s glorious symphony of prayer. We could linger here for hours. But we must move on. As we do, however, may we be encouraged to broaden the number and type of prayers we commit to music.

### 3. TO DECLARE GOD’S GREATNESS TO FELLOW HUMANS

I almost dug a hole in my Bible trying to find them. Earlier, I had effortlessly located nearly a score of Biblical exhortations to sing praises *to* God. Had I the motivation, I would surely have caught still others that were playfully eluding me. Yet where are the corresponding exhortations to sing praises *about* God to a congregation? They are as rare as bearded sopranos!

In a moment of desperation I almost wrenched part of 1 Samuel 21:11 out of its context:

‘. . . sing to one another of him . . .’

But alas, it is referring to secular music!

The Babylonians were a willing human audience. They pressed the Israelites to sing to them ‘the Lord’s song’.[[267]](#footnote-189) It would have been easier to force a tune out of granite.

The following verse is the most I have been able to wring out of Scripture in the way of a specific exhortation to sing to people about God, and even then the original wording is a little too vague to be certain it is referring to music.[[268]](#footnote-190)

‘. . . with a singing voice declare . . . to the end of the earth . . .”The Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob. And they thirsted not when He led them through the deserts. He caused the water to flow out of the rock for them . . .”‘[[269]](#footnote-191)

Here we find an exhortation to sing (or shout) about certain miraculous acts of God. This song exalting God is apparently directed to people, rather than to the Lord. I have found no other such command in Scripture.

The Book that repeatedly tells us to sing *to* the Lord hardly ever tells us to sing to people *about* the Lord. There’s a lesson here somewhere.

**Our search is much more fruitful, however, when we widen it to include not just specific commands, but the psalmist’s personal example.** For instance, Psalms 95, 96 and 98 are all exhortations to sing ‘unto the Lord’. Yet, in encouraging his hearers to do this, the psalmist musically proclaims to them (not to God) the Lord’s praiseworthy acts.[[270]](#footnote-192)

Commencing with, ‘Give ear, O my people’, Psalm 78 is obviously directed to an earthly audience, and half of it describes God’s mighty acts.

‘Come, behold the works of the Lord’, sings the forty-sixth psalm.[[271]](#footnote-193) It then proceeds to enumerate those works.

So although Scripture most often exhorts us to direct our music to God, rather than man, it provides many examples of singing God’s praises to a human audience.

**Most frequent of all, is music directed to God but deliberately played in the presence of other people.** That way, two of music’s two most important functions – ministering to God and to people – are achieved at the same time. Furthermore, it effectively focuses both the musicians’ and the audience’s attention upon the Lord, who alone is the Source of effective ministry. The audience is drawn into worshipping the Creator, rather than idolizing the dust the music is coming from.

‘. . . I will sing UNTO YOU *among the nations*.’[[272]](#footnote-194)

‘At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns TO GOD, *and the prisoners were listening* to them.’[[273]](#footnote-195)

‘. . . Speaking *to one another* in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart TO THE LORD.’[[274]](#footnote-196)

Ultimately, every song of praise in the Bible directed to God falls into this category. Obviously, the Lord intends us to ‘overhear’ every song of praise recorded in the Bible.

### 4. AS AN AID TO THE WORSHIP OF OTHERS

We have seen that exhorting others to praise God is a very common theme in the Bible’s songs. Sermons on praise can be helpful, but the psalmists usually went far beyond this. By singing their song they provided a living example. Moreover, they created an atmosphere conducive to praise and even provided words for their hearers to use.

‘O magnify the Lord WITH ME  
and let us exalt His name together.’[[275]](#footnote-197)

‘And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.’[[276]](#footnote-198)

‘All the people of the land rejoiced and blew trumpets, the singers with their musical instruments LEADING the praise.’[[277]](#footnote-199)

Some psalms[[278]](#footnote-200) were probably intended to be sung by a choir, with responses by the congregation. In fact, the nature of Hebrew poetry means that most psalms can be readily used in this form of singing.[[279]](#footnote-201) At least by the first century AD, there were three different types of responsive singing, alternating between a leader and the congregation.[[280]](#endnote-79)

### 5. AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Music that woos the Spirit of God must, of necessity, make demons quake.

When God’s chosen people comprised one nation, wars involving that nation had spiritual overtones. For instance, when the Israelites slaughtered the former inhabitants of the promised land, they were executing God’s judgment, not expressing personal hostilities.[[281]](#footnote-202) This is highlighted by the Lord repeatedly rebuking Israel for being too lenient.[[282]](#footnote-203) As the Lord told Jehoshaphat centuries later, ‘The battle is not yours, but God’s.’[[283]](#footnote-204)

The Lord of hosts was deeply involved in Israel’s wars; whether it was giving victory to Joshua’s army whenever Moses raised his rod,[[284]](#footnote-205) pounding the Amorites with hailstones,[[285]](#footnote-206) teaching David’s ‘hands to war,’[[286]](#footnote-207) revealing Syrian war secrets to Elisha,[[287]](#footnote-208) or slaying Sennacherib’s army,[[288]](#footnote-209) to mention just a few exploits of the One who is ‘mighty in battle’.[[289]](#footnote-210) On the other hand, we would expect evil spiritual powers to have an active interest in attempts to annihilate or subjugate God’s people.[[290]](#footnote-211)

Since these wars clearly had a spiritual dimension, they may encompass principles of relevance to the spiritual warfare each of us face today.[[291]](#footnote-212) This could be a major reason why God has preserved these accounts in Scripture.

Consider this divine instruction:

‘If you go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresses you, then you shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and you shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies.’[[292]](#footnote-213)

Trumpet blowing played a significant role in the defeat of God’s enemies under both Joshua’s[[293]](#footnote-214) and Gideon’s[[294]](#footnote-215) leadership. In each case, the decisive point of the battle was won before they even physically touched the enemy.[[295]](#footnote-216)

In Jehoshaphat’s time, God’s secret weapon was taken one step further: the enemies annihilated each other. The most strenuous thing God’s people had to do was to collect the booty.[[296]](#footnote-217) Musicians played the key role in this glorious victory, right from the initial prophecy,[[297]](#footnote-218) through to the victory celebration.[[298]](#footnote-219)

Following in this tradition, a Jewish hero in the intertestamental era is reported to have loudly sung psalms as he successfully attacked the enemy.[[299]](#footnote-220)

Isaiah connected the playing of godly music with the Lord executing His judgment upon Assyria.[[300]](#footnote-221) The blows of God’s judgement would fall upon anti-God forces to the accompaniment of the drums and stringed instruments (and singing) of God’s people.

Half of Psalm 149 may be roughly thought of as dealing with the subject of musical praise, and the other half, with the defeat of God’s enemies. These two, seemingly diverse activities, might be closely related.

With David, certain leaders were involved in the appointment of the Levitical musicians. Though acknowledging that there are other views, Payne insists that the Hebrew of 1 Chronicles 25:1 unambiguously identifies these leaders as military commanders, an interpretation favored by several Bible translations.[[301]](#endnote-80) If military commanders had a particular interest in the appointment of musicians, it suggests a strong link between music and warfare.

Another aspect of spiritual warfare is seen in David’s skillful harp playing which relieved King Saul of his oppression from an evil spirit.[[302]](#footnote-222)

In this context, note Psalm 138:1:

‘I will praise you with my whole heart:  
Before the gods will I sing praise unto you.’

‘Gods’ often represent demonic powers.[[303]](#footnote-223) So this verse is yet another Scriptural suggestion that musically praising God directly affects evil spiritual powers.

This discussion is important because spiritual warfare is inevitable for the Christian. Even after Christ’s victory, Peter declared Satan to be our enemy and Paul affirmed that we wrestle against principalities, powers and rulers of darkness.[[304]](#footnote-224) This, of course, is not merely defensive. We should be on the attack, as suggested by the NIV rendering of Psalm 141:5 b, ‘My prayer is ever against the deeds of evildoers’.

A Tyndale publication, *Attack From the Spirit World* is a compilation of reports from 38 different Christian workers (mainly missionaries) in a total of 24 different countries. Though the sources are so diverse, account after account testifies to the power of Christian songs over the demonic realm. As Ruth Noack put it, years of experience in pre-Communist China had taught her that ‘demons do not like hymn singing’.[[305]](#endnote-81)

### 6. AN ACT OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD

There are times when personal feelings must not be allowed to dictate to us.

Music was a central feature of King Hezekiah’s celebration of the purification of the temple. This emphasis, however, was not the result of a royal whim or ecclesiastical embellishment: it ‘. . . was the commandment of the Lord by His prophets.’[[306]](#footnote-225)

‘To obey is better than sacrifice’[[307]](#footnote-226) This applies to melodic sacrifices of praise, as much as animal sacrifices.

‘. . . David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.’[[308]](#footnote-227)

Read out of context, we would surely conclude that this event must have greatly pleased the Lord. Instead of approving, however, God slew a key participant.[[309]](#footnote-228)

Disobedience was at the heart of the tragedy. What seemed a good, modern, God-glorifying idea (the use of a new cart) had displaced simple obedience – carrying the ark upon the Levites shoulders.[[310]](#footnote-229) All the praise, music and sacrifices were nullified by disobedience.

### 7. TO DELIVER A PROPHETIC UTTERANCE

The Bible’s hymn book is crammed with prophecies. This is no coincidence. In fact, I believe the relationship between music and prophecy is so strong that rather than present just a smattering of the evidence here, I will restrain myself until a later chapter so that I can draw all the evidence together.

### 8. TO INCREASE ONE’S RECEPTIVITY TO THE SPIRIT

During the dedication of Solomon’s temple, music played and the cloud of God’s glory spectacularly filled the sanctuary. The biblical account[[311]](#footnote-230) hints at a link between this music and the awesome manifestation of the Lord’s presence.

After privately anointing Saul as king, Samuel told him,

‘. . . you will meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tambourine, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they will be prophesying: And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them, and will be turned into another man.’[[312]](#footnote-231)

Clearly, Saul’s spiritual experience on that day was closely associated with music, though it is uncertain how critical the music was in initiating the experience.

In the above examples, the use of music to induce a manifestation of the Spirit may not necessarily have been deliberate. Any element of doubt, however, is removed in the case of Elisha. On one occasion, when he wished to prophesy, he specifically arranged for a harpist to play.[[313]](#footnote-232)

It was probably common knowledge amongst the bands of prophets such as those Saul met that, under God’s direction, music can enhance one’s receptivity to the Holy Spirit. Whilst the harpist played, the Spirit of God came upon Elisha and the Lord spoke through him. Since Elisha’s message was apparently in prose, it is unlikely the music was used to accompany a prophecy in song. On this occasion, music was used to elicit a prophecy, rather than to deliver one.

This is highly significant. Here we have Scriptural proof that non-vocal music can have a genuine spiritual effect upon a hearer. Moreover, it suggests that some spiritual experiences are dependent upon what may be loosely called background music. Those who take exception to the use of music during altar calls need to give this implication serious consideration.[[314]](#footnote-233) Other sections, such as the discussion on spiritual warfare may also be relevant to this facet of music.

### 9. TO EDIFY YOURSELF

In the chorus of Psalms 42 and 43, the psalmist sang to himself, in an attempt to break through depression, and exercise faith in God.[[315]](#footnote-234)

As is typical of Biblical music, however, he did not force the entire ministry burden upon music alone. In addition to melody, he used prayer, praise and a positive Scriptural mentality to lift himself from his despondency.[[316]](#footnote-235)

Furthermore, this godly songwriter did not use music as a means of escapism. He faced his problems head-on; neither pretending his trials were trivial, nor letting them stifle his faith.

There are several other instances of psalmists addressing themselves in song.[[317]](#footnote-236)

A New Testament reference to singing for personal edification is found in Paul’s discussion of singing ‘with the Spirit’.[[318]](#footnote-237) This, he says, edified the participant.[[319]](#footnote-238)

If we are not edified, how can we hope to edify others?

### 10. TO EDIFY OTHERS

‘Whenever you come together, each of you has a song, or a teaching, a tongue, a revelation, or an interpretation. Let all be done for edification.’[[320]](#footnote-239)

We cannot always be with people. But we can teach them encouraging songs that will remain with them wherever they go.

### 11. TO SHARE A TESTIMONY

‘Come and hear, all you that fear God,  
And I will declare what He has done for my soul,’  
sang the Psalmist.[[321]](#footnote-240)

A number of psalms fall into this category.[[322]](#footnote-241) The book of Psalms is filled with references to being saved from sin, sickness, death, etc. Often these testimonies are combined with praise or petition to God.

These songs reveal a standard of frankness and honesty that we should emulate. They are not all glowing testimonies of victory.[[323]](#footnote-242) They neither hid, nor gloried in, past failings.

A personal testimony in song necessitates having an experience. Frequently, it involves an initially adverse situation. We cannot, for example, give a personal healing testimony without first being sick! Very few Scriptural miracles occurred without someone being in an unpleasant dilemma that necessitated divine intervention.

Scripture commands us to rejoice when we encounter trials[[324]](#footnote-243) because such trials produce a depth of character[[325]](#footnote-244) and a greatly enhanced ability to minister to others.[[326]](#footnote-245) If our experience is only second-hand, this is likely to be reflected in our music, especially its composition. This is another possible reason why ‘no-one could learn that song except the 144,000’.[[327]](#footnote-246)

### 12. AN IMPORTANT AID TO MEMORY

The Lord wanted to impress a message upon the minds of His people that would remain with them for generations. So He wrote a song.[[328]](#footnote-247) God declared that although in generations to come Israel would forget Him, they would never forget the song.

Andraé Crouch failed his high school algebra. He couldn’t remember the formulas. His father suggested he set them to music. It worked! He later used the same method to learn Scripture.[[329]](#endnote-82)

I doubt if there is a preacher in the world who has instilled so many Scriptures into so many minds as Dale and David Garratt have with their Scripture songs. The simple addition of music to Scripture’s power-packed words and presto! thousands of people start effortlessly memorizing God’s Word. *Integrity Music* used to produce recordings of Scripture songs for the express purpose of aiding the memorization of Scripture.

The more Scripture is put to music, the easier it becomes to fulfil God’s command to Joshua, and Paul’s command to the Colossians.

‘This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; but you shall meditate therein day and night . . .’

‘Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly . . . in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs . . .’[[330]](#footnote-248)

### 13. TO TEACH

Music’s value of as a memory aid, coupled with its ability to entertain and arrest attention, makes it a powerful medium for instilling truth. But the Scriptural standard of music is not achieved by using song merely to drill people with biblical facts. The goal should be to instruct and enlighten. And beyond even that, the goal of all ministry gifts – of which teaching is one – is to lovingly release people into their own ministry and to help them reach ‘the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ’.[[331]](#footnote-249)

For hundreds of people to quote a preacher is almost unheard of. In contrast, it is common-place for thousands to sing words composed by a song-writer.

Consider the Wesley brothers: Hundreds of thousands – no, millions – more people have sung Charles’ songs than have read any of his famous brother’s sermons.

‘. . . teaching and admonishing one another [by means of], psalms and hymns and spiritual songs . . .’[[332]](#footnote-250)

In fact, teaching is the primary or secondary aim of a number of Biblical hymns.[[333]](#footnote-251)

Psalmists sang:

‘Give ear, O my people, to my teaching.’[[334]](#footnote-252)

‘I will teach you the fear of the Lord.’[[335]](#footnote-253)

In Psalm 49 the teacher expounded his wisdom to the accompaniment of a harp.[[336]](#footnote-254)

Everyone engaged in teaching should take the following words very seriously:

‘Let not many become teachers, knowing that we shall receive the greater judgment. For in many things we all offend.’[[337]](#footnote-255)

Teaching is a highly responsible ministry.

### 14. TO CHALLENGE AND INSPIRE OTHERS TO ACTION OR COMMITMENT

The attitude-changing power of music is vividly portrayed in the words of Jeremy Collier (1698): ‘Music is almost as dangerous as gunpowder; it may be requires looking after no less than . . . the mint.’[[338]](#endnote-83)

Many of us pray earnestly for our politicians and never give our nation’s secular songwriters a thought. Yet ‘a very wise man’ felt music is so persuasive that if he could write a nation’s songs, he would be unconcerned about who wrote its laws.[[339]](#endnote-84)

Shortly before he died, Dwight L. Moody was visited by hymn-writer, Will Thompson. ‘Will’, said the famous evangelist, ‘I would rather have written [your hymn] *Softly and tenderly*, than anything I have been able to do in my whole life.’[[340]](#endnote-85)

A remarkable statement.

Let’s examine the divinely authorized methods the Bible’s songs use to influence people for God. We will then tackle the issue of whether Scripture approves of using music for the ultimate impact upon a person – conversion.

Psalm 95 is one of many Biblical songs seeking to raise its hearers to new spiritual heights. It urges hearers to worship God and not harden their hearts. How it does this should be of particular interest to us. It is, after all, no ordinary hymn. It carries God’s seal of approval in a way no extra-Biblical song can claim.

This psalm ministers to the whole man – intellect, will and actions, as well as emotions. The writer used to the fullest, every means at his disposal to elicit a God-glorifying response in his hearers.

This is in marked contrast to some modern musicians, who seem content to rely almost solely upon a musical appeal to the emotions.

One of the features of this psalm is its use of the words ‘us’ and ‘we’. The psalmist did not have a ‘holier-than-thou’ or stand-offish attitude. He identified with his listeners. This can be a powerful way of influencing people. Furthermore, as many of the great intercessors have discovered,[[341]](#footnote-256) identification – which reaches its pinnacle in Christ crucified – is an attitude that touches not just human hearts but God’s heart. And God’s approval is obviously crucial in Christian ministry.

To the power of music and identification, the psalmist adds rational argument. Persuasive reasons, both positive and negative, are given for worshipping God:

\* He is the Rock of our salvation.

\* He is above all gods.

\* He is the Creator.

\* We are His people.

\* If we harden our hearts we could miss God’s rest, as did our fathers.[[342]](#footnote-257)

Not content with even this impressive list, the psalmist adds yet another powerful means of influencing others: the magnetism of personal example. ‘Make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms,’ he sings and immediately he does just that, singing a psalm of praise to God in the next three verses.

Psalms 96 and 98 employ the same principles. They commence with, ‘O sing unto the Lord a new song’ and that is exactly what the psalmist proceeds to do, at the same time giving rational reasons for following his example.

Many other psalms fit this pattern. How many can you find?

Inspired by the Bible’s example, let’s use music’s power, under the leading of His Spirit, to help change people’s attitude, for the glory of God.

#### Evangelism

To look for evangelistic content in the Bible’s Song Book is nearly like scanning the works of Shakespeare for references to rock ‘n’ roll You are looking in the wrong era. Evangelism is essentially a New Testament concept. Less than one eighth of the Bible belongs to the era initiated by the Great Commission.[[343]](#footnote-258) Nevertheless, if the Bible’s Songs are as deep as I suggest, you never know what you might find. Before plunging into this, however, let’s step back a little and ask ourselves if people who wish to use music for Evangelism are not closer to the spirit of New Testament evangelists than their critics.

The New Testament portrays its model evangelist, the apostle Paul, as a man desperate to employ almost any and every means to propagate the gospel.

‘I have become all things to all people that I might by all means save some,’ he declared.[[344]](#footnote-259)

‘Some indeed preach Christ because of envy and strife . . . from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds . . .’ Can you imagine such debased motives attached to such a holy task? Yet in even this scandal Paul rejoiced because what mattered most was that in ‘every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached . . .’[[345]](#footnote-260)

If we had Paul’s passion for Evangelism brewing within us we would need pretty strong evidence that something was unacceptable to God before refusing to press it into service for the King.

‘Music and the Bible are the two most important agencies with which to reach the world’ declared Dwight Moody in the latter part of his life, ‘And I’ve made as much of singing as I have of preaching.’ That’s the evaluation of one of the greatest evangelists the world has seen – someone who himself was totally unmusical.[[346]](#endnote-86)

If we had just one percent of Moody’s conviction of music’s power to ‘reach the world’ we would beg God to let us use it to snatch souls from the flames of hell.

We don’t know how regularly Paul used music but we know he burst into a duet at midnight in the midst of criminals in the Philippian jail, and that was about as far from a church setting as one can go.[[347]](#footnote-261) If he sang with his wounds throbbing in a stinking jail in the dead of night surrounded by such a potentially hostile audience, one wonders how often he sang to non-Christians in less trying circumstances

We’ve mentioned and will later expound how Scripture regularly links music with prophecy.[[348]](#footnote-262) The significance to this section is that Paul stressed the powerful spiritual effect prophecy can have on unbelievers.[[349]](#footnote-263) If music is linked to prophecy, it is also linked to powerfully convicting unbelievers of the reality of God.

Geoff Bullock sees the initial outpouring of the Spirit upon the church as a blueprint for what should happen when the Holy Spirit comes upon Christian musicians. At the birth of the church, the ‘sound of divinity and humanity being struck together in the power and the presence of God by the Holy Spirit’ did not remain within the four walls where the church had gathered. It reached outside and touched people of diverse cultures, not in the normal language of the first Christians, nor even in Greek, the international language with which all must have had some familiarity, but in the mother tongue – the heart language – of every hearer.

‘For too long we’ve been making our music more relevant to within the walls [of the church] than outside the walls. And yet God, from the day of Pentecost, burst out of those religious walls . . . because He wanted this sound . . . heard in the marketplace in the language of every culture represented.’ The result, of course, was thousands of conversions.

Note the key facets:

1. The message went out from the church into the world

2. It penetrated cultural barriers and reached hearers in a form they could readily identify with

3. There was a strongly supernatural element.

It is often asserted that there is no Biblical precedent for using music for Evangelism, but even in the Old Testament not only were God and the godly sung to, but also the ungodly.[[350]](#footnote-264) Some psalms were addressed not just to Israel, but to ‘all inhabitants of the world’.[[351]](#footnote-265) This is rather staggering, written as they were, centuries before Jesus commissioned His church to preach to Gentiles. The significance was not lost to Paul, who twice quoted psalms to prove that Christ came ‘that the Gentiles might glorify God’.[[352]](#footnote-266) His first quote is particularly strong:

‘Therefore will I give thanks unto you, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto your name.’ This verse appears three times in the Bible.[[353]](#footnote-267)

The Song of Moses focuses on people who have turned their back on God.[[354]](#footnote-268) Psalm 94 admonishes evil-doers to take heed.[[355]](#footnote-269) Psalm 52:1-7 is directed to sinners, warning them of God’s judgment and Psalm 75:4-10 is similar. (These last two psalms are discussed in greater detail in the appendix, note 4.3.)

You could certainly build an evangelistic sermon around Psalm 34:14-18, which commences ‘Depart from evil and do good,’ and ends by affirming that the Lord is near those who, in the words of the Amplified Bible, are ‘thoroughly penitent’.

Psalm 82 has lyrics apparently designed to coax the ungodly into a right relationship with God. The song says:

‘How long will you judge unjustly,  
And be partial to the wicked? Selah.  
Defend the poor and fatherless:  
Do justice to the afflicted and needy.’[[356]](#footnote-270)

Note also Psalm 4:2-5:

‘O you sons of men, how long will you turn my glory into shame?   
How long will you love vanity, and seek after lies? Selah.   
But know that the Lord has set apart him that is godly for Himself:  
The Lord will hear when I call unto Him.  
Stand in awe, and sin not:  
Continue with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.  
Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,  
And put your trust in the Lord.’

That sounds to me like an appeal to sinners to repent and put their faith in God. Can you conceive of anything more ‘evangelistic’ in an Old Testament context?

Several psalms come close to telling us to use music to evangelize the world:

‘Sing to the Lord, bless His name;  
Tell of His salvation from day to day.  
Declare His glory among the [heathen] nations,  
His wonders among all people . . .  
Say among the nations that the Lord reigns . . .’[[357]](#footnote-271)

The use of music as an evangelistic tool has solid Scriptural backing.

Since most of our Biblical understanding of music comes from the Old Testament, it is not surprising that references to Evangelism are muted, and for me it would be loud and clear at half the volume. Nevertheless, Carman has an interesting thought. This innovative and controversial artist believes the scriptural emphasis indicates that the primary function of music is to magnify the Lord. Emphasizing Jesus declaration, ‘If I be lifted up . . . I will draw all people to myself’, he concludes that if music causes Jesus to be exalted, conversions will result. Praise and worship directed solely to the Lord will woo the Spirit of God so effectively that unbelievers present will be saved. He warns that some Christian artists, rather than casting the burden of Evangelism upon Jesus, seem to think *they* must be lifted up, so that *they* will draw people to Jesus.[[358]](#endnote-87)

‘He put a new song in my mouth,’ sings the psalmist, ‘. . . Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.’[[359]](#footnote-272) Doctored that way, the ‘new song’ sounds like an evangelistic song, but the full verse supports Carman’s thesis. The words I teasingly omitted define the ‘new song’ as ‘a hymn of praise to our God’.

The power of the approach outlined by Carman cannot be denied, though I find no Scriptural basis for excluding songs that are unashamedly evangelistic. Jimmy and Carol Owens also see a role for evangelistic songs and yet, to their surprise, songs they intended to be sung to the Lord or to Christians have often turned out to be their ‘most powerful instruments of Evangelism’.[[360]](#endnote-88) Even in Geoff Bullock’s analogy based on the Day of Pentecost, it was probably praise, rather than a call to repentance, that the non-Christians heard in their heart language.[[361]](#footnote-273)

### 15. TO EXPRESS PENT-UP FEELINGS

Christians have used music as an emotional release. Is this a perversion of God’s gift? Not according to Scripture. James wrote, ‘Is anyone happy? Let him sing psalms.’[[362]](#footnote-274) Clearly, such a supposedly ‘unspiritual’ motivation has God’s approval. Isaiah virtually commands the barren to sing for joy because of the exciting things that will happen to them.[[363]](#footnote-275)

We may piously lament theological shallowness in some Christian songs, but an emotional shallowness is also below the scriptural norm.

Ideally, Christian music is like a rope made strong by the entwining of many strands. Emotional appeal is one of those strands. Some of us are tempted to rely almost exclusively upon it. But God intends music to accomplish far more than mere emotionalism can achieve. Others of us would like to weaken the emotional strand, but that would weaken the entire rope.

The psalmists confessed feelings of confusion and frustration. Jesus openly wept and displayed anger. Early Christians ‘made great lamentation’ over Stephen.[[364]](#footnote-276) The Ephesian elders ‘all wept sore’ at Paul’s departure.[[365]](#footnote-277) Many of us, in contrast, seem reluctant to even admit that dedicated Christians can have feelings other than peace and moderate joy. We could hardly be surprised if, locked within many Christians from time to time, are strong feelings that they have no idea how to express in an authentically Christian manner.

Emotions are created by God. We should neither despise them, nor be enslaved by them.

Whereas some Christian traditions fear ‘excessive’ enthusiasm, there are others equally wary of any expression of sorrow. Yet in the book of Ezra we see both, on the same occasion and associated with music.[[366]](#footnote-278)

A jubilant expression of joy seems to be gaining acceptance in Christian circles. The expression of sorrow, however, often seems less common in today’s Christian music than in Scripture.[[367]](#footnote-279)

In his youth, William Muhlenberg wrote a melancholic hymn. He afterwards regretted its tone and for years tried to brighten it. To his repeated frustration, the hymn was widely accepted only in its original form.[[368]](#endnote-89)

Sad songs should not seem strange to us – consider the innumerable pop songs of our era expressing the pain of broken relationships. In P. B. Shelley’s opinion, humanity’s ‘sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought’.[[369]](#endnote-90)

There is considerable scope for such Christian songs; especially dealing with Jesus’ suffering and death, the sorrow of knowing a loved one is going to a Christ-less eternity, grieving over past sin, lamenting the future judgment of this world,[[370]](#footnote-280) and so on.

A renowned Christian author once implied to song-writer Don Wyrtzen that it is wrong to compose when one is depressed. Don hardly needed his extensive theological training to recognize that had psalmists heeded such advice, our Bibles would be slimmer.[[371]](#endnote-91)

‘Out of the depths [of distress] I cry to you, O Lord.’[[372]](#footnote-281)

How can we hope to adequately minister to real people with real hurts if our songs belong to a fantasy world of continual highs? Scripture urges us not just to ‘rejoice with those who rejoice,’ but to ‘weep with those who weep’.[[373]](#footnote-282)

The rejected, ridiculed, pain-racked Son of Man identified with our anguish before raising us up with Him. Let’s not allow hypocrisy to banish this divine pattern from our songs.

Opening the Psalter almost at random reveals inspired songs which plunge into the depths of despair before leading their hearers to new heights of devotion.[[374]](#footnote-283) Their sheer honesty helps believers cope with conflicts some of us pretend never exist in godly people – fear, pain, grief, loneliness, frustration, failure, depression, complaints, guilt, enemies, unanswered prayer, the apparent failure of God’s promises, the success of the world in contrast to the trials of God’s people – and the list keeps going. Whereas some psalms joyfully praise God for victories, success and prosperity, others freely admit being betrayed, rejected, ridiculed and slandered.

Thankfully, Christians in great distress have always been able to turn to biblical songs for comfort. Many of today’s song-writers would have let them down. But what about those pressures unique to our era – unemployment, AIDS, the power of the mass media, the ecological time-bomb, fear of getting mugged, the fragmentation of Christ’s body, the exploitation of sex, and so on? While we’re busily burying such problems in the ‘too hard’ basket, real flesh and blood Christians are forced every day to try to cope with them. Does our music sufficiently follow the psalmist’s lead, offering emotional and spiritual support to fellow believers weighed down by these burdens?

Perhaps it is significant that Israel’s mourning women – who almost certainly used music[[375]](#footnote-284) – were apparently known as ‘wise women’[[376]](#footnote-285).

One needs a lot of courage, wisdom and experience to take up David’s lyre.

I know of a church that banned the old Scripture chorus based on Habakkuk’s song, ‘Though the fig tree does not blossom’.[[377]](#footnote-286) It was pronounced too negative! The song is saying that we can enjoy and delight in God for who He is, not just for His gifts; that God is far more precious than material things; that no matter how much circumstances may hinder our physical eyes from seeing it, God is always loving and trustworthy. What could be more positive? What greater comfort could there be for someone suffering a financial reverse? What greater encouragement to see material things in their proper perspective?

A careful study of the seemingly negative aspects of the Psalms will confirm that the Bible’s songs really are a divine pattern for today’s music.

To lift people we must first reach down to where they stand. The first task of apparently mournful songs is to assure hearers that they are not alone: other godly people have experienced similar feelings. What vast comforting power there is in the knowledge that others really understand! Inspired of God, such music is not a call to self-pity, but a sweet embrace dispelling loneliness; a shaft of hope penetrating icy darkness.

Beginning here, a song can slowly lift hurting people heavenwards. Having identified with their sorrow, it can then be used of God to help hurting humanity come to grips with real-life crises and handle them in a truly God-glorifying way; providing a means of expressing nebulous feelings and gradually turn repressed anxieties into concrete prayers. It can then, under the Spirit’s leading, gently, patiently entice the afflicted to confident trust. Carefully nourished, trust will grow ever stronger until it finally bursts into jubilant praise. We must not, however, confuse the starting point with the goal, imagining we can bludgeon hurting Christians into by-passing these stages and commence with triumphant praise. If we do, I suggest it is we, not they, who have deviated from the biblical pattern.

‘Singing bright songs to a grieving person is like rubbing salt into a wound.’[[378]](#footnote-287)

‘. . . they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him . . . they lifted up their voice and wept; and they rent everyone his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spoke unto him, for they saw that his grief was very great.’[[379]](#footnote-288)

‘A time to weep and a time to laugh.  
A time for dirges and a time for anthems.’[[380]](#footnote-289)

### 16. TO ACCOMPANY PHYSICAL MOVEMENTS

#### (1) Processions

When Nehemiah dedicated the city wall, he divided the people into two processions, each with their instruments and singers.[[381]](#footnote-290) This religious use of processions had a long history in Israel. For more Scriptures relating to religious processions, see Note 4.4 in the Appendix.

If we view the way David brought the ark into Jerusalem as a procession, we can easily see how they must have often been associated with dancing as well as music.[[382]](#footnote-291) Perhaps we could also view the march of Jehoshaphat’s army behind the singers as a religious procession.[[383]](#footnote-292) Even the march around Jericho led by Joshua seems to bear similarities.[[384]](#footnote-293)

‘Onward Christian soldiers’ is one of a number of hymns originally written for Christian processions.[[385]](#endnote-92)

The challenge of even simple movement can sometimes inspire selfless dedication. A choir sang a recessional as they marched with reverence and precision up the center aisle to the back of the church. On the way was grating covering a hot-air register, negotiated with grace by woman after woman. Then a high heel slipped through the grill. Knowing the recessional must not falter, the quick-thinking lady stepped out of her shoe and without a break the procession continued. Inspired by her poise, the next man knew how to salvage the situation. Not dropping a beat, he executed a masterful swoop and seized the shoe. With it came the entire grate. Startled, but still singing, still conscious of the solemnity of the occasion, he could only proceed up the aisle carrying the shoe and the grate.

The couple might have looked a trifle ridiculous as they solemnly pressed on, but sheer dedication to excellence had redeemed what could have been disaster. Not a note had been missed. With dignity they proceeded in faultless step, majestic music soaring heavenward, striding as one with as the next man reverently stepped into the open register.[[386]](#endnote-93)

#### (2) Dancing

Though worldly excesses and ‘religious’ fears make me hesitate, Scripture forces me to confess that godly music was frequently associated with dancing.[[387]](#footnote-294) Being thoroughly convinced from childhood that all dancing is worldly has made it difficult for me to face these Scriptures.

To the accompaniment of music,[[388]](#footnote-295) David leaped[[389]](#footnote-296) and ‘danced before the Lord with all his might’.[[390]](#footnote-297) It was an act of holy worship offered to the God he delighted in. But his wife despised it and, perhaps as a direct result, became barren.[[391]](#footnote-298)

I might have come precariously close to spiritual barrenness myself, had I allowed a similar judgmental attitude towards dancing to remain in me.

The dancing that Scripture approves of is often misunderstood. For example, we would be way off the mark if we imagined that such modern innovations as dancing by couples were involved.

Percussion, especially tambourines, seems to have played a prime role in Biblical dancing, often being played by the dancers themselves.[[392]](#footnote-299) However, other types of instrumental, and even vocal, accompaniment were common.[[393]](#footnote-300)

Could ‘. . . praise His name in the dance’[[394]](#footnote-301) refer to singing God’s praises while dancing?[[395]](#footnote-302)

A number of Bible versions[[396]](#footnote-303) also link singing and dancing in Psalm 87:7.

The evidence suggests the ‘dance music’ endorsed by Scripture was more complex than we might have expected, with lyrics, as well as rhythm, playing a significant role.

Psalm 150 gives the impression that dancing was such an integral part of Biblical music that it was impossible to speak at length about music without referring to dancing. The psalmist mentioned it in the midst of a list dealing exclusively with musical instruments.[[397]](#footnote-304) Perhaps it was as much a part of their music as hand-clapping is in some Christian circles today.

Dancing may have been much more a part of the Biblical scene than we generally realize. For example, as Johnson[[398]](#endnote-94) points out, ‘. . . it is hard to imagine the music and ecstasy of prophetic bands [such as those which Saul met[[399]](#footnote-305)] without rhythmic movement . . .’ They even played the instrument most frequently associated with dancing – the tambourine.

Christ had no hesitation in including dancing in His Prodigal Son parable and when mentioning children’s games to make a point.[[400]](#footnote-306) Physical movement is a natural and legitimate way to express joy and if the New Testament emphasizes anything, it is that joy did not die with the making of the New Covenant. Even when persecuted, we should ‘jump for joy,’ said Jesus.[[401]](#footnote-307) The God who in the Old Testament era turned mourning into dancing[[402]](#footnote-308) has in no way diminished in power or lost His desire for us to exuberantly share in His joy.

As instrumentalists use their instruments and singers their voices, so dancers use their bodies to magnify the Lord. ‘. . . the body is . . . for the Lord,’ declared Paul, ‘. . . glorify God in your body . . .’ Later he expressed his desire ‘that the life of . . . Jesus might be made manifest in our body.’ In a third epistle he wrote of his longing that ‘as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body.’[[403]](#footnote-309) He was not, of course, specifically referring to dancing but I believe that when offered as a living sacrifice to God, a dancing body redeemed by the blood of Jesus can reach Paul’s goal of using one’s body to exalt our Lord.

As instrumentalists often unite with singers to heighten the power of their individual ministries, so they can both unite with dancers for a further enhancement.

I have seen the gift sadly abused by Christians who think that by copying the world they glorify the One who overcame the world; who imagine that what pleases the crowds must please the Lord. Too many dancers convert their Christ-bought liberty into an occasion for shame. The situation demands much prayerful rethinking.

Nevertheless, the fact that dancers can use their bodies for sensual purposes should thwart us no more than the fact that singers can misuse their voices. The very real possibility of abuse only accentuates the glory when that path is spurned in favor of passionate purity. Though the servant in Jesus’ parable resisted the urge to squander his talent on sensual pleasure, he still incurred the master’s wrath because he failed to use that talent positively.[[404]](#footnote-310)

Clement of Alexandria (c AD 150) was so narrow that he even opposed the use of musical instruments, yet even he spoke positively of dancing.[[405]](#endnote-95)

Ambrose, the ‘jealous upholder of orthodoxy’ who played a role in Augustine’s conversion and was ‘greatly revered’ by him,[[406]](#endnote-96) wrote in about 390 AD:

‘Everything is right when it springs from the fear of the Lord. Let’s dance as David did. Let’s not be ashamed to show adoration of God. Dance uplifts the body above the earth into the heavenlies. Dance bound up with faith is a testimony to the living grace of God. He who dances as David danced, dances in grace.’

Wrote Theodoret forty years later: ‘I see dance as a virtue in harmony with power from above.’[[407]](#endnote-97)

### 17. SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Obviously music played an important role in Israel’s holy festivals.[[408]](#footnote-311) There are numerous Biblical references to the use of music in weddings,[[409]](#footnote-312) funerals,[[410]](#footnote-313) coronations,[[411]](#footnote-314) victories,[[412]](#footnote-315) banquets,[[413]](#footnote-316) farewells,[[414]](#footnote-317) completion of public works projects[[415]](#footnote-318) and harvests.[[416]](#footnote-319)

Generally, this reflects the secular use of music, acceptable to God, though not specifically ordained by Him.

The prophets, when speaking of God’s judgment, often said that the Lord would cause a people’s music (and associated merry-making) to cease.[[417]](#footnote-320)

According to Werner, music in Biblical times contrasted with our society in that it ‘was an organic part of daily life, linked with a thousand bonds to all human concerns, from birth to death’.[[418]](#endnote-98)

### 18. TO ACCOMPANY ANIMAL SACRIFICE

‘. . . TO OFFER THE BURNT OFFERINGS of the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and WITH SINGING, as it was ordained by David.’[[419]](#footnote-321)

The Jewish Talmud even suggested that the absence of Levitical music invalidated a sacrifice.[[420]](#footnote-322) So strong was the link that when sacrifices ceased in AD 70, so did Levitical music.

This was such an important use of music that I dare not omit it, even though it is difficult to extract a principle that applies to our era.

This use of music certainly shows that it is sometimes valid to play music while another important spiritual activity is in progress. Music while the sacraments are being administered is probably the closest modern parallel. One might also be tempted to use it to support the common practice of playing music while the offering is being received.

### 19. USHERING IN NEW ERAS

I’ll let you stretch your mind on this one for a while. We’ll return to it in the next chapter. I’ll leave you with just one, highly suggestive Scripture:

‘In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah . . .’[[421]](#footnote-323)

### 20. EXTEMPORANEOUS SONGS

We have missed the Biblical norm if we limit ourselves to carefully composed and rehearsed songs. There is a spontaneity about music in the Bible that caught me so much by surprise that I almost missed it. For example, many Bible scholars find songs in passages I had assumed could not have been songs because they seemed to have been delivered too soon and the occasion seemed to trivial and/or unrepeatable to warrant the effort of laborious composition.[[422]](#footnote-324)

Many of the songs we have already mentioned seem to have been extemporaneous. The most appropriate time for music is usually when emotions are highest; not a couple of days after the event. Human nature being what it is, one would expect enthusiasm for the song *Spring up O well* to have quickly waned a day or so after striking water.[[423]](#footnote-325) Victory songs and laments also fit this category. They were tailored for the specific occasion and yet seem to have been delivered almost immediately, possibly on the very day of the event. For example, though burial occurred quickly in that culture, David sang his lament for Abner on his burial day, long before sunset.[[424]](#footnote-326) Again, the maidens’ song about David slaying tens of thousands seems to have been sung immediately upon the army’s return from battle.[[425]](#footnote-327) One would expect many of the prophetic songs to also be extemporaneous.

Extemporaneous songs have been so foreign to me that I find it helpful to examine accounts from other cultures.

Elias Chacour, a Palestinian living in modern Israel, tells of the occasion when he received the First Citizen award for his village. At the height of the ceremony, his mother arose ‘and, in the Arab fashion, created a song as she sang, improvising the words. The people clapped in rhythm, joining her in a familiar refrain.’ He described the song as like a Magnificat, with his mother expressing her joy in her son being honored. Then she addressed him in song, reminding him that to be Christlike he must not be first, but last and servant of all. Elias wept at a song which to him was ‘incredibly beautiful and holy’.[[426]](#endnote-99)

Zinzendorf (1700-1760) was a key figure in the Moravian revival, whose hymns greatly influenced the Wesley brothers. His practice was to sing a familiar song before the sermon. ‘After it, however, if I do not find a song in the hymnal that I would like to have sung to emphasize the subject matter of my sermon to the audience and to offer to the Savior as a prayer, I invent a new song of which I knew nothing before and which will be forgotten as soon as it has served its purpose.’[[427]](#endnote-100)

The history of Judeo-Christian music is richly sprinkled with such spontaneity[[428]](#endnote-101) and we must be careful never to become too proud or sophisticated to continue this godly practice.

### 21. MORE?

I’ve tried, but I make no claims to have fully listed, let alone adequately expounded, all the vital functions Scripture attributes to music. Every time I’m sure I’ve exhausted the possibilities, up pops another.

I must get my brain seen to – it seems to have some intermittent fault. Fortunately, some things are obvious. Everyone knows no self-respecting Christian would produce romantic love songs. Then, just when I thought it safe to go to print, my brain worked. I finally remembered Solomon’s love song (the Song of Songs). That threw a spanner among the pigeons and gummed up the cats. I’ll let you allegorize that away; I’m still in a state of shock. . . .

So I can only claim to have skimmed the shallows in an exploratory Bible probe, hoping to stimulate you to launch more extensive expeditions. Perhaps, for example, you will find Scriptural endorsement for using music to help people work. My brief investigations of this possibility have unearthed clues, but not conclusive proof.[[429]](#footnote-328) Your research might produce something more substantial.

May the Lord bless you with many more exciting discoveries, as you explore the riches of His precious Word.

## MUSIC: A MANIFESTATION OF DIVINE EXTRAVAGANCE

The long list established in this chapter shows how highly God prizes music. That divine approval rests on using music for such diverse and sacred purposes should forever silence anyone tempted to belittle music. Yet I doubt I have mentioned one thing that God could not accomplish without music. This suggests that the primary function of music goes beyond the tasks so far identified in this chapter. I put it to you that the divine purpose of music is to show forth the beauty and mind-boggling extravagance of almighty God.

If the Lord wanted us to see, black and white vision should have sufficed. Instead, he lavished upon us the ability to revel in an estimated seven million discriminable hues. In the magnificent garden of Eden, just one tree was forbidden. A lesser god might have banned every tree but one. One bland, nutrient-rich food-type could keep us healthy. Instead we have been divinely showered with a vast array of tastes, aromas and textures. Wherever we look we see the creative genius and extravagant generosity of the One who invites and empowers us to imitate Him. Music is our opportunity to reflect this aspect of the divine nature.

Beautiful music is like gold in Solomon’s temple. It theoretically was not necessary, but God is worthy of nothing less.

As Christ inspired us to bless our enemies by focusing our attention upon the God of nature who sends His blessings of rain and sun upon His enemies,[[430]](#footnote-329) so I invite you to look at the generosity, beauty, intricacy and endless delights of His handiwork and be inspired to ‘Go and do likewise’.

## THE OTHER SIDE

Between the covers of our Bibles, God has entrusted us with truth in its full complexity. Any attempt to systematize it will almost inevitably result in some distortion. The most glaring defect in the picture I have so far painted is that one might imagine that all music is from God and thrills His heart.

There is a darker side to music. Scripture neither highlights it, nor hides it. We won’t dwell on either, but to totally ignore it would be irresponsible. We must strive to view music as God views it.

The Bible graphically shows that not all music pleases God.[[431]](#footnote-330) Like all of God’s precious gifts, music can be corrupted. Scripture speaks of it being associated with slander,[[432]](#footnote-331) idleness,[[433]](#footnote-332) drunkenness,[[434]](#footnote-333) immorality,[[435]](#footnote-334) hypocrisy[[436]](#footnote-335) and false religion.[[437]](#footnote-336)

Nebuchadnezzar used an orchestra as part of a sinister attempt to bludgeon and bewilder Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into idolatry. Scripture emphasizes this corrupt use of music by laboriously listing all the different instruments four times in the space of eleven verses.[[438]](#footnote-337) Some of those instruments were almost certainly foreign to the Hebrews. No doubt, the exotic music would have raised some pious eyebrows back in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, the biblical account is devoid of the suggestion that there was anything *intrinsically* decadent about the pagan music or the ‘weird’ instruments.

Music and pomp and public pressure were all employed, but the furnace held center stage. Possibly, the furnace was of a type never before mention in Scripture. However, new ways of doing things are not inherently evil. It was the godless use Nebuchadnezzar’s furnace was put to that was evil, not the furnace itself.

Perhaps the same could be said for Nebuchadnezzar’s unorthodox music.

It is sometimes asserted that when Satan was the highest angelic being God appointed him as chief musician. Note 4.5 in the Appendix explains how tenuous this argument is, but if the theory is right, it focuses on pre-fall Lucifer and so it says nothing about fallen music. On the contrary, if the Lord entrusted music to the most important arch-angel it yet again confirms God’s exalted view of music.

In this fallen world, abuse has always exceeded the proper use of music, yet Scripture gives it scant attention. Let’s follow the Bible’s example, taking far more delight in producing godly music than in attacking questionable music.

The identification of Satan with musical ability has made it a compliment in some circles to call a great virtuoso ‘the devil’. How ridiculous! Creator God is the Great Musician. And He is the Source of all power. It’s about time we stopped superstitiously fearing words played backwards and fell on our knees until the world fears words prayed upwards.

## CONCLUSION

‘Some to church repair,  
Not for the doctrine,  
But the music there,’ wrote Alexander Pope.

My congratulations to anyone so musically skilled: drawing to church, people who would otherwise have stayed away. I have failed to find Scriptural precedent for using music simply as a draw card. Yet if the rest of the church service is Spirit-empowered, surely great things will be accomplished.

Even more commendable, however, is music that itself has a life-changing effect upon its hearers. It is this latter type of music which Scripture highlights.

Perhaps I’ve missed something, but I fail to see how using music solely to draw a crowd, though perhaps effective, is any more spiritual than offering door prizes. Our Lord has a far higher view of the role of musicians within the body of Christ. We have seen from the very Word of God that music can help us edify ourselves, pray, worship, lead, teach, comfort, testify, prophesy, evangelize, defeat evil powers, express God-given emotion, and fulfil God’s command. We are inspired to employ this gift of God for the highest, holiest tasks.

‘What passion cannot music raise and quell?’ asked John Dryden.[[439]](#endnote-102) Music’s power to manipulate emotions is well known. This can be abused, yet it has a legitimate place in Christian music. Our study, however, has established that God intends music to be much more than a mere appeal to the emotions.

In fact, the Bible’s songs are so comprehensive that Luther had good reason to call the Psalter ‘a Bible in miniature’.

Our music may sway the body, but our lyrics should sway the mind. Like the Psalms, the words of our songs should draw deeply from Scriptural truths. These truths are the girders enabling our music to tower above that of the world.

To follow the example of the psalmist, however, we cannot stop here. Only God can effect a spiritual change in our hearers. Through faith and prayer we must allow Him to empower our songs.

Yet even this is not enough. Our Lord expects us not merely to sing our songs, nor even to pray them, but to live them, for the glory of God.

Finally, we must never lose sight of our highest calling – to direct our music to the One who alone deserves all praise.

‘Wagner’s music is better than it sounds’, wrote Bill Nye. We laugh. Sound is everything. But Christian music is another universe. Infinitely more than sound, Christian music is a divine message propelled by supernatural power to achieve humanly impossible goals. It will outshine civilization’s most spectacular glories. Its triumphs will endure for eternity.

And we can be part of it! We’ve examined God’s Word. We know that God delights in empowering music to score each of the goals we’ve mentioned. All that remains is for each of us to receive any personal directions the Lord has for us.

Knowing the general will of God makes it much easier to fine-tune our hearts so as to receive the Spirit’s specific guidance for each particular occasion. With a clearer perception of the uses of music endorsed by Scripture, we are now better equipped to set personal, Spirit-inspired goals for our music.

Spirit-led ministry is always Scriptural, yet gloriously unpredictable. Beware of the temptation to make it predictable by suppressing the Spirit’s leading!

Soldiers on a mission, are handed maps of the terrain. Then they are briefed concerning intelligence reports and their objectives. Without the briefing there would be chaos. But without the map, they’d get lost.

Scripture is your map. The Spirit briefs you, nominating your daily destination and filling in any personal details you need. The Spirit’s guidance is not a substitute for those too lazy to seriously study the Bible. Nor is the Bible an alternative for those too preoccupied to maintain a daily, intimate walk with God. Both are indispensable.

We’ve seen a little of the vast domain God’s general will encompasses. It is now over to you to seek the Lord for your personal, day by day course directions within this thrilling domain.

# CHAPTER 5: MUSIC’S POWER CONFIRMED BY HISTORY

We’ve now left the biblical era and are speeding towards the time indicated on our twentieth-century watches. The centuries blur by. Lest we overshoot the mark we begin to decelerate. Peering down, we can make out certain peaks in God’s use of music. Glimpsing a few of them as they whiz by will heighten our conviction that Spirit-empowered music is a tremendously versatile, God-given way of firing the infinite power of the cross into the lives of men and women.

Most of our peeps below the clouds will stop short of our era. This will help us see contemporary music in an historical perspective. Some of us seem to imagine that God has been on vacation from the closing of the New Testament until this century! And neither are our trials unique to our era. Consider, for example, Ira Sankey and his old-fashioned Gospel Songs.

Even a Christian heavy metal band has a greater kinship with D. L. Moody’s soloist, Ira Sankey (1840-1908) than most of us would imagine – including bitter opposition from seemingly pious sections of the church. His music was so much like the popular secular music of the day that, wrote one journalist, ‘. . . it is sometimes difficult to realize that what we hear is sacred song . . .’[[440]](#endnote-103)

Many lovers of classical music would regard Sankey’s simple gospel songs as lightweight, yet, according to one estimate, in just one year more people heard Sankey sing than listened to actual performances of Bach’s works during the entire nineteenth century. In the first fifty years, sales of his collection of hymns have been estimated at between fifty and eighty million copies.[[441]](#endnote-104)

Many of us locked into contemporary music would suspect that the secret of Sankey’s popularity was that people were starved of modern alternatives. That’s a factor I cannot entirely dismiss, but there are many other factors. Pollock observes that Sankey is judged harshly today because his song book was published before the snail of time could kill off the inferior songs and because we have heard only poor imitators of this great soloist.[[442]](#endnote-105) I would add that a song droned by a sparse congregation in a dead church service soars to a new dimension when sung enthusiastically by a packed church that really loves the Lord and enjoys the music.

Fashion, however, is probably the most significant factor in tainting our evaluation. Familiarity and the opinion of others do strange things to our tastes. Put aside the emotive issue of music and consider how we find clothing and hairstyle fashions of the past to be weird, inferior, laughable – until they again come in vogue in our own era! We rarely have objective reason for scorning past fashions.

We should try to not despise musical styles different to our own. For example, If your musical style is blasted by pious individuals, you have more in common with Moody’s singer, Ira Sankey, than you might realize.

## AN EVERYDAY MIRACLE

A London newspaper editor trudged through the rain. Suddenly, a hymn tune split the gloom. A boy was whistling. As the notes continued, the editor’s mind instinctively added the words as vividly and uncontrollably as if the whistling boy were shouting them:

‘My Jesus I love thee, I know Thou art mine . . .’

Grey skies suddenly lost their power to weigh him down. The editor’s spirit soared heavenwards. Sacred music had touched a weary heart. So moved was he that he later described the incident in his influential editorial.[[443]](#endnote-106)

The miracle hardly lies in the uniqueness of this experience. Rather, the astounding thing is that every day vast numbers of people from all walks of life are similarly transported by this powerful force.

The whole point of this chapter is that with few exceptions the events described, no matter how dramatic, can be repeated over and over.

Without faith surging through your spirit, your music is a rocket without fuel. With little faith, little happens in the spiritual realm. So, as with the rest of this book, let each incident in this chapter boost your faith in God’s ability to empower *your* music for His glory. Musical miracles are within your grasp. Empowered by believing prayer, your music can reproduce the results described.

## A MEMORY PILL

An elderly man described in a British newspaper the amazing ability of music to evoke memories. His son died in the war. On the last night they were together they sang a hymn.

Whenever he hears this particular hymn, wrote the man, he can vividly recall his son’s voice and features but, much to his dismay, the memory of his son dramatically fades as soon as the hymn ends.[[444]](#endnote-107)

## IT STICKS LIKE CHEWING GUM TO THE SOUL

Coerced into attending one of Moody’s meetings, he obtained a song book and sat down.

The singing of a particular hymn, however, was too much. He stormed out in disgust, declaring he had ‘never heard such twaddle’.

He opted to drown the memory with whisky. The first bar didn’t work, so he tried another hotel – and another. At home, with that exasperating ditty still clanging in his mind, he ripped the song out of the hymn book and threw it into the fire. But that ‘twaddle’ refused to die. It kept buzzing around in his head like an infuriating fly that just wouldn’t be shooed away. A nagging spouse would have been more considerate! Night and day it haunted and harassed him until finally he surrendered, and made peace with God.

Then a strange thing happened: that horrid song became the most precious in the book![[445]](#endnote-108)

A young lady was persuaded to attend a mission service. Apparently unmoved, she arose to leave as soon as the sermon finished. As she walked towards the door, however, she found herself gripped by the words the choir was singing. It hit her that she was the ‘lost one’ they were singing about. Before the night was over she was on her knees praying the words of the song and finding salvation.[[446]](#endnote-109)

## A GODLY ADDICTION

Thomas Hornblower Gill was brought up a Unitarian. However, he loved the Isaac’s Watts’ hymns. This gradually lured him away from his sect until finally he fully embraced orthodox Christianity.

Dr. Frederick Faber, a convert to Roman Catholicism lamented the fact that many Catholics delighted in Protestant hymns. He confessed that these very hymns had earlier held a spell-like influence over him, for years acting as ‘a counter-influence to very grave convictions’ and keeping him within the Protestant fold. ‘Even now,’ he wrote, these hymns ‘come back from time to time unbidden into the mind.’[[447]](#endnote-110)

## BURIED TREASURE

Two Americans were gambling in a drinking house near Hong Kong. Absent-mindedly, one of them started humming a tune as the other shuffled the cards. Suddenly, the dealer threw down the cards and demanded to know where Harry had learnt the tune.

‘I dunno,’ came the offhanded reply. No doubt, the melody which was surfacing had been buried in his hardened heart sometime during his childhood. Had he realized its religious connotations, he would probably have stifled his humming.

Deeply moved, the dealer recited some of the lines to Harry. It was a simple hymn, merely saying that each day brings us closer to our heavenly reward. Hardly earth-shaking. Within seconds, however, Harry found his sizeable gambling losses thrust into his hand. His former drinking partner began confessing his sins, pronounced an end to his drinking and gambling, and urged Harry to join him in his new commitment.

Eyewitness, Col. Russel Conwell later received a letter from one of them confirming that the repentance of both men was genuine and permanent.[[448]](#endnote-111)

All because of a half-forgotten hymn tune. Those two men owe their spiritual lives to the power of music.

## IT GIVES WORDS WINGS

In contrast to the above incident, a Jewess owed her conversion to a hymn’s lyrics without even hearing the tune.[[449]](#endnote-112) She came across a parcel wrapped in printed paper. The words of Isaac Watts’ hymn caught her eye and later captured her heart:

‘Not all the blood of beasts   
On Jewish altar slain . . .’

‘Music wasn’t involved in this conversion,’ someone objects. My view is quite the opposite. It was as a hymn that the words were published. I suggest that only because the words were wedded to music could they have multiplied sufficiently to reach the lady. As a mere poem, far fewer copies would have been printed. Music acted as a catalyst, increasing the demand for the words and thus silently propelled them to the Jewess.

James Montgomery said his hymn ‘For ever with the Lord’ had gained him more favorable comments than anything he had ever written, except for his work on prayer. Yet for quarter of a century it merely gathered dust until a tune helped it receive recognition.[[450]](#endnote-113)

## THE CHRISTIAN ALTERNATIVE TO SPINACH

If only Popeye had realized the power of Christian music. He could have had his incredible strength without assaulting his taste buds with slime-colored snail-food.

Rev. Manton Smith hired a rowing boat to visit an island on the west coast of Scotland. All went well until they tried to row back. A contrary wind made progress extremely difficult. Hart’s account of the incident[[451]](#endnote-114) suggests there may have been some danger.

Rev. Smith began singing an old gospel song to the oarsman. The words, written years earlier for their spiritual meaning fitted the circumstances so well that they could have been written for that very occasion:

‘Light in the darkness, sailor, day is at hand! . . .  
Pull for the shore, sailor, pull for the shore!  
Heed not the rolling waves, but bent to the oar.’

The writer, P. P. Bliss, would no doubt have been surprised to see his words taken so literally. Nevertheless, when at last they reached the shore, the boatman declared, ‘It was the song that did it!’

If this incident seems trivial, you might be more impressed by the effect this same hymn had on shipwreck victims forced to row a badly leaking lifeboat two hundred miles in freezing conditions. Of the fourteen men, one woman and a young child, six died before reaching the safety of the Falklands. For the last seven days they had no food at all. Survivors claimed the hymn inspired them, filling them with the courage and strength to press on day after day.[[452]](#endnote-115)

Still dubious? Good! That’s all the excuse I need to share two more, strikingly similar instances when a godly song physically strengthened people in perilous circumstances.

Emily Beck was returning from a holiday in Cuba when her ship, the Morro Castle, caught fire. Terrified, she obeyed the order to don a life-jacket and plunged into the sea. At that critical moment a hymn flooded her mind. Though numb with the cold and often near unconsciousness, she sang that hymn of devotion hour after hour. She afterwards testified how, like perhaps nothing else could, that song sustained her until she was finally rescued.[[453]](#endnote-116)

Leaping flames forced passengers of another ill-fated ship, the Seawamhaka, to hurl themselves into turbulent seas. One of them, upon reaching his struggling wife, told her to hold on to him. This she did until, nearing total exhaustion, she cried that she couldn’t hold on any longer.

In desperation, the man suggested they sing ‘Rock of Ages.’ Soon, other drowning passengers caught up the hymn, finding fresh hope and strength. With almost superhuman endurance, they continued singing until help arrived. A survivor claimed that more than one life had been saved by a hymn that day.[[454]](#endnote-117)

Convinced? What a pity! I’d love to tell you about the time John Wesley, wanting to sail despite a severe storm, reversed the decision of fearful fishermen by singing them a hymn.[[455]](#endnote-118) I could write about the time sacred music strengthened . . . but let’s move on to yet another aspect of this powerful force.

## MORE LIVES SAVED

One night, during the American Civil War, a depressed, on-duty sentry sang a hymn, unaware that an enemy soldier was lurking in the shadows. A musket was poised. The sentry’s heart was in its sights.

‘Cover my defenseless head . . .,’ sang the sentry. Touched by the song, the soldier lowered his weapon and slunk away.

Eighteen years later, when the two men chanced to meet in peacetime, the ex-sentry was still singing this same hymn. Upon recognizing the voice, the former enemy confessed. Only then did he learn that he owed his life to a hymn. The life that had been saved was none other than Ira Sankey’s. [[456]](#endnote-119)

With menacing spears, hostile natives surrounded E. P. Scott. He had been warned against going there alone, but these primitives needed Christ. They had never even heard of the One who had died for them.

What could he do? He didn’t even know their language. Closing his eyes in prayer, he raised his violin and sang. ‘All hail the power of Jesus’ name . . . Let every kindred, every tribe . . . to Him all majesty ascribe.’

He opened his eyes. Every spear had been lowered. Brown cheeks were wet with tears. The missionary was welcomed into the tribe and for two and a half fruitful years shared with them the love of Christ. Hundreds were converted.[[457]](#endnote-120)

Scottish evangelist, Duncan Matthison, was working in the Crimea. Conditions were appalling and no end to the siege was in sight.

He gave half a sovereign to a shivering soldier whose bare toes were poking through his boots. The soldier could now buy some much-needed boots. Thanking him, he told the missionary he was no longer the man he was yesterday. He confided that he was so overcome by the oppressive circumstances that he had been about to kill himself when he heard someone singing a hymn. It had transformed his whole outlook.

It turned out that Mr. Matthison had been the singer. As soon as he discovered this, the grateful soldier, with tears in his eyes, returned the half-sovereign, saying, ‘Never, sir, can I take it from you after what you have been the means of doing for me.’[[458]](#endnote-121)

## and another

While a young executive was writing a suicide note he decided to flick the radio switch. Over the waves came the words:

‘God understands your heartache,

He knows the bitter pain;

O, trust Him in the darkness

You cannot trust in vain.’

Like me, you have probably heard similar stories, but here’s the rub: ‘If that had been a preacher,’ said the man later, ‘I would have turned him off, but that song . . . broke me.’[[459]](#endnote-122)

## A HEALING BALM

A man had lost his speech as a result of shell shock suffered during the war. One Sunday, he got so caught up with a congregation singing Psalm 100 that he actually joined them, thus regaining his speech.[[460]](#endnote-123)

A lady, stricken with tuberculosis, for months appeared to be making no moves toward recovery. In her weakened, discouraged condition, even thinking, let alone reading or needlework seemed too much effort. But a song reached her. She overheard a little girl singing to her dolly, ‘Jesus bids us shine.’

It proved to be the turning point. She later testified how this simple song transformed her attitude and set her on a steady path to full health and joy.[[461]](#endnote-124)

On October 18th., 1966, Mrs. I. D. Bull was involved in a serious car accident. A pastors’ conference was quickly notified and they started interceding. While travelling unconscious in an ambulance, Mrs. Bull saw what looked like a high class orchestra playing what she calls ‘the most exquisite music one could ever wish to hear.’ The tune seemed new, but the style approximated to classical music and seemed to be within the capabilities of an earthly orchestra.

In hospital, Mrs. Bull was diagnosed as having three cracked ribs and injury to her spine and neck, in addition to concussion. Pastor Peter Vacca visited her and prayed that there would be no bone injury and that the x-rays would be perfectly clear. Despite the initial diagnosis, the words of the pastor’s prayer proved to be the exact words used by the doctor after examining the x-rays.

Mrs. Bull was discharged with instructions to lie flat for three days and warnings that she would suffer extreme headaches and vomiting. Instead, she immediately travelled one hundred and forty miles by car and experienced none of the predicted ill effects.

Sister Bull believes the orchestra she saw symbolized the pastors at the conference harmonizing in prayer on her behalf as she travelled to hospital.[[462]](#endnote-125)

Mrs. Bull may not necessarily have seen a heavenly orchestra, but how wonderful of the Creator of music to give such a precious experience to someone in the midst of such a traumatic ordeal. There may also have been great curative power in that music, both psychologically and cerebrally.

I suggest that in response to prayer, the Lord dramatically healed this lady and that the great Physician elected to use music to affect at least part of this healing.

John Cornthwaite asked for special prayer that his wife might be able to speak with their son on Mother’s Day. Val had not seen Peter for years, except through a slit in the venetian blinds. She was so incurable and so chronically ill that even her doctor went for years without seeing her. It was believed the trauma of moving her to hospital would kill her. She could not endure the slightest noise, could not raise her head above her pillow, could not be moved to another room, could not read, could speak only a sentence or two and then be too exhausted to speak for another four hours, could not even say the Lord’s prayer in her mind without breaking it into eight parts. Space forbids an adequate description of what she had endured over the previous nine years.

Early in the morning the day before Mother’s Day, the Lord miraculously touched her. She was able to speak with her son on Mother’s Day and do many things for the first time in years. She was, nonetheless, still bedridden.

Three months later, at 5.30 in the morning the Lord visited Val again. He told her to ask John to put on music. Until then, music had been too much for her brain to cope with. John put on a tape of Evie Tornquist singing of Jesus’ unfailing love. He walked back to Val and knelt by the side of the bed. They had not listened to music together for over nine years. Tears of joy streamed down their faces. Suddenly, the volume jumped. *That’s strange* . . . The sound remained at this level, then surged louder still. ‘You’re not touching the volume control!’ yelled Val, astonished. The room was filled with what to both of them seemed unnaturally loud music – louder than anything they had ever experienced (and John used to work in a disco). Not since he bought that high quality stereo years earlier, nor in the years since, has it ever wavered in volume.

The next thing John knew, Val, still on her bed, had thrown off her quilt and her legs were moving slowly and gracefully to the music. ‘The Lord is moving my legs!’ she shouted as her legs continued to move involuntarily. They stared wide-eyed at those white emaciated legs that had hung useless for years. All the muscle had long since wasted away, leaving behind two knees that looked enormous relative to the rest of the skin-covered bones she called legs. And now those legs were moving!

After this the Lord started to build up her muscles. Val would get a feeling that certain parts of her body would be exercised. She would switch on the stereo and in time with the music those parts would begin moving, as if manipulated by an invisible physiotherapist. Every day, healing hands that were neither seen nor felt would exercise various muscles – arms, legs, neck – each moving without Val’s conscious control in graceful time to the music.

John and Val are now my treasured friends. Their amazing story has all the elements of a best-seller and they have approached me about devoting an entire book to their miracle.

## THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY

If anyone reminds me of a modern apostle Paul, it is Rev. V. A. Thampy of India. Many times, his evangelistic zeal has exposed him to suffering and great danger.

Early in his Christian experience he was stoned and left for dead. While unconscious, what seemed like angelic voices sang in his mind, ‘I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back’.

If that’s too ordinary for you, wait until you hear this: Rev. Thampy insists he had never heard that hymn before. He came from a pagan family and was startled when he later heard Christians singing the song he had assumed was known only to angels. If God uses human music in churches and such music is precious to Him, why should He not use it when human singers are unavailable?

Whatever the explanation, a severely persecuted young man regained consciousness, overawed by a song and determined that there would be ‘no turning back’.

New convert, Martha Thompson, was filled with rapturous joy upon the singing of the closing song in one of John Wesley’s meetings. Afterwards, at her work she was heard constantly singing this hymn until finally she was committed to a lunatic asylum for her ‘abnormal’ behavior. Weeks later, she managed to get a letter to Wesley, who secured her release.

One would have thought this dreadful experience would have ended her attachment to this particular song. Yet, decades later, upon her death-bed she gathered her children and grandchildren and requested they sing this very hymn. Not even the horror of an eighteenth century asylum had been able to diminish the blessing associated with that hymn.[[463]](#endnote-126)

In anguish, the crew of a British battleship helplessly watched their comrades suffer greatly on the shore at Gallipoli. Were the ship to fire at the enemy, they would kill their own men.

One of the crew began singing a well-known chorus, ‘For you I am praying.’ Soon others joined in until, even above the sound of the battle, the melody reached the fighting men.

Later, a horribly wounded lad, his legs shot away, was being attended to. Despite his pain, all he could talk about was the effect that chorus had upon him and his fellow soldiers.[[464]](#endnote-127)

## MUSIC’S CONTRIBUTION TO REVIVAL

When an Englishman asked if the Welsh revival would reach London, Evan Roberts replied with a smile, ‘Can you sing?’[[465]](#endnote-128) ‘Such marvelous singing, quite extempore, could only be created by a supernatural power, and that power the divine Holy Spirit,’ wrote eyewitness, David Matthews. ‘No choir, no conductor, no organ – just spontaneous, unctionized soul-singing . . .’[[466]](#endnote-129)

From the song of the morning stars celebrating creation’s inception[[467]](#footnote-338) to the fanfare trumpeting Christ’s triumphant return,[[468]](#footnote-339) music seems divinely ordained to usher in new eras. Since the previous chapter, you have had a chance to ponder this notion. I won’t attempt a full list, but have you considered: the song of Moses composed when Israel entered a new epoch by escaping Egypt;[[469]](#footnote-340) the music of the prophetic bands;[[470]](#footnote-341) David’s total restructuring of sacred music in preparation for the building of the temple;[[471]](#footnote-342) the re-establishment of temple music during the reformations initiated by godly kings;[[472]](#footnote-343) the lack of music during the exile,[[473]](#footnote-344) in contrast to the Jews’ return to Israel ‘with singing;’[[474]](#footnote-345) the songs heralding Christ’s birth?[[475]](#footnote-346) Then, in the outpouring of the Spirit in the church’s earliest history, there’s the use of new terms (‘spiritual songs,’ singing ‘with the spirit’) to describe what must certainly have been a new type of song.[[476]](#footnote-347)

This correlation between new moves of God and new songs continues outside of the Bible, climaxing in the prophesied ‘new song’ in the age to come.[[477]](#footnote-348) Dr. Schaff notes that not only were the great revivals of the Reformation, Pietism, Moravianism and Methodism ‘sung as well as preached,’ the leaders of each of these revivals ‘were themselves hymnists’.[[478]](#endnote-130) Again, the founding of the Salvation Army meant the development of new musical expressions of old truths, and the founder himself contributed to the movement’s songs. Moody’s enormous influence in Great Britain was inseparably linked with the introduction of Gospels songs. Until then, especially in Scotland, anything but metrical versions of the Psalms was banned in very many churches.

In a Northern Ireland revival in the mid-nineteen century, music played an unexpected role. The move of God so affected the crime rate that the police formed quartets and sang in churches in an attempt to find something to do![[479]](#endnote-131)

Far from being an insignificant consequence of new moves of God, however, music was often in the forefront, actually helping to carry the revival. Brown and Butterworth[[480]](#endnote-132) strongly support an oft-quoted observation of Coleridge that Luther’s hymns accomplished as much for the Reformation as did his translation of the Bible into German. A moment’s reflection will confirm the enormity of this statement. A return to the Bible was at the very heart of the Reformation. Moreover, Luther’s Bible translation has been called ‘one of the greatest human achievements of all time’.[[481]](#endnote-133) Yet music is seen to have rivalled even this as a means of spreading the Reformation.

Even without the wisdom of hindsight, the centrality of music to the reformation was widely recognized by contemporaries. ‘We seek poets everywhere,’ wrote Luther about the importance he placed upon obtaining suitable songs. On the other side, Roman Catholic monks said, ‘Luther has done us more harm by his songs than his sermons’.[[482]](#endnote-134)

Likewise, the songs of the Wesleyan revival are claimed to have had a greater impact than even the sermons and Biblical expositions.[[483]](#endnote-135)

New moves of God have generally had songs which were not only of recent origin, but were of a new type. Thus, Dr. A. E. Gregory[[484]](#endnote-136) believes he can see in many of Wesley’s hymns a style designed to arouse the attention of casual passers-by. Open-air meetings played an important part in the Wesleyan revival.

Salvation Army songs, with their military symbolism and different tempo, fitted this movement’s needs better than any other type.

For the Charismatic Movement, Scripture choruses, markedly different from hymns, were an ideal vehicle for introducing a new form of worship and a renewed emphasis upon taking Scripture at face value.

In the hands of God, music can not only transform individual lives, it can shape entire movements and fan the fires of mass revival.

## THE ACID TEST OF TIME

Today, few people who sing his songs are aware that Isaac Watts had significant abilities in addition to hymn-writing.[[485]](#endnote-137) His songs have outlasted his other achievements. As illustrated by the following quotes, there is little in the whole of Christendom that can rival the durability and worth of good music.

When delivering his brother’s obituary, John Wesley declared that Charles’ ‘. . . least praise was his talent for poetry . . .’ Many who have studied his life agree, yet it is for this very ability that posterity remembers this remarkable man.[[486]](#endnote-138)

James Montgomery, a poet of uncommon ability, was asked which of his works would ‘live’. ‘None,’ came the reply, ‘except for a few of my hymns.’ At the time, few would have believed him, yet his prediction proved remarkably accurate.[[487]](#endnote-139) On another occasion, Montgomery wrote that he would rather be the anonymous author of a few hymns that were permanently embraced by God’s people than be ranked with the greatest poets the world has seen.[[488]](#endnote-140)

According to Lord Shaftesbury, if Ira Sankey had done nothing but teach the hymn ‘Hold the fort,’ he had bestowed upon the British Empire a blessing of incalculable worth.[[489]](#endnote-141)

Henry Ward Beecher said he would rather have written the hymn *Jesus, Lover of my soul* ‘than to have the fame of all the kings that ever sat on the earth. It is more glorious. It has more power in it. That hymn will go on singing until the last trump brings forth the angel band; and then, I think, it will mount up on some lip to the very presence of God.’[[490]](#endnote-142)

Moody’s musical limitations were such that he was moved to tears by what he imagined to be his daughter’s-in-law rendition of *Rock of Ages*. She had mischievously played a soulful rendition of *Yankee-Doodle*! Yet this gifted evangelist was not so easily fooled about the power of music to out-run the spoken word. When asked why he placed so much emphasis upon getting his audience to sing heartily, he indicated that whilst they would soon forget what he said, Gospel songs would have a more permanent impact.[[491]](#endnote-143)

## SOUL-WINNING POWER

Fanny Crosby’s prayer was that her hymns would play a key role in the conversion of one million people. Many believe her target has already been passed, and the work of her songs is still far from over. Her remarkable ministry did not commence until the age of forty-four when she wrote her first hymn. 8,000 more were to follow![[492]](#endnote-144)

## STRANGER THAN FICTION

Dobry couldn’t pay the rent. The German peasant and his family were about to be cast into the snow. After prayer, they in faith sang a hymn, an English version of which contains the line ‘And all things serve Thy might.’

Before completing the song, there was a tap on the window. It was a pet raven. In its beak was a costly ring. With his pastor’s help, the ring was traced to King Stanislaus. Upon hearing this amazing story, the king richly rewarded the honest peasant and built him a house. Inscribed over the door were the words of the hymn and a representation of a raven with a ring in its bill: an apt testimony to the way a hymn, sung in faith to the Lord of Creation, was so remarkably fulfilled.[[493]](#endnote-145)

## EDGE OF ETERNITY

Luther was inspired to commence hymn-writing by two young martyrs singing praises to God while being burnt alive for their reformed faith.[[494]](#endnote-146)

According to Beattie, the playing of *Nearer my God to The*e’ enabled passengers on the ‘Titanic’ to die with dignity.[[495]](#endnote-147) Some researchers dispute this particular instance, but the role of music in comforting countless dying Christians is beyond dispute. Suffice to say that reports, a few of which are alluded to in chapter two, suggest that God Himself sometimes applies this refreshing balm – caressing the minds of His beloved with heavenly strains as life ebbs away.

## BODILY BIO-CHEMICAL CHANGES

Music can reduce susceptibility to hypothermia and boost the body’s immune system. It has also demonstrably improved both the quality and quantity of milk produced by lactating mothers in third-world countries. It has been reported to ease hunger pains in malnourished children and there is strong evidence that music can actually lower infant mortality rates.

The mechanism by which these little-recognized powers of music operate is fully understood – money! The dramatic changes referred to above were accomplished, not by some mysterious force, but by the use of music in fund-raising. I trust that your interest in the relief of human suffering has not waned now that the link between music and the wondrous results seem less astonishing.

Handel understood. The first performance of his *Messiah* secured the release of 142 people from debtor’s prison. Subsequent performances not only – in the view of Myers – probably did more to convince multitudes of the reality of God than ‘all the theological works ever written,’ but the proceeds fed, clothed and housed multitudes.[[496]](#endnote-148)

## COUNTER-ATTACK

Like everything else he does, Satan’s use of music is much less powerful than God’s. Nevertheless, if we let him, he will use this force for his own perverted ends. So one role of Christian music is to displace worldly music. This use of music is not some crack-pot idea dreamed up in the last decade. It was even one of Luther’s motivations in writing hymns. He wished to provide youths with something to counter the corrupting influence of what he called ‘amorous and carnal songs’.[[497]](#endnote-149)

## SINGING SAINTS SMASH SATAN’S STRONGHOLDS

With feeble voice, I’ve warbled a few notes of the almost endless anthem of the astounding things God has so far accomplished through music. It’s hard to stop! Our tiny sample could be multiplied a thousand times. I long, like the very heavens,[[498]](#footnote-349) to declare day after day the glorious works of God. Yet, for the purposes of this book, there’s no need. We’ve cited enough to know that, wielded by God, music is a most formidable weapon against the devil’s strongholds.

We dare not, however, treat this powerful force like the latest toy. As Jimmy Owens discovered, even mature Christian musicians can be mesmerized by its heady surge and be swept into ungodly ego trips.[[499]](#endnote-150) This nitroglycerine of the mind and emotions must be handled with fear and trembling.

The forces of evil are unmoved by musicians ‘playing church’. But when musicians are locked into the power of God, Satan shudders. One observation that should help us keep sober is the fact that many of the instances in this chapter would have poorly performed. I don’t, for instance, know of many singers likely to be in best voice while treading water in the mid-Atlantic.

Inspired by God’s past glories, your musical ministry can become a significant part of the unfinished symphony of God’s musical miracles. We’ve seen music’s power confirmed by heaven, by Scripture, and now by history. But, musician, the Spirit won’t rest until music’s power is confirmed in *your* ministry.

# CHAPTER 6: God’s music God’s WAY

We’ve touched down. An inspiring voyage through time and other dimensions has ended. If we let the memories remain, we’ll never be the same again.

We plant our feet on the crumbling pearl we temporarily call home. It’s time to grapple with the problems faced by musicians residing on this polluted planet.

The smog down here is so thick that many of us can’t even see some of the issues. Others of us are so wearied by earthly toil that we prefer to side-step them.

I would be honored if the Lord enables me to help penetrate the gloom and shoulder for you much of the burden associated with facing these enigmas head-on.

We’ll commence with issues we often fail to even identify. Before we do, however, let me explain where we are headed.

We have seen (and I will provide even more examples later) that throughout history supernatural moves of God in music have occurred through divine sovereignty, but for music miracles to occur with greater frequency requires two things of us:

(1) to use music God’s way

(2) to have the faith to receive divine intervention in our music.

Around these twin goals this book revolves, with the conviction that when fully appropriated into our lives these strategies will bring us to such intimacy with God and His power that our music will be lifted into a higher realm of the Spirit for His glory.

With these two goals in the sight we are mining to great depth the solid rock of Biblical revelation and, for possible confirmation, venturing beyond that security, sifting through every possible line of evidence right to the precarious edge of human experience. As you already know from the title, this chapter, like chapter 4, is one of several wrestling with the challenge of using God’s music God’s way.

Please continue to intersperse your reading with prayer to the One who makes my understanding look infinitesimal.

## EXTRA-BIBLICAL SONGS

It was the American Civil War. Rev. Rankin bent over a critically wounded soldier. Seeking to minister to him, the chaplain asked if there was anything he could do. The unexpected reply hit the reverend like a sickening blow. He was asked to sing *Jesus, Lover of my soul*.

He knew the song, but never in his life had he sung it. His United Presbyterian Church taught that only psalm-singing was acceptable to God. A chill swept his spine. Suddenly, the folly of shallow Bible study was all too apparent. The soldier was but seconds from death. It was too late now to feverishly scour the Word for an authoritative answer.[[500]](#endnote-151)

But we have no such excuse.

Most of us have mindlessly accepted the practice of singing songs which are not found in God’s hymn book – the book of Psalms. Few Christians have bothered to seek God’s thoughts on substituting human inventions for His songs.

Without prayerful investigation of God’s Word, all assumptions are potentially dangerous; even ones that seem too obvious to require divine confirmation.[[501]](#footnote-350) History confirms that a church custom may be widely accepted without having God’s endorsement.

‘But,’ you protest, ‘we’ve seen in the previous chapter the mighty way God has used non-biblical songs.’ Yes, and that’s strong evidence for using ‘man-made’ songs today, but it falls short of conclusive proof.

Though it’s hopelessly out of context, I’m reminded of Acts 17:30:

‘The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now He commands all men everywhere to repent.’

No doubt an historical search would uncover Christian slave-owners mightily blessed of God. That doesn’t mean the Lord would let me act in like manner!

New Christians, cigarettes drooping from their mouths, have witnessed to the saving power of Jesus Christ in the only way they know – in speech peppered with foul language. It would be hypocritical to be shocked by the Spirit empowering such witnessing. If God doesn’t use flawed vessels and imperfect means, you and I don’t have a chance. Yet that doesn’t imply divine approval of the method.

God even prophesied through the man who sent Jesus to the cross.[[502]](#footnote-351)

If not even church tradition guarantees divine approval of our methods, neither will godly motives. We have noted the disastrous consequences of David’s minor deviation from Scripture’s ark-carrying instructions.[[503]](#footnote-352) The purity of David’s and Uzzah’s motives did not insulate them from God’s judgment.[[504]](#footnote-353)

It is imperative that we do God’s work, God’s way.

You would brand me a heretic if I claimed a hymn was as inspired as a Biblical Psalm. We readily admit that Biblical songs are of unsurpassable worth. We recognize that the Lord has gone to great lengths to provide and preserve the bountiful collection of uniquely inspired songs found in Scripture. So is it blasphemous to even consider press-ganging lesser songs into Christian service?

As musicians, we dare not proceed without resolving such a fundamental issue. Rather than risk offending our Lord, let’s sift God’s Word in search of clues relevant to this topic. As we proceed, we will pick up some more fascinating insights from that inexhaustible goldmine we call the Bible. (I admit it. Before leaving the Biblical era, I smuggled out a copy of God’s Word. I’m not going to be left groping in the dark for anyone.)

## THE EVIDENCE

Surprisingly, the clearest confirmation comes from Paul’s reference to singing ‘with the Spirit’.[[505]](#footnote-354) The context reveals that this refers to singing in words unintelligible to the hearers.

Obviously, these unintelligible words appear nowhere in Scripture. And yet, in his inspired epistle Paul declares, ‘I will sing with the Spirit.’ So God approves, even though the lyrics are not recorded in the Bible.

Scriptural reference to ‘psalms, hymns and spiritual songs’[[506]](#footnote-355) is difficult to interpret with definite accuracy. Commentators have often regarded ‘spiritual songs’ as synonymous with singing unknown words ‘with the Spirit’. But even without such precise identification, it is most unlikely that a writer would use in succession three separate terms if he simply meant the book of Psalms. Surely, at least one of the terms must refer to songs not found in Scripture.

1 Corinthians 14:26 may also hint at divinely approved extra-Biblical songs:

‘When you come together, each one of you has a hymn, or a teaching, a tongue, a revelation, or an interpretation.’

Delling, in Kittel’s Theological Dictionary, says this ‘obviously’ refers to a song composed and sung by the person in the gathering.[[507]](#endnote-152) In other words, an extra-Biblical song. Notice how ‘a hymn’ is placed side by side with gifts of the Spirit. Some commentators even wonder whether this implies the song is a gift of the Spirit.

Another line of evidence is found in the Bible’s repeated plea for ‘a new song’.

So the Bible supports our hunch: at least in principle, God endorses the singing of lyrics not preserved in Scripture. This, however, has been hotly debated at various times and in various parts of the Christian Church.

Rev. Rankin sang the hymn to that soldier. Before he had finished, the man was dead. But the light on the soldier’s face amazed him. He arose, an eyewitness to God’s ability to empower songs not found in the Psalter. We can now complement that subjective evaluation with reassuring hints from the authoritative Word of God. We have a scriptural basis for affirming that a divine blessing upon such music is neither exceptional, nor a reluctant accommodation to the weakness of man.

Perhaps we should be cautious, however, about a wholesale musical rejection of the Bible’s songs, in favor of man-made ones. It is disturbingly easy to imagine we revere Scripture, while our behavior suggests otherwise.

Do our actions imply we regard God’s Word as a dull, irrelevant museum-piece?

## THE USE OF NON-CHRISTIAN MATERIAL

The Salvation Army is renowned for its total opposition to alcohol. This church offers full membership only to strict teetotalers and non-smokers. Yet so strong is their conviction that secular melodies can be used for the glory of God, that Salvationists often sing their hymns to such tunes as, ‘It was my first cigar’ and ‘Here’s to good old whisky, drink it down’.[[508]](#endnote-153)

Whilst most of us would approve of Christians composing their own songs, the Christian adaptation of *ungodly* tunes or lyrics causes many more qualms.

Moved by a lady’s rendition of ‘an Indian air,’ Alexander Young wrote a children’s hymn. So popular did it become that was translated into many languages. Though praised by multitudes of dedicated Christians, most have been oblivious to the assertion that the tune being engraved upon tender minds is none other than a Hindu melody used in idolatrous worship.[[509]](#endnote-154)

The above are obviously dramatic examples. Even so, an amazing proportion of the music many of us assume to be Christian, is actually of non-Christian origin. Luther employed secular music for hymns.[[510]](#endnote-155) If all such music were to be purged, most churches would feel the loss. I’d be thrilled if this fact motivates Christian composers. Meanwhile, however, we are stuck with this dilemma. Should we use secular music at all?

## SACRED PSALMS WITH SECULAR TUNES?

The titles of Psalm 8, 81 and 84 contain the Hebrew word *gittith* This could mean these Psalms were set, not just to a secular tune, but one from the pagan (Philistine) town of Gath. If so, we have clear, Scriptural support for using secular tunes in the highest Christian worship.

But, alas, it is not without reason that several Bible versions leave this word untranslated. Technical musical terms in the Bible are notoriously difficult to translate. Not even Jewish translators in the second century BC seem to have understood them! Scholars can only guess – and their guesses have been many and varied.[[511]](#footnote-356)

Other possible tune names appear in the titles of many Psalms.[[512]](#footnote-357) These could be secular melodies. For instance, ‘Do Not Destroy’[[513]](#footnote-358) may have been the tune of a vintage song.[[514]](#footnote-359) However, this is only an educated guess.

So these terms are frustrating! Potentially, they could be very illuminating, but without further discoveries they tease us.

## ANOINTED DANCE-HALL MUSIC

A study of the biblical adaptation of pagan lyrics will give us greater confidence in the use of non-Christian melodies. Before proceeding to this, however, let me illustrate the power of this practice.

Old-time Methodist preacher, Hodgson Casson couldn’t sleep. Unable to tolerate the din any longer, he burst into the dance saloon, seized a fiddle from a stunned player and proceeded to put new words to the dance music that had been keeping him awake. Soon, people were kneeling before the Savior Casson sang about.

Music which, just moments before, was moving dancing feet was now bending penitent knees. Such is the power of a musician sold out to God.

That night a new hymn was added to the Christian Church. More significantly, new names were added to the Lamb’s Book of Life. The tune wasn’t new, but the reverence in that tavern certainly was. A man had converted dance-hall music. God had converted dancers. Casson changed their song. God changed their hearts.[[515]](#endnote-156)

## DANGER

Bruce Olson was excited when at last one Motilone Indian surrendered to Christ. As months slipped by, however, without Bobby sharing his new found faith with others, Olson became increasingly agitated. He was sure Bobby could evangelize the South American tribe far more effectively than a foreigner.

A Festival of Arrows was announced, the only occasion when all Motilones gathered together. One of its features was singing contests in which participants would sing for as long as they could of legends or news events.

A chief challenged Bobby to a song. Delighted, Bobby began to sing, the chief copying him line after line. ‘Jesus was incarnated into man,’ sang Bobby, with the chief repeating the line. ‘He has walked our trails. He is God yet we can know him.’

Other men engaged in their own contests began to hear and fell silent. All attention was riveted on Bobby’s wailing song as though life itself depended on it.

Writes Olson, ‘Inside me, however, a spiritual battle was raging. I found myself hating the song. It seemed so heathen. The music, chanted in a strange minor key, sounded like witch music. It seemed to denigrate the Gospel. . . .’

On and on went the song.

‘“Can’t you see the reality he is giving them?” the Lord seemed to ask me.

‘“But Lord, why am I so repulsed by it?”

‘Then I saw that it was because I was sinful. I could love the Motilone way of life, but when it came to spiritual matters I thought I had the only way. But my way wasn’t necessarily God’s way. God was saying, “I too love the Motilone way of life. . . . And I’m going to tell them about my Son in *my* way.”‘

Bobby’s song continued for fourteen hours. When they finally finished the chief said, ‘I too want to suspend myself in Jesus. I want to pull his blood over my deception.’

Continues Olson,

‘That night a spiritual revolution swept over the people. No one rejected the news about Jesus. Everyone wanted Him to take them over the horizon. There was tremendous jubilation. Sometimes it was quiet and people would talk to each other in little groups. At other times the joy would break into spontaneous singing.’[[516]](#endnote-157)

What if Olson, even by a disapproving look, had silenced Bobby?

A word of caution, however. Though we have established that musical ability is from God, it does not logically follow that, lyrics aside, every musical style must be of God. And although some worldly music can be reclaimed for the cause of Christ, this does not automatically imply that all secular music is capable of such use.

Let me use two other gifts of God to demonstrate the distinction between what is able to be used in God’s service and what is not. The world can misuse God’s gift of sex, turning it into sin and yet that exact behavior could be placed in a godly, marital context and glorify our Maker. However, this gift can be not merely misused but so perverted (e.g. bestiality) that there is no acceptable context in which that perversion could be used for the glory of God. As another example, consider God’s gift of speech, something that is so much of God that His Son is call the Word. We will confirm in the next few paragraphs that words, even sentences, used by pagans can be put into a Christian context that pleases God. Some words, however, (e.g. vulgar swear words) are so perverse that there is probably no context in which they can be used for the glory of God.

I don’t know if any music falls into this category, I just warn of the theoretical possibility. I also alert you to the greater likelihood of there being music which, while not intrinsically anti-God, has such evil or sensual connotations in the minds of some people as to present a spiritual danger to them. Then there are those who conclude that if Christians can play a certain type of music then they can fill their minds with the worldly equivalent. More than two entire New Testament chapters are devoted to the care we should exercise in ensuring we do not risk a bother’s or sister’s spiritual welfare by doing something which causes us no qualms of conscience.[[517]](#footnote-360) There are people who would not dare touch alcohol for fear of offending a ‘weaker brother’ and yet spare no thought for the casualties their music might produce. Musicians worthy of the name of Christ are ministers of the Gospel, servants of the body of Christ, not egotists intent of having a good time or establishing their own rights.

## PAGAN PARALLELS TO THE PSALMS

With our knowledge of ancient tunes being so slight, it is hardly surprising that a search for the Biblical use of pagan or secular songs is more productive when we examine the lyrics.

Some divinely inspired psalms bear striking similarities to Canaanite and Akkadian psalms. Many scholars even believe Psalm 29 was originally a Canaanite hymn. Whilst this might be going too far, it does seem that songs used in Baal worship have strongly influenced the form of some of the Bible’s psalms.

The full extent of Scripture’s use of heathen works is not known. It certainly goes beyond the book of Psalms. Paul’s famous sermon on Mars Hill contains pagan poetry,[[518]](#footnote-361) as does two of his letters.[[519]](#footnote-362)

So if expressions in a pop song, or even from a non-Christian cult, happen to be particularly applicable to the true God, we apparently have Biblical support for adopting them.

When night club singer Chico Holiday first became a Christian, he continued singing just as before, with minor word changes. ‘Sweet Caroline’ for example became ‘Sweet Lord of mine’. The club owner allowed it because Chico became a curiosity and the number of patrons actually increased!

An older example is found in Charles Wesley’s:

‘Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of Heaven, to earth come down,  
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling . . .’

These lines were apparently influenced by the contemporary ‘song of Venus’ in Dryden’s ‘King Arthur’:

‘Fairest isle, all isles excelling’,  
Seat of pleasures and of loves,  
Venus here will choose her dwelling . . .’[[520]](#endnote-158)

However, the limits of permissibility must not be confused with the norm. We must be wary about our license becoming someone else’s downfall. And when adapting, we would have to be rigorous about correct theology.

There seems no justification in deliberately exposing oneself to potentially harmful non-Christian material, in search of rare possibilities. It is far more profitable to devote that time to seeking God’s inspiration and searching His Word.[[521]](#footnote-363) Why scour a desert for a speck of gold when you own Fort Knox?

It might seem that Paul must have spent much time researching pagan poetry to obtain his quotes. But this argument springs a leak when we learn that half his quotes[[522]](#footnote-364) come from adjacent sentences in the one poem! Of the two remaining quotations,[[523]](#footnote-365) the one in *Corinthians* is generally thought to have been so common in Paul’s day that it was virtually a proverb. Contrast this with Paul’s abundant use of Scripture. *Romans* alone contains at least sixty-one direct quotations from fourteen different Old Testament books.[[524]](#endnote-159)

Charles Wesley displayed this same spirit. It is claimed that in his hymns, ‘only five books of the Bible are not illustrated’[[525]](#endnote-160) Just one of his eight-stanza hymns contains the words and thoughts of at least fifty verses from seventeen books of the Bible from *Genesis* to *Revelation*.[[526]](#endnote-161) It was not unusual for Charles to consult Bible commentaries when penning his famous hymns.[[527]](#endnote-162) A Methodist hymn book, published early this century, had less than 5,000 stanzas, yet its far from exhaustive index contained 5,600 Scriptures.[[528]](#endnote-163)

Fanny Crosby memorized eight books of the Bible – the first four of both testaments.[[529]](#endnote-164) She must have been lazy. Except for the book of Acts, hymnist Frances Ridley Havergal could recite the entire New Testament, as well as Psalms, Isaiah and all of the Minor Prophets.[[530]](#endnote-165) The way she crammed this into her short, exceptionally busy life, is a rebuke to nearly all of us. She once wrote,

‘I don’t see how one can put too large a proportion of God’s own words among our own. He never said *our* words should not return void . . .’[[531]](#endnote-166)

She regularly studied both testaments in their original languages.

Chuck Girade confessed that he ‘started getting really into the Word’ only after twelve years. He made up for lost time. Chuck so filled his mind with Scripture that its words appeared in his songs without him even realizing it. There were even occasions when he worried over whether some of his lyrics lined up with Scripture, only to later discover he had unconsciously taken the words verbatim from the Bible.[[532]](#endnote-167)

It was exciting to see a reliance upon Scripture continuing in our era. Consider, for instance, the Scripture choruses within the last couple of decades. I have no idea of their full extent, but my casual perusal of just some of them unearthed excerpts from forty-three books of the Bible. They are now unfashionable. We’ve found more trendy music. Does heaven (and the world for that matter) see us as lovers of music or lovers of God’s eternal Word? Whether or not we use the exact words of Scripture will not answer that question, but the question that demands serious attention.

The use of Scripture rather than original material may be a blow to the ego, but the psalmists didn’t shrink from it. Consider Psalm 118. Unlike several psalms,[[533]](#footnote-366) it doesn’t even mention the crossing of the Red Sea, yet Psalm 118:14 is a direct take from the song of Moses associated with that event,[[534]](#footnote-367) and three other verses[[535]](#footnote-368) seem to echo Moses’ song.[[536]](#footnote-369) The first and last verses of this psalm are identical with Psalm 107:1, and the second verses in both psalms are similar. The fifth verse of Psalm 118 has a number of close parallels elsewhere in Scripture.[[537]](#footnote-370)

I’ll let you complete this study, but if you think the writer of this hymn must have been a mindless parrot, unable to receive anything original from the Lord, you couldn’t be further from the truth. In addition to other beautiful, original contributions to Scripture, this psalm is the source of that famous prophecy, ‘The stone which the builders rejected . . .’[[538]](#footnote-371)

So we are vindicated in adapting, but not diligently researching, unchristian material. For example, perhaps a converted Muslim could cautiously draw upon his past experience. After becoming a Christian, however, no-one should engage in further pagan studies without definite guidance from heaven. Scripture is the songwriter’s treasure house. Every spiritual truth on earth is deposited there. Delving into its depths is a life-long pursuit worthy of humanity’s noblest minds supernaturally expanded by the Spirit of God. To mount in a worthy setting, just one of Scripture’s priceless jewels is a challenge of superhuman proportions; a calling as high as the heavens.

## WORDLESS PRAISE

We mentioned earlier Paul’s resolution to ‘sing with the Spirit’. In fact, he boldly declared to the Corinthians,

‘I thank God, I speak with tongues more than you all.’[[539]](#footnote-372)

This puzzles many people. ‘Of what possible value is praising God with incomprehensible sounds?’ they wonder. But Bible-based musicians understand. They know of times in one’s Christian experience when we need to express ourselves, but words fail.[[540]](#footnote-373) And they know God welcomes praising Him with musical instruments, even though these are incapable of producing intelligible words.[[541]](#footnote-374) In fact, instrumental praise was mandatory in temple worship:

‘And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps . . . for SO WAS THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD BY HIS PROPHETS.’[[542]](#footnote-375)

Psalm 150 also goes beyond saying it is permissible to praise God instrumentally: it urges us to participate in this kind of worship.

‘Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet;  
Praise Him with psaltery and harp!  
Praise Him with timbrel and dance;  
Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipes!  
Praise Him with loud cymbals;  
Praise Him with high sounding cymbals!’

This magnificent song seems to be exhorting God’s people to praise with every conceivable kind of instrument – whether delicate or boisterous, soft or shrill, solemn or bright, percussive or melodic; whether associated with plucking fingers, striking hands, blowing mouths or dancing feet – even though none of them are vocal.

Spurgeon commented on this psalm ‘[No instrument] is common and unclean: all may be sanctified to highest uses.’[[543]](#endnote-168)

Cymbals are especially limited in their ability to convey a message. Yet, not even they are excluded from the loftiest worship.

This is consistent with Scripture’s attitude to sub-human creation praising its Creator. Not even the contribution of the roaring sea should be despised.

## MUSICAL INSIGHTS GAINED FROM GLOSSOLALIA

Like tongue-speaking,[[544]](#footnote-376) instrumental praise can be edifying to the participant and pleasing to God, without the message being verbally explicit. It is perfectly suited for private worship. For public performance, however, we should carefully consider the implications of Pauline teaching about interpretation of tongues.[[545]](#footnote-377) From this unlikely source, we can distil a principle of great significance to musicians.

This principle, however, must not be confused with an infallible law of God. I have no desire to grieve the Spirit, and put you under bondage, by attempting to bind you to a man-made law. Rather, I would humbly seek to alert you to a viewpoint which, in many instances, should further increase the effectiveness of your music. If the Lord shows you an exception to these general guidelines then, by all means, follow His leading.

One’s doctrinal position on tongues is irrelevant to this discussion. We are simply looking at the phenomena Paul spoke of, irrespective of what it was, or whether it occurs today.

To unite us, we will speak as though we were Paul’s contemporaries. Christians may have differing ideas as to whether the gift is still given, but all are united in declaring that God made no mistake in preserving these New Testament chapters for us. Since ‘all Scripture is . . . profitable . . .’,[[546]](#footnote-378) these Scriptures must have some application for today and I believe, no matter what else they may teach, they hide a principle of great importance to the musician.

Whilst wordless music conveys *some* meaning, it does so no more than singing ‘with the Spirit’. In both cases, there is a tune without intelligible vocalization. Even without a tune, speaking in incomprehensible words can communicate something through the tone of voice. However, Scripture demands that these sounds be followed by intelligible words so that everyone present benefits from those sounds and hears from the Lord.

As musicians, we would miss a significant point if we thought ‘with the Spirit’ refers to human emotions or the subconscious. Paul meant an utterance originating from the Holy Spirit[[547]](#footnote-379) with whom our spirits have become one.[[548]](#footnote-380) Obviously, gibberish or sham emotionalism should be absent in public worship. But what Paul is saying is much more startling: something may be good,[[549]](#footnote-381) personally edifying,[[550]](#footnote-382) even Spirit-inspired, and yet still be unsuited for public ministry. Something that has its source in God Himself could detract from a church service, or lift it. It could be of enormous value, or worse than nothing. Everything hinges on whether it is accompanied by intelligible words.

## OUTSIDERS

When playing the melody of a well-known song without vocal accompaniment, it may seem sufficient to rely on the hearer’s memory. The obvious problem, however, is that the message is clearest only to those who have fully memorized the entire song. This conflicts with the apostle’s concern that every part of a service should minister to the ‘unlearned or unbelievers’ as well as the thoroughly initiated.[[551]](#footnote-383)

Our Father is highly concerned about the way we treat strangers in our meetings.[[552]](#footnote-384) Leaving the music bereft of words discriminates against newcomers.[[553]](#footnote-385) Behaving as though everyone knows the lyrics, makes newcomers acutely conscious that they are outsiders.[[554]](#footnote-386) They are made to feel misfits, instead of an important part of the congregation.

## BALANCE

Naturally, there are limits as to how far Paul’s discussion of glossolalia can be applied to music.

Entirely instrumental music is much less likely to offend outsiders than uninterpreted singing in tongues.[[555]](#footnote-387) Moreover, it can be played while something else, clearly intelligible to outsiders, is simultaneously occurring. No-one need feel left out. When used wisely, so as not to detract from whatever else is happening, background music is unlikely to offend newcomers.

So interpreting the gist of *background* music seems less essential than for tongues. When music is the focus of attention, however, Scripture’s teaching about glossolalia is more directly applicable.

It may be objected that some music has no need of words or verbal explanation. Music can do things beyond conveying a message to the congregation. But so can tongues.

Paul’s teaching about interpretation is obviously applicable to those uses of music which parallel the functions of tongues, especially prayer, personal edification and delivering a message.[[556]](#footnote-388) Nevertheless, even when music is put to other uses, it still usually fits Biblical teaching about making a spiritual activity intelligible to inexperienced listeners.

For example, wordless music can create an atmosphere in which the Spirit moves by speaking through someone, or by overcoming spiritual opposition. But in the former case, Paul would want the person receiving the Spirit’s burden to share it with the whole congregation.[[557]](#footnote-389) In the latter case, sometimes spiritual warfare could perhaps be just as effective if restricted to background music. Furthermore, the enemy-defeating music of Gideon’s and Jehoshaphat’s armies was verbalized.[[558]](#footnote-390)

## LYRICS

Not even the use of a known language guarantees that we have fulfilled our obligation to new-comers. The jargon-infested lyrics of some Christian songs would hardly be less intelligible to non-Christians if they were sung in tongues! Then there’s the issue of how clearly the lyrics are heard.

‘It took a miracle to put the stars in place,’ sang George Beverly Shea. The song completed, he sat down; satisfied that he had exalted the Lord before this British audience. Imagine his shock when he learnt about the irate woman who slated Billy Graham for having the audacity to allow a soloist to come to England and sing, ‘It took *America* to put the stars in place’.[[559]](#endnote-169)

Words are important.

‘Actions speak louder than words’ takes on a whole new meaning when you see mime artist Randall Bane in action. His use of movement synchronized with music intensifies the music’s message amazingly. Few people could make music with unclear or non-existent words seem so eloquent. Yet even he considers words so important that he takes enormous care in selecting music with unmistakably clear lyrics.

## CLARIFICATION

The spiritual burden of music may be clarified by accompanying words, whether distinctly sung, spoken or written. Even pictures or mime may help. Modern technology opens up many possibilities.

It is not always essential that it be synchronized with the music. Sometimes the theme may be effectively expounded before or after your rendition.

Regardless of sequence, however, the verbal or visual ‘interpretation’ is an integral part of your performance. As much care should be taken with this as with the music itself.

Some musicians’ spoken introduction to their works are like mounting exquisite jewels in settings of scrap iron. Each note of your music is precisely planned and executed, representing countless hours of writing, arranging and practice. Stumbling through a spur-of-the-moment introduction is ridiculously incongruous.

Just as an utterance in tongues and its interpretation are equally Spirit inspired,[[560]](#footnote-391) so our rendition of the music’s message is as important to God as the music itself.

A few, well-chosen words can be powerful. You don’t have to preach a sermon. As much as possible, let your music do the talking. If, however, your comments add clarity to the message, they could be the linchpin, validating your whole performance in God’s sight. Like clothing one’s naked body, making the theme explicit renders one’s music publicly presentable. Otherwise, it might be too private for public exposure. You are a minister of God, not an exhibitionist!

Even if reading between the notes is easy for most of your audience, less discerning hearers still deserve your loving concern. For someone, your explanatory remarks could be the key to transforming a mere sound into a life-changing experience.

Lighting, movement, video clips, and so on, have the power to enhance the message. Ideally, everything should be like a whirlpool drawing people to the central message. Too often, however, they detract from it. Not many experienced pastors preach while a James Bond movie is showing on the screen behind the pulpit, a spotlight is on an acrobat performing on one side and a fireworks display is in progress on the other. The greater the complexity, the smaller the chance of people grasping the message in one hearing. The more you are sure you will repeat your performance to the same audience, however, the more justified you are in adding to the complexity.

Too often we think if it works in the world it will work in the church. What we fail to see is that much worldly music seeks simply to entertain, not convey a life-changing message. In fact, even entertainment is too lofty a goal for some music. Making money is the ultimate for many. Their goals and our goals; their measure of success and Christ’s measure of success, are worlds apart. Look at the ministries of the prophets, of Christ, of Paul. You will find no-one whose goal was popularity and no-one whose goal was to have a good time. Their passion was to serve and if that meant ostracism or pain or death, so be it.

For us to slavishly imitate worldly entertainers makes no more sense than a struggling landscape artist copying the brush strokes of a successful house redecorator simply because the redecorator has discovered how to use paint to make money and be in demand. No matter how many platinum albums worldly musicians may have, from God’s viewpoint they have failed. They have achieved nothing for the kingdom of God. So why copy them as if they had found the formula for success?

I am not saying we can learn nothing from secular musicians, but we must be very discerning and led of the Spirit.

## LOVE

The crux of the matter is expounded in a section sandwiched between Paul’s two chapters on spiritual gifts. Love. Without it we sound decidedly tinny.[[561]](#footnote-392) And the world’s best sound system cannot correct it.

That Scripture’s greatest exposition of love be required in the midst of a discussion about spiritual gifts is staggering. If anything has its origin in God; if anything is reserved solely for the Spirit-controlled life, it must surely be spiritual gifts. One can understand the possibility of natural gifts getting out of hand, yet even the most godly things are capable of mutating into monsters. Unless constantly immersed in love, the sweetest music turns sour; the most spiritual music becomes unspiritual; the loftiest goals crumble. We’re not talking gooey sentiment. Love is sacrificing your own pleasures and rights – even your own spiritual ecstasy – for the sake of others. We might have the mind of a genius and the spirit of an Elijah, but without the heart of a servant we are nothing.

Ego-trip and you’ll land on your face. Stoop to serve and you’ll stand.

Paul stressed that the criteria determining what we do in public worship must be far higher than simply whether we find it personally helpful or enjoyable.[[562]](#footnote-393) We can have our own spiritual or emotional high in private.[[563]](#footnote-394) In public, however, we should choose what best ministers to others. If, for example, some people find a certain type of music offensive, we must take this very seriously.[[564]](#footnote-395)

If even spiritual gifts are not an end in themselves, neither is music. It must be a vehicle the Spirit can use to touch the lives of those listening.

‘Yet if people don’t relate to the vehicle,’ says musician Brett Johnson, ‘they won’t relate to the message.’ This sobering truth applies even if both message and music are unsurpassable.

Love for God and our hearers will at times necessitate the ruthless disregard of our personal musical infatuations. We must die to our own desires and be sensitive both to God and our audience. Only then, will we select material which most effectively ministers.

Scripture warns us to be sensitive to our audience. Solomon said that singing joyful songs to someone who is not in the mood is like stripping him of his clothes in mid-winter.[[565]](#footnote-396) And the One greater than Solomon warned against casting pearls before swine. Unreceptive people, taught Jesus, will not only treat your ‘pearls’ with disdain, they may even attack you.[[566]](#footnote-397)

Ideally, we should be able to say with Paul, ‘I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some’.[[567]](#footnote-398)

## DECIBELS

Both love and the clarity of the message are related to volume.

Does the instrumental volume, relative to the vocal, give people the impression that music is more important to us than our message? It may require an abundant endowment of humility and self-control for an instrumentalist to give priority to the vocalist. Guitarist Stewart Wissell calls it, ‘Dying to self for both the audience’s and band’s sakes.’

It’s not that vocalists are more important, but if, before reaching the listener, the lyrics get lost in an instrumental maze, our performance might not even be Christian ministry – perhaps ‘jam session’ would be a more accurate description.

Often the problem is more with the arrangement that the relative volume. For instance, other things being equal, the more the melody line is left to the vocalists, the easier it is to hear the vocalists.

A songwriter is someone who finds a dull rock and discovers it’s a diamond. Without instrumentalists, droves of people will bypass that stone, having no conception of the beauty and value locked inside it. Instrumentalists cut that stone, revealing facet after facet of God’s beauty, with each cut adding value and showing forth God’s glory, causing people to be transfixed by something they would otherwise have overlooked. Were instrumentalists to pervert their high calling, however, by foolishly cutting too deep and too often, those entrusted with beautifying and enriching would begin to devalue and destroy a work of God. What a challenging task and grave responsibility rests with diamond cutters with musical instruments in their hands.

Frances Ridley Havergal heard in a dream the most exquisite music. It thrilled her. Then she saw the Savior. Knowing He was about to address her, she was filled with rapturous anticipation. Yet His words, more precious than life itself, never reached her. They were drowned by the music. Those thrilling, beautiful strains should have added to the grandeur of the occasion. Instead, they ruined it. Instead of enriching her, they robbed her sorely. How she hated that lovely music![[568]](#endnote-170)

When the words are displayed, clapping to a song is fine, but I get annoyed when a leader of a Christian band urges the audience to clap along with a song which has lyrics I’ve never heard before and might never hear again. The leader seems to be saying, ‘Block out the words with your clapping, we haven’t found a message worth hearing anyhow. All we can offer is a beat that we hope you’ll enjoy.’ Usually the problem is that performers have an exaggerated idea of the clarity of their lyrics by the time it goes through the sound system and arrives at a dead spot in the auditorium. With the lyrics chiseled into their brain, performers have difficulty perceiving the problems facing first time hearers.

In addition to the relative vocal and instrumental volumes, the overall volume is important. What should we do if our music is so loud that it offends half our audience, while pleasing the other half?

The divinely established Old Testament worship was apparently very noisy. The ‘joyful noise’ of Psalm 100:1 is the usual word for a blood-curdling battle-cry designed to instill fear into enemy soldiers. This ear-splitting shriek which often appears in a military context in Scripture[[569]](#footnote-399) is also frequently used to describe the triumphant shout of worshippers in.[[570]](#footnote-400) Let’s examine the context of one of these latter references:

‘. . . they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David, king of Israel and they sang, praising and giving thanks to the Lord . . . And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord . . . and the noise was heard afar off.’[[571]](#footnote-401)

I’m not sure how loud music would have to be to wake the dead, but I know that a divine trumpet blast will one day do just that![[572]](#footnote-402)

In the book of Revelation, almost everything seems to be done at double forte (ff) – or louder.[[573]](#footnote-403) So from a Scriptural viewpoint, it seems false piety to imagine it is reverent and honoring to God to always keep the volume subdued in church.

There is an additional consideration, however. The Bible teaches that our bodies are sacred. It is they, rather than a church building, which house God’s Spirit.[[574]](#footnote-404) The Lord counts our bodies so important that He will resurrect them for eternity.[[575]](#footnote-405) That God treasures our bodies should hardly surprise us. After all, He is the One who lovingly fashioned them. There are Christian musicians, who out of reverence for the One whose blood purchased their bodies, have endured agony to give up cigarettes and yet scorn anyone who objects to ear-damaging volume. Of all people, surely music lovers should value God’s gift of hearing. Can we harm the gift without hurting the giver? We spend thousands on sound equipment that gives us the broadest possible range of frequencies. Are we then going to permanently lower our ability to hear those sounds? Yes, dangerously loud music is fashionable, but it’s never fashionable to be Christlike. How much like Jesus is it to contribute to someone’s hearing loss? Tradition-bound Christians grieve our Savior, but so do Christians who mindlessly follow the ways of the world. God finds both worldliness and pseudo-reverence sickening.

Furthermore, we have a responsibility to be faithful steward[[576]](#footnote-406) of everything divinely entrusted to us. Our bodies are as much God-given gifts as our talents and ministries. So adequate rest, recreation and physical exercise are as important as developing one’s ministry.

Christians may be required to endanger their bodies in times of persecution, or be specifically led to minister in dangerous places. Otherwise, however, our commendable desire to praise God with everything we’ve got (including volume) must not over-rule our duty to care for our bodies. Hence, for God’s sake, if not for our own and that of others, we will keep the volume below that which endangers voice or hearing.

If your music offends some people while blessing others, it is wisest and most loving to clearly indicate the nature of your music when advertising. Can you think of further ways of reducing possible offence?

## CONCLUSION

I’ve stuck my neck out, giving some unusual expositions of Scripture. It’s your responsibility before God to determine whether I am right. I have endeavored, however, to illustrate the need to dig deep to find the Bible’s treasures. It may be in an obscure Hebrew word, or locked away in a passage apparently unrelated to music, but somewhere in Holy Writ God has deposited the answers we need today. Prayerfully seek, and the joy of finding divine wisdom will be yours.

# CHAPTER 7: MUSICAL EXCELLENCE – THROUGH CHRIST

‘Through Him, [i.e. Jesus] therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.’[[577]](#footnote-407)

We have established a solid Scriptural basis for using music not just for praise, but for many diverse purposes. The above verse about praise, however, uncovers principles essential to all forms of Christian music.

## THROUGH HIM

Not through training, practice and effort. Not through righteous living, Bible study and prayer. We do those things but they can never turn sound into ministry or make one note acceptable to the Holy One. Our only hope of doing anything of eternal value rests in the undeserved kindness of Jesus. Place empty hands in the nail-scarred hands of the sinless Son, or throw your life on the garbage heap.

Though ‘I can do all things through Christ’,[[578]](#footnote-408) without Him ‘I can do nothing’.[[579]](#footnote-409)

*Through Him* involves more than performing in Jesus’ name. Our music must be the product of an intimate union with the Lord. Otherwise, though we may entertain and perhaps even impress some people, our best musical efforts are ultimately as useless and repulsive as – to use the language of Scripture – filthy menstrual rags and dung.[[580]](#footnote-410)

Strong language! But the Lord deliberately chose it. Apparently, this stark reality can be adequately portrayed by nothing less.

Without Christ, the awesomely Holy One is repulsed by even our best, most unselfish endeavors.

If we understood, we would sooner proudly exhibit our own bodily filth than attempt to produce Christian music without a total reliance upon Jesus Christ.

Most of us realize that a ministry can be divinely inspired and empowered only because of God’s power to cleanse us. We know that this is available solely because of the sacrificial death, miraculous resurrection and triumphant ascension of the sinless Son of God. But too many of us are gravely mistaken about how to receive this cleansing.

A horrifyingly large number of sincere church people falsely imagine they are serving Christ.[[581]](#footnote-411) They mumbled a prayer asking God’s forgiveness through Jesus’ shed blood and since then they have been virtually indistinguishable from true Christians. However, their certainty that they are forgiven, heaven-bound, born again Christians is nothing but a tragic delusion.

Being good, clean-living, hard-working musicians in the best church does not guarantee we have been forgiven. Neither does believing the right doctrines. Neither do spiritual experiences, dramatic answers to prayer, and loving every aspect of church life. Such blessings merely prove God is working in our lives, trying to draw us to Himself.

Our attitude to sin, however, is an excellent indication of whether we have saving faith.[[582]](#footnote-412) If you are not willing to obey God, irrespective of cost, your faith rests not in the saving power of Jesus, but in your own power to love and protect yourself. If you do not trust Jesus to take you through the known (this life), you obviously cannot trust Him to take you through the unknown (death).

The essence of sin is disobedience. So to be saved from sin is to be delivered from disobedience. No matter what you pray, heaven knows you cannot want the Savior to deliver you from disobedience if you want to remain in disobedience.

It is sheer hypocrisy to ask God to take away the sins we hate if we plan to keep the sins we love. Our pet sins are just as deadly as the sins we loathe. Adam’s sin, with its cataclysmic results, was not mass murder, hideous perversion or demon worship. In fact, by human standards, it was two saints who were forever banished from Eden. It is blissfully easy to define sin in a manner that make us feel good.

We can never fool God. Tragically, we often fool ourselves.

The Almighty longs to give us holy desires[[583]](#footnote-413) and victory over sin,[[584]](#footnote-414) but He never abuses His power by forcing this upon us against our will. Many people, though they would never admit it, want to keep their favorite sin more than they want forgiveness. Though it would grieve God greatly, we will rot in any sin we deliberately choose to remain in.[[585]](#footnote-415) This would result in not only our music, but our entire lives being cut off from God.

Imagine a head of state with the legal power to pardon anyone he chooses. It would be morally wrong for him to pardon a murderer who showed every intention of continuing his killing spree when released. Likewise, the Perfect One is obligated to consider our attitude to sin before releasing us from eternal condemnation. He does not insist that we never fall, simply that we *want* to never fall.

Just as we cannot let a jet take us into the sky while insisting on keeping one toe on the tarmac, neither can we let Christ take us to heaven if we stubbornly insist on keeping a part of us outside of His will. Our own efforts will never get us off the ground, but we must agree to Christ’s desire to lift every part of us away from the world. This has nothing to do with our own moral struggles, but simply permitting Christ to save us from the sins we love – giving Him permission to wrench our darling sins from us.

I am referring neither to ‘works’ nor sinlessness, but to a mental attitude of vital importance to God. The Bible calls it repentance – a change of heart regarding sin; a genuine desire to surrender to God’s holiness. It involves placing our trust in Him, rather than in our own ability to control our lives; giving more credence to His wise and loving demands than to our own whims.[[586]](#footnote-416) We may find it virtually impossible to even desire a sin-free life. God is eager to help us even in this, but we must at least be willing to be made willing.

Another heart attitude essential to salvation is our willingness to forgive others.[[587]](#footnote-417) God treats us the way we treat other people.[[588]](#footnote-418) Unforgiveness is sin.

Put simply: if you want Jesus to deliver you from *all* your sins, He will. If you don’t, He won’t.

I urge you to settle this matter right now. The stakes could not be higher.

To offer music to God through Christ, it is obviously essential to be truly saved. More is required, however. Not all music emanating from genuinely born again Christians is produced through Christ.

Once we slip from a total reliance upon, and submission to, the power of the crucified Lamb all sorts of horrors raise their head. As John Fischer[[589]](#endnote-171) observed we can become so anxious for people to accept the gospel that we unknowingly change the message of salvation, making it easy, popular, glamorous, compatible with a soft life and materialism. In short, in the name of Jesus, we abandon the teaching of Jesus.

Sex appeal sells albums. And many Christians use it. I wonder how many million fans have fanaticized a romantic involvement with a Christian artist solely as a result of a poster or album cover authorized by the artist. We’re too sophisticated to use eroticism but we nonetheless want to market the latest Christian sensation as physically desirable. You don’t have to convince me that it’s harmless. You have to convince God. Convince Him that this is the way of the cross.

Do we secretly believe that the world’s gimmicks are more powerful than the way of Christ? If the world is the ultimate, follow it; if Christ, follow Him.

How much are we really relying upon Jesus to render our music acceptable to God? The priority we give to praying for our music is very revealing. We say we can effectively minister only with Christ’s help, but how ruthlessly our prayer life exposes the strength of this conviction!

Another sobering indicator is how much we inwardly attribute our success to the Lord, rather than to our own efforts or natural abilities.

The faith which entices God to minister through us operates just like saving faith. To obtain forgiveness, we must believe that our efforts can contribute nothing towards salvation. It is totally a work of Christ. All credit for it belongs to Him alone. Likewise, to effectively engage in Christian ministry, we must firmly believe we can contribute nothing towards ministry. The most that practice and hard work can achieve is to put us on the level of non-Christian performers. Developing our God-given talents could never meet a listener’s spiritual needs. Ultimately, all we can do is trust Savior and let Him minister through us.

The extent to which we deserve credit for the results of our music, rather than Christ, is a measure of our failure as Christian musicians.

Anything done in our own strength stinks. But when we yield ourselves to Christ, allowing Him to minister through us, everything accomplished is of inestimable worth.

Faith, prayer and willing submission give Christ permission to do what He longs to do – minister through you. And since it is Christ who is ministering, don’t be surprised if the result is supernaturally powerful.

## MUSICAL SACRIFICE

Having plumbed some of the depths of those vital words *through Him*, let’s explore more of this powerful verse:

‘Through Him, . . . let us offer the sacrifice of praise . . .’[[590]](#footnote-419)

That startling expression ‘sacrifice of praise’ reminds me of Psalm 69:30-31:

‘I will praise the name of God with a song,  
And will magnify Him with thanksgiving.   
This will please the Lord better than an ox   
Or bullock that has horns and hoofs.’

This encourages us to realize how highly God values our musical praise. Consider how costly animal sacrifices were. Even in our affluent society, few of us would sneeze at the cost of a fully grown bull. (Think of the price of a single beef steak.) Moreover, in Bible days, these animals were more than four-legged hamburgers. They were also tractors, trucks and threshing machines. And you could bet your bottom shekel, that forced the price up.

How much are we willing to spend in time, effort, and money to offer a melodic sacrifice of praise worthy of our Creator and Redeemer?

Early in Malachi we find God’s judgment concerning those who offered to God blind, lame or sick animals as sacrifices. Though a blind animal may not fetch the highest market price, it would be of significant value for slaughter. But since it was not the best possible specimen, it was unacceptable to God. The prophet suggested this test of whether it is worthy of the Lord: would the governor be impressed if it were offered to him?

If we were asked to perform before television or heads of state, would we endeavor to improve our efforts beyond what we usually offer to God? If so, are we implying that there are people who are more worthy of our best than the King of kings is?

Perhaps we should very seriously meditate upon Malachi 1:7-8. It suggests that anything less than our best is defiled and that offering it to God is offensive to Him. Another Scripture suggests that anything done half-heartedly is nauseating to God.[[591]](#footnote-420)

Yes, we enjoy a beautiful, intimate relationship with the Lord of creation. The Holy One accepts us in Christ despite our flaws. But dare we abuse God’s matchless grace as an excuse for robbing Him of the honor He so richly deserves?

New Zealand senior music lecturer, John Cousins made ‘spectacular’ music at Britain’s 1984 Edinburgh Festival by publicly urinating on drums. Surely your music is of more significance to God and our dying world than that! How many times more important than that insult to dignity would you rate your music ministry? One hundred times? One thousand? More? Then are you willing to be that many times more dedicated to your ministry than Cousins was to his questionable act?

Cousins fasted four days and drank large quantities of water for a grueling seven hour performance.[[592]](#endnote-172) How do we compare in praying and fasting for God’s blessing upon our ministry? How much have we sacrificed in order for our music to be, with divine assistance, the best we are capable of?

If we are ‘walking in the realm of the Spirit’ we can hear the redeemed in heaven sing their songs ‘and join in with them,’ says Roberts Liardon. He implies that by this means, songs composed in heaven can become part of earth’s repertoire. Roberts, whose visit to heaven I described earlier, claims he discovered books and songs in heaven that are also on earth because people ‘have paid the price to write them’. However, he adds that some compositions in heaven ‘have not yet come to earth, because no man has yet paid the price for them’.[[593]](#endnote-173) You can remain skeptical like me. You can add that Christ has already paid the price. But it is undeniable that in terms of dying to self, resisting opposition, slogging on despite the pressure to slacken off, effective ministry is costly.

‘Through Him . . . let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually . . .’ Not spasmodically, not just when asked or when convenient or when consistent with our emotions, but continually, persistently.

‘Through Him . . . let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips . . .’

Though linguistically the link with Hosea 14:2 may be slightly stronger, I am drawn to Isaiah 57:19 where God says, ‘I create the fruit of the lips . . .’ I am again reminded of our dependence upon the creative power of God on our utterance if it is to be pleasing to heaven and potent on earth. We should aim to so yield to Christ that through Him we utter words that are not merely ours, but His; desiring like Paul to ‘speak not in the words which human wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches . . .’[[594]](#footnote-421) In expounding Paul’s statement, respected theologian Leon Morris says, ‘The Spirit’s activity extends to providing the actual words used, and is not confined to the supplying of general ideas (cf Mark 13:11).’[[595]](#endnote-174)

Finally, is our music directed ultimately to humanity or – as our verses in Hebrew concludes – ‘to His name’?

## THE LIMITING FACTOR

A very talented instrumentalist, drawing upon his wide experience, once remarked that those musical performances which the Lord appeared to particularly bless and use, seemed inevitably to be those which were below standard.

Lest this seem a contradiction to what we have already established about offering our best, let me put it this way: those performances which the musician couldn’t possibly feel proud about were more likely to be the very ones God chose to use. It’s not that God approves of shoddy performances, but our pride limits God’s willingness to use our music. Our loving Lord never gets so selfishly rapt in our music that our spiritual welfare ceases to be His top priority.

Hymn-writer and composer, Frances Ridley Havergal discovered, ‘. . . it is nearly always just in proportion to my sense of personal insufficiency in writing anything, that God sends His blessing and power . . .’[[596]](#endnote-175) ‘It’s generally something I don’t think worth copying out or getting printed . . . that God sees fit to use.’[[597]](#endnote-176)

If God chose to use our music in a special way, would we afterwards begin to secretly imagine that our skill or hard work or ‘spirituality’ contributed to the blessing which God freely poured out? God knows the answers to that one better than we do. Our Lord wants, and deserves, our very best, but only when undefiled by pride.

## GIDEON

Do you sometimes think that your musical abilities are pathetic compared with those which exist in the secular world? Are the musical resources available to you ridiculously inadequate? Then take comfort from Gideon’s predicament.

His under-equipped army of a mere 32,000 was hopelessly outnumbered by forces so vast they are simply said to be ‘like grasshoppers for multitude, and their camels were without number, as the sands by the sea-side for multitude’.[[598]](#footnote-422) One gets the impression the Hebrews couldn’t cope with their numbers mathematically, let alone militarily! And yet, astounding as it sounds, Gideon’s problem was that his army was too large.

The principle involved here is so significant that I will quote the Lord Himself:

‘The people who are with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, My own hand has saved me’.[[599]](#footnote-423)

This inadequate army was whittled down to less than one-third of its original size, and still it was too large! They knew only an act of God could give then victory against such odds. But their present sobriety was not the issue. It’s after the victory that pride-intoxicated minds begin to imagine foolish things. More than 99% of that meagre band were sent packing before it was pathetic enough for the Lord use.

When the Lord is our strength, we are strong indeed.[[600]](#footnote-424) But if we are content to merely draw upon our own abilities, we will always be pitifully inadequate for Christian ministry.[[601]](#footnote-425)

The more we recognize our weakness, the more we will, in desperation, throw ourselves upon the limitless power of God. No wonder the great apostle wrote, ‘When I am weak, *then* I am strong’.[[602]](#footnote-426) And it is no coincidence that this famous declaration was made in the midst of a discussion about pride[[603]](#footnote-427) – that insidious delusion that lulls us into a false sense of self-sufficiency so that we fail to tap into the dynamic power of God, which alone can meet humanity’s chronic needs.

So a key to spiritual power is to both distrust our own ability to minister without God, and to trust God’s ability to minister through us.

God delights to use the weak to astound the powerful; the unlearned to put intellectuals to shame.[[604]](#footnote-428) It is then obvious to everyone that God has acted. In most cases, however, the critical factor is not abilities or lack of them. Nor is it merely a question of knowing God. The issue is whether we place our confidence partly in our own abilities or solely in God.

It’s a disturbing paradox that the closer we get to the musical excellence God deserves, the greater the likelihood that pride will nullify our ministry. The more we improve musically, the more diligently we have to fight the delusion that our dependency upon God is becoming less chronic., We were once certain we couldn’t complete a single performance without God’s miraculous intervention. Now, we’re not so sure.

The life of King Saul tragically demonstrates the dangers involved.

## TWO KINGS

He started off so well, regarding himself as quite insignificant[[605]](#footnote-429) and, far from seeking public acclaim, he actually hid himself.[[606]](#footnote-430) After his first taste of success, the people wanted the death of his opponents. What an excellent opportunity to exalt himself. But this humble king displayed a beautiful, patient spirit, and declined, publicly declaring that the victory was due to God.[[607]](#footnote-431)

Rather than grow in his confidence in God, however, Saul grew in self-confidence. The rot set in. Finally, instead of rejoicing in the victory God had wrought through a puny shepherd boy, Saul began to imagine that, as king, he deserved to be praised above everyone else.[[608]](#footnote-432) Regrettably, he ably proved the truth of the proverb, ‘A man’s pride shall bring him low’.[[609]](#footnote-433)

Interestingly, it is two Biblical songs which most vividly reveal the crucial difference between Saul and his successor.

Rejoicing women greeted Saul with a song which exalted him. But he was furious because the lyrics attributed even greater victories to the shepherd boy.[[610]](#footnote-434)

In contrast, David, though the object of Saul’s wrath, composed a memorial song praising the man who had repeatedly tried to murder him.[[611]](#footnote-435)

David, the man after God’s heart,[[612]](#footnote-436) continually humbled himself,[[613]](#footnote-437) even after gaining the throne.[[614]](#footnote-438) Consequently, this king experienced the outworking of the truth, ‘He who humbles himself will be exalted’.[[615]](#footnote-439)

Temptation is basically deceitful propaganda from the father of lies. So our best defense is faith in the truth of God’s Word. It was this very weapon which Jesus used to overcome each of the temptations He faced in the wilderness.[[616]](#footnote-440)

The most powerful truth I know of in combating pride is found in the words of Jesus: ‘I can, of myself, do nothing’.[[617]](#footnote-441) I suggest repeating and meditating upon these words until becoming convinced in every fiber of your being of the truth they contain. After all, if Jesus could accurately say that about Himself, how much more applicable should it be to us!

Occasionally, Satan may so hoodwink us that it really seems as though we could accomplish something of value without divine assistance. At such times we may have to simply take it by faith – we can of ourselves do nothing! God is doing us a favor (never vice versa) in allowing us the privilege of serving Him.

In your particular situation, God may choose to use an additional Scripture to defeat the Deceiver. So search the Scriptures.

You may briefly quell the fires of pride so effectively that Satan reverses his tactics, whispering, ‘You’re useless. You’ll never achieve anything.’ Defeat him by wielding Philippians 4:13, ‘I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me’. Only be sure to emphasize ‘through Christ!’

## CONCLUSION

A highly experienced, deeply perceptive and loving man of God astounded me. Knowing that I was writing a book for musicians, he confided that he had little time for musicians. Obviously, he was talking in generalities, but he found Christian musicians to be egotists, more concerned with being in the limelight and doing their own thing than humbly serving the Lord; more eager to exert their power over people than to seek and submit to the power of God.

Coming from most people, I would have ignored such an evaluation. A man of this caliber, however, is much harder to dismiss.

Words are powerful. Put them to music and they are more powerful still. Yet Paul was adamant that the proclamation of spiritual truth rest on a still greater power:

‘My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.’[[618]](#footnote-442)

He spoke elsewhere of declaring ‘the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness . . .’[[619]](#footnote-443) As the sons of Sceva discovered in their abortive attempt at exorcism, words that sound Christian are easy to come by; backing them with the power of God is something else.[[620]](#footnote-444)

Some supposedly Christian music sounds beautiful and has the right lyrics, and yet is no more Christian than exquisite pharisaical prayers.[[621]](#footnote-445) For music to be authentically Christian, it must be accomplished ‘through Christ’. Anything else is a sham.

Once we learn the secrets of yielding to Christ, however, a whole new realm opens. In a later chapter we will see some of the wonders God has prepared for those musicians with the faith and boldness to enter this realm. I believe few of us have sampled more than a fragment of the splendors purchased by our crucified Lord to empower our ministry. Let’s resolve that nothing – not pride, not fear, not sloth, nothing – rob us of the musical miracles within our reach.

# CHAPTER 8: THE IDEAL MUSICIAN

In James Montgomery’s expert opinion, George Sandys’ psalms were ‘incomparably the most poetical in the English language, and yet they are scarcely known’.[[622]](#endnote-177)

Genius alone is insufficient for an effective music ministry.

We know that praising the Lord in music is not to be restricted to a favored few. Every Christian should musically extol the Creator.[[623]](#footnote-446) However, as we have scanned the pages of God’s Word a picture is beginning to emerge of the person who specializes in the music ministry.

As we put the pieces together we will almost certainly feel unworthy of such a high calling, but it is the crucified Lord, not our background, natural abilities, or religious strivings, who makes us worthy.

## THE CALL

Why haven’t you walked on water? You’re no more mortal than Simon Peter. By His Spirit, Jesus is even physically nearer to you than He was to Simon. The difference is that Peter was called to walk on the water. Jesus *told* him to do it.[[624]](#footnote-447) Prior to this Peter could only say, ‘Bid me to come.’

Similarly, Isaiah could only plead, ‘Send me,’ and wait for a response.[[625]](#footnote-448)

King David discovered that not every request for ministry is accepted. He was not permitted to build the temple.[[626]](#footnote-449) Another King, Uzziah, learnt to his grief that he could not exercise the ministry of a priest.[[627]](#footnote-450) Centuries earlier, the Levite, Korah, made a similar mistake, with even more disastrous consequences.[[628]](#footnote-451) Even priests could not engage in priestly ministry unless it was specifically authorized by God.[[629]](#footnote-452)

Allow me the madness of piling instance upon instance to demonstrate the centrality of this principle.

The Lord strongly rebuked those who assumed the office of a prophet without being ‘sent’.[[630]](#footnote-453) Likewise, to have the ministry of an evangelist, one has to be ‘sent’.[[631]](#footnote-454) And James warned against seeking a teaching ministry.[[632]](#footnote-455)

Paul’s apostolic authority rested in the fact that he was chosen by God to have that ministry. He did not seek it.[[633]](#footnote-456) Nor was it conferred upon him by man.[[634]](#footnote-457) So crucial to Paul’s entire ministry was his divine calling that he stressed it in most of his letters before writing another thing.[[635]](#footnote-458)

It’s mind-boggling, but even Jesus’ ministry was authentic only because He did not act on His own initiative.[[636]](#footnote-459) The sole basis for His ministry was the fact that His Father had sent Him[[637]](#footnote-460) and that He said and did nothing other than what the Father authorized Him to.[[638]](#footnote-461)

Ministries are not to be grasped on our own initiative.

Whenever God sets us a task, He commits Himself to equipping us with everything necessary to triumphantly complete it. There is not a Christian on earth who lacks the divine resources needed to excel in the ministry God has called him or her to. The key to successful ministry is therefore God’s calling. Everything springs from this.

I can almost hear people objecting, ‘Reliance upon God’s calling applies only to ministries like missionaries and pastors, not lesser ministries such as music.’ Hopefully, not many would have proceeded this far into the book and still regard music as a minor ministry. But if further confirmation is needed, it is readily available.

In the Old Testament, the main people with a ministry in music were Levites. There were probably no others engaged in this ministry full-time. Like the high priest himself,[[639]](#footnote-462) Levites did not volunteer for ministry, but were chosen by God.[[640]](#footnote-463) They were chosen solely on the basis of their parentage.[[641]](#footnote-464) Talent was not the critical factor.[[642]](#footnote-465) They were literally born for this specific ministry.

Just as we could not choose the human family we were born into, no amount of effort on our part can cause us to have a God-ordained ministry in music. It is not for us to decide to have a music ministry and then seek God’s blessing upon it. Our responsibility is to determine whether God is calling us to this ministry. Musical ability and a love of music are suggestive, but are not infallible proof, of God’s calling.

It’s obviously futile to spend the rest of our lives wringing our hands, wondering whether God has called us. But neither should we be presumptuous. By all means, continue with music if you feel at peace about it, but keep your ear attuned to the Lord, being aware that in time He could lead you into another ministry.

We may have to serve our Lord in a very humble capacity for years before being called into the ultimate ministry God has chosen for us.[[643]](#footnote-466) For decades, the Levites served God as mere laborers, carrying and assembling the tabernacle through the wilderness. There was no time to develop musical skills. After the conquest of the promised land, the ark seldom moved. For centuries, they had almost no ministry. Only after the permanent site for the ark was finally captured by David, were the Levites released into the music ministry.

Assuming we have been ‘called’, let’s bring into sharp focus the qualities we should be believing God to develop within us. We’ll draw together those aspects we have already discovered and add new ones. Since so many of them are of great importance, we won’t attempt to list them in any particular order.

## The ideal musician:

### 1. DELIGHTS IN GOD’S WILL

Consider spending every second of the rest of your existence doing nothing but God’s will. If that prospect seems a little cold, drab, claustrophobic, you have missed so much.

Obedience is the ecstasy of perfect love.

Do you believe God is all-powerful? Then you believe He could ask nothing of you that would be too hard for you. An omnipotent God could turn a mouse into a superman. It’s exciting when God asks the impossible of you. A miracle is around the corner!

Do you believe God is all-knowing? Then you believe that in every situation you face, God knows all the facts – past, present and future – so much more than you could possibly comprehend. When God asks you to do something, He is granting you the unique privilege of tapping into the greatest Mind in the universe. You have the opportunity to so something infinitely wise.

Do you believe God’s love is infinite? Then you believe God loves you more than you could possibly love yourself. Your welfare, joy and fulfilment mean more to Him than they do even to you. You can trust a God like that. You can revel in the extravagance of His desires for you.

If you truly believe in the infinity of God’s knowledge, love and power, we will never disobey Him. We only disobey when we secretly believe we are smarter than God, that His love for us is inferior, or that He is so weak that our inadequacies can nullify His power.

Satan whispers, ‘One little sin won’t hurt,’ or says about a particular issue, ‘Obedience is too frightening/painful.’ He’s really saying, ‘The God who gave everything for you – even His own Son – doesn’t have your best interest at heart. He doesn’t know what’s best for you. He will command you and then abandon you to your own frailty.’

To disobey our wonderful Lord is to foolishly believe a lie. In any circumstance, the will of God is the one thing you can do that you’ll be forever thankful for.

God’s will is an exciting manifestation of love. God revealing His will is the Almighty Lord expressing His desire for us to enjoy His very best. And obedience is us receiving that love, delighting and rejoicing in the beauty, perfection and security of God’s yearnings for our welfare. Think of it: we need no longer be confounded by the finiteness of our own intelligence; Almighty God loves us so much that He grants us free access to His infinite wisdom and goodness! Obedience is love made real.

For more on the importance of obedience, see Chapter 4, section 6.

Exalt in the magnificence of God’s glorious desires for you.

### 2. IS MOTIVATED, EMPOWERED, AND CONTROLLED BY SACRIFICIAL, SELF-DENYING LOVE

The Christian musician exists to serve. This is not some lofty ideal. It’s basic. Fundamental. A servant’s heart is essential for a fulfilled life. So much of Jesus’ teaching revolves around this. He who loses his life will find it . . . if you would be greatest be servant of all . . . deny yourself . . . It sounds morose. It’s actually the secret of a joy-filled life.

Andraé Crouch records in his book the wise words of his father when Andraé started his first tour. ‘God is going to use you. As you travel, your name may be in lights but if you don’t care about people, if you get on stage and don’t feel for those people, don’t have a burden, a compassion to win them at any cost, then it is time to come home.’[[644]](#endnote-178)

Love drives a musician to prune every trace of *unnecessary* offence from a performance so that only elements ordained and confirmed by God remain. Don’t be surprised if God’s leading varies from occasion to occasion. No-one knows the audience like the Lord.

We touched on love that costs in chapter 6, but if its importance were to be reflected by the space devoted to it, this subject would fill the book.

### 3. IS DEVOTED TO PRAYERFUL COMMUNION WITH GOD

In our survey of Bible songs we discovered that a vast proportion, something like two-thirds, are either prayers or contain prayers.[[645]](#footnote-467) Further analysis of these songs revealed an enormous range of prayers. Virtually every conceivable type of prayer is represented.

The songs that the Lord so much approved of that they are included in Scripture, were the works of musicians for whom prayer was as natural as breathing, and more important than eating.

The ideal musician understands prayer. For him/her, prayer is not a spiritual sheen added to give a ministry its finishing touch. Prayer is the structural framework around which the entire ministry is formed. You can achieve great worldly success without a word of prayer but Christian musicians are expected to move in the spiritual realm and in that realm you get nowhere without prayer.

Before he made his first album, Keith Green regularly included in his concerts a plea to the audience to pray for the production of the projected album. In addition, prayer teams were formed, praying constantly throughout every studio session. The result was the biggest debut album in the history of Christian recording to that time. He ensured that subsequent albums were also immersed in prayer.[[646]](#endnote-179)

Frances Ridley Havergal is said to have never written ‘a line without first praying over it.’[[647]](#endnote-180)

‘I’m very excited about the new album,’ John Schlitt of *Petra* told a magazine about their new release, ‘but I’m feeling the real excitement is in this new Prayer Warriors endeavor.’ The band was making a concerted effort – through such things as mail outs and a phone line with 50 three-minute devotionals – to teach its fans about prayer and to mobilize intercessors.[[648]](#endnote-181) ‘We believe it’s going to make a huge difference in our ministry,’ said Bob Hartman, the band’s founding member. ‘When Christians get really serious about prayer, things can happen. We’ve seen it over and over . . .’

### 4. IS FILLED WITH THANKFULNESS AND PRAISE TO GOD[[649]](#footnote-468)

‘. . . singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God . . .’[[650]](#footnote-469)

To this general Scripture we can add many that specifically target those who specialize in music.

David appointed the Levitical musicians ‘to thank and praise the Lord’.[[651]](#footnote-470) This was the very reason for their existence.

That fruit of the Spirit called joy, is very closely associated with this:

‘And David spoke to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of worship . . . by lifting up the voice with joy.’[[652]](#footnote-471)

‘And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed themselves and worshipped.’[[653]](#footnote-472)

‘. . . with rejoicing and with singing, as it was ordained by David.’[[654]](#footnote-473)

‘My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing praises to Thee.’[[655]](#footnote-474)

The Lord is not looking for musicians who are good actors. Hear the pain in Jesus’ voice as he quotes *Isaiah:*

‘This people honor me with their lips but their heart is far from me.’[[656]](#footnote-475)

A praise ‘performance’ leaves Him cold.

George Beverly Shea has sung *How great thou art* so many times you’d think he was striving for top billing in the Guinness Book of Records. In just one crusade, he sang this hymn, with choir backing, ninety-nine times. People kept asking for it. He humbly honored their request.

Once, would you believe, he found himself tending to mechanically repeat the words, rather than worship his Lord in song. He repented before the Lord, resolving never to be overcome by such an attitude again. Over a decade later, his promise was still unbroken.[[657]](#endnote-182)

If repetition reduces you to a robot, it’s time for a new song or a new heart. There is a place for perseverance, but only if your motivation is love for God. If you intend persisting merely because it’s too embarrassing to stop or because you love the accolades, then it’s time to persist not in music but in prayer.

Don’t let your attitude smother your music before it reaches heaven’s Throne.

See chapter 4, section 1.

### 5. IS CONTINUALLY SPIRIT-FILLED

‘Be not drunk with wine . . . but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody . . .’[[658]](#footnote-476)

In alluding to these verses, Kittel’s Theological Dictionary, speaks of the ‘Spirit-produced song’.[[659]](#endnote-183) Wilson points out that the present participles – *speaking*, *singing*, *making melody* etc. – ‘depend upon the main verb’ – *be filled* – ‘and thus describe the blessed consequences of the Holy Spirit’s fullness.’[[660]](#endnote-184)

‘Men are said to be filled with wine when completely under its influence,’ mused theologian Charles Hodges, ‘so they are said to be filled with the Spirit, when He controls all their thoughts, feelings, words, and actions.’[[661]](#endnote-185)

If wine elicits song,[[662]](#footnote-477) how much more should being filled with the Spirit of the Song-giver![[663]](#footnote-478) If our songs should be *Spirit-produced*, how dependent we are upon the Spirit!

### 6. HAS A PROPHETIC MINISTRY

I am forced to the rather startling conclusion that ideally a Christian musician should prophesy. In fact, though I am a cautious person, the more I pore over Scriptures about music, the stronger my urge to going beyond calling this the ideal and pronounce it the Scriptural norm.

Many psalms foretold future events.[[664]](#footnote-479) So did the song of Moses.[[665]](#footnote-480) This obviously makes them prophetic. The essence of prophecy, however, is not prediction, but God speaking through His servant. In prophecy, God frequently speaks in the first person, as He does in many psalms.[[666]](#footnote-481)

Even in inspired songs outside the Psalter, composers with prophetic ministries clearly predominate. Moses,[[667]](#footnote-482) Deborah,[[668]](#footnote-483) David,[[669]](#footnote-484) Isaiah,[[670]](#footnote-485) Habakkuk,[[671]](#footnote-486) and John[[672]](#footnote-487) all contributed to the Bible’s songs and had obvious prophetic ministries. Miriam, too, was a prophetess.[[673]](#footnote-488) Moreover, the key Levitical musicians appointed by David – Asaph, Heman and Jeduthum – were all prophets. David placed these three Levites in charge of all the musicians, and the musical leaders came from their descendants.[[674]](#footnote-489) Scripture individually calls each of these three founders a ‘seer’, in other words, a prophet.[[675]](#footnote-490) Psalm 50, bearing the title ‘a Psalm of Asaph,’ is prophetic in that it can say ‘God says’[[676]](#footnote-491) (cf the familiar prophetic expression, ‘thus says the Lord’).

When the Lord spoke prophetically to Jehoshaphat, it was through one of the ‘sons of Asaph,’[[677]](#footnote-492) presumably a Levitical musician.[[678]](#footnote-493) *Prophets* in 2 Kings 23:2 becomes *Levites* in the parallel passage in 2 Chronicles 34:30, perhaps implying that all Levitical musicians were regarded as prophets.

Amazingly, I have found only one person named in Scripture, clearly stated to have composed a biblical song, who is not specifically called a prophet – Solomon. Yet we have only to read a few samples of his sayings and revelations to gain the impression that even he foretold future events under divine inspiration.[[679]](#footnote-494)

Furthermore, we see a similar picture when looking from the other side: most prophets wrote songs. Besides the long list already provided of songwriters who had prophetic ministries, several other prophetic books have parts that read so much like psalms that you can almost hear the music.[[680]](#footnote-495) To this we could add the inspired utterances of Mary and Zechariah.[[681]](#footnote-496) Jeremiah wrote laments that were apparently set to music.[[682]](#footnote-497) Almost every prophet burst into poetry. Of all seventeen prophetic Old Testament books, plus the highly prophetic books of Psalms and Revelation, only tiny Haggai and Malachi contain no poetry. Whether the poems were originally intended to be set to music we cannot always be certain. Music, however, seemed to play a critical role in the prophetic ministry of Elisha[[683]](#footnote-498) and the prophetic bands.[[684]](#footnote-499)

1 Chronicles 25, called by Johann Sebastian Bach ‘the true foundation for all God-pleasing music,’[[685]](#endnote-186) describes David’s appointment of Levitical musicians. This has to be a key passage for a Biblical understanding of the function of music. In the span of just five verses, *prophecy* appears once, *prophesied* twice and *seer* once. That’s four references in five key verses. We must be careful not to drain *prophecy* of its meaning just because it is used in relation to music.[[686]](#footnote-500) Music is the vehicle of the Spirit. Neither must we diminish prophecy’s significance to music in our era. Since *Acts* 2, ours is the age of the Spirit.

If prophecy is as basic to God’s plan for music as Scripture implies, then a brief analysis of its nature is too important to relegate to an appendix. For many years I was very mistaken about the nature of prophecy. Instead of careful analysis of the Scriptures, I was allowing my imagination and experience dictate to me.

Preaching is speaking about God. Prophecy is God speaking. It often foretells the future, not because this is an essential feature of Biblical prophecy, but because the Source of the utterance is the One who knows the future and the darkest secrets buried in the human heart. Godless soldiers blindfolded Jesus, hit him, and mocked, ‘Prophesy who hit you.’[[687]](#footnote-501) These brutes were not asking for a Bible lesson! When prophesying, a person is the mouthpiece of the One who cannot be blindfolded. John called the book of Revelation, filled with predictions, a prophecy.[[688]](#footnote-502) *Revelation*’s letters to the seven churches,[[689]](#footnote-503) however, are also prophecy. Even without the occasional foretelling, they clearly touch a dimension not reached by teaching or preaching. They are personal orders from the Commander and Chief of the church; the piercing words of the One who knows each church with divine knowledge. No wonder Paul said that if newcomers encounter prophecy the secrets of their hearts would be laid bare.[[690]](#footnote-504) This is why, when Jesus started telling the woman at the well things about her that only God could know, it immediately dawned that she was in the presence of a prophet.[[691]](#footnote-505)

The outpouring of the Spirit after Jesus’ ascension irrevocably changed not the nature, but the availability, of the gift of prophecy. It is the fulfilment of Moses’ longing:

‘. . . would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!’[[692]](#footnote-506)

Our spiritual era, ushered in on the Day of Pentecost, is characterized by the outpouring of both the Spirit of God and the gift of prophecy *upon all flesh*.[[693]](#footnote-507) Said Peter under the inspiration of the Spirit, ‘the last days’ prophesied by Joel have arrived, characterized by everyone being able to prophecy – exercising a gift God had previously reserved for a select few. That Joel meant prophecy in the fullest, supernatural sense is proved by the fact that he bound it firmly to dreams and visions – unlike preaching, but exactly like Old Testament prophecy.[[694]](#footnote-508) The source of a teacher’s message might be a Bible commentary, but the source of a prophecy is a supernatural revelation of the order of visions and dreams.[[695]](#footnote-509)

So prophesying in our time should be just as supernatural as it was in Old Testament times, but far more prevalent. The closing of the canon of Scripture means we have no need of new doctrine from God, but our need for new direction from God is just as great as when Agabas told the church to get ready for a drought, and prepared Paul for the trials ahead by saying, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit . . .’ and acting like a prophet of old.[[696]](#footnote-510) It is just as needed as when Paul received God’s guidance through visions,[[697]](#footnote-511) and saved lives by foretelling the outcome of a shipwreck. Our need is just as serious as when Paul, under the inspiration of the Spirit, penned the words, ‘covet to prophesy’.[[698]](#footnote-512)

We could continue looking at the New Testament usage of the word prophecy, but each time the same picture emerges. The New Testament uses not just the same word to describe Old Testament prophecy and the gift we should be exercising today, but it clearly refers to the same phenomenon. It is not general exhortation, or the expounding of doctrine. It might be, ‘Prepare for a famine,’[[699]](#footnote-513) or ‘You have five husbands,’[[700]](#footnote-514) or ‘I [the Lord] have this against you,’[[701]](#footnote-515) but it is the exact message God wants a certain group of people to hear at that specific time.

In most Christian circles, music is a form of communication either from people to people (such as testimonies and re-hashes of Bible truths) or from people to God (prayer and praise). But before we can begin to imagine our music conforms to the Biblical pattern, we must add a third dimension: from God to people (prophetic music).

Jimmy Owens was ‘songwriter-arranger-conductor-producer’ of Christian albums. He had made over a hundred when the Lord suddenly showed him he was on ‘a colossal ego trip . . . trying to build a name for myself in the name of the Lord’. He felt the Lord say that he and his wife should write nothing until they heard from him. One and a half years passed. Then they quickly achieved more for the Lord ‘than in all our previous years of ministry combined’. Their secret: ‘Hear what the Spirit is saying and let Him say it through you.’

They point out that this was Jesus’ approach to ministry.

‘I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father who has sent me.’

‘. . . the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father’s who sent me.’

And, I add, this is the way even of the Spirit Himself:

‘Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, [that] shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.’

In the words of Peter:

‘If any person speak/sing,[[702]](#endnote-187) [let it be] as the oracles of God . . .’[[703]](#footnote-516)

Though the Owens’ make no claim to a prophetic ministry, they believe that by being sensitive to the Spirit of God and listening to the ministry of others, they can discern what the Spirit is currently saying to the church. They can then, with the Spirit’s empowering and direction, put that message into music. The result is not merely Scriptural truth, but that specific truth which the Spirit knows the church most needs to hear at that time.[[704]](#endnote-188)

I challenge at least all songwriters, preferably every musician, to earnestly seek God regarding this matter. People claiming that the gift of prophecy is not for them must be extremely cautious. There is a great danger of using human tradition or fear to nullify a direct command of Scripture.

To anyone wishing to divorce prophecy from music, I feel like proclaiming ‘what God has joined let no man put asunder’. The bond is strong and holy.

Covet it, and the gift will be yours.[[705]](#footnote-517)

### 7. so filled with SCRIPTURAL TRUTH THAT HE/SHE can TEACH OTHERS

*Jesus shall reign where’er the sun* is one of the greatest of all missionary hymns and yet, marvels mission historian Ruth Tucker, it was written virtually a life-time before the onset of the modern missionary movement. Though more than half a century ahead of its time, Isaac Watts’ hymn was so powerful that it stayed in circulation decade after decade until the church finally caught up. How ever did he achieve such a feat? Because his hymn writing was based not on contemporary Christian thought but on the eternal word of God. He was paraphrasing Scripture.

I had heard that gifted preacher and Bible expositor Charles Spurgeon was grateful that as a child he had committed many of Isaac Watts’ hymns to memory. I was unmoved. It had helped him in his formative years, I assumed. What startled me was the discovery that this great man of God treasured those memorized lyrics as being of immense value as he crafted his sermons. ‘No matter on what topic I am preaching,’ he wrote, ‘I can, even now, in the middle of my sermon, quote some verse of a hymn in harmony with the subject . . .’[[706]](#endnote-189) Would a Bible scholar be moved to quote your lyrics in a sermon?

I confess to being initially surprised upon discovering the high proportion of theologians among hymn-writers. But how could it be otherwise? Should sermons be devoted to correcting the bad theology sung earlier in the service? Should the enormous power of music-enhanced words be placed in the hands of people inept at discerning truth? If music is the powerful, holy ministry we believe it to be, it should attract the cream of the Christian church.

It is believed Johann Sebastian Bach owned more books on theology than on music.[[707]](#endnote-190)

We earlier identified teaching as a vital function of Christian music.[[708]](#footnote-518)

‘Your statutes have been my song . . .’ sang the psalmist.[[709]](#footnote-519)

‘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 . . .’[[710]](#footnote-520)

Steve Camp claims most Christian musicians know more about music than about Jesus and they spend more time developing their music than their theology. Camp, who initially focused his music on Christian entertainment, asserts that Christian musicians cannot avoid the grave responsibilities of being teachers merely by labelling themselves Christian entertainers. If the average young person spends more time listening to music than to teachers, parents and pastors, the message in that music assumes great importance.[[711]](#endnote-191)

The Bible calls the Levites ‘Israel’s teachers’.[[712]](#footnote-521)

Billy Graham’s personal gift is clearly the spoken word, not music. Yet in a foreword to a book that had nothing to do with music he advised Christians ‘to continually be reading and meditating in at least three books: the Bible, the hymnal, and a Christian biography.’[[713]](#endnote-192) But before getting too excited, take a second look at that quote. He said not hearing or singing, but *reading and meditating.* Are your lyrics worthy of this?

Popular songs with questionable theology are said to have ‘contributed to the eventual official acceptance of unscriptural practices in the Roman Catholic Church.’[[714]](#endnote-193)

Bishop Wordsworth provides us with an astonishing example of what not to do. In his hymn paraphrasing 1 Corinthians 13, he says that neither faith nor hope will remain, only love![[715]](#endnote-194)

One young man, who had written a number of Christian songs, discarded them after a few months at Bible college. The Bible-training had exposed deficiencies in his lyrics.

If you knew the Lord and His word more intimately, would you feel the same way about your songs?

Be haunted by Michelangelo – a gifted man immortalized by a ridiculous interpretation of Scripture. He depicted Moses with horns.[[716]](#footnote-522)

### 8. IS CHRIST-CENTERED

At least three times in Scripture we find the words, ‘The Lord . . . is my song’.[[717]](#footnote-523)

The Bible speaks of songs which focus so much upon God that they are referred to by such expressions as ‘the Lord’s song’.[[718]](#footnote-524)

Animal sacrifice was the focal point of all temple activity.[[719]](#footnote-525) Everything else (music included) served this.[[720]](#footnote-526)

For us, the focal point is Christ’s atoning sacrifice.[[721]](#footnote-527)

Bernard Manning speaks of Charles Wesley’s ‘obsession with the greatest things’, citing as proof the fact that in one on his hymnbooks, one in every nine hymns begins with the name Jesus, Christ or Savior.[[722]](#endnote-195)

See also Chapter 4, section 1.

### 9. LIVES A DISCIPLINED LIFE

The Levitical musicians were chosen on the basis of birth, not natural affinity for music. For many of them it must have been a hard slog. And these musicians had to be available for ministry, not only when they felt inspired, but ‘day and night’. That meant discipline.

Alan J. Lerner had a bit of trouble writing the lyrics to *On a clear day you can see forever*. In fact, it took him three hours a day, seven days a week for eight months. Before he was happy with the result he had written and discarded ninety-one complete sets of lyrics.[[723]](#endnote-196) And he wasn’t even writing for the Lord of glory. That’s discipline.

Self-discipline is the power factor in a person’s life. It is the quality that enables you to maximize your every gift. It means being persistent and consistent; punctual, reliable, committed. Without it you are like someone frantically try to bring life-giving water to a thirsty world, using a bucket with gaping holes. An undisciplined person is his/her own saboteur. This folly left the one-talent man a no-talent man.[[724]](#footnote-528)

There is a law that can be expressed in a formula something like this:

Divine Input X Talent X Discipline = Achievement

Regardless of talent, if discipline equals zero, achievement equals zero. If discipline equals ten, your output is ten times greater, ten times more valuable, than if you had one unit of discipline.

How could your talent move the heart of God? Talent is God’s gift to you. Disciplined effort is your gift to God.

Don’t think of discipline as fleshly self-effort able to be dispensed with by a spiritual experience. On the contrary, discipline in its purest form is itself the product of a spiritual experience. It is the blending of two of the fruit of the Spirit – patience (better translated perseverance) and self-control.

Without God, however, even the most beautiful quality turns ugly. Leave Him out of the equation and apparent faithfulness becomes a faithless struggle; what should be an expression of love becomes proud self-effort.

Discipline must spring from a heart brimming with thankfulness for the undeserved kindness of God that has cleansed it. Effort must be lovingly, joyously yielded to God. It must not be a vain attempt to win divine or human approval, but a natural response to the realization that through Christ we already have divine approval – and that’s the only approval that matters.

We have already established that the ideal musician is well-trained in music.[[725]](#footnote-529)

‘. . . All of them trained and skilled in music for the Lord . . .’ says 1 Chronicles 25:7 of the temple musicians.

Our Lord has often elected to mightily use untrained people. This thrills me. But we are looking at the person who specializes in ministering through music. Training may not necessarily be formal, but, at the very least, it will involve much practice and hard work. God rewards faith and faithfulness, but never sloth.

The disciplined person excels in prayer, Bible study, practice *and* heavenly reward. You might not think discipline very exciting, but I do. It’s the secret that empowers me to overtake people with far greater ability than me.

### 10. HAS LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

Singers tended to lead processions.[[726]](#footnote-530) They might not necessarily have planned the route, but they went out in front and set the pace. Unimpressed? That’s because you see the procession as a peace-time ritual. What if that procession were an act of war? You might think twice about leading Jehoshaphat’s march.[[727]](#footnote-531) God’s singers put themselves in the line of fire.

If the church and the devil were in some sort of truce it would matter little who stands in front. But each church service should be an advance against dark and hostile forces. Eternal destinies hang in the balance.

We discovered earlier that a divinely-ordained function of music is to lead God’s people in worship.[[728]](#footnote-532)

‘. . . the singers with musical instruments LEADING the praise.’[[729]](#footnote-533)

The leadership abilities of the temple musicians is obvious from the following Scripture, referring to repairs made to the temple during Josiah’s reign:

‘. . . The Levites – all of whom were expert with musical instruments – had charge of the burden bearers and supervised all the workmen from job to job. . . .’[[730]](#footnote-534)

The Levitical musicians were literally foreman material.

Christian musicians are leaders, not performers. They seek not to win the acclaim of spectators, but to bring fellow believers into a greater awareness of the Lord’s presence, a deeper love for God, an increased ability to worship, a heightened sensitivity to the Spirit, a more accurate understanding of spiritual truth, and a fuller manifestation of Spirit-led unity. What a privilege!

The psalms place much emphasis upon worshipping God, not just alone, but in congregations.[[731]](#footnote-535) The need for this to be done ‘decently and in order’[[732]](#footnote-536) immediately highlights the importance of leadership.

One of the greatest achievements of a good leader is the unification of the body of people, empowering them to pull together in the same direction. Scripture stresses the importance and immense potential of a congregation spiritually moving as one.[[733]](#footnote-537) Music – especially congregational singing – can accomplish this like perhaps nothing else can. When singing, everyone is actively involved in, and focusing on, the same thing. Diverse emotions will be represented in almost any congregation – joy, grief, apathy, solemnity, and so on. Yet even these will begin to merge as the music continues.

Leadership through music is so subtle it often goes unnoticed, yet so powerful it will be acknowledged for all eternity.

The original text of Jesus’ powerful promise regarding corporate prayer[[734]](#footnote-538) contains the Greek word *symphoneo*.

‘If two of you shall agree [*symphoneo*] on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them . . .’

Even in Jesus’ day, this word had musical connections.[[735]](#endnote-197)

If the unity achieved when an instrumental or choral group flows together, is an excellent picture of the type of unity Jesus had in mind, why not actually use music to achieve that goal?

There is yet another seldom-noticed contribution of music to unity. Noting that most denominational hymnals include the works of writers from very diverse denominations, the hymn book has been called ‘the greatest argument for church unity ever printed’.[[736]](#endnote-198)

We each need to express to both heaven and earth our deepest feelings. Yet we usually lack the linguistic skills to spontaneously and adequately do this. Most of us flounder. We need a leader. We need a song-writer.

Writers of congregational songs have the responsibility of assisting large numbers of people to voice their spiritual feelings, enabling them to sing ‘with understanding’[[737]](#footnote-539) without the frustration of groping for appropriate words.

On the other hand, worship leaders have the even greater responsibility of selecting the exact songs that best meet each person’s immediate need to express himself/herself. Since only God knows the exact needs of each person, it is obvious how dependent a song leader is upon divine guidance. Song selection is a huge responsibility. It actually shapes people’s communion with the King of kings.

Song leaders have immense power. In seconds they can change the entire mood of a congregation. They can greatly assist, or hinder, the work God’s Spirit wishes to do.

Like the smell of food luring a nervous church-mouse out of its hole, music can coax hardened, hurting or timid souls to tentatively reach out to the God they desperately need. Yet, at this crucial time, the slightest distraction – just one discordant note – and those tentative creatures will instantly retreat to the dark hole they’ve been in.

Even self-conscious worshippers may slowly open up to God under the warmth of Spirit-led musicians, who are constantly filling the congregation’s hearts with reasons to trust, love and worship their Lord. Yet just one musician’s slip – even an inappropriate change of volume or tempo – can almost be like bursting into the privacy of timid lovers, jolting them into awkward self-consciousness. The ever-strengthening link between heaven and earth will have snapped and many people will have to start almost from scratch again.

Whoever has the power to lead a congregation into a greater sensitivity to the Spirit, has the power to destroy that experience. Regrettably, though it may take many musicians to create a perfect atmosphere, it only takes one to shatter it.

‘I’m so afraid of power,’ confided Keith Green in his private journal. The famous song-writer and recording artist confessed to ‘my fleshly desire to rule others. In my heart of hearts I only want serve! . . . I want more than anything else to pour myself out for them, for Jesus. But then there’s my old nature that wants to control everything . . .’[[738]](#endnote-199)

Ideally, only those having such a fear should be entrusted with leadership. In practice, at least one survey has suggested that even in churches, there is a tendency for power to be seized by those who lust for it. That should make us all fear.

Christlike leaders are servants, not celebrities. Their task is not so much to bless people as to lead them to the One who can really bless them. Their joy is not in reaching inaccessible heights, but in making those heights accessible to everyone.

A leader of God’s people must:

1) know where God wants His people to go

2) know how to get there

3) have the courage and faith to take God’s people there.

What a spiritually demanding task that is!

#### Wisdom

Leadership and wisdom are allies. Solomon, for example, sought wisdom in order to effectively lead God’s people. He knew that it is through wisdom that ‘princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth’.[[739]](#footnote-540)

Another product of his wisdom, however, was one thousand and five songs.[[740]](#footnote-541)

Not only does Scripture mention Solomon’s song writing when describing his wisdom, there is evidence that all four people with whom his wisdom is compared might have had musical ability.[[741]](#footnote-542)

Perhaps the bond between wisdom and the ideal musician is greater than is first apparent. According to our western view, wisdom’s strongest link would probably be with musical leadership and song-writing. The Hebrew conception of wisdom, however, stretches beyond ours to include artistic skill.[[742]](#footnote-543)

### 11. HAS STRONG FAITH

We noted briefly in chapter 4, section 2 that the Bible’s musical prayers often provide us with inspiring examples of faith.[[743]](#footnote-544)

Strong faith is also a prerequisite for being a spiritual leader, as demonstrated when the singers went in front of Jehoshaphat’s army, taking the most dangerous position, when approaching three hostile armies of formidable strength.[[744]](#footnote-545)

Faith is a vital ingredient is prophesying,[[745]](#footnote-546) and, in fact, in every aspect of the Christian life.[[746]](#footnote-547)

### 12. IS HOLY

Of all the peoples on the globe, just one nation was holy unto God.[[747]](#footnote-548) In the midst of this nation was a small minority who stood out as being holier than the rest of God’s holy people.[[748]](#footnote-549) Yet even within the Levites, the holiest tribe of the holy nation, was a tiny minority who were holier still.[[749]](#endnote-200)

Whereas some Levites lived in secular areas,[[750]](#footnote-550) some in Levitical cities,[[751]](#footnote-551) and some in the holy city,[[752]](#footnote-552) the singers were assigned to the temple itself.[[753]](#footnote-553) Most of God’s people occasionally visited the Lord’s House and a few ministered in it, but those involved in holy music actually lived there. Even priests could be temporarily unclean,[[754]](#footnote-554) but no-one in that condition could dwell in the temple.[[755]](#footnote-555) To reside in that holy place, would demand a very strict, dedicated life.

2 Chronicles 5:12 tells us the musicians were clothed in white linen. Perhaps it is significant that in Revelation 19:8 linen clothing is explained as being symbolic of righteousness.

In 2 Chronicles 20:21 we find an expression that is open to several interpretations, but it may mean that the singers were in ‘holy array’.

Singing godly songs without living a godly life is futile.

‘Take away from me the noise of your songs;  
For I will not hear the melody of your harps.  
But let justice run down as waters,  
And righteousness as a mighty stream’.[[756]](#footnote-556)

Because of unrighteousness,   
‘. . . the songs of the temple shall become wailings in that day, says the Lord God’.[[757]](#footnote-557)

Their songs were from God Himself. Their dedication to sacred music was probably faultless; their musical skills impeccable. But wrong living had nullified their entire ministry.

To human ears, the music would sound the same. But to God, what should have been the loveliest strains in the universe, were as hideous as a choir of pneumatic jack-hammers. And soon the whole word would know it.

The pursuit of holiness may be far from painless but, like salvation and everything else in the spiritual life, it grows from our faith-relationship with the Lord, not self-effort.

### 13. SHINES WITH UNEARTHLY HUMILITY

We have noted that for generations the Levites were little more than laborers and servants of the priests. Even when they entered their musical ministry they were positioned on the east side of the altar, the very side where the ashes and offal were flung.[[758]](#footnote-558)

The world and its music industry want ‘stars’; Christ and His church want servants. ‘Stars’ are parasites squandering their talents as they wallow in accolades. Servants are benefactors who roll up their sleeves and get things done.

The world may call egotists ‘stars’, but they are really black holes, sucking in people’s money, self-esteem and talent. Servants are the real stars; suns that brighten, release and empower the lives of those around them.

Humble people are spiritually fit; liberated from the excess flab of an inflated ego. They are spiritually perceptive, enjoying heaven’s lofty view of reality; seeing things from God’s perspective, in contrast to the narrow, gutter level view of an egotist whose eyes can focus on little beyond himself. Egotists are bombed out of their brains by self-delusion.

To many of us humility sounds dull, limp, shriveled, sickly; pride sounds expansive, vibrant, dazzling, powerful. Nothing could be further from reality. The virtue is so tarnished that we almost need another word. Those endowed with this power are but bold realists who storm to the finish line while egotists are still preening themselves. Humility is a gleaming, high-powered sports car under wraps; pride is a beaten-up wreck under tinsel. Those who humble themselves will be exalted, promises Scripture. This secret weapon operates in numerous natural and supernatural ways. One of them springs from the fact that humble people do not imagine they have ‘arrived’. As a result they heed good advice and continue to improve long after the proud have peaked.

George Beverly Shea’s autobiography drove this point into my brain. Early in his book he referred to his singing lessons and the help they had been. I can handle that. Most of us admit our need for instruction when first commencing to play an instrument or sing. His hard work paid off. He finally gained regular spots on two different radio stations. Still he took lessons. Still he improved. Then came another advance. He moved to Chicago to take up a full-time position on the Moody Radio Station. Upon arrival, one of the first things he did was to locate a voice coach. This man just didn’t know when to quit improving. He kept getting better and better because he kept believing that there were others who knew more about singing than he did. Advancement is one of humility’s hidden joys.

Jimmy and Carol Owens’ most popular songs, such as *Freely, Freely* from their musical *Come Together*, would never have been written had the Lord not convicted them of the pride that was keeping them from writing such ‘simple’ songs. There was an enormous cost to the ego for Jimmy to write like that.[[759]](#endnote-201) There’s a place for sophisticated and complex music but our Lord reserves a special place for those who humble themselves. Millions of people have been blessed on earth because Jimmy Owens’ won his painful battle with pride. Jimmy, however, will be blessed eternally.

We must never allow ourselves to set such high standards that we begin to despise simple lyrics. Isaiah’s report of seraphim’s worship[[760]](#footnote-559) prove that lyrics can be simple, short, not very original,[[761]](#footnote-560) and not particularly poetical, and yet be of heavenly origin and treasured by the Almighty. Unless Luke recorded a mere summary, the angelic song heard by shepherds also had brief, simple lyrics.

Paul’s ‘thorn in the flesh’ sounds most unpleasant. Three times he cried out to God for its removal. Yet pride is so deadly that suffering this ‘thorn’ was preferable to succumbing to pride’s charms.[[762]](#footnote-561) In these days when humanistic egotism is touted as a virtue, when the possibility of being idolized no longer terrifies, many of us are oblivious to our peril. God opposes the proud.[[763]](#footnote-562)

### 14. HAS A DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

See Chapter 4, section 11.

‘Music is your own experience . . .’ declared Charlie Parker, ‘If you don’t live it, it won’t come out of your horn.’[[764]](#endnote-202)

To follow in the footsteps of ‘the sweet psalmist of Israel’[[765]](#footnote-563) we would need more than an abundance of creative musical skill. Even if, in addition to David’s musical genius, we had his extensive theological understanding, we would still be hopelessly deficient.

We would have to match his beautiful, patient, forgiving spirit,[[766]](#footnote-564) his humility,[[767]](#footnote-565) faith,[[768]](#footnote-566) intense yearning for God,[[769]](#footnote-567) desire for personal holiness[[770]](#footnote-568) and his eagerness to obey the Lord.[[771]](#footnote-569) These are the fruit of a genuine relationship with the living God.

Yet even then, there would be a shallowness about our musical composition unless, like David, we could sing about God’s supernatural intervention in our lives: delivering us from danger, healing us, empowering us, materially providing for us, loving us. The ideal musician is living proof that the Lord is a mighty, prayer-answering, promise-keeping God.

It is noteworthy that the four thousand musicians appointed by David were all aged thirty or over.[[772]](#footnote-570) Consider also the implications of Paul’s instruction that a church leader must be what the Good News Bible calls ‘mature in the faith’.[[773]](#footnote-571) The reason given is particularly important:

‘. . . lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.’

Christian artists are precariously exposed to this serious danger.

Charlotte Elliott’s ‘Just as I am’ is believed to have ‘touched more hearts and influenced more people for Christ than any other song ever written.’[[774]](#endnote-203) Her brother wrote that more than half a century of suffering went into the writing of her hymns.[[775]](#endnote-204)

Audrey Mieir prayed daily year after year for Andraé Crouch’s ministry. ‘Andraé,’ she would say, ‘You are going to have to go through every song you write because God is using you to bring out things people want to express.’ The experience might come before or after the writing but, she assured him, it would come.[[776]](#endnote-205)

‘Your walk,’ says Chuck Girade, ‘Is the most important part of your song writing.’

Earth’s greatest music is the product of a beautiful, intimate union with the eternal King. It is of untold worth. And, through Jesus, you are capable of producing it.

### 15. HAS THE IDEAL SONG

For simplicity, I will describe this song as if it were performed. However, even greater power sometimes attends congregational singing. Let’s explore the qualities of the ‘perfect’ Christian song.

Its every aspect – the writing, arranging, selecting for the occasion, and the performance – is accomplished with a heavy dependence upon the Spirit of God.

Both the words and music are enticing and relevant, not just to people in general but to the specific audience on the occasion it is sung. How past generations or out-of-earshot contemporaries would respond is irrelevant.

The words are so well formed and the message so vital that, like Scripture’s songs, they would have an effective ministry even without music. The music, too, is so good that it could stand alone. Additionally, tune and words come together as the perfect fit, with, ideally, not one syllable or note seeming a little forced or out of place.

Not only does the music – through volume, tempo and so on – not inhibit the words, it highlights the words and adds meaning to them. It arouses within the people a longing to hear the song (and hence the message) over and over. It engenders appropriate emotion, lifting them towards the attitude appropriate to the occasion (thankfulness, praise, joy, awe, repentance etc.), causing people to be more responsive to the lyrics. It seeds the words into the hearers’ mind and heart, causing the song and its message to erupt in their minds long after the music has stopped.

The ideal song moves people to respond to God in the way He wants them to respond at that particular time – perhaps to have faith in Him, yield to Him, praise Him, pray to Him, love Him, unburden themselves, appropriate His gifts, or repent.

It combines personal experience with Scriptural truth. Some elements of the experience might be foreign to the hearers (it might, for example, be more extreme than what they have personally gone through) but its nature and presentation is so meaningful to the hearers that it touches their own fears, longings, anguish or joy. The Scriptural truth linking it so hits the hearers that they see it as powerful, relevant and life-changing.

It preferably mentions not just ‘God’ – a word that could mean almost anything to people outside the church – but identifies the true God by focusing upon His only Son, Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior of the human race.

Above all, the ideal song is God’s choice at the exact moment and location in which it is sung. It might even be so divinely tailored to that particular occasion and audience that, like many sermons and most specific prayers, it is never used again.

### 16. IS COMMITTED TO CHRIST, NOT TO POPULARITY

Scriptures references to a ‘new song’ reveal that in the heart of God is a continual yearning for the new. To fulfil this divine longing we must cut loose from the tyranny of old songs and let the fresh winds of the Spirit blow us wherever He wills. Sadly, this will upset traditionalists, just as Jesus and all his Spirit-led followers have always offended those who worship a god frozen in time, instead of Creator God who is forever doing a new thing. However, we must not confuse true spirituality with worldly fashion or with a lust for change. We must be like the Israelites on route to the promised land who moved whenever, and only when, God’s cloud moved.

Jesus is ‘the same yesterday, today and forever,’ but those who would misuse this truth to excuse a retreat into the past must remember that yesterday Jesus was dynamic and controversial. He made a whip and overturned the tables of tradition. And He’s the same today.

We must cling to Christ. That alone distinguishes a Christian musician, not the fact that Christ’s name appears in the music.

Commercial success may demand a commitment to ‘the market’. Success in your church may demand a commitment to the status quo. But spiritual success requires fearless commitment to Jesus Christ. The result might be glorious music that few people appreciate.

Hey, that can’t be right. Anything truly of God would be so good that people could not fail to appreciate it. Really? Is the best music always the most popular? People prefer old ‘wine’, said Jesus. God delights in new songs, says Scripture. Under God’s anointing holy prophets of old spoke words from heaven. And to their hearers those inspired utterances sounded like fingernails scratching a blackboard. People love darkness rather than light. And if anything exposes the fickleness of human taste it is music.

Be careful before trashing music so innovative that it is unpopular. If we think lightly of music that touches only God, our understanding of God’s worth is abysmal. If we regard as inferior a ministry that powerfully touches only one person, we do not understand the infinity of God’s love for an individual.

How can we be servants of the Lord if we are slaves to human approval?

A chill sweeps my spine as I contemplate how often we must stifle the Spirit by repressing innovative concepts He drops into our minds.[[777]](#footnote-572) Be true to His leading, no matter what the cost.

Says Winkie Pratney, ‘The one who conforms to a culture will never transform it. You’ve got to step out and be *ahead* of it.’[[778]](#endnote-206)

If fear of the new can be a stumbling-block, fear of the old can be a millstone. Each move of God emphasizes particular truths, but fresh winds will sour if allowed to get so out of control that other Biblical truths are displaced by sheer neglect. For instance, a rediscovery of the love of God must not be allowed to wipe from our minds the Bible’s teaching about fearing God. Often it is the unpopular, almost forgotten truth that we most need in order to become the full, complete people God wants us to be. So be led by the Spirit, not by the latest fad, when writing and selecting songs.

### 17. MIGHT BE FEMALE

The Scriptures amply testify to the significant contribution women can make to both secular[[779]](#footnote-573) and religious music.[[780]](#footnote-574) In fact, Strabo, as a foreign observer of Palestinian music, singled out female, rather than male, singers for his exceptionally high praise.[[781]](#footnote-575)

1 Chronicles 25:5-6 reads as though Heman’s daughters, along with his sons, were appointed, ‘. . . for song in the house of the Lord, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God.’

This interpretation is supported by many Bible scholars. If correct, it is quite surprising because other temple ministries appear to have been restricted to male Levites.[[782]](#footnote-576)

Female singers were amongst the Jewish refugees returning from their Babylonian exile.[[783]](#footnote-577) Some scholars believe they were temple singers. I agreed, until taking more heed of the immediate context. In both Nehemiah and Ezra, temple musicians are grouped with the Levites several verses prior to the reference to female singers.[[784]](#footnote-578) Instead of being included with the temple musicians, the ‘male and female singers’ are mentioned immediately after ‘male and female slaves,’ just before a list of the beasts of burden. This suggests that these particular singers were slaves, not temple choristers. The use of musical slaves was no doubt accentuated by the fact that radios and stereos were rare in those days. In addition to entertainment, such slaves may have been in great demand in times of mourning.[[785]](#footnote-579)

Miriam led only her sex in triumphant singing and dancing.[[786]](#footnote-580) In contrast, Judith, the key figure in a Jewish apocryphal book, led both sexes in song and dance.[[787]](#footnote-581) Deborah’s musical leadership, as outlined in the book of Judges, probably fell mid-way between these two. She joined Barak in song and is actually mentioned before him, suggesting she may have taken the dominant musical role.[[788]](#footnote-582) The account of Sisera’s mother in the last portion of the song[[789]](#footnote-583) has been cited as suggesting feminine authorship. In fact, Bishop Hervey[[790]](#endnote-207) suggested that, relative to Moses and Miriam, the roles were reversed, with Barak leading a male chorus *in response to*Deborah’s song.

So it is certain that in Scripture women had important roles in secular and religious music. Whether temple music was included is not quite as clear. If this one barrier to female musicians did exist, however, it surely met the same fate as the temple veil, rent asunder when Jesus died.[[791]](#footnote-584) The only possible restriction would seem to be the New Testament directive that women should not exercise authority over men.[[792]](#footnote-585)

Of many nineteenth-century women could it be said, ‘Preachers, theologians and Bible scholars, who would not permit a woman to speak or teach in a worship service, week after week sang her hymns and profited by her ministry.’[[793]](#endnote-208)

### 18. IS INTEGRATED INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST IN THE EXACT MANNER PRESCRIBED BY GOD

The ideal musician has so many special qualities that I doubt if I’ve covered them all in this book. Feel inadequate? Of course you fall short. There is no ‘ideal musician’. But there is a way to compensate for our deficiencies.

Consider David and Solomon. Though exceptionally musical, they were not Levites. This deficiency was overcome by their reliance upon others to perform such tasks as moving the ark and singing to the Lord in a full-time capacity.

It is universally accepted that of the two Wesley brothers, Charles was the greater hymnist. In fact, there is little original poetry we can confidently ascribe to John. Yet it is claimed that John’s ‘perfect taste’ significantly contributed to his brother’s greatness.[[794]](#endnote-209)

We need each other.

A finger, cut off from the hand and grafted directly to the head would be utterly useless. It must relate correctly to the rest of the body before it can function. Likewise, we cannot have a ministry worthy of Christ, unless we relate correctly, not just to Christ (the Head) but also to the rest of His body.

‘. . . holding fast to the Head, from whom the entire body, BEING SUPPLIED AND HELD TOGETHER BY THE JOINTS AND LIGAMENTS, grows with a growth which is from God.’[[795]](#footnote-586)

Growth comes from the Head. But for this to be fully manifested in the individual body parts, each must be properly united to the other.[[796]](#footnote-587)

Whether we like it or not, we are each dependent upon the rest of Christ’s body.

Someone with a music ministry obviously must relate to the other musicians in his group. This, in itself, can provide fertile soil for the fruit of the Spirit[[797]](#footnote-588) to grow. It usually proves to be a wonderful, God-given opportunity for love, patience and self-control to mushroom, as we teeter on the brink of mortal combat, squabbling over musical arrangements and the like!

It was when the trumpeters and singers were in unison, that the cloud of God’s glory filled Solomon’s new temple.[[798]](#footnote-589)

However, a musician also needs to relate properly to people with such diverse ministries as faith, prayer, theological insight, administration, financial support, encouragement, correction, cleaning, welcoming people, and so on. Even those who merely sit in rapt attention have a significant role to play. A musician’s contribution to a meeting must blend with every part of the meeting. This involves being in harmony with every other person contributing to the meeting.

But we dare not imagine everything revolves around the music ministry, or even around our particular church.[[799]](#footnote-590) Musicians should look for opportunities to assist other ministries, wherever they are. For example, would a tiny gathering of intercessors be lifted by the mere addition of your singing voice to their feeble attempt to sing?

Through love, serve one another.[[800]](#footnote-591)

Relating closely to the body of Christ provides us with countless infuriating opportunities for growth. We need practice in learning how to draw upon the Spirit’s gentleness, kindness, self-control, etc. and the best practice-sessions occur when the going gets tough. Particularly useful are the times when people hurt us. Don’t worry – there’s usually someone willing to give us the experience we need. Even when things seem unbearable, we must not cut ourselves off from members of the body. A hard-won victory does more for a person’s character than a dozen instantaneous ones.

When the fur flies we should take seriously such Scriptures as, ‘Count it all joy when you fall into various trials’.[[801]](#footnote-592) Such an attitude can transform what would previously have seemed a nightmare into an exciting challenge to be an overcomer.

Although each of us has a unique place in the body of Christ, it will include three aspects:

l. Submitting to God-ordained authority.

2. Receiving the ministry of others.

3. Being positioned where we can most effectively minister to others.

Without these, we could never reach our full potential, no matter how talented or spiritual we think we are.

#### SUBMISSION

Not only must a finger relate to the arm, it must be in submission to it. Though direction comes from the head, it comes via the arm.

That’s fine – as an anatomy lesson. As a spiritual truth, however, it’s as welcome as toothache.

Submit to the Head? Sure! Christ is perfect. Disagree with Him and it’s obvious who is wrong. (Better still, pretending we did not hear is often easy.) But submit to a twit no better (probably worse) than you and me? We’d sooner eat glass.

The apostle John hit us hard when pointing out that we cannot love God, whom we have not seen, if we do not love those we do see.[[802]](#footnote-593) Painfully, the same could be said about submitting to the unseen God.

Since God is the ultimate authority, disrespect for authority is therefore at least logical in our godless society. But not in the church.

In the jungle of Western civilization, obstinacy is a virtue; submission is a dirty word; Biblical standards are outdated. Few, if any, of us have escaped this pervasive influence from the world. So it is not surprising that submission within the body of Christ is resisted by many fine Christians. To our distorted thinking, submission seems humiliating, archaic, and even unscriptural.

Thankfully, Scripture lavishes musicians with clear examples of submission.

‘. . . these were UNDER THEIR DIRECTION OF THEIR FATHER for song in the house of the Lord, with cymbals, psalteries and harps . . .ACCORDING TO THE KING’S ORDER to Asaph, Jeduthum and Heman’.[[803]](#footnote-594)

‘. . . when he [Jehoshaphat] had consulted with the people, he APPOINTED singers unto the Lord . . .’[[804]](#footnote-595)

‘. . . Hezekiah the king and the princes COMMANDED THE LEVITES to sing praise unto the Lord . . .’[[805]](#footnote-596)

Early in 1 Chronicles 25 the prophetic responsibility of the musician is emphasized, ‘Meaning,’ says Wilcock, ‘that they are open to whatever unexpected ministry the Spirit of God may put into their mouths.’ Yet these same verses three times affirm that they are to be under the direction of leaders. ‘The freedom,’ comments Wilcock, ‘is within a framework.’[[806]](#endnote-210)

Holy singers and instrumentalists of old yielded themselves, under God, to human authority.

If, like me, you have problems with this subject, I urge you to consult Note 8.6 in the Appendix.

I was touched to read of George Beverly Shea’s reaction to his first offer of a recording contract. In that stage of his life, not only was it a great honor to be approached by RCA Victor, it was a tremendous opportunity to cement his ministry. Most of us would have seized the offer with vice-like grip. But not this man. Though his service to the Lord extended far beyond his association with the Billy Graham team, he sought Billy Graham’s approval. Not content with this act of submission, he delayed his decision for almost a month after receiving Billy’s enthusiastic response. He wanted to be absolutely certain it would create no disharmony with other members of the team.[[807]](#endnote-211)

Like love, submission is an act of obedience to God, not an indication of inferiority. The person submitting, like the one loving, is often displaying the greater virtue.

A person may be obnoxious, but that is no excuse for not loving him. Neither is a leader’s foolishness a legitimate reason for disregarding him.

Only if told to disobey God’s clearly revealed command should we not submit to human authority[[808]](#footnote-597) and even then, we are still obligated to obey the authority on neutral matters.

Sadly, a beautiful truth wrenched from its Biblical checks and balances, becomes hideous. Scripture records the tragic consequences of a man of God mindlessly submitting to an old prophet who lied when claiming to be giving divine guidance.[[809]](#footnote-598) This may be a rare occurrence, yet it shows we each have a personal responsibility to seek and obey God on matters related to ministry and guidance.

Furthermore, those of us in authority should constantly remember that only the heathen lord it over each other.[[810]](#footnote-599) So, ‘obey those who have rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch over your souls, as ones who must give account’.[[811]](#footnote-600)

In the beautiful words of the Paul the prisoner, the one way to lead a life worthy of our calling is ‘with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.’[[812]](#footnote-601) ‘. . . in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better than themselves,’ thus modelling themselves after the exalted Lord.[[813]](#footnote-602)

#### RECEIVING THE MINISTRY OF OTHERS

What a beautiful consequence of snuggling into the exact part of the body God has chosen for us!

In a particular Passover celebration highly commended by Scripture,[[814]](#footnote-603) singers were released to minister in music because other Levites prepared the Passover for them.[[815]](#footnote-604) Had the singers proudly refused ministry from their brethren, their own ministries would have been hampered.

*Ephesians* teaches that Christ has set in His body apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to perfect us for ministry.[[816]](#footnote-605) So musicians cannot expect to be perfected for ministry without being so positioned in the body that they can receive these uplifting ministries.

A vast number of hymns have been written as a direct result of the writer being moved by a sermon. The writers were first ministered to, then they were able to minister to others. Frequently, the hymn writers had a far greater impact upon the world than the original sermon, but they owed it all to preachers.

It is said that Charlotte Elliott’s ‘Just as I am’ was inspired by the Christian counsel she received by a Dr. Caesar Malan of Geneva.[[817]](#endnote-212) Other songs have been inspired by testimonies.[[818]](#endnote-213) Mrs. Joseph Knapp wrote a new melody and played it to a blind friend. As a direct result, Fanny Crosby wrote, ‘Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine’.[[819]](#endnote-214)

A young servant girl, seeking spiritual counsel was told all she needed to do was to pray and read her Bible. In tears, the illiterate girl lamented, ‘I canna read, I canna pray!’ Then, in a moment of desperation she prayed, ‘Lord, tak’ me as I am.’ The story reached Eliza Hamilton. She was so moved that she wrote what became a popular hymn based upon that simple prayer.[[820]](#endnote-215) That wouldn’t be the first time an illiterate has inspired a gifted hymnist.

Most Christian songs are probably the product of amazingly intricate chains of inter-relationships between members of Christ’s body. Dr. William How was moved to write a hymn after reading a poem he came across. The poem, in turn, was inspired by a sermon Jean Ingelow heard in an English fishing village.[[821]](#endnote-216) Probably the full story is far more complicated. Perhaps, for example, it was the way Jean was welcomed by a deacon at the door that caused her to be in a receptive frame of mind when she heard that sermon. And one wonders how many people ministered to the preacher to enable him to give the sermon.

The full background to the writing of just one hymn may be too complex for the human mind to cope with. But at the heart of it is Spirit-led relationships within the body of Christ. We cannot resist such relationships without our ministries suffering.

#### POSITIONED WHERE WE CAN BEST MINISTER TO OTHERS

‘And the singers the sons of Asaph wereIN THEIR PLACE, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthum the king’s seers; and the porters waited at every gate; they had no need to depart from their service; for their brethren the Levites prepared for them’.[[822]](#footnote-606)

As a result of submitting to human authority[[823]](#footnote-607) and receiving the ministry of their Levitical brethren, the singers were released to minister. They were united together in one specific location. And you can be sure that location was the exact point from which they could most effectively minister to God’s people. This is the final joy of being correctly integrated into the body.

Let’s persistently seek God’s face until we are sure that our position in the body of Christ is the exact one God has ordained for us.

#### PEDIATRICS

No mid-wife would joyfully deliver a healthy baby and then leave it to die. Yet the spiritual equivalent seems to happen.

Like new-born babes, new Christians require constant attention. Few would thrive, some would not even spiritually survive without the self-sacrificing support of other members of the body. They need continual prayer, encouragement, counselling, Bible teaching and ensuring they are fully integrated into a caring body of believers. It is not sufficient to merely tell them what to do. They need living examples. They should be brought to church regularly, introduced to Christians and welcomed into members’ houses until they regard the church as their home and the place where their best friends are.

A mid-wife’s duty is not complete until she knows the infant’s welfare is assured. As part of a team, she does her part and then entrusts the newborn into the care of responsible and adequately trained people. When Christian musicians are part of a team – a properly functioning body of Christ – the new-born Christian will be expertly nurtured.

When someone comes to Christ through our ministry we must not rest until that ‘baby’ Christian is adopted by Christians who will fully care for him/her as their very own. Otherwise, we must take the full responsibility upon ourselves.

We should not consider bringing babies into the world without ensuring the necessary means to care for them are in place. So whenever you are invited to perform, you need to confirm there is adequate preparation for follow-up.

Under all ministries there are likely to be apparent converts who are actually still seeking salvation. This is particularly true of the music ministry, where people can easily be moved emotionally without the experience going deeper.[[824]](#footnote-608) Such results should not be despised. Becoming an active seeker is a vital stage in becoming a Christian. However, we need to be aware of the situation, and endeavor to bring such people through to salvation during the ‘follow-up’. No doubt, the Lord will have touched them, but it is irresponsible to glibly assume from this that they have genuinely experienced salvation.

With the invention of recordings and electronic media, musicians have been tempted to abdicate their responsibility. Just because we cannot see those we are ministering to, is no reason for being unmoved by their need for personal counsel. I’ll leave it with you and the Lord to determine how to overcome this serious problem. Urging people to write or telephone is one possibility. Certainly, the task is not complete when we come to the final note of our song. And the total ministry God requires is best accomplished not by musicians in isolation, but by a properly functioning body of believers.

Controversial band *Petra* has received so many knocks over the years from other Christians that you might expect them to flee their persecutors and try to exist alone. Yet the band’s principle songwriter and guitarist, Bob Hartman feels dependent upon churches, even when it comes to attracting non-Christians to *Petra*’s concerts. He stresses that the band wants to ‘act under accountability’. ‘If churches don’t want to support us, won’t get behind us,’ he told a magazine interviewer, ‘then there’s no reason for us to exit.’[[825]](#endnote-217)

## CONCLUSION

Even musicians can slip into the mentality that music is little more than pandering to human inabilities to take large doses of the ‘real’ ministry of preaching. Many churches seem to imagine the sole prerequisites for Christian musicians are musical ability and confession of faith – anything else is a welcome, but optional extra. We could fill a book with the qualities expected of pastors, yet in many churches, highly skilled musicians would be given prominent positions, irrespective of their newness to the faith, or how much they hide behind the label of temperamental artist to excuse their resistance to the Spirit’s yearning to fashion their character in the image of Christ.

Let’s draw together some of the reasons we have discovered for taking a much higher view of music.

1. Music originated in the heart of God.

2. Music is of eternal significance. Unlike most ministries, it will continue in the age to come.

3. The Lord’s estimation of the music ministry is revealed by Him assigning it to some of the holiest people in the holiest tribe of the holy nation. They were personally selected by God and financially supported by the holy tithes given by God’s people. So crucial was this service that they needed to be released from all other duties, free to minister day and night.

4. Our Lord has ordained that music fulfil an enormous range of vital functions, from ministering to God, to ministering to His people, to saving the lost.

5. The Bible’s songs, the model for all Christian music, are some of the deepest, most precious parts of holy writ. They are filled with lofty theology, amazingly precise prophecies, beautiful prayers, exquisite praise, and heart-wrenching confessions. They thrill the theologian, inspire the poet, instruct the wayward, comfort the crushed, uplift the pray-er, and lend words to lips trembling with inexpressible joy.

6. God has mightily used music in past centuries and He yearns for us to appropriate from Him still greater things.

Flowing from our conviction that music is so important, is the conviction that to be involved in its production is a high calling. If music really is a holy ministry unto God; if people can daydream through a sermon and yet be gripped by a song; if they can forget a sermon but have music permanently engraved on their minds; then the selection and spiritual preparation of musicians demand much prayer.

Christian musicians need special qualities, far beyond the ability to emit pleasant sounds, just as much more is expected of an evangelist than the mere ability to speak. There have been evangelists with rough voices who could hardly put two words together and yet have been spectacularly used of God. The world saw a poor orator; heaven saw a great preacher. I wonder if there is much similarity between the Lord’s list of the world’s greatest musicians and our list.

Robert Douglass says that most Christian musicians are essentially musicians who use their gift in a Christian setting. In contrast, he says Southern Baptists typically view a musician as ‘basically a minister, whose particular field of service lies in music’.[[826]](#endnote-218) It takes little thought to realize which concept is more Biblical. Had musical ability been paramount in the heart of God, Levitical musicians would have been chosen not on the basis of birth, but on the basis of native talent.

We dare not exalt sound above character, music degrees above spiritual insight, or worldly acclaim above God’s anointing. Progress in the ministry of music is as dependent upon pouring over Scripture as it is upon pouring over music sheets. If one’s preparation for the music ministry consisted of practice alone, then even twelve hours a day would ultimately achieve nothing. Prayer makes practice perfect. Spiritual music comes from spiritual musicians.

# CHAPTER 9: A CHALLENGE

Using words as a brush, Jesus painted a now-famous masterpiece. On the canvas of our minds, we see two dedicated, God-ordained leaders. One was leaving Jerusalem, probably on his way home after having admirably completed sacred temple ministries. The other was perhaps hurrying towards the holy city to worship and serve the God he loved. An inspiring sight – except they abandoned a fellow countryman, leaving him to squirm in a pool of blood.[[827]](#footnote-609)

The hypocrisy of devout first century Jews is frightening. Their whole lives were dedicated to the study and out-living of God’s Word. Their zeal was indisputable.[[828]](#footnote-610) No amount of effort seemed too much for them; no detail too small. How could such committed people see so clearly and be so blind; be so right and yet so wrong?

Respected religious leaders murdered their Savior as an act of religious devotion. A chill sweeps my spine. Am I any less deluded? We humans have a horrifying potential for self-deception.[[829]](#footnote-611)

We desperately need Christ to expose our hypocrisy as effectively as He did in first-century Palestine. So should the Lord graciously open our eyes to a short-coming, we have much reason to rejoice. Knowing our failures is infinitely preferable to being ignorant of them. How could we repent of something we do not even recognize as wrong?

The magnitude of God’s forgiveness, the expression of His boundless love, is equaled by His power to make us victorious. When we discover a failure, we have every right to say to Satan:

‘Rejoice not against O my enemy:   
When I fall, I shall arise’.[[830]](#footnote-612)

We long to please the One who has done so much for us. So let’s join with the psalmist in praying:

‘Search me, O God, and know my heart:   
Try me, and know my thoughts:   
And see if there be any wicked way in me,  
And lead me in the way everlasting’.[[831]](#footnote-613)

The following questions may not be as perceptive as those that would fall from Jesus’ lips. Forgive me. There’s something in my eye. I’m not sure what it is, but it feels disturbingly like a log . . .[[832]](#footnote-614)

It has accurately been said that the good is the enemy of the best. Many of the following questions focus on this. Choose between the alternatives given. There are no prizes for knowing the right answers. It’s what we do which counts; not what we know. Furthermore, God gives us different ministries. His specific leading for one musician will differ to that another receives. My aim is not to dictate what your attitude should be, but to encourage you to seek God’s confirmation that you are moving in the right direction.

**Which request would excite you the most?**

(1) I must have a recording of your music.

(2) Please tell me more about the message in that song.

(3) Could you tell me where the washrooms are?

**Is it your aim to win for Christ . . .**

(1) The masses?

(2) Just the musical elite?

(3) The target audience the Lord has specifically called you to?

(4) Only the tone deaf?

**Which comment would most please you?**

(1) ‘With your talent you could make a fortune!’

(2) ‘Isn’t it amazing that God uses so mightily music as ordinary as yours?’

**You have a ministry in music because . . .**

(1) You’re the best person for the task.

(2) No-one else will do it.

(3) God has called you to this ministry.

**Would you rather . . .**

(1) Make a fool of yourself, breaking down in the middle of a performance, but be used to lead someone to Christ?

(2) Give a performance which gains you high acclaim but achieves nothing spiritually?

**Which would you consider the greatest honor?**

(1) To achieve world-wide fame for your music, though the Lord considers it worthless.

(2) To know your music thrills the heart of the King of Kings, though it is so awful that no-one on earth can endure it.

**Your music gives the impression that . . .**

(1) You are reaching out to the world for Christ.

(2) You are withdrawing from the world.

(3) You are copying the world.

**To you, music is primarily . . .**

(1) A duty.

(2) Something you enjoy.

(3) A means of giving pleasure to others.

(4) An expression to God of your love for Him.

**Which statement best describes your aims?**

(1) To draw people to Christ by the quality of your music.

(2) To yield yourself and your music to the Holy Spirit, so that He can draw people to Christ.

**Music and emotions are related. Do you . . .**

(1) Fear this?

(2) Exploit it?

(3) Neither?

**Which remark would move you the most?**

(1) ‘I’ve never heard such beautiful music!’

(2) ‘God spoke to me while you were playing!’

(3) ‘Is that a spider on your shoe?’

**What response do you most want your music to elicit in your hearers?**

(1) ‘That was great!’

(2) ‘God is great!’

**Which is the strongest impression you leave with people?**

(1) You care about music.

(2) You care about people.

(3) You’ve got B.O.

**When you hear Christian music you regard as greatly inferior to your own, do you . . .**

(1) Tell everyone how awful it is?

(2) Buy some ear plugs?

(3) Thank God you’re so much better?

(4) Pray that God will still use the music?

**Which comment would hurt you the most?**

(1) ‘You were out of tune.’

(2) ‘Your hair style looked awful.’

(3) ‘Your music was indistinguishable from a first class secular performance.’

**What is your primary goal?**

(1) To be popular

(2) To reach a high musical standard.

(3) To be used of God.

**Which would you rather?**

(1) Deeply move 5,000 appreciative Christians with your music, but accomplish nothing of lasting spiritual significance for them.

(2) Hand a boy a tract which leads him to Christ.

(3) Stay in bed.

**Neighbors tend to take a special interest in the nature and timing of our practice sessions. Which alternative best matches their feelings?**

(1) You are blessed.

(2) You are a blessed @\*@## . . .!

**When someone heaps praise upon your music, what’s your most likely thought?**

(1) I must be getting good!

(2) Isn’t God gracious!

**When selecting music, do you . . .**

(1) Assume that because you like it, others will?

(2) Through prayer and conversation with people seek to understand the needs and tastes of your audience?

(3) Conclude that since God has dramatically used a piece with similar audiences, there is no need to specifically seek His direction this time?

**Tonight’s the big night, culminating countless hours of spiritual and musical preparation. Your music creates an atmosphere in which the Holy Spirit begins to really move. The moment you finish, however, the leader abruptly changes the mood. The atmosphere is destroyed long before the Spirit has completed His work. All your preparation seems lost forever. Do you . . .**

(1) Feel resentment?

(2) Ignore it?

(3) Check out employment opportunities in the French Foreign Legion.

(4) Privately, in prayerful humility, share your insight with the leader?

**Which would you rather hear?**

(1) ‘There were nine decisions as a result of your concert and we’ve taken up an offering of $1500 for you.’

(2) ‘At least ten people have come to the Lord through your ministry tonight and, after costs, your love offering came to 85 cents, one button and some slightly used chewing gum.’

**Do you seek through music to . . .**

(1) Serve others?

(2) Impress people?

(3) Satisfy your inner needs?

Perhaps the Lord has blessed our music even though we are conscious of areas in our lives which we have deliberately not submitted to God. We should note, however, that God’s present kindness is intended to lead us to a change of heart.[[833]](#footnote-615) If that doesn’t work the Lord has other ways of getting our attention!

We are right in putting much emphasis on being in tune musically, but do we put sufficient emphasis upon being in tune with the Lord? And we dare not forget that our relationship with God is inseparably linked to our relationship with people. As John poignantly put it, everyone who loves the Father will love His children.[[834]](#footnote-616)

James exposed the total inconsistency of imagining we can use the same voice to both bless God and slander someone made in the image of God.[[835]](#footnote-617) So do we seek diligently to be in harmony with fellow musicians, or merely in tune with their instruments and voices?

And let’s not overlook other relationships. Are we, for example, neglecting family responsibilities?[[836]](#footnote-618) Is there something we haven’t put right with someone?[[837]](#footnote-619) Is there anyone we haven’t forgiven?[[838]](#footnote-620)

Grappling with the issues already raised seems sufficient to keep anyone busy for several life-times. Yet, there are still further considerations. (Fortunately, He who dwells within you is exceedingly powerful!)

Have you sought God to ensure that the amount and nature of your practice sessions is in full accord with His will for you? Do you give proper priority to being spiritually prepared for your ministry? Prayer makes practice perfect.

Down through the ages, people have noted that almost any trivia can be put to a good tune and people will happily sing it. How far beyond trivia are your songs?

We can even love our ministry too much. Our deepest yearning must be to love and exalt the Lord Jesus. Both Isaiah and Amos prophesied the ruin of people who were more devoted to music than they were to the Lord.[[839]](#footnote-621)

The Christian musician’s devotion to God should parallel the psalmist’s attitude to God’s city:

‘If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
let my right hand forget [its musical skill].  
If I do not remember you,  
let my [singing] tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth;  
If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.’[[840]](#footnote-622)

Judson Cornwall tells of a talented violinist who surrendered alluring scholarships to follow God’s calling. As a missionary, however, he seized opportunities to give Christian concerts. Several times he felt the Lord telling him to abandon his violin altogether. Yet he persisted, arguing that his music would be an asset to his future ministry. Surely it would be irresponsible to discard his obvious talent.

Eventually, God spoke so firmly that he knew no amount of rationalizing or bargaining would work. He quit his violin forever. As a result of this obedience, the Lord used that missionary in a powerful way to touch the lives of thousands of people.[[841]](#endnote-219)

More than our music, God yearns for our love.

Are you willing, at any moment, to give up your ministry, should the Lord so lead? Furthermore, is your loving devotion to your Savior such that you would specialize in a type of music you intensely dislike, if He asked you?

If you have survived this barrage of questions without wanting to cry out for mercy, you’re better than me! But, praise God, His grace is sufficient for us. We haven’t arrived, but *provided* we keep pressing towards the goal depicted by these questions, claiming the righteousness and strength which is ours through faith in Jesus, God will be pleased to use us for His glory.

# CHAPTER 10: THE SPIRIT’S ENABLING

God has things in His heart ‘He has never given to anybody before because everybody is so busy cloning everybody else,’ says Winkie Pratney.

To illustrate, he cites the scene he witnessed in a camp where ‘God was pouring out His Spirit in incredible ways’ upon many teenagers. A girl got up, eyes closed, walked to the piano, sat down and started to play. Winkie had never heard such music. ‘It sounded like rainbows and waterfalls and novas. It was so powerful I ran and got my tape recorder and taped it.’

With her eyes still closed, she played for an hour and a half. Winkie described the music as ‘from heaven,’ ‘scary,’ ‘unbelievable’. He stressed that she until then she had never been able to play the piano. She had always wanted to play but her family was too poor to afford lessons.[[842]](#endnote-220)

I am convinced that *you* can receive music direct from God. I don’t mean you could call it Psalm 151 and add it to the Bible. I mean that enough of God can be in your music that your native abilities are surpassed; that if you claimed your music originated entirely from within you, heaven could sue you for plagiarism.

Both Bach and Mozart so highly regarded a tune ascribed to church musician Heinrich Isaak that they would rather have composed it than any of their own masterpieces. Tradition, however, says that Isaak received the melody from a wondering minstrel.[[843]](#endnote-221) Said Igor Stravinsky, ‘A good composer does not imitate, he steals.’[[844]](#endnote-222) We have enough people on earth stealing from each other. Why not plunder heaven?

Biblical revelation leads us to expect God to at least occasionally endow people with powers beyond their natural abilities. We noted in chapter three, Scriptural instances of supernaturally empowered physical strength, speed, stamina, sight, and speech. To the list of biblical miracles of interest to musicians, we could add divinely bestowed knowledge,[[845]](#footnote-623) wisdom,[[846]](#footnote-624) ability to hear heavenly things,[[847]](#footnote-625) manual dexterity, and artistic skill.[[848]](#footnote-626) These were not native abilities. Some of them occurred just once in a person’s life.

Consider the implications if such acts of God were channeled into music. Imagine a flutist playing along with heavenly music she is divinely allowed to hear; a guitarist with supernaturally heightened speed or dexterity; a composer soaring beyond his natural talent under the inspiration of the same God who gave David his psalms, Solomon his wisdom, and Paul his revelations.

If our Lord can give a ‘human’ voice to an ass,[[849]](#footnote-627) He can give a beautiful singing voice to anyone. The God who taught David’s hands ‘to war’[[850]](#footnote-628) can instantaneously teach anyone’s hands to play an instrument.

We are forced to acknowledge the theoretical validity of this. With God all things are possible, and He delights in using unskilled people to put the skilled to shame.[[851]](#footnote-629) Furthermore, we have gathered many clues throughout this book that heaven longs to be actively involved in our music. So it is quite conceivable that He would sometimes choose to work such musical miracles. But now it’s time for the crunch – the cold reality of life on this planet since the closing of Scripture’s canon. Are our theories ‘pie in the sky,’ or do they work in the lives of real flesh-and-blood, bumbling Christians like you and me?

## A NEW VOICE

Brian believed he had a ministry in music, but no-one else seemed to think so. Out of sympathy, his church allowed him to croon to them about once every six months.

One day, he announced to his pastor that he had seen himself in a dream singing with a magnificent voice to the church on Sunday night. He saw the congregation captivated by every note.

Feeling challenged that such a miracle was theoretically possible, Pastor David Pawson reluctantly consented. He could sing in the service. Brian added that in his dream, a stranger accompanied him. Here the pastor drew the line. He would have to use the church’s usual organist.

Five minutes before the service, the organist handed Pastor Pawson a note saying he had been called away. He could find only one replacement – a stranger. Brian immediately recognized the new organist as the one he had seen in his dream.

With a voice his friends had never heard before, Brian began to sing. ‘That’s not my husband!’ cried his wife, tears rolling down her face. Even his usual stiff, wooden posture was transformed. When he finished the church was filled with such awe that the eloquent preacher was unable to continue the service.[[852]](#endnote-223)

Young Kathryn Kuhlman, in her twenties, preached a simple salvation message and stayed on while a half dozen people knelt at the front. One of them was Isabel Drake, a teacher. In between sobs Isabel was praying for God to fill her with more of Himself, unaware that something extra-ordinary would occur. She then began to sing.

‘I had never heard such music,’ said Kathryn of this unforgettable experience. ‘It was the most beautiful singing with the most beautiful voice I had ever heard. She was singing in a language I had never heard, but it was so ethereal, so beautiful that I felt the hair on my skin begin to rise.’

Isabel’s mother, gripping Kathryn’s hand so forcefully as to almost crush it, gasped in near-hysteria, ‘That’s not my daughter singing. Isabel can’t even hold a tune. My daughter can’t sing a note!’

The song, sometimes reaching high C, sometimes in a minor key, sometimes dropping to a whisper, continued for nearly fifteen minutes.[[853]](#endnote-224)

## PRAYER POWER

May got out of bed to switch off the television. Joe must have left it on.

The set was dead. Where was the music coming from? From Leslie’s room? Sixteen year-old Leslie, blind, spastic and mentally retarded, couldn’t talk or hold a spoon. He’d never managed to even wriggle out of bed by himself. Yet there in front of her was Leslie, seated at the piano, giving a flawless rendition of Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1. This severely retarded boy had never so much as played a note before.

May fell to her knees, praising her miracle-working God.

Thereafter, with skill equal to a professional, Leslie was able to play any tune after hearing it only once. Often, his rendition would contain embellishments and feeling which were lacking in the music he was challenged to copy.

Later, years before he learned to talk, he began to sing. His repertoire, which included almost every conceivable type of music, grew into thousands before everyone lost count.[[854]](#endnote-225)

Leslie Lemke has become so famous that you have probably heard of him. His concerts move his audiences so profoundly that it defies explanation or comparison. Through them, many people have come to know the Lord.[[855]](#endnote-226)

While ‘experts’ frantically grope for a natural reason for Leslie’s unique gift, we need look no further than May’s and Joe’s faith-filled prayers to the Lord of creation. Year after heart-wrenching year the Lemkes daily interceded for their pitiful charge.[[856]](#endnote-227) May would say she made a real nuisance of herself, persistently badgering heaven for a miracle. From the time Leslie was twelve, her prayers became more specific. Tenaciously clinging to Jesus’ parable in which everyone received a talent, May insisted that God give Leslie a talent.[[857]](#endnote-228)

For the Lord not to honor such stubborn faith would be more astounding than the subsequent miracle. No wonder Leslie’s performances have such a powerful impact. How many of us have mediocre, rather than miraculous, ministries because we have failed to emulate May’s persistent prayer-life? Let’s refuse to accept anything less than heaven’s best!

## OUR FIRST HYMNIST

Caedmon, who died in about AD 680, is widely regarded as the first writer of hymns in the English (Anglo-Saxon) language. Until late in his life, this prolific hymnist had been poetically and musically inept.

One night, as Caedmon slept in a stable, a man appeared to him in a dream and asked him to sing. ‘I can’t sing!’ protested poor Caedmon. This inability was the very reason why he was in the stable. At feasts, guests were sometimes invited to take turns singing. Whenever his turn was approaching, he would walk out, rather than face the embarrassment of displaying his musical incompetence. That very night, to his distress, it had happened yet again.

At the man’s insistence, however, the sleeping Caedmon launched into an original song extolling God as Creator. When he awoke, the song was still with him.

Early in the morning, an excited Caedmon reported the strange experience to the monastery. Soon scholars were assembling to hear his song. So impressed were they, that they pronounced it a divinely bestowed gift. Further, they expounded a Christian theme and invited him to render it in verse. To their delight, the next morning, Caedmon presented them with a beautiful poem on the nominated topic.

He was urged to join the monastery, where this same technique was employed innumerable times with astounding success. They would expound a Scripture or doctrine and he would return it to them in delightful, melodious verse. Before long, his works covered a huge range of biblical themes and deeply moved many hearts.[[858]](#endnote-229)

Does God really do things like that? I confess I wondered how much of this tale is historical fact, rather than quaint legend. Tracking information to its source is often frustrating, full of cul-de-sacs, and sometimes disappointing. This time, however, there is gold at the end of the trail. All the above facts about Caedmon can be traced to none other than the scholarly English monk, Bede.[[859]](#footnote-630) Not only did he write soon after Caedmon, he is renowned for his thorough historical research.

Bede remarked that whilst others tried to follow Caedmon’s lead, none could reach the heights of this humble songwriter who received his gift direct from the Throne.

## maSTERPIECES

For Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), composing was such a spiritual exercise that whenever he got stuck he said, ‘I try to find out if I have erred in some way or other, thereby forfeiting grace; and I pray for mercy until I feel that I am forgiven.’

When writing his great oratorio *The Creation*, Haydn prayed every day for strength for the task. Near the end of his life, this famous composer heard, for the last time, his impressive chorus, *Let there be Light*.

‘Not mine, not mine!’ he exclaimed, ‘It all came to me from above’.[[860]](#endnote-230)

A servant opened the door to find Handel in tears. ‘I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God Himself,’ blurted the composer. He had just finished writing the *Hallelujah Chorus*. That the *Messiah* could be written in so short a time caused Sir Newman Flower to pronounce ‘it will remain, perhaps forever, the greatest feat in the whole history of music composition.’ The composer ate little during those momentous 24 days. Later, fumbling for words to describe his experience, he said, ‘Whether I was in the body or out of my body when I wrote it I know not.’[[861]](#endnote-231)

## THE SPIRIT’S CHOICE

It was mid 1966. Several hundred Pakistanis had gathered in Hyberabad to farewell their beloved Australian missionary. At the end of the meeting, the guest of honor, Rev. Geoffrey Bingham, was asked to close in prayer. He arose to do just that, but instead, he found himself singing. Somewhat surprised, he sang with transcended ability about Christ suffering on the cross and of the love of the Father and encouraged those present to go on in Christ. Though not sure what his next words would be, his song continued for probably more than ten minutes. An American Episcopal Bishop expressed his amazement, wondering how Rev. Bingham had fit the words into the tune. Both missionaries realized that it was not the usual type of Christian music sung in Pakistan, but the significance escaped them.

In contrast, most of the Pakistanis had tears in their eyes. Not only were they deeply moved by the words, the melody had touched them as well. ‘How did you learn our music?’ they asked, astonished to hear such music coming from a westerner. They explained that it was the type of music associated with Urdu folk songs which were a thousand years old.

The Spirit of God had not only spoken, He had chosen the perfect melody with which to whisk those words deep into Pakistani hearts.

Rev. Bingham is well aware of the tendency for us to unconsciously reproduce tunes we have heard before. Nevertheless, this highly perceptive and intelligent man is convinced that such an explanation of this event is hopelessly inadequate.

## SPIRIT-LED UNITY

Two or three weeks later, Rev. Bingham was some three hundred and seventy miles away in a rural area, leading an outdoor meeting. Few Christians have seen such scenes. The Spirit of God was moving in an exceptionally powerful way. The feeling of love and unity was immense and it was soon to manifest itself in a remarkable manner.

As he was about to lead in prayer, Rev. Bingham again found himself singing. He recognized the song flowing through his lips as somewhat similar to the one the Lord gave him in Hyberabad. But no-one else did. He was the only one present who had been at both meetings.

He had hardly started when all those present joined in, singing the same words and music! The congregation would have been familiar with the musical style, but the tune, quite complex by western standards, was almost certainly quite new to them, and the words definitely were. Nevertheless, Rev. Bingham could clearly hear them pronouncing the words as they sang along with him. The missionary himself was unsure what his next words and notes would be, yet it seemed not one of the two or three hundred present were silent. Finally, after ten or so glorious minutes, they all stopped together.

Acts 4:24 could possibly mean that all present unitedly prayed aloud an identical prayer. Since this is a most obvious interpretation, commentators have often felt obliged to specifically mention it, but they usually reject it. Such a miracle seems improbable. However, Rev. Bingham’s experience has led him to conclude that we have underestimated what can happen when Spirit-filled Christians are united in love.

In a church service in Adelaide, South Australia, the Holy Spirit gave Pastor Roger Rice a brand new song. He immediately sang it to the congregation. Simultaneously, the Lord gave a member of the congregation the same tune and words. Glennis Wearn was inclined to publicly join the pastor in his new song, but refrained for fear that such boldness would be construed as improper. Instead, she remained in her seat, quietly singing a duet with her pastor. Though the words and tune were completely new, singing the duet was so effortless that it seemed to her as if anyone could have done it.[[862]](#endnote-232)

During the Welsh revival, the congregational singing soared to such spectacular heights that one of the leaders, R. B. Jones, declared it ‘indescribable’ and ‘unimaginable.’ ‘I have seen nothing like it,’ he declared. Conventional hymns were sung, but with a supernatural unity. Unannounced, an appropriate hymn would suddenly commence. It was as though the congregation were responding to an invisible baton – as if over one thousand individuals had gelled into one personality.[[863]](#endnote-233)

## HEAVEN-SENT

We saw in chapter two that the hearing of celestial music has continued down to present times. Some of this music might be beyond our powers to reproduce. Nevertheless, in a divinely-given vision, John the Revelator not only heard songs, he recorded the lyrics for posterity.[[864]](#footnote-631) Perhaps he even shared the tunes with some fellow Christians. He heard melody just as surely as the lyrics. Isaiah may have had a similar experience when he heard the seraphim’s worship.[[865]](#footnote-632) The angelic Christmas carol is yet another celestial song which has found a permanent place in Scripture. Such Biblical occurrences prove that at least part of some heavenly songs can be shared with the world.

A pastor lost his power of speech. With his ministry opportunities severely curtailed, he prayed for a new way to serve His Lord. He always maintained that his hymn writing gift was a direct answer to that prayer.[[866]](#endnote-234)

One day, while communing with God, he had a vision of Paradise. As he gazed in awe, words came to him which he immediately wrote down. Only after completing the song did the vision slowly fade. That song, born so mysteriously, was soon being sung around the world, blessing countless thousands of people.

The experience of a modern-day Pentecostal? Hardly. He was Rev. William O. Cushing. The year was 1876.[[867]](#endnote-235) As you read this section, notice the dates. Many of the instances were clearly untouched by twentieth century Pentecostalism. Indeed, they belonged to an era in which I would expect a greater reluctance than exits today to admit to a supernatural experience.

Thirteen years earlier, Prebendary Edward Harland had a dream. He saw a huge heavenly choir singing as they entered a glorious temple. The moment he awoke from the dream, he recorded the words he had heard. The hymn was later published.[[868]](#endnote-236)

In that same decade, Phillips Brooks wrote, ‘O little town of Bethlehem’ for a Sunday school Christmas festival. He asked his Sunday school superintendent, organist Lewis Redner, to provide a suitable melody. Inspiration, however, eluded the organist. Redner went to sleep on Christmas eve with still no tune. As he slept, he dreamt he heard angels sing. Upon waking, he quickly jotted down the angel’s melody. It winged Brooks’ carol to popularity. For the rest of his life Redner believed the tune came from heaven.[[869]](#endnote-237)

This side of eternity, we may never know how many other Christian works have had similarly remarkable origins. In many Christian climes, there would be considerable pressure to suppress such facts.

Nevertheless, we know enough to be certain that God’s desire to communicate with His people through dreams and visions didn’t die when the ink dried in the final word of the New Testament. Nor has it suddenly been revived in our era.

The fading of the first century did not introduce a new spiritual epoch. It was the dying of our Savior that established our current spiritual era, not the dying of the last apostle.

For God to change the ground rules at some point in history, would require another covenant. Large chunks of the New Testament would be obsolete. If it is true that ‘I will pour out my Spirit . . . and your young men shall see visions’ is not a promise we can claim today, the New Covenant has been superseded and God didn’t bother to tell us. For the Lord to withdraw this promised mode of communication with His children would have been such a blow to the early church that they would have needed at least as much warning and preparation as Scripture gives regarding the Second Coming. At no time – not today, not in the middle ages – has God ever rescinded His promise to the church.

Deception, excesses and heresy have always been with us, but so has a loving Savior who longs to reveal Himself through His Word and through visions.

## OTHER TYPES OF HEAVENLY INVOLVEMENT

The presence of dreams, visions or angels, however, is not essential for divine assistance in a composition.

God spoke to Job out of a whirlwind, to Elijah in ‘a still, small voice,’ to Gideon by a dew-drenched fleece, to Josiah by the Scriptures. He has spoken through girls and old men, through kings and prisoners-of-war.

When God wishes to deliver a melody to you, He has an enormous range of options, including dropping it into your mind, perhaps a few notes at a time, in a manner so subtle that it seems the work of your own creativity.

William Cowper’s dearest friend was gravely ill. From the midst of this painful experience came his famous hymn, ‘Oh, for a closer walk with God.’ The words of the hymn ‘were whispered to my heart,’ he said, ‘in a way which I have often experienced.’[[870]](#endnote-238) Theoretically, this ‘whispering’ could have been as much of God as if a heavenly choir had chanted it to him.

‘Writing is *praying* for me,’ wrote Frances Ridley Havergal. She prayed not just for enabling or thoughts, but for each word.[[871]](#endnote-239) She would receive perhaps a line, joyfully thank her Master, then look to Him for the next word or note.

Many people regarded her as talented, but she considered the truth to be ‘much nicer’ than that. She believed her poems and music not the product of her ability, but something she received line by line from God.[[872]](#endnote-240) To confirm that it was really the Lord and not she, she would sometimes discover that the ability to write verse was taken from her. Once, this lasted for five years.[[873]](#endnote-241) If each word, each rhyme, each note is a direct answer to prayer, the whole work must be gloriously saturated with heavenly input.

## A SHAKY SANKEY

Ira Sankey was on a British train scanning a newspaper for news from home. His eye caught a poem, ‘The ninety and nine.’ Enthusiastically, he told Moody it would make a good Gospel song. Moody requested it be read to him. This the famous singer did, with as much feeling as he could muster. Upon completion, he expectantly looked up, only to find Moody so unimpressed that he had already reverted to reading his mail. Deflated, Dr. Sankey cut out the poem and cast his mind to other things.

Next day, Dwight Moody was preaching a stirring sermon on ‘The Good Shepherd’. Suddenly, he asked Sankey to sing something appropriate. Sankey’s heart pounded. This gifted singer and composer had a wide repertoire and yet the perfect song for the occasion seemed to elude him.

Out of nowhere a voice seemed to say, ‘Sing the hymn you found in the train.’

‘Impossible!’ thought Sankey. The words were ideal but they had never been put to music. He was about to totally dismiss the ridiculous notion when again the impression came that he must sing this poem.

In one of the most nerve-racking moments of his life, he reached into his pocket, unfolded the newspaper scrap and, before more than a thousand people, placed it on the organ.

Offering a fervent prayer as though his life depended on it, he struck a chord and sang the first word. Note after note came to him. A hush fell upon the audience.

Miraculously, the first verse was completed. But would he be able to repeat the miracle for the second verse? Sankey’s mind raced. What if he forgot the new-born melody? But the Lord who started the miracle was well able to complete it. That tune has circled the globe with not a note changed.

‘Sankey, where did you get that hymn?’ asked Moody with tears in his eyes. ‘I never heard the like of it in my life.’

It was the poem Moody had dismissed the previous day!

Though born in a moment, it became his most popular song.

There are people who owe their spiritual lives to that song. Yet would the tune ever have been written, had Sankey, at the crucial moment, resisted that inner prompting?

## WITH GOD AND A GUITAR

Heaven’s interest in music extends far beyond song-writing.

‘Sometimes, after prayer and fasting, God would anoint me at a practice and show me things on the guitar I’d never done before,’ said Stewart Wissell, speaking of his experiences when a member of the gospel group ‘Emmanuel.’ ‘It’s as if the Holy Spirit would take control of my mind and hands and put patterns in my guitar playing which I never knew could be done. Even in live concerts this would often happen.’

I can certainly understand why Stewart said he found that exciting. Note, however, that it wasn’t a substitute for practice. God’s grace isn’t intended to induce slothfulness.

## A DIVINELY INITIATED REHEARSAL

Mrs. Hall scribbled in the choir loft during her pastor’s lengthy prayer. The result was the hymn ‘Jesus paid it all’. She showed it to her pastor, who had no difficulty finding a tune. Another church member had written some music and handed it to him. The two matched perfectly.[[874]](#endnote-242)

While in Southern Africa, David Pawson wrote a hymn, based on part of the book of Habakkuk. He searched for a suitable tune and could only find one.

Some time later, he visited a church in England. To his amazement, he discovered they had felt led to learn this very tune. They knew nothing about his song. Not having any words, they used to merely hum the melody, in blind obedience to the Spirit’s leading. Pastor Pawson had the words the Lord was preparing them for.[[875]](#endnote-243)

## THE SPIRIT’S LEADING

When Brett Johnson announced his song, I was annoyed. It was the second time in as many weeks he had chosen that song. I later learned that others had considerably more fuel for criticism. For this church, it was actually the fourth time in a month that artists had sung ‘On Christ the solid rock I stand.’

Until now, it had apparently been merely an unusual coincidence. But this time, it was a deliberate choice on Brett’s part. And everyone knew it.

Brett had a very wide repertoire, including several dozen original songs. Despite this, and knowing that the worn-out hymn had already been ridiculously over-exposed, this young man announced that he felt led of God to sing it yet again!

It was Brett’s home church. He would have to live with this for a long time.

That morning, during his usual time with the Lord, he was reminded that his purpose was not to entertain, but to minister to people, as God’s Spirit directed. That clinched it for Brett. He would face the fireworks. There was only one way for him – God’s way.

Here was a man God could trust with a snippet of His infinite knowledge. God’s direction did not have to make human sense before he would step out in obedience. He had the courage to take up God’s challenge.

The song completed, Pastor Andrew Evans arose to preach. His text was none other than the parable of the man who built his house upon the rock. So accurately did his sermon fit the song, that Pastor Evans deliberately read verbatim a portion of his typed notes to demonstrate how he and Brett had independently chosen exactly the same theme. It was fitting that Brett be honored in front of the whole congregation, in whose presence he had risked humiliation.

Before someone tries to dismiss this act of God as mere coincidence, let me share another incident in Brett’s ministry. He and his wife were asked to sing in an evening service in their church. They chose one of Brett’s original songs. This is how it went:

In this quiet morning hour,  
When I come before you,  
Just to get to know you, –  
Know you better –  
I meditate upon your Word.  
You are my strength forever.  
And in this quiet hour,  
We are together.

Place your Word, eternal truth,  
Deep within my heart,  
That I might know   
The wisdom of your ways.  
And let that seed of love you’ve sown,  
Grow into a tree,  
Bearing fruit for all the world to see.

Search me, O God, and know my heart,  
Try me and know my anxious thoughts,  
And see if there be any wicked way in me.  
Lead me in Thy everlasting way.  
O, lead me in Thy everlasting way.

There are things within me still  
That have to fall away.  
Complete the work within me, Lord I pray,  
And shape me for your perfect work,  
Like a potter molds the clay.  
And help me Lord to serve you every day.[[876]](#endnote-244)

I have quoted it in full because it gives valuable insight into why this man hears from God. Moreover, you can see for yourself that there is scant reference to being molded by a potter. Yet the song they sang on Sunday emphasized this. For no rational reason, Connie and Brett felt led to sing ‘Like a potter molds’ thrice, instead of the usual once. Never before or since have they done that.

I have in my possession a tape of the full service. It’s entitled, ‘The Potter and the Clay.’ The visiting speaker’s entire sermon was devoted to that very topic.

## A LIFE-LONG DEPENDENCE

Music which on one occasion assists, will on a similar occasion, hinder. God alone can differentiate.

Invitational songs have often been used to bring people to a life-changing decision. But not always. Teenager, George Beverly Shea, came under conviction many times. Each time, however, he would release his pent-up emotions by heartily singing the invitational hymn with the congregation, thus delaying his spiritual pilgrimage.[[877]](#endnote-245)

Background music has sometimes been most helpful, but some people could react so violently to this ‘attempt to manipulate emotions’ that the music ends up hindering the Spirit’s work. At times Billy Graham has chosen not to use music when people in his crusades are making a decision for Christ.[[878]](#endnote-246)

No matter how experienced we become in the use of Christian music, we never lose our dependence upon the Spirit’s leading.

The Lord whispers His directions to those who sincerely seek Him. But Scripture teaches it is far better to have never received a revelation than to hear and not obey.[[879]](#footnote-633) And why should God even bother to share His secrets with musicians too inflexible or tradition-bound to respond to them?[[880]](#footnote-634) The Bible records times when people sought the Lord’s guidance in vain. Knowing they were rebellious, God refused to answer them.[[881]](#footnote-635) So let’s rid ourselves of hindrances and enter the exciting realm of Spirit-led ministry.

## THE PERFECT MIX

‘That’s good!’ she gushed when he finished his song.

‘Oh, it wasn’t me,’ he humbly said, ‘it was the Lord.’

‘No – it wasn’t *that* good!’[[882]](#endnote-247)

Having confirmed that God wants to be creatively involved in our music, we come to what I regard as the most exciting part of the book – discovering how our creativity and God’s creativity mesh. If we get this wrong we will produce music which, no matter how good, is still less than what God wants and, no matter how much we enjoy our ministry, we will still miss one of the greatest joys a human can experience. Because it is so vital that we are convinced of the following, I will in a short space look at it from many different angles, not to be repetitive, but to prove that no matter how we approach it, truth leads to the one, thrilling conclusion.

When writing the book that grew from this one,[[883]](#footnote-636) I pleaded with God that it be all of Him and none of me. That seemed spiritual and I sincerely meant it, but God was not interested. His revelation came only in drips, and putting it together was like trying to thread needles with spastic hands. All of God? I could not possibly have poured more of my own effort into that book, yet I knew God was there – powerfully.

My prayer to become God’s dictating machine fizzled because I had not counted on God’s love. He ignored my offer, just like the father ignored his prodigal son’s offer to relinquish sonship and become a hired hand.[[884]](#footnote-637)

The Almighty wants to give us the thrill and honor of genuine involvement in His magnificent purposes. Being creative is God-like and He longs for His children to know this joy. If, through His inexplicable love, Christ wants me as co-heir, he wants me as co-author.[[885]](#footnote-638)

It was critical that a piece be written immediately and Jimmy Owens’ mind was blank. In desperation Carol slumped to her knees at her bedside. ‘Do you know what it’s like when you’re trying to create something?’ she asked God, then broke into laughter as she realized who she was speaking to. What made the moment so precious, however, was that when she next peeked at her husband, ideas were flowing almost quicker than he could scribble.[[886]](#endnote-248)

Divine love is a compelling reason for God valuing our efforts. Here is another: God created our creativity. Our raw natural abilities are as much a product of God’s creativity as any music He could ever compose. He could not deny our (consecrated) creative efforts without denying His own creative skill in making us.

Some people’s claim to divine inspiration produces such mediocrity that it seems an excuse for laziness or, more likely, a failure to see the gap in the ‘all of God, none of me’ half-truth.

Self must die – sinful selfishness, independence, pride and trying to earn heaven’s approval. And we must yield everything to Christ, acknowledging that His ways are higher than ours. But to go so far beyond this that we renounce and denigrate our divinely-created mental and physical powers is as unchristian as gnostic heretics who taught that everything physical is of the devil.

Paul’s ministry was an astounding mixture of hardship (torture, deprivation, shipwreck) and miracles (healings, earthquake, snakebite survival, blinding of Elymas’ eyes). Likewise, your music should be a peculiar mixture of the natural (plain hard work) and the supernatural (divine intervention). The same passage of Scripture that emphasizes the prophetic (i.e. supernatural) side of music, also points to the existence of a training system.[[887]](#footnote-639)

During her ‘musical visions’,[[888]](#footnote-640) Frances Ridley Havergal, for the most part was content merely to marvel at what she was hearing. At times, however, she applied her mind to composing along with the ethereal music, predicting, and in fact *willing* the next sequence.

That our Lord wants us to be submissive but active partners is His work, not mindless robots, is demonstrated in the penning of Scripture. In the original language, the individual style of each human writer is very obvious. It is truly the Word of God, yet the Lord ordained it that each sentence bears the imprint of the human writer. He chose to use, rather than over-ride, the individual personalities of the writers. If this is so for Scripture, which is more God-inspired than anything we could produce, it will be true for even our most Spirit-filled music.

A man and a woman in love long for a union, the natural result of which is offspring that are neither entirely the man’s, nor the woman’s, but bear the unmistakable marks of both. That union, Scripture boldly declares, has a spiritual parallel.[[889]](#footnote-641) Though this initially shocks our impure minds, it rings true. The human desire to express love in this manner was placed within us by the One who fashioned us in His image. The inexhaustible creativity of God longs, through our union with Him, to birth within us unique and wondrous things, bearing the image, not just of one partner, but of both Him and us.

A musician and an instrument unite to produce sounds which neither would produce without the other. We are living instruments fashioned by the divine Instrument Maker with greater sophistication than any man-made instrument, having our own creativity. Like an instrument maker with his cherished instrument, our Maker longs to blend His ability with ours to produce unique sounds to bless the world.

So, both to express His unfathomable love for us and to display His own genius in creating us, the omnipotent Lord treasures our contribution. But because that same love yearns for intimacy with us and that same creativity forever craves new expression, the Almighty longs to couple His supernatural ability with our natural effort to birth something as unique and as precious as is a child to its loving parents. The product of this supernatural union will be in one sense human, in another sense divine; an earthly song glowing with heavenly glory.

Let’s clarify the often misunderstood role of human effort. As a proud attempt to earn salvation, good works are abhorrent. Wrong attitudes turn good works sour. As an expression of loving submission to God, however, sweat is beautiful. For the Spirit-filled Christian in divine submission, human exertion and divine enabling are not opponents but allies. View inspiration and effort not as an incompatible mix of oil and water but as bricks and mortar. They merge to build a monument of love for the glory of God – glory that His father-heart longs to share with us.

## HUMAN INSTRUCTION VERSUS HEAVENLY INSPIRATION

Those who are called to minister in music, will seek to refine their gift. If we are ever hesitant, the parable of the talents is sufficient to seal the matter for us.[[890]](#footnote-642) Yet as we grow in Christ, our motivation intensifies. Our love for God fills us with a longing to develop the abilities He had graciously bestowed upon us. We treasure the gift because we adore the Giver.

A man takes from the earth a precious diamond and spends hours studying and cutting it, desiring to reveal to the fullest the beauty God has placed within it. In like manner, we labor to display the beauty resident within our gift, that the Giver might be glorified.

Longing to see our Lord’s eyes sparkle with joy, we polish His gift till it gleams. We want it to shine so brightly that He can see His face in it. Then we want the whole world to see that face.

For the secular musician, training and practice are simply a matter of common sense. Our motivation is much deeper and sweeter. Yet sometimes practice and musical training seem at odds with ministering in the Spirit’s power.

A lady I admire was very much used of God until she started taking singing lessons. Formerly, when she was in church worshipping her Lord, God would often suddenly give her an entirely new song. There was no time for rehearsals. The song was divinely created for that specific occasion. The moment there was a pause in the service, she would share that beautiful song with the congregation. With remarkable consistency, her songs would blend in with the rest of the service in ways beyond human control. Since commencing singing lessons, however, her training seemed to be hindering her ministry.

My guess is that her lessons had simply made her more self-conscious, causing her to focus upon correct voice production, rather than focusing upon her Savior. Such a change of focus would probably have an adverse effect upon any ministry, let alone one so dependent upon hearing from God that very moment.

The solution, it would seem, is not less practice, but more. Eventually, such things as correct breathing should become almost second nature. Then she will be able to concentrate upon the Lord and sing correctly as well. The result will surely be an even more effective ministry.

## THE COST

Miracles are an essential aspect of authentic Christian ministry. So powerful are they that Jesus affirmed that miracles would have brought to repentance even Sodom, the epitome of wickedness.[[891]](#footnote-643)

Nothing can compel belief, but we have an obligation to present a message so Spirit-charged that everyone knows that to reject it is to reject not a man-made religion, but God Himself. We long to join Paul in saying we have ‘fully preached the Gospel,’ but how can we unless, like him, we can say in the same breath that we have proclaimed ‘in word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders’.[[892]](#footnote-644) ‘The kingdom of God consists not of talk [or human music], but power,’ declared the apostle.[[893]](#footnote-645)

Miracles – God’s supernatural intervention – are not a luxury. Yet they often come with a price tag. In May’s case, it was one and a half decades of unrelenting, faith-filled prayer. For Stewart Wissell, it was diligence. For Rev. William Cushing, it was maintaining intimacy with the Lord. Without courage, Dr. Sankey’s miracle would have been quashed.

In no sense can we earn a miracle, but how can we receive if we are not receptive?

Another common cost is obedience. Many miracles, by their very nature, simply cannot occur without it.

## CONCLUSION

Souls are God’s responsibility, sounds are our responsibility. That’s the way many Christian musicians view it. God wants us to do our best, but they imagine that’s about the limit of His interest in our music. The Lord is expected to take the back seat, politely applauding the finished performance, but basically leaving us to our own devices, musically.

We now know differently. God longs to be involved in our music – guiding, inspiring, tutoring, and at times actually composing and playing through us.

‘Open my lips,’ prayed the psalmist, ‘and my mouth will show forth your praise.’[[894]](#footnote-646) ‘Take my lips and speak through them, take my mind and think through it,’ became one of Frances Ridley Havergal’s favorite prayers.[[895]](#endnote-249)

Let’s never forget that music has its ultimate Source in God, not man. The further one goes from the source the more polluted the water. Forget about following the world; you will lead it, if you draw close enough to the Source.

Be not quick to assume God is not in your song writing or musical performance just because it fails to conform to one of my illustrations. God assists and inspires us in a thousand ways.

The Spirit of the Almighty resides within us. Every day we speak with God. Every day we’re seated in heavenly places. To us, the supernatural is commonplace. It would hardly be surprising if much of our music is more divinely inspired than we realize.

Yet each of us could probably develop still further our ability to receive from heaven. My passion is to inspire you to enter into an ever-deepening musical partnership with ‘the Chief Musician,’ the One who ‘gives songs in the night,’ the Origin of ‘every good and perfect gift,’ the Lord of sound and time, who is constantly worthy of a new song. Seek Him. Yield to Him. Harmonize with Him. The result will last for eternity.

# CHAPTER 11: MORTAL MUSIC’S PINNACLE

After a fascinating look at ways of discovering the original musical arrangements of Scripture’s songs, we will discuss whether such efforts will enable us to produce music which is closer to the divine ideal. Finally, we will look at the challenges and opportunities of modern musical developments and ask ourselves whether we should look to the past or the future for earth’s greatest music prior to Christ’s return.

## RECONSTRUCTING THE PSALMS’ ORIGINAL MUSICAL SETTING

Just because a melody sounds ‘Jewish’ is no indication of any similarity to King David’s music. Our knowledge of ancient Jewish music is surprisingly slim. Nevertheless, exciting discoveries are continuing. Let’s briefly examine various approaches to rediscovering David’s music.

### 1. THE BIBLICAL TEXT

The Hebrew text of the Psalms contains accents. It was once thought that these could be interpreted musically. Unfortunately, all attempts have failed and this approach has now been generally abandoned.

However, an analysis of the text has revealed other significant clues. An obvious one is that the Psalms cover a wide range of different emotions. One would expect the associated music to be sufficiently complex to reflect these varied moods.

Hebrew poetry does not have regular strophes. From this, the *Jewish Encyclopedia*[[896]](#endnote-250) concludes that the original melody must have had considerable ‘freedom and elasticity,’ like Oriental melodies today.

Another clue suggested by a psalm’s structure is illustrated by the hundred and thirty-sixth psalm. This distinctive psalm is written in a manner highly suggestive of call and response singing. Each alternate line is,

‘For His mercy endures forever.’

Theoretically, singers could have responded with such a refrain between the lines of almost any Psalm. In fact, these very words may have been used as a response in the singing of many of them. ‘For His mercy endures forever’ appears in a musical context amazingly often.[[897]](#footnote-647)

In Psalm 107, ‘For His mercy endures forever’ is immediately followed by, ‘Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,’ as though the psalmist expected ‘the redeemed’ to respond by singing that line.[[898]](#footnote-648)

So perhaps Psalm 136 preserves in written form a musical style in which a number of other Scriptural Psalms were also sung. Supporting evidence is found in Psalm 135:10b-12. These verses are almost identical to Psalm 136:18-22, except for the absence of the refrain.

One has simply to read the following verses to realize that other refrains may also have been used:

‘O Israel, trust in the Lord:  
HE IS THEIR HELP AND THEIR SHIELD.  
O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord:  
HE IS THEIR HELP AND THEIR SHIELD.  
You that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord:  
HE IS THEIR HELP AND THEIR SHIELD’.[[899]](#footnote-649)

Another possibility is found in Psalms 124:1 and 129:1 where ‘Let Israel now say’ may have been an invitation to respond. In both instances, the answer, in whole or in part, consists of the opening words of the psalm.

In Hebrew poetry, alternate lines echo the meaning of the previous line. So, even without the insertion of a refrain, the structure of many psalms is ideally suited for call and response singing. We simply don’t know how much of this potential was exploited. However, there are several Scriptural hints that antiphonal singing actually occurred.

After victoriously crossing the sea, ‘Moses and the sons of Israel’ sang to the Lord. Of particular interest to us is the fact that Miriam, leading the women, ‘answered them’ with a chorus.[[900]](#footnote-650) In fact, the music may have alternated several times between the two groups.

Hervey[[901]](#footnote-651) suggested the song of Deborah and Barak was ideally suited for this type of rendition, with the first two lines[[902]](#footnote-652) forming an antiphon sung by the opposite sex.

Centuries later, Nehemiah celebrated the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s walls by forming not one, but two choirs.[[903]](#footnote-653) Perhaps this was done to facilitate antiphonal singing.

Some Bibles definitely refer to such singing. For instance, in the New King James, Amplified and Revised Standard Versions, Ezra 3:11 reads, ‘they sang responsively’. Regrettably, the underlying Hebrew, according to some experts, is less explicit than this rendering suggests.

In 1 Chronicles 16 we find that after the singing of a long psalm the people responded with ‘Amen’ and ‘Praise the Lord’. Whether the congregation actually sang this response is not known, but the last verses of the psalm in *Chronicles* ends like Psalm 106, and in the end of Psalm 106 ‘let all the people say, Amen. Praise the Lord’ is actually part of the psalm.[[904]](#endnote-251)

There is extra-Biblical evidence of antiphonal singing in the early church.[[905]](#endnote-252)

Further investigation unearths additional clues about the nature of music in Bible times. One suggestion is that the leaders of temple worship used cymbals to keep time.[[906]](#endnote-253)

### 2.ANALYSIS OF EXISTING MUSIC

King David’s original music echoing through the tunnel of time has long since faded to stony silence. Yet we have glimpsed at how probing God’s Word can help revive some ever-so-faint strains. But there are further ways of making those sounds more distinct.

It has been claimed there must have been no harmony in Old Testament music. Harmony, goes the argument, is a feature only of music influenced by western civilization. Extensive research in Africa alone has shown this to be an exaggeration. Nevertheless, it is said that modern Arabs relatively uninfluenced by the west, detest harmony. It has generally been assumed that, at least in this respect, musical tastes in ancient Israel would have been similar. We shall see later that this assumption is highly questionable.

However, another fascinating line of research based on existing music is not so easily dismissed. Marked similarities between the music of Yemenite Jews and the earliest Gregorian chant have been identified.[[907]](#endnote-254) These two traditions had no contact, but presumably grew form the same soil – the sacred Jewish music of Jesus’ time or earlier. The common elements are therefore of immense value in reconstructing ancient Jewish music.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGY

I was stunned to discover a stereo record of music pre-dating the Bible’s psalms.[[908]](#endnote-255) This staggering achievement represents the combined efforts of an Assyriologist, a musicologist and a physicist, with the support of countless other archaeologists, scholars and technical staff.

A clay tablet, well over three thousand years old, was found to contain the lyrics, melody and harmony of a Hurrian cult song. The importance of the find is illustrated by the fact that the writing of harmony directly below the melody was previously thought to have been developed no earlier than the European Middle Ages. In the light of many guesses about ancient music, the mere existence of harmony is quite significant. The musical scale corresponds to the modern major. The tablet provides no indication of tempo, rhythm or musical ornamentation.

The music was sung by modern vocalists to the accompaniment of a lyre made to ancient specifications.[[909]](#endnote-256)

How accurately this startling recording mirrors Levitical and Davidic music cannot at present be determined. At several points scholars were forced to resort to guesswork. Furthermore, the relationship between this song and Israelite music is unknown.

The tablet was found about one hundred and fifty kilometers, as the crow flies, outside the border of David’s Israel. It apparently predates David by about four centuries. The Hurrians have sometimes been identified with the Horites, Hivites and Jebusites.[[910]](#endnote-257) Each of these dwelt with the Israelites until the Babylonian exile.[[911]](#footnote-654)

Although we have the lyrics to non-biblical Christian hymns dating back to about AD 170, a Christian hymn dated AD 270 is the earliest I know of found with the melody indicated by Greek vocal notation. It speaks of all creation praising the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.[[912]](#endnote-258)

As illustrated in Note 1.7 in reference to trumpets, archaeology can provide invaluable data concerning the sound and limitations of the musical instruments in the Bible. Each break-through provides another vital piece of the jig-saw.

### 4. FUTURE SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS

It is currently possible to extract past conversations from solids, writes Billy Graham associate John Wesley White. He postulates that one day we may have the technology to extract from rocks, sounds produced in biblical times.[[913]](#endnote-259)

Last century, cassette recorders would have seen equally far-fetched. Who knows how far technology will take us? As incredible as it seems, we may one day have recordings of singers in Solomon’s temple!

## WHY BOTHER?

Even if we possessed such recordings, however, should we model our music on it? We have already noted that some of the psalm’s tunes might have been secular, perhaps even pagan.

A study of the Psalms’ original musical settings might yield a few useful principles. For example, it could challenge some conservative attitudes if a common interpretation of Shiggaion[[914]](#footnote-655) is confirmed. This technical term could possibly mean the tune was wild and rhythmic or ecstatic.

However, to slavishly imitate Hebrew music seems an unwarranted regression. It has been disputed whether the Israelites even had such musical conventions as the octave and written music. Should we revert to the era when trumpets were capable of only two or three notes; when unamplified music had to compete with the sounds of sacrificial animals?

I revere the Israelite’s divinely inspired writings because God intended His Word for all times and cultures. Scripture cannot be improved. But that does not mean I should regard as infallible those aspects of Hebrew culture God saw fit not to immortalize. Centuries before David, Israel’s neighbors wrote the music alongside the lyrics of sacred songs. Yet God decided not to use such a system when recording the Psalms for posterity. Scripture preserves the enduring principles, not the transitory curiosities, of music.

Were I expected to exalt Hebrew music, it would be inconsistent to stop there. Logic suggests I should also imitate other aspects of their culture, such as clothing.

We feel at liberty to put Hebrew psalms into English, an entirely different language. Are we not also free to put those psalms to different music? If it is right to use a non-Hebrew language to evangelize, it must also be right to put that message to non-Hebrew music.

Yet we should realize that no music has a stronger claim to being a model for Christian musicians than that of the biblical era. If we need not be dominated by the crotchets and quavers of Bible times, we certainly need not be dominated by church musical traditions developed since then. If any Christian in the past were justified in composing music that sounded nothing like that played in Bible times, then contemporary Christians must certainly be free to develop styles which sound nothing like the Christian music of previous generations.

God’s doctrinal revelation to mankind is complete. That does not imply, however, that the Lord has nothing further to show us in the musical realm. We have no need of verbal inspiration of the type the writers of the Bible had, because God has given us their writings. But we do not have their music. If we are as committed to God as His ancient servants were, surely He will inspire us musically as much as He did them.

## CHANGE

This ailing world will finally be put out of its misery. We then expect music to undergo significant changes. Realizing this should make us less resistant to changes in Christian music today.

So far, all human music has been less than the ideal. There has always been room for improvement – even when David sang his inspired psalms accompanied by primitive instruments, with a mortal, continually aging voice.

Humanity will not have perfect health in our era, but this has not prevented significant medical developments, like the apparent eradication of small-pox. Similarly, our inability to achieve musical perfection does not make it impossible for us to attain musical heights never before achieved on earth. Rather than Davidic times being the golden era of godly music, our Lord could be saving the best till last, like the wine at the wedding feast in Cana.[[915]](#footnote-656)

Not just recent inventions, but every human musical development has occurred in a fallen world.[[916]](#footnote-657) Modern society is decadent, but show me any era in fallen humanity’s history not indelibly sin-stained. Virtually everything associated with music – conducting, musical notation, instruments, and so on, was once a new invention. Further, the originators of the idea were not necessarily godly.

All Christian musicians commandeer long-established inventions. There is therefore no intrinsic reason for out-of-hand rejection of recent advances. The mere passage of time never made anything holy!

Martin Luther, soon after the invention of the printing press, organized a literature blitz not equaled until relatively recent times. Regrettably, Christians have not always been so quick to seize technological advances for the glory of God.

But as musicians, let’s be quick to prayerfully evaluate the latest developments. We need to determine what God expects of us in the light of each musical break-through or new trend.

We have already concluded that God deserves the very best.[[917]](#footnote-658) Yet another strong incentive to keep abreast of recent developments is our desire to reach the unchurched.

## FOREIGNERS IN OUR OWN COUNTRY

Christian culture seems so removed from the rest of western society that we need to view Evangelism as a missionary venture. We are trying to reach what is virtually a foreign culture. This means that someone must undergo the hazardous crossing of a cultural barrier before accurate communication is possible.

We can hardly expect the unregenerate to go to pains to adapt to our jargon and musical tastes. The initiative rests with us.[[918]](#footnote-659)

Naturally, there is always a limit to how far a Christian can adopt the practices of non-Christian society. Discerning the limit is not easy. In this respect we must do our utmost to be charitable towards other Christians, realizing that God gives us different ministries. God’s leading for some, will not be His leading for all.

## TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES BRINGING US ‘CLOSER’ TO NATURE

In *Numbers* we see the yearning of a man of God for something that could not occur in his era. ‘Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets . . .’ could only be fulfilled in the era of the Spirit.[[919]](#footnote-660) In several psalms we seem to see another yearning of people of God that could not be fulfilled in their lifetime – the longing for nature’s sounds and movements to mingle with human worship to our common Creator. Though I believe this will find its full fulfilment only in the age to come, there is a sense in which it is more possible now than ever before.

Ironically, because the cancer of humanism and eastern heresy has caused many people to feel a kinship with non-human creation, the following, inspired by my Bible study, does not seem as weird as when I started writing several years ago. Biblical revelation, however, has always taught that we have much in common with sub-human creation. Humanity and everything else on earth is created and sustained by the same God,[[920]](#footnote-661) was marred by the same original sin[[921]](#footnote-662) and will be restored by the same Savior.[[922]](#footnote-663) Adam was ordained to tend the garden and name the animals, not to abuse; to have dominion, not to decimate. Every facet of creation displays the glory of the One who fashioned it. Each species is priceless, not because it might one day springboard a scientific advance for the comfort of humanity but because it is the handiwork of the One we love. Whether they be waterfalls or rainbows; insects or poets, all are the work of the divine Artist. We are of more value than sparrows, taught Jesus. But this rebuke to eastern thinking is tempered with a rebuke to money-grubbing westerners: not one falls to the ground without it touching our Father’s heart.[[923]](#footnote-664)

These frequently neglected truths[[924]](#footnote-665) paired with biblical insight into the musical possibilities of sub-human sounds and the role nature can play in magnifying its Creator, fuels a yearning to join our musical praise with that of the rest of creation. Achieving this prior to Christ’s return used to seem fanciful. Modern technology, however, has brought that elusive dream closer.

Creation is no less ‘subject to bondage’ than it was in the apostle Paul’s day,[[925]](#footnote-666) In fact, it is even more bowed under the cumulative weight of human sin. Nevertheless, the advent of audio recording has introduced exciting ways of incorporating nature’s sounds in our music.

As a group of Christians were worshipping the Lord, the chirping of untamed birds filtered into the building and blended with human praises. Hardly an event unique to our era, except that what should have been a fleeting experience for a few New Zealanders, has been savored by countless thousands of Christians around the world. Those precious moments were captured on audio tape and distributed under the title of ‘Praise the Name of Jesus’.[[926]](#endnote-260)

The electronic mixing and manipulation of nature’s sounds and movements presents almost limitless possibilities. I will give just three examples. Canadian flutist Paul Horn produced an album in which he wedded his music to the delightful sounds of marine animals. Paul Clark recorded a song that incorporated harbor sounds – winds, creaking boards, and so on. In the 1970s film *Beautiful People,* the movement of desert wildflowers in the wind was synchronized with music. A trifle artificial, perhaps, but modern technology provides us with greater opportunities than ever before, to unite our praises with those of nature.

One technological breakthrough which never seemed to catch on is the ‘Catano.’ This Italian invention, first described in 1892, consisted of a series of wooden compartments, each housing a cat, ranging from kittens (for the high notes) to large tom cats. It was claimed that staccato and chords could be extracted from the levers which pulled the cats’ tails in the appropriate manner.

Americans will be relieved to know that their invention, the ‘Porco-Forte’ predated the Italian one. In 1839, the *Musical World* described this scientific wonder, which used pigs, rather than cats. If well chosen, they reportedly only need tuning every three years or so.[[927]](#endnote-261)

Fortunately, we are under no compulsion to adopt every invention!

## VISUAL IMPACT

In the span of a few words, a psalmist would lure our minds from the depths of the earth to mountain heights. Seconds later he’d have us visualizing the sea, as he sought to impress upon us the Lord’s majesty.[[928]](#footnote-667)

Had they been available to him, I wonder how keen David would have been to synchronize twentieth century photographic techniques with his lyrics, as he sought to magnify the Lord of Creation.

You may recall that the heavenly music heard in 1937 by Mrs. Murphy[[929]](#footnote-668) was linked with changing colors. More than ever, modern technology has made such a correlation an earthly possibility.

Just ask yourself whether the visual presentation (and every live performance has one) amplifies the intended message or distracts from it.

## PROS AND CONS

Electronic breakthroughs have irrevocably changed the scene for Christian musicians. As never before, earth’s best music is available to almost everyone. This is good, to the extent that it motivates us to raise our standards. If it means people can be more effectively ministered to, it is marvelous. Yet it is a tragedy if it causes any of us to feel so out-classed that we fail to pursue our God-given ministry. Even such big names as Andraé Crouch have been sorely tempted to quit, feeling they have nothing to contribute.[[930]](#endnote-262) We need to stubbornly resist such temptations. Our individual ministries are precious to the Lord. In His sight, our contributions can never be swamped by a glut of recordings.[[931]](#footnote-669)

Prior to this century, deliberately teaching a congregation a song, was more powerful than performed music in engraving a message upon human minds. As they went about their daily work, they could not be followed by a choir. Only their memories could go with them. Now, recordings are almost as portable, and certainly more reliable than, memories. And people can hear recorded music over and over, learning songs without conscious effort. In effect, this has increased the power of performed music. Regrettably, these electronic developments have caused a corresponding increase in competition from secular music.

## MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

Do we produce music to make money, or to seriously challenge worldly music in the battle for minds? That catchy jingle from the television commercial and that godless song on the radio constantly threatens to push godly music out of Christian minds.

How much money are we going to demand from our brothers and sisters before permitting them access to a viable alternative to ungodly music? There are no universal rules. We must avoid the deadly tentacles of a judgmental spirit. But it is a personal issue demanding serious consideration.

If my aim is simply to entertain, I am clearly justified in charging as much as I can get. People should pay for luxuries. But I pray your music is closer to being a necessity. You want people to have your recordings, not because it boosts your ego or fills your pocket with temporary gain, but because it boosts your hearers’ spirituality and fills their minds with eternal wealth.

If our music is truly from God, dare we let a desire for monetary return rob people of the blessing? We should be more aware of the spiritual worth of our own music than our potential audience is. If they would genuinely benefit from owning our recording or attending our concert, will God hold us responsible if our prices tempt some people to opt for a cheaper, less edifying, alternative? With a flick of a switch, they have endless access to secular radio music. Parting with hard-earned cash is much more difficult. In localities where music spiritually equal to ours is not regularly aired on the radio, the pressure is immense.

Failure to cover our expenses has an interesting side-benefit: the more our ministry costs us, the greater our motivation to ensure that our ministry is truly from God.

Finance is one of many matters in which it is insufficient to follow precedents set by others. We should seek direct confirmation from our Master.

So modern technology presents Christian musicians with many exciting challenges. The alluring possibility of becoming wealthy through music has never been greater, nor has the possibility of spending vast sums of money in blessing others with music.

We have more options than ever before in selecting musical instruments and harmonizing with electrically captured sounds of nature. The possibility exists of even recording angelic music.

We have seen that heavenly visions are still a present-day reality. Moreover, technology has equipped us with such instruments as sound synthesizers which could probably allow us to mimic authentic celestial music with greater accuracy than ever before. Perhaps God will grant you the joy of ascending in the spirit to heaven and returning with a new song with which to bless the earth.

Nevertheless, all of this fades into trivia, relative to the greatest of all challenges: discerning and achieving the precise musical goals God has personally set you. The possibilities are immense, but whatever you are called to, it will involve the two most thrilling things anyone can ever contribute to: exalting the Lord and meeting humanity’s deepest spiritual needs.

Let’s use modern developments to exalt out Lord, without plummeting into a false dependence upon technology. God is moved not by our sound system, but by the soundness of our heart. Persecution or a financial reverse could strip us of our technology, but not of our spirituality. Disaster could destroy our instruments, but not our inspiration.

## WARNING

Like perhaps all non-Biblical books, there are almost certainly errors within these covers. This book, in particular, has been written by an extremely fallible man, whose ability to hear from the Lord places him one degree above stone deaf. You must not unquestionably accept any sentence I have written, no matter how long the string of supposedly supporting Scriptures. It is your responsibility to confirm the truths and expose the errors.[[932]](#footnote-670) You must personally search the Scriptures, seek the Savior and submit to them. There is no substitute.

I’m sorry if that disturbs you. I’d dearly love to be your servant, saving you the spiritual and mental effort involved. Unfortunately, to attempt to do so would not only be presumptuous, it would rob you of blessings you deserve.

My aim should be to intensify your pursuit of truth by suggesting new leads, not to curtail your search by arrogantly claiming to have found the answers.

Now it’s time to confess my dark secret: I am utterly unmusical. You might forgive my dearth of musical ability, but the worst is yet to come: I like music less than almost anyone I have ever met. That’s a fact.

It’s one thing not to play a musical instrument, it’s quite another never to play a recording. Whenever music is played on my radio, I switch stations.

Asking me to pen this book – and I had to be asked – bears similarities to asking Hitler to describe the joys of being a Jew.

Before you lynch me, think of the implications of my prejudice and ignorance. If, with a mind that recoils from the subject and a brain that finds writing 90% headache, I can discover what I’ve shared in this book, imagine the wondrous things you should find!

If you are serious about having a music ministry worthy of God, you will diligently search the Scriptures yourself, allowing the Spirit of God to explode new revelations into your mind. As a springboard to further Scriptures, I suggest examining before the Lord every Bible reference given in this book. You will then need to extend your prayerful search to every word of Holy Writ, taking into your being the whole counsel of God.

So this is not the end: it’s the beginning.

## THE PINNACLE

Bible-believers know that God is forever taking His people from strength to strength[[933]](#footnote-671) and from glory to glory.[[934]](#footnote-672) In the midst of a decaying world, ‘the people who know their God will be strong and do exploits.[[935]](#footnote-673)‘The path of the just is as a shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day.’[[936]](#footnote-674) The darker this world gets, the brighter God’s people will shine.[[937]](#footnote-675)

With such truths jumping for joy in minds, it’s hard to imagine the quality of godly music fizzling out as we approach this planet’s greatest hour. Surely we won’t be bereft of the best and be left with drab, inferior music with which to herald our King’s coming. How fitting for mortal music to triumphantly attain its highest glory as the climax of the ages hastens towards us.

Is your Lord calling you to be part of this – to yield yourself to Him so that He can inspire you to hitherto unimagined heights of musical excellence? Let’s shed the deadweights of doubt, conformity and mediocrity, and soar with our Lord to new heights, to the praise of his glory.

# APPENDIX

Some readers may find in the following pages material more fascinating than anything else in the book. These notes belong here, however, because they either diverge from the subject of music (being justifications or qualifications of material presented in the body of the book) or they provide more technical information than the general reader would require.

## NOTE 0.1: THE MISSING CHAPTER

I draw your attention to a missing chapter. Though originally part of this book, it has grown into a book of its own. In fact, it’s my favorite. It offers a wealth of encouragement and insight to all Christians as it touches many subjects relevant to anyone who ministers in the name of Christ. Tentatively called *Heaven’s Dole Queue: Waiting For Your Ministry*, it focuses on the needs of Christians who feel frustrated because they lack the ministry opportunities or the success that they long for. Copies are available from me.

When you are referred to this note in the body of the book it means that the concepts raised there are explored more fully in the second book.

# CHAPTER 1 NOTES – THE ORIGIN OF MUSIC

## NOTE 1.1: DISCERNING THE SUBTLETIES OF BIBLICAL POETRY

A difficulty with the Scriptural evidence for sub-human music is that it comes from the Bible’s poetry.

We would expect the subject of music to appear more often in songs than in prose. And the Bible is about one-third poetry anyhow. However, since the ancient poets plotted their course, the passage of time and culture has eroded once-obvious landmarks. Lacking the precision with which the ancients navigated their poetry, we have a tendency to either sail past our destination by overlooking the obvious, or to run aground by interpreting poetic devices too literally.

Consider, for example, my line of ‘poetry’:

‘The quivering boy *bleated* his reply’.

The first type of error would be to miss my attempt to emphasize the similarity between the boy’s reply and the sound of a sheep. The other trap would be to take my figure of speech too literally, assuming I meant the boy’s reply sounded *exactly* like a sheep.

We must take poetry as far as it was intended, but no further. This is particularly difficult when that poetry has been frozen between Bible covers for thousands of years. Time’s relentless march has forced all of us to treat the Bible’s anthology more like priceless relics than the crowning glory of a living language. No-one alive is as familiar with the relevant language and culture as the humblest of David’s contemporaries. What was second nature to the original readers must now be artificially reconstructed. Sadly, that means there are times when even the most skilled of us lack the sure-footed confidence with which the ancients would have traversed the Bible’s poetry. This is particularly obvious in the matter at hand.

## NOTE 1.2: TRANSLATION DIFFICULTIES OF OLD TESTAMENT WORDS RELATED TO SINGING

Most of us see the word *sing* in our favorite Bible and assume we have found an unambiguous reference to music. Unfortunately, it is rarely this simple. Many such references are translations of words having broad meanings. When the word itself is inconclusive, translators have to guess from careful examination of the context as to whether music is involved. Except for Psalm 65:13, all the Scriptures mentioned in ‘Nature Worship’ belong to this category.

Translators often find themselves hard pressed to know whether in a particular instance, singing or jubilant shouting is meant. A partial explanation for the confusion might be that Israelite singing was itself sometimes less distinguishable from shouting than our music usually is.[[938]](#endnote-263) You may recall that Joshua mistook the sound of Israelites singing for cries associated with war.[[939]](#footnote-676)

The following table, though far from exhaustive, will give you an idea of the extent of the problem and assist you with some key verses. Only instances using ambiguous Hebrew words are cited.

5V NKJV NASB NIV NEB GNB

2 Sam 3:33 X C X X

1 Chr 16:33 X X X

Job 38:7 X X X X X X

Ps 149:5 X X X X X

Prov 29:6 X X X X

Isa 14:7 X X X X

Isa 35:2 X X X

Isa 35:6 X X

Isa 44:23 X X X X

Zeph 3:17 X X X X

In the above table:

X = a form of the English word *sing* is used

C = the word *chant* is used

5V = 5 versions (KJV, AMP, LB, RSV, NRSV), all of which, to the extent of this table, give identical renderings

See Note 1.6 for New Testament examples of this problem.

## NOTE 1.3: SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE AND ONE’S PERCEPTION OF NATURE

You have no doubt heard testimonies like that of Malcolm Smith’s father, who said that after conversion the sky seemed bluer and the grass greener.[[940]](#endnote-264) For years I let such remarks waft over my head. As my reading widened to include different eras and countries, however, I was struck by the frequency of reports linking authentic spiritual experiences with a heightened awareness of creation. For so many Christians to independently include it in quite brief accounts of their conversion, indicates it must have been a very vivid (and perhaps unexpected) experience. The more one examines these experiences, the more Scripture’s references to creation praising seem to be the product, not of over-indulged poetical license, but of a rich spiritual experience.

On the first morning after his conversion it seemed to D. L. Moody that the birds ‘were all singing a song to me. Do you know,’ he later marveled, ‘I fell in love with the birds. I had never cared for them before. It seemed to me that I was in love with all creation.’[[941]](#endnote-265) For Malcolm Smith, after a spiritual revelation, ‘Suddenly, all nature seemed to be alive around me, and I was seeing it for the first time . . . I was gazing at the waves, the trees, the flowers, everything with a new awe and joy, seeing reflections of God in all . . .’[[942]](#endnote-266)

No doubt emotionalism played a significant role in these experiences, but there is also a rational element: a heightened love for the Creator must increase our appreciation of His handiwork. Possibly there is something deeper still; a divine insight into the nature of sub-human creation.

One dawn in 1822 it seemed to Charles Finney that the glory of God shone around him with such intensity that he believed it to be the same light that blinded St Paul. In that light he saw all nature praising God. The fact that humanity was not praising reduced him to tears.[[943]](#endnote-267)

Born in 1799, Elder Jacob Knapp was a powerful American evangelist who finally gave up trying to count the converts in his meetings after he passed the 100,000 mark. In his late teens, under such conviction of sin that it affected his health, he regularly spent hours in prayer seeking forgiveness. One Sunday morning, he says, ‘I took my Bible and hymn-book and repaired to the woods with a determination never to return without relief to my soul.’ There he ‘prayed and read, and read and prayed’ in agony of soul until finally ‘my load of guilt was gone. I rose up quickly, turned my eyes toward heaven, and thought I saw Jesus descending with His arms extended for my reception. My soul leaped within me, and I broke forth into singing praises to the blessed Savior. The sweet melodies of the birds seemed to make harmony with the songs, and, as I looked around, the sun shone with a luster not its own, the majestic trees, swaying to the gently breeze, appeared to bow in sweet submission to the will of heaven. All nature smiled, and everything, animate and inanimate, praised God with a voice (though unheard before) too loud and too plain to be misunderstood.’[[944]](#endnote-268)

His contemporary, pioneer Methodist preacher, Peter Cartwright describes a similar experience. ‘In the midst of a solemn struggle of soul, an impression was made on my mind, as though a voice said to me, “Thy sins are all forgiven thee.” Divine light flashed all around me, unspeakable joy sprung up in my soul. I rose to my feet, opened my eyes, and it really seemed as if I was in heaven; the trees, the leaves on them, and everything seemed, and I really thought were, praising God.[[945]](#endnote-269)

Note how Cartwright links heaven and nature in that last sentence. Many of the people referred to elsewhere in my book who were granted insights into heaven mention such things as birds, animals, trees, flowers and grass in heaven. Like the Chinese orphans,[[946]](#endnote-270) Marietta Davis heard birds in Paradise warbling with a melodic beauty superior to earthly birds.[[947]](#endnote-271) Their various calls sounded together and blended in harmonious perfection.[[948]](#endnote-272) In recounting his 1973 experience of heaven, Roberts Liardon mentions birds of differing size ‘all singing the same song’. He describes the leaves on trees swaying ‘back and forth, dancing and praising the Lord’.[[949]](#endnote-273)

In the light of the above, it is little wonder that the Welsh revival affected miners’ treatment of pit ponies.[[950]](#endnote-274)

## NOTE 1.4: TOWARDS A BIBLICAL VIEW OF NATURE

The Bible’s songs teem with references to God’s provision for plants and animals[[951]](#footnote-677) and, inspired of God, singers called upon nature to join them in magnifying the Lord.[[952]](#footnote-678) And in *Revelation* we see every creature in existence – every species in every conceivable location – unitedly singing[[953]](#footnote-679) the Lord’s praises.[[954]](#footnote-680) This is too strong a theme for present-day musicians to gloss over. Few religions understand creation the way Christians do and I believe musicians who grasp its uniqueness may find it influencing their music, especially in the light of possibilities modern technology offers.

Virtually from its birth, the church has been pressured to adopt a non-Biblical view of the physical world. To the blight of the ancient heresies of Gnosticism and Greek philosophy, which usually espoused a low view of anything physical, we can add the capitalism of recent times, which seems to view nature not as something to be cherished but to be exploited for selfish gain.

The law revealed God’s concern for the treatment of domesticated animals and Paul effortlessly applied those same principles to people.[[955]](#footnote-681) Jesus preached that the way God provides for plants and animals shows the nature of God and teaches us what we can expect from Him.[[956]](#footnote-682) In *Job* we see God revealing His nature by devoting pages to descriptions of nature and different species of birds and animals.[[957]](#footnote-683) In *Jonah,* God uses not just a man, but a sea creature, a plant and a grub.[[958]](#footnote-684) When Nineveh repented, even the animals were made to fast and wear sackcloth.[[959]](#footnote-685) The book culminates with God revealing that He longed to save from destruction not only the people of Nineveh but also its animals.[[960]](#footnote-686) Centuries earlier God used an ark not just to save eight people but to save many animals. ‘And God remembered Noah and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark.’[[961]](#footnote-687) Then God forged a covenant, sealed with a rainbow, specifically stated to apply equally to humanity and animals.[[962]](#footnote-688) In *Exodus* we learn that the Sabbath was instituted not just for mankind but for the land and animals.[[963]](#footnote-689)In *Numbers,* Balaam’s ass is shown to be more spiritually perceptive than its rider.[[964]](#footnote-690) In *Deuteronomy* and elsewhere*,* the blessings and cursings of God fall equally upon humans, plants and beasts.[[965]](#footnote-691) In *Isaiah* we see the hope of harmony between a lamb and a wolf; a child and an asp.[[966]](#footnote-692) In Pauline theology we find Christ’s sacrifice reconciling not just humanity, but *all things* to God, whether in heaven or earth[[967]](#footnote-693) – an expression as vast as that used four verses earlier to describe everything that was created by Him and for Him. And we find nature longing for the same redemption that our own bodies long for.[[968]](#footnote-694) Our final hope is not just a new heaven but a new earth.[[969]](#footnote-695)

In contrast to the bulk of human thinking, the Christian knows that nature is not an illusion or a fluke or evil or something to be ruthlessly exploited. We have a strong kinship with the rest of creation. The purpose of all of creation – not just that part that can complete an IQ test – is to magnify the Creator. Nature longs for a conductor who can orchestrate its sounds and movements into a colossal symphony of praise to its Creator. Put that in your pipe and play it.

## NOTE 1.5: SUPERHUMAN ANGELIC POWERS

Because of the authority Christ has bestowed upon us, we will one day judge the angels.[[970]](#footnote-696) But this in no way implies we humans are at present physically or intellectually superior to all heavenly beings. When He became like us, Jesus was ‘made a little lower than the angels’.[[971]](#footnote-697)

Judges 6:21; 13:19-20; Luke 16:22; Acts 12:7,10 dramatically illustrate how angels have powers far beyond our own.

Even the powers of sinful spirit beings show the greater-than-human abilities that exist in the spirit realm. It took years, plus a special revelation[[972]](#footnote-698) for even those most intimately familiar with Jesus to gain insight into His divine nature. In contrast, demons were able to instantaneously perceive who He was.[[973]](#footnote-699)

Greater-than-human abilities in certain heavenly beings seem implied in the possession of thousands of eyes and six wings[[974]](#footnote-700) – or, in another instance, four heads and four wings – in addition to hands and feet.[[975]](#footnote-701)

## NOTE 1.6: TRANSLATION DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH REFERENCES TO ANGELIC SINGING

Unfortunately, the original Greek does not specify whether the angels sang, or merely unitedly spoke, to the shepherds.

The word Luke used clearly refers to singing in Revelation 5:9 and 15:3. There are other Biblical contexts, however, where it is equally evident that singing is *not* meant.

Nevertheless, commentators display an exceptionally high degree of consensus in regarding Luke 2:14 as an angelic song.

Regrettably, this same Greek word is responsible for ambiguity in other likely references to celestial singing.

Let’s compare a few translations:

GNB NIV NEB LB RSV NRSV Jer Bible

Luke 2:13-14 X X X

Rev. 4:8 X X X X X

Rev. 4:10 X X X

Rev. 5:12 X X X X C

Rev. 5:13 X X X

A cross indicates when the version translates the word as some form of the word *sing*, C indicates the use of *chant*. The KJV, NKJV, Phillips and NASB do not use *sing* or *chant* in any of the above four verses.

## NOTE 1.7: TYPES OF TRUMPETS IN BIBLE TIMES, THEIR MUSICAL CAPACITY AND THEIR USE

Scholars question whether the ‘trumpet’ should be regarded as a musical instrument; its function being more to make noise than music. Its sound is frequently described by authorities as ‘harsh’, ‘shrill’ and ‘loud’. At times its use more closely resembled that of a church bell, to summon, or of a siren, to warn. It was frequently used to signal.

In many instances, trumpeting could probably be conceptualized as an instrumental equivalent to non-verbal shouting. In fact, trumpets were often associated with shouting or war cries.[[976]](#footnote-702)

The *shophar* was usually a curved animal horn. Sometimes metal was used. Werner[[977]](#endnote-275) says it was capable of only approximately producing just the first two harmonic overtones. Evidence from the rams horns still used in synagogues today suggests it is capable of three notes, one a fifth and another an octave removed from the basic note.[[978]](#endnote-276) Several times the ancient Jewish book of Jewish practices, The Mishnah, speaks of a sequence of three *shophar* blasts, the first sustained, the second quavering and the third sustained. The sustained blast was three times longer than the quavering blast which, in turn, was three times longer than the alarm blast.[[979]](#endnote-277)

In contrast to the *shophar*, the *chatsotserah*,[[980]](#endnote-278) which is also frequently referred to as a trumpet, was a straight metal tube. It appears to have been more musical.

A silver and a copper Egyptian example were found well-preserved in Tutankhamun’s tomb. Modern attempts to play them have shown they are capable of three notes. The third, two octaves above the basic one, required great effort. Further notes could be produced with the addition of a modern mouth piece.[[981]](#endnote-279)

The Dead Sea Scrolls imply that legato, staccato, trills and tonguing could be produced in unison by the *chatsotserah* trumpets.[[982]](#footnote-703) In contrast, neither these manuscripts, nor the Old Testament, indicate the *shophar* trumpets could be played in unison. Werner[[983]](#endnote-280) believes the *shophar* lacked the necessary precision for several players to sound the one note in unison. Presumably, the natural variability of animal horns (even between left and right) supports this view. Perhaps the ancients could have achieved it if they tried sufficiently hard, but there is no evidence to suggest they were so motivated. When they required this precision they would probably have used the *chatsotserah*.

The ancient Greeks considered trumpet blowing an art and even held competitions. Volume was apparently considered in rating a performance.[[984]](#endnote-281)

2 Chronicles 5:12f clearly indicates that *chatsotserah* trumpets were used in music:

‘. . . the Levitical singers. . . having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets: It came to pass, as 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 forever . . .’

Knowing the limitations of these trumpets, we can only speculate as to how they were used. They could signal the start of the music, set the rhythm, add volume and fill pauses in the music.[[985]](#endnote-282) It would be particularly appropriate for the trumpets to predominate at the end of such lines as ‘shout to God with the voice of triumph’.[[986]](#footnote-704) Some scholars believe that even in worship, signaling was their main function – indicating the moment when priests will enter, when worshippers should bow, etc.[[987]](#endnote-283)

In Numbers 10:3-4, the Lord commanded the use of silver trumpets to summon people. Which of two groups was being summoned depended on whether one or two trumpets was used. This would surely have been ineffective had the two trumpets been played in unison, sounding merely like a slightly louder version of the other signal.

The *shophar* is grouped with musical instruments in Psalm 150.

What the Kings James Version calls a ‘cornet’ in Daniel 3:5, 7, 10, 15 seems equivalent to the *shophar*. The Babylonians obviously used it in conjunction with their other musical instruments.

There was certainly a large overlap in the use of the two types of trumpet and Bible word studies I have conducted on many diverse topics have repeatedly confirmed that Scripture rarely uses words with the rigidity of modern technical or theological jargon.[[988]](#endnote-284) If a similar overlap in meaning exists for the two Hebrew terms for *trumpet* it is not surprised that some scholars find no discernible distinction in the Old Testament use of these two trumpet types.

Greek, the language of the New Testament, does not differentiate between the two trumpets. The musical potential of the instrument is shown in Revelation 18:22 where trumpets are linked with harpists, singers and pipers.

Trumpet blowing was usually the domain of the priests, rather than the Levitical musicians.[[989]](#footnote-705) Note, for example, 2 Chronicles 29:26:

‘And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets.’

1 Chronicles 16:42, however, indicates that there were exceptions.

We need to remember that a choice of high quality musical instruments simply did not exist in Biblical times. Even when naming heavenly instruments, the writers were still limited to the few names their native tongue provided.

See also Note 4.2 below, ‘Trumpets in war’.

## NOTE 1.8: THE JEWISH PREFERENCE FOR THE *SHOPHAR*

The ram’s horn might have been the first instrument played on earth. The ‘father of all those who play the lyre and pipe’ was Jubal, a name related to the Hebrew word for ram.[[990]](#footnote-706) It is such a primitive instrument as to raise the question of why its use continued throughout the Old Testament era. There were pipes, end-blown flutes, double clarinets, double oboes, and – in the Greco-Roman period – ‘terra-cotta rhyton-shaped wind instruments’.[[991]](#endnote-285) In fact, unlike the metal trumpets used in the Bible times, the ram’s horn is still used today![[992]](#endnote-286)

Part of the answer for its continued use is probably that despite musical limitations, rams’ horns were effective noise-makers. Perhaps the other half of the answer lies in the fact that they were literally horns from rams. To the Hebrew mind, horns were potent symbols. Not only did they symbolize physical power, but the holy altars designed by God – both the sacrificial altar and the altar of incense – had horns[[993]](#footnote-707) and the Lord Himself is the ‘horn of our salvation’.[[994]](#footnote-708) Furthermore, each *shophar* came from an animal suitable for God-ordained sacrifice and the animal had, presumably, actually died. Then there’s the fact that, relative to most other instruments, an animal horn is divinely made. Finally – and perhaps least significantly – horn-blowing was a way of involving nature in praise to the Creator.

In their choice of instrument, ancient Jews were not beyond considering its tone.[[995]](#footnote-709) At least in the post-Old-Testament era, however, factors other than sound assumed great significance. For instance, cow horns were forbidden for ritual blowing,[[996]](#endnote-287) apparently because cows were not sacrificial animals.[[997]](#endnote-288) According to the Jewish *Mishnah*, the voice of a sacrificial victim is multiplied seven times when it dies because its horns become *shophar*s, its two leg-bones become flutes, its hide becomes a drum, its entrails are used for lyres, and its chitterlings for harps.[[998]](#endnote-289) According to a Jewish legend, David’s harp strings were made from the gut of the ram Abraham slew on Mount Moriah.[[999]](#endnote-290) In the synagogues ram’s horns were used as a reminder of that ram sacrificed in Isaac’s stead.[[1000]](#endnote-291)

## NOTE 1.9: IDENTIFYING THE BIBLE’S SONGS

The exact number of songs in the Bible is difficult to determine. There are many songs in Scripture, clearly identified as such, outside of the Psalter.[[1001]](#footnote-710) With poetry being so common in Scripture, it would have been fairly easy to set large portions of it to music. Many passages appear to be songs although Scripture does not specifically call them songs or indicate that they were intended to be set to music.[[1002]](#footnote-711) Some of these read so much like psalms it is hard to read them without imagining them being set to music.[[1003]](#footnote-712) If some were not originally set to music they seem to cry out for music so loudly that it is hard to conceive of them being bereft of music for long.

Some Bibles, by printing poetry in lines of uneven length, make it immediately obvious which parts of Scripture are poetry. Consulting such a Bible opens a new dimension to Scripture, not just making possible songs easier to identify or adding interest for the musician and beauty for the lover of literature, but also aiding interpretation.

Possible songs pop up in the most unlikely places. In the search for fragments of Christian hymns, scholars have been drawn to many Scriptures, including John 1:1-18; Romans 3:13-18, 23-25; 8:31-39; 9:33; 11:33-35; 1 Corinthians 13:1ff; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:4-7, 10, 19-22; 5:14; Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 1:15-20; 2:9-15; 1 Timothy 1:17; 3:16; 6:15-16; 2 Timothy 2:11-13; Titus 3:4-7; Hebrews 1:1-3; 1 Peter 2:6-7, 21-25; 3:18-22; Revelation 4:8,11; 5:9, 12-13; 7:10, 12; 11:15, 17-18; 12:10ff: 14:7; 15:3-4; 19:1-2, 6-8.[[1004]](#endnote-292) Unfortunately, most of this remains highly speculative.

Such an examination of the Old Testament would produce a huge list. The first Biblical song is said to be Genesis 4:23.[[1005]](#endnote-293) Some Bible versions specifically call Numbers 21:27-30 a song.[[1006]](#footnote-713)

There is another factor: Scriptures have been sung which were apparently not originally intended to be songs. The practice of reciting even the prose parts of Scripture in a singing voice may have extended back centuries before Christ. Psalm 119:54 could be relevant to this practice:

‘Your statutes have been my songs . . .’

Harold Best[[1007]](#endnote-294) believes that by Jesus’ time this practice may have been so established as to make it likely that Jesus employed it when delivering Scripture in the synagogue.[[1008]](#footnote-714) Eventually, it came to be questioned whether it was acceptable to ever read Scripture without melody.[[1009]](#endnote-295)

So, whether they were aware of it or not, contributors to the Old Testament ended up writing lyrics to songs. Who can authoritatively declare that this result was not in God’s mind when He originally inspired the writers?

## NOTE 1.10: HEBREWS 2:12 – THE SON OF GOD SINGING

The highly esteemed Greek lexicon by Arndt and Gingrich, along with eleven of the thirteen translations I consulted, see in Hebrews 2:12 a reference to singing. This certainly seems to be the usual meaning of the key word. However, to be strictly unbiased, I should point out that this word is sometimes applied to spoken, rather than sung, praise. Singing seems to be hinted at, rather than emphatically stated.

## NOTE 1.11: DIVINE SINGING, TRUMPETING AND WHISTLING

Does Zephaniah 3:17 indicate that God sings? See note 1.2.

God’s trumpet-playing is hinted at in Zephaniah 9:14 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16. The problem, of course, is to know how literally this should be interpreted. Literal trumpet blasts from heaven are mentioned in the Bible but they might be unmusical signals.[[1010]](#footnote-715)

Isaiah 5:26; 7:18 and Zechariah 10:8 refer to God ‘whistling’. But since these are references to signaling, it is unlikely that a tune would be involved.

# CHAPTER 2 NOTES – CELESTIAL CHOIR

## NOTE 2.1: drugs, hallucinations and after death experiences

Dr. Karlis Osis and his associates analyzed the reports of over one thousand medical personnel who regularly worked with dying patients. They found that patients taking drugs or sedatives known to produce hallucinations were *less* like to report an afterlife experience than those who took no medication. Likewise, those illnesses that produce hallucinations were associated with less afterlife reports than other illnesses. The patients’ experiences did not usually conform to what they expected and they appeared as frequently to people who fully expected to recover as to those who knew they were dying.

Dr. Charles Garfield, assistant professor of psychology at the University of California Medical Center that life-after-death experiences are entirely different from drug-induced hallucinations or the sensations sometimes associated with severe pain. Dr. Maurice Rawlings agrees. ‘Drug effects, alcoholic delirium tremens, carbon dioxide narcosis, and psychotic reactions deal more with objects in the present world and not with situations in the next world.[[1011]](#endnote-296)

## NOTE 2.2: ERRORS IN NON-CHRISTIAN ANALYSES OF ‘AFTER DEATH’ EXPERIENCES

When researching anything related to spiritual matters, non-Christians inevitably get things hopelessly confused. In two excellent books, Dr. Maurice Rawlings does much to sort out the chaos.

He points out that only about twenty percent of resuscitated patients volunteer information about their experience.[[1012]](#endnote-297) We are thus dealing with a very biased sample. He rightly asks, who would boast about being such a moral failure that one is sent to hell?[[1013]](#endnote-298) Many people joke about it, but it’s a very different thing to be faced with the reality of hell.

Dr. Rawlings was desperately trying to save a postman’s life. In between times of clinical death, his patient kept screaming that he had been in hell. He pleaded with the reluctant doctor to lead him in prayer. His certainty that he was entering hell was so convincing that it removed the doctor’s personal skepticism. The patient survived the ordeal and became a Christian. He could recall the prayer and viewing his body from a distance, and yet he could remember nothing of his hellish experience. Apparently, it was so horrific that his mind had suppressed it.[[1014]](#endnote-299)

Previous researchers had not personally resuscitated patients. They were content to interview people who had sufficient time to repress unpleasant experiences.[[1015]](#endnote-300)

The doctor records another man’s description of his experiences after his heart stopped beating. It ended up being so horrendous that the patient was certain he had been to hell. It brought about his conversion. Yet the first part of his experience was blissful – floating above his body, feeling happy, at peace and free from pain. Had he been resuscitated at that point, his impression of life after death would have been vastly different.

Eighty-five percent of people resuscitated after suicide attempts reported being glad to be alive. Every account Dr. Rawlings has collected from such people has been ‘hellish’.[[1016]](#endnote-301) Overall, he found that interviewing people immediately after resuscitation produced as many reports of bad experiences as good ones.[[1017]](#endnote-302)

In line with Scripture’s affirmation that multitudes will have an unpleasant after-life, a number of people have reported hearing unpleasant sound, rather than beautiful music. Mention is made of ‘the awfullest, eerie sounds,’[[1018]](#endnote-303) ‘a roaring noise,’[[1019]](#endnote-304) and an unforgettable, ‘really bad buzzing noise’.[[1020]](#endnote-305)

The bias that many people have is illustrated by the fact that Dr. Rawlings himself has been misquoted in a way that suggested all after-death experiences are pleasant.[[1021]](#endnote-306)

We are justifiably dubious of experiences which cause some non-Christians to give glowing reports of ‘life after death’. However, it seems theoretically possible that even some of these could be in accordance with reality, though misinterpreted.

Certainly, most non-Christians have some pleasant earthly experiences which are neither Satanic deception, nor indicative of where they will spend eternity. I confess ignorance, but it seems theoretically possible that on the other side of the grave they could also have a few moments in pleasant surrounds before being ushered into a strikingly different abode.

The Bible seems to hint at this possibility. Before being hurled into the lake of fire,[[1022]](#footnote-716) non-Christians will be brought before the great white throne.[[1023]](#footnote-717) Presumably, this is situated in a very beautiful, heavenly place. Hence, for at least this brief moment, it seems that non-Christians could be in lovely surrounds before being cast into hell.

#### Conclusion

Reports from resuscitated patients are usually consistent with the reality of hell. When correctly interpreted, even non-Christian data is more creditable than we might have imagined. So we are certainly justified in examining Christian reports with an open mind.

The Deceiver always tries to pervert the most beautiful, loving and holy acts of God into opportunities to amplify his evil. He bent the miraculous provision of manna into an occasion for the Israelites to murmur against their Lord.[[1024]](#footnote-718) He twisted God’s infallible Word into a weapon of deception against the holy Son of God.[[1025]](#footnote-719) He used Jesus’ power over demons to blaspheme Him as the prince of demons.[[1026]](#footnote-720) He turned divine judgement into an opportunity to curse God instead of repent.[[1027]](#footnote-721) Rather than list a hundred more examples, let’s focus on the point: if we failed to differentiate between an act of God and the evil interpretation with which Satan tries to tar it, we could end up labelling as satanic virtually everything God has ever done.

## NOTE 2.3: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT DR. EBY

I shudder at Dr. Eby’s apparently uncritical account of how his mother, as a girl, came under the influence of an American Indian medicine man. Nevertheless, I believe a careful reading of the whole book restores one’s faith in the genuineness of Dr. Eby’s Christian experience.

As biblical support for the reality of his celestial journey, Dr. Eby equates Paul[[1028]](#footnote-722) with the time the apostle was stoned and left for dead.[[1029]](#footnote-723) Though I disagree, this in no way detracts from the genuineness of the doctor’s experience. The weakness in his argument is that even after ‘being caught up into paradise’, Paul did not know whether he had been in or out of the body,[[1030]](#footnote-724) in the stoning incident his body seems to have clearly been on earth. The doctor’s theory is based on the assumption that Paul actually died when stoned, something Scripture does not specifically state.[[1031]](#footnote-725) Finally, there is a chronological problem: the stoning does not appear to have occurred in the year referred to in 2 Corinthians 12:2 (i.e. not fourteen years prior to the penning of 2 Corinthians).

## NOTE 2.4: MORE REPORTS OF CELESTIAL MUSIC

In the following instances, reports were too brief to add to our understanding of celestial music. Their mere existence, however, tend to confirm the reliability of the accounts recorded in the body of the book. Obviously, the larger the number of independent witnesses, the harder it is to escape the conclusion that heavenly strains have touched earthly ears. Moreover, some bear striking resemblances to incidents already cited.

August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), a German clergyman and educator, is renowned for his important role in a spiritual movement intended to revive the Lutheran church at a time when it was becoming increasingly formal and lifeless. According to Basilea Schlink,[[1032]](#endnote-307) he heard heavenly music as he was dying. It is said that even his family heard it.

Prompted by the Lord, Rev. W. B. McKay’s wife closed the door, drew the curtains and commenced praying. Suddenly, the room was filled with a brilliant light. The Lord Jesus appeared, saying He had come to show her the splendors of heaven. Together with Jesus and a host of angels, she spiraled up to heaven, leaving her body behind. As they ascended, Mrs. McKay heard angelic music and singing which she says was indescribable. In the city of God, she witnessed many things, including the redeemed, some of whom she had known on earth, singing. The Lord declared that she and her husband would be given a healing ministry. He urged her to remain humble so that He could work through her.

The entire experience may have lasted seven hours. Her spirit then returned to earth.

Over her body were three highly concerned men: her husband, a doctor, and the Bible college president. Until that moment, the doctor had been unable to detect any pulse.

Mrs. McKay later testified that this heavenly encounter radically changed her life. Both she and her husband received the prophesied healing ministry.[[1033]](#endnote-308)

This incident dovetails nicely with several of the accounts I have cited.

Numerous people have reported hearing ethereal music during, or on the verge of, clinical death.[[1034]](#endnote-309) Perhaps all of these were born-again believers. The information given is sometimes too scanty to be sure. Only six of the hundred cases in Osis’ study heard ‘sacred music or heavenly choruses’.[[1035]](#endnote-310) His sample was taken from the general population. Had he weeded out non-Christians, I suspect the percentage would have been much higher. Unfortunately, the nature of the music heard rarely receives any attention from researchers. One lady described the music as ‘majestic’.[[1036]](#endnote-311) Another called what she heard ‘organ music’.[[1037]](#endnote-312) (You may recall that Mrs. Grace Murphy also mentioned organ music in her attempt to describe the sounds she heard.) Other accounts were even less descriptive, merely using such words as ‘beautiful’ and ‘wonderful’.

So common is this phenomenon that when I saw a compilation about dying Christians I bought it, confident that I would find reference to celestial music. I was not disappointed. In five separate reports, dying Christians heard music with such vividness that they expected others in the room to be able to hear it and of such quality that with obvious pleasure, even excitement, they summoned strength to speak of it.[[1038]](#endnote-313) ‘Hear that music!’ exclaimed Rev. Hiram Case, ‘they don’t have such music as that on earth.’[[1039]](#endnote-314) There were other reports beside these five, but of particular interest was about an African youth, not long converted from heathenism, who had been gored by an elephant. Though ‘not preconditioned to descriptions of heaven,’ in his last moments he described angels to missionary Paul Landrus ‘and spoke of music like Landrus knew he had never heard in his lifetime.’[[1040]](#endnote-315)

# CHAPTER 3: NOTES – THE CULMINATION OF MUSIC

## NOTE 3.1: EZEKIEL’S TEMPLE AND THE FUTURE OF MUSIC

In its description of the temple Ezekiel saw in his vision, the King James Version refers to ‘the chambers of the singers in the inner court’.[[1041]](#footnote-726) Several English versions omit reference to singers here, preferring to follow the ancient Greek version, rather than the Hebrew. Depending upon your interpretation of this vision and whether you accept the reliability of the Hebrew (Masoretic) text at this point, you might see this as provision for the music ministry in the age to come.

## NOTE 3.2: ‘HARPS OF GOD’

Theologian, Leon Morris points out that the term *harps of God* in the book of Revelation is ‘unusual’.[[1042]](#endnote-316) King James Bible readers would be excused for not recognizing this. In their version, 1 Chronicles 16:42 uses a similar expression (*instruments of God*) to refer to earthly Levitical musical instruments. The apparent similarity of terms, however, is a quirk of the King James Version. It is not found in the ancient translations of 1 Chronicles 16:42,[[1043]](#footnote-727) nor in most modern versions. Not even Young’s literal, nor Jay Green’s Literal Translation, which both follow the King James text, nor the old Revised Version, has this expression. A more accepted translation is *instruments of the songs of God*. We find a similar expression to this elsewhere in even the King James Version – *instruments of the music of the Lord*.[[1044]](#footnote-728)

As a further complication, however, the NIV employs the expression *the Lord’s musical instruments* and *the Lord’s instruments* *of praise* in *2 Chronicles.*[[1045]](#footnote-729) This rendition is not followed by other versions consulted.[[1046]](#footnote-730)

Old Testament musical instruments are otherwise referred to as the *instruments of David*.[[1047]](#footnote-731)

So although translation problems abound – further intensified by the fact that the New and Old Testaments were written in different languages – it seems that rather than reflecting Old Testament terminology, *harps of God* contrasts with the Old Testament term *instruments of David*. In fact, the closest biblical parallel is *trumpet of God*.[[1048]](#footnote-732) Obviously, this ‘trumpet’ is of non-human origin.

# CHAPTER 4 NOTES – MUSIC’S FACETS IN SCRIPTURE’S LIGHT

## NOTE 4.1 THE HIGH STANDARDS OF JEWISH SINGERS

There is a Jewish tradition (of uncertain reliability) that Levitical singers underwent at least five years intensive training.[[1049]](#endnote-317) That the standard of Jewish music was internationally esteemed is hinted at by the discovery of an Assyrian inscription. It states that, in addition to the usual precious metals demanded by kings as tribute, Sennacherib extracted male and female musicians from Hezekiah. Later, the Greek Stoic geographer Strabo (64 BC – 19 AD) judged the Palestinian singing girls to be the most musical in the world.

## NOTE 4.2: TRUMPETS IN WAR

We can’t ignore the question of whether the ‘trumpets’ of the Bible should be classified as musical instruments (see Notes 1.7 and 1.8 above). However, in chapter 4, section 5, I have cited only references[[1050]](#footnote-733) to the military use of trumpets which seem to parallel instances when music clearly played a significant military role.[[1051]](#footnote-734) In contrast, many other references to trumpets in war[[1052]](#footnote-735) seem less likely to have melodic implications.

## NOTE 4.3: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT EVANGELISM IN THE PSALMS

Some versions of Psalm 75:4 read ‘I *said* to the arrogant’, suggesting that it is not this song, but something said in the past, which is directed to the ungodly. However, other versions[[1053]](#footnote-736) use the present tense. The confusion is due to the nature of Hebrew grammar. Hebrew verbs do not differentiate between past, present and future tenses.

Although in Psalms 52 and 75 there is no specific invitation to repent and receive forgiveness, neither was there in the message of Jonah,[[1054]](#footnote-737) which produced great repentance and saved a whole city.

## NOTE 4.4: religious processions

In addition to the more obvious reference to religious processions in Psalm 68:24-27, there are a number of other possible allusions to them in the psalms. Perhaps Psalm 26:6-7 refers to singing as the psalmist marches (or even dances) around the altar.[[1055]](#footnote-738) Other possible references to religious processions include Psalm 42:4; 48:12-13; 95:1-2; 100:2, 4; 118:19-20,26,27; Isaiah 30:29 b. Some Bible versions[[1056]](#footnote-739) bring this out more than others.

## NOTE 4.5: EXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE FOR LUCIFER’S MUSICAL INVOLVEMENT PRIOR TO HIS FALL

This theory rests on three assumptions in the interpretation of Ezekiel 28:13.

#### Assumption 1. The verse alludes to Satan

Although Feinberg sees an allusion to Satan in this verse, Carley, Clarke, Keil, Stuart and Taylor in their commentaries on the verse, all see it as alluding to Adam rather than Satan. The verse seems to refer to someone who was in ‘Eden the garden of God’ before he fell.

Some scholars (e.g. Zimmerli) see it as Ezekiel adopting for his own purposes the story of a mythological being. Conservatives can hold this view without any compromise (e.g. Beasley-Murray, whose commentary is praised even by Feinberg[[1057]](#endnote-318)).

Much is sometimes made of the fact that this passage refers to the *king of Tyre* rather than the *prince of Tyre*.[[1058]](#footnote-740) Zimmerli, however, notes that elsewhere in *Ezekiel*, *king* refers to earthly rulers. Alexander sees no reason for seeing any distinction in these terms. He points out that *king* and *prince* are often used interchangeably in the Old Testament.[[1059]](#footnote-741)

#### Assumption 2. Every detail in the figure applies literally to Satan.

Ezekiel could easily be intending to draw attention to similarities between the king and Satan, without meaning that every aspect mentioned applies utterly to Satan. Otherwise, it seems one must conclude that before he fell Satan was involved in commerce.[[1060]](#footnote-742)

#### Assumption 3. What the KJV calls *pipes* refers to musical instruments.

Linguists need to find words in different contexts to accurately determine meaning, but this is the only occurrence of the word in the entire Bible. Not surprisingly, speculation abounds.

A few scholars, noting that the word is similar to that used in Genesis for *female*, conclude that it is a plural form of that word.[[1061]](#endnote-319) They therefore see it as referring to women playing tambourines.

Most scholars, however, see the word as referring to some sort of hole. Whilst a few see this a referring to the hole in a musical instrument, and some (e.g. Holliday) see it as referring to a mine – from which precious minerals are extracted – most see it as somehow related to jewelry making. This latter view is held by Brown, Driver and Briggs and many modern Bible versions, as well as the ancient Greek *Septuagint*.[[1062]](#footnote-743) Those who give credence to the dictionary in Strong’s Concordance will be interested to know that Strong also is of this opinion.

In general, the context seems to favor a jewelry-related term better than a musical term. Those who would argue for a musical term on the basis that kings have musicians, seem to be straying too far if they then want to claim that this verse applies to Satan. One word, however, is most significant for those who see this as a reference to music. This word – translated *tabrets* in the King James Version – means tambourine in all other Old Testament contexts.

## NOTE 4.6: MUSIC WHILE YOU WORK

The realization that music affects human productivity is hardly new. Documents found beneath Pompeii’s lava, for example, prove that the ancient Greeks used music for this purpose.[[1063]](#endnote-320)

Some scholars believe that the musicians chosen to oversee temple repairs performed this function during Josiah’s reign.[[1064]](#footnote-744)

One authority cites five different Scriptures as evidence for ‘occupational songs’.[[1065]](#footnote-745)

Music played a significant role in the rebuilding of the temple in Ezra’s time. The issue, however, is whether this occurred while the builders worked[[1066]](#footnote-746) or in a ceremony afterwards. Josephus’ account, written in the early Christian era mentions music only in an emotion-charged ceremony which he seems to place after the completion of construction. The canonical account[[1067]](#footnote-747) also fails to state that music was played while building was proceeding, except perhaps during the official ceremony at the laying of the foundation.[[1068]](#footnote-748)

# CHAPTER 6 NOTES – ANCIENT INSIGHTS INTO MODERN PROBLEMS

## NOTE 6.1: GITTITH

Israel’s greatest psalmist had countless opportunities to be influenced by Gath’s (Gittite) music. Though initially wary,[[1069]](#footnote-749) David found refuge in Gath for over a year.[[1070]](#footnote-750) Even after gaining the throne, he maintained strong links with Gittites.[[1071]](#footnote-751)

Other possible meanings of Gittith are also of interest. It could refer to a Gittite musical instrument or to the tune of a vintage song.

# CHAPTER 8 NOTES – THE IDEAL MUSICIAN

## NOTE 8.1: PROPHECY AND MUSIC

There is a tendency among some Bible scholars to weaken the usual supernatural element in the term prophecy when it is applied in 1 Chronicles 25 to the Levitical musicians. This seems to disregard the fact that their songs were so much controlled by the Holy Spirit that many (perhaps all) of the songs are now part of Scripture. At the very least, one must acknowledge that many of their songs were as highly inspired as any prophecy has ever been.

1 Chronicles 25:3 speaks of prophesying ‘with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the Lord’. My immediate reaction is to assume that if thanking and praising is involved, it must be of human origin, but Scripture says otherwise.

‘I will bless the Lord, who has given me counsel . . .’[[1072]](#footnote-752) says the Psalm that both Peter and Paul quote as a prophetic (Messianic) Psalm.[[1073]](#footnote-753) Psalm 45, a hymn of praise to a king, is seen in Hebrews 1:8-9[[1074]](#footnote-754) to be praise directed prophetically to the Messiah. Psalm 40 is yet another Messianic psalm[[1075]](#footnote-755) that thanks and praises God.[[1076]](#footnote-756)

‘Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, Blessed [be] the Lord God of Israel . . .’[[1077]](#footnote-757)

Since the Spirit helps us in our prayers,[[1078]](#footnote-758) it is to be expected that He would also help one’s praise. In fact, Paul refers to an ecstatic utterance, the function of which is to thank and praise God.[[1079]](#footnote-759) Again, at Pentecost the 120 were heard magnifying God in a foreign language known to some of the hearers but not to the speakers.[[1080]](#footnote-760) These were clearly supernatural, Spirit-inspired utterances, and they seem to have contained at least elements of praise.

Psalms 51:15 seems to be a prayer for a verbal inspiration, the result of which is praise:

‘O Lord, open my lips; and my mouth shall show forth your praise.’

It’s no wonder there is a link between music and prophecy. Scripture after Scripture links the Holy Spirit and prophecy,[[1081]](#footnote-761) and *Ephesians* links being filled with the Spirit to singing spiritual songs.[[1082]](#footnote-762) Also, in the context of Spirit-inspired utterances, Paul mentions a hymn.[[1083]](#footnote-763)

If Paul does not specifically mention prophetic songs, he gets mighty close. It is a well-established fact that one writer of Scripture sometimes uses a term in a different way to another writer of Scripture. (For example, James uses the word faith in a shallower sense than Paul.) Paul carved up spiritual utterances into different categories – prophecy, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, etc. – which some other Bible writers would probably have lumped together under the term prophecy. So I suspect that in *1 Corinthians* Paul uses *prophecy* in a narrower sense than Scripture usually does. In any case, when he contrasts singing in (or with) the Spirit with singing with the understanding, he is obviously referring to a song which, like a prophetic song, has its origin not in the human intellect but in the Spirit of God.

## NOTE 8.2: THE POSSIBLE MUSICAL ABILITY OF THE FOUR MEN WITH WHOM SOLOMON’S WISDOM IS COMPARED

Scripture cites four particularly wise men to illustrate the magnitude of Solomon’s wisdom. At least three of these sages are called ‘sons of Mahol’.[[1084]](#footnote-764) Many scholars believe this to be a Hebrew term indicating not parentage, but musical ability, a little like the expression ‘daughters of music’ in Ecclesiastes 12:4. The fourth sage may also have been a songwriter.

Although it appears nowhere else in Scripture as a name, ‘Mahol’ could be a man’s name. Even the fact that these four wise men are called sons of Zerah in 1 Chronicles 2:6 does not necessarily contradict this interpretation. Jesus, for example, was both the son of Joseph and the son of David.

However, ‘son’ in the Hebrew Bible often has a broader meaning. In a literal translation we would read of ‘sons’ of affliction,[[1085]](#footnote-765) destruction,[[1086]](#footnote-766) velour[[1087]](#footnote-767) and oil,[[1088]](#footnote-768) to give just a small sample. Particularly noteworthy is the term ‘sons of the prophets’[[1089]](#footnote-769) which indicates membership of a prophetic guild, or order.[[1090]](#footnote-770)

Furthermore, ‘mahol’ means ‘dancing’ and elsewhere our Bibles translate it as such.[[1091]](#footnote-771)

This could mean the sages were dancers, but since dancing is closely associated with music,[[1092]](#footnote-772) many scholars believe ‘sons of Mahol’ indicates musical ability, perhaps even membership of a musical guild.

Supporting evidence for the musical ability of these sages is found in the titles of Psalms 86 and 89, where two of them seem to be mentioned.

Bible scholar Derek Kidner goes even further and identifies these two wise men as Heman and Jeduthum, who, along with Asaph, founded the Levitical choirs.[[1093]](#endnote-321) ‘Ethan,’ he believes, is Jeduthum.[[1094]](#footnote-773)

Even that sage not clearly stated to be a ‘son of Mahol,’ apparently receives mention in the title of Psalm 89.

So it could be more than coincidental that as soon as Scripture mentions these four men, Solomon’s song writing is referred to. Each of these exceptionally wise men may, like Solomon himself, have been musical.

## NOTE 8.3: MUSIC PROVIDES UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY

Music seems to have given ministry opportunities to people who would otherwise have been exempt. Boys under thirteen years, for example, were prohibited by Jewish law from entering the Temple Court to take part in the service. The Mishnah allowed just one exception: young boys could sing in the Temple Choir.[[1095]](#endnote-322)

## NOTE 8.4: FUNERAL MUSIC

In Palestine, social pressure to have musicians at funerals was so great that it eventually became mandatory. According to Edersheim,[[1096]](#endnote-323) the time arrived when every Jew was required by Rabbinical law to provide at least one mourning woman and two lutes at his wife’s funeral.

## Note 8.5: WOMEN, MUSIC, AND PROPHECY

The raising of emotive gender issues could not be further from my intention. It’s a deeper understanding of music and prophecy that interests me. Whether you see the gender question as a cultural quirk or a binding rule makes no difference to the following discussion.

Paul approved of women teaching children[[1097]](#footnote-774) and urged older women to teach younger women,[[1098]](#footnote-775) but he did not permit them to teach men.[[1099]](#footnote-776) Nevertheless, he regarded women prophesying in church as so normal that he mentions it only to make another point.[[1100]](#footnote-777) To forbid teaching but allow preaching is ridiculous. It would therefore seem that by *prophecy*, Paul meant something quite different to teaching. This fits the evidence. Whilst teaching originates in the human intellect, prophecy originates with God. A prophet is simply God’s mouthpiece. It should also be noted that because prophecy is God’s word for the moment – not an exposition of the clear-cut, unchanging doctrines of Scripture – Paul expected it to be uttered in submission to others who would determine whether it really was from God.[[1101]](#footnote-778) This aspect of submission is again consistent with Paul’s concerns about women.[[1102]](#footnote-779)

Miriam,[[1103]](#footnote-780) Deborah,[[1104]](#footnote-781) Huldah (who apparently had a significant ministry in Josiah’s day)[[1105]](#footnote-782) and Anna[[1106]](#footnote-783) are specifically called prophetesses. Whether Isaiah’s wife had a prophetic ministry is not so clear[[1107]](#footnote-784) but we know that Philip’s four daughters exercised the gift.[[1108]](#footnote-785)

So the prophetic gift opened up ministry opportunities in a manner rather surprising for the era. We saw in Chapter 8[[1109]](#footnote-786) that music also opened usual ministry opportunities for women. Is a common denominator the fact that – as discussed in Section 16 of Chapter 8 – music and prophecy themselves are linked?

## NOTE 8.6: submission

With horrifying accuracy, Scripture describes our own society when it lists the hallmarks of the morally corrupt ‘last days’.[[1110]](#footnote-787) In the midst of this description is a forgotten sin: disobeying one’s parents. This breaking of the fifth commandment is so typical of the defiant pig-headedness rampant in society, that few of us are even shocked by it.

I plead with you to prayerfully study: Exodus 22:28; Numbers 12; 1 Samuel 24:4-6; Ecclesiastes 10:20; Romans 13:1-5, 7; 1 Corinthians 4:15-21; 5:12-13; 16:16; Ephesians 5:21; 1 Thessalonians 5:11-14; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 2:5, 9; 3:1-2; Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24; 1 Peter 2:17; 5:5.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

This is a list of references referred to by name in this book (usually in the end notes). The theological books actually consulted would probably run into the hundreds.

*Attack From the Spirit World: A Compilation* Tyndale House, Wheaton, Illinois, 1973.

Alexander, Ralph *Ezekiel* Moody, Chicago, 1976.

Arndt, William and Gingrich, F. Wilbur *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* Second Edition, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1979.

Atkinson, James *Martin Luther and the Birth of Protestantism* Pelican, Middlesex, England, 1968.

Augarde, Tony *Oxford Dictionary of Modern Quotations* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991.

Avery, Gordon *Companion to the Song Book of the Salvation Army* Salvationist Publishing and Supplies Ltd., London, 1961.

Baker, H. A. *Visions Beyond the Veil* Whitaker House, Springdade, Pennsylvania, 1973.

Beasley-Murray, G. R. *Ezekiel* *IN* The New Bible Commentary Revised Eds D. Guthrie, J. A. Motyer, A. M. Stibbs, D. J. Wiseman, London, Inter-Varsity, 1970.

Beattie, David J. *The Romance of Sacred Song* Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1931.

Bede See Sherley-Price (below).

[Beeson, Ray & Hunsicker, R M *The Hidden Price of Greatness* Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, 1991.]

Best, H. M. and Huttar, D.  *Music; Musical Instruments IN* Tenny, Merrill C. (Gen. Ed.) The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible in Five Volumes Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1976, 4:311-324.

Borge, Victor and Sherman, Robert *Victor Borge’s My Favorite Comedies in Music* Franklin Watts, New York, 1980.

Braun, Roddy *Word Biblical Commentary Vol 14: 1 Chronicles* Word, Waco, Texas, 1986.

Brenton, Sir Lancelot L. *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament and Apocrypha With an English Translation* Bagster, London, n.d.

Brown, Colin (Gen. Editor) *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1979.

Brown, Francis, Driver, S. R. and Briggs, Charles A. *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament: Based on the Lexicon of* *William Gesenius* . . . Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1907, 1953.

Brown, Theron and Butterworth, Hezekiah *The Story of the Hymns and the Tunes* Geo. H. Doran Co., New York, 1906.

Buckingham, Jamie  *Daughter of Destiny: Kathryn Kuhlman* Logos International, Plainfield, New Jersey, 1976.

Carley, Keith W. *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1974.

Chacour, Elias *We Belong to the Land* Marshall Pickering, London, 1990.

*Change the World School of Prayer* [A manual issued to those attending the ‘school’] World Literature Crusade, Studio City, California, 1967.

Clarke, Adam *The Holy Bible . . . With a Commentary and Critical Notes in Six Volumes: A New Edition with Prefatory Notes . . . by Thornley Smith* William Tegg, London.

Cooper, Duff *David* Harper and Brothers, New York, 1943.

Cornwall, Judson *Freeway Under Construction* Logos International Plainfield, New Jersey.

Critchley, Macdonald and Henson, R. A., (Ed). *Music and the Brain: Studies in the Neurology of Music* Wm. Heinemann Med. Books, London, 1977.

Cross, F. L. and Livingstone, E. A. (Ed) *The Oxford Dictionary Of The Christian Church* Second Edition, Oxford University, London, 1974.

Crouch, Andraé, with Nina Ball *Through It All* Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1974.

Darnall, Jean *Heaven, Here I Come: A Brief Biography* Lakeland, London, 1974.

Davis, Marietta *Scenes Beyond The Grave: Visions of Marietta Davis* Ed. Gordon Lindsay Christ For The Nations Inc., Dallas, Texas.

Douglas, J. D. (Gen. Ed.) *The New Bible Dictionary* Inter-Varsity Press, London, 1962.

Douglass, Robert *Church Music Through the Ages* Convention Press, Nashville Tennessee, 1967.

Duffield, Samuel W. *English Hymns: Their Authors and Histories* Third Edition, Revised and Corrected, Funk & Wagnall, New York, 1888.

Eby, Richard E. *Caught up into Paradise* Revell, New Jersey, no date.

Eadie, John *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle Of Paul to the Ephesians* Second Edition, Griffin, Bohn, & Co, London, 1861.

Edersheim, Alfred *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services* Pickering and Inglis, London, no date.

Edman, V. Raymond *They Found the Secret* Clarion Classics, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1984.

Feinberg, Charles Lee *The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord* Moody, Chicago, 1969.

Finney, Charles *Charles G. Finney: An Autobiography* Hodder and Stroughton, London, 1892.

Fortunato, Connie *Children’s Music Ministry: A Guide to Philosophy and Practice* Cook Publishing, Elgin, Illinois, 1981.

Foxvog, D. A. & Kilmer, A. D. *Music IN* Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Gen Ed) The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: Fully Revised Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1979-88, p438

Gardiner, F. *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* *IN* Charles John Ellicott (Ed) An Old Testament Commentary for English Readers by Various Writers Cassell, London, 1884.

Gillman, Frederick John *The Evolution of the English Hymn* Geo. Allen and Unwin, 1927.

Ginzberg, Louis *The Legends of the Jews* Volume IV Jewish Publication, Society of America, Philadelphia, 1941.

Graham, Billy *Angels: God’s Secret Agents* Hodder and Stroughton, London, 1975.

Green, Jay P. *The Interlinear Hebrew – Greek – English Bible* Assoc. Publishers & Authors, Wilmington, Delaware, 1980.

Green, Melody and Hazard, David *No Compromise: The Life Story of Keith Green* Word, Milton Keynes, Eng, 1989.

Grof, G. and Halifax, J. *The Human Encounter With Death* Dutton, New York, 1977.

Grudem, Wayne A. *The First Epistle of Peter: An Introduction and Commentary* Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988.

Hagin, Kenneth E. *The Art of Intercession: Handbook on How to Intercede* Faith Library Publications, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1980.

Halter, Carl *God and Man in Music* Corcordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1963.

Harris, R. Laird, Archer, Gleason L. and Waitke, Bruce K. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* Moody Press, Chigago, 1980.

Hart, William J. *Unfamiliar Stories of Familiar Hymns* W. A. Wilde Co., Mass., 1940.

Havergal, Maria V. G. *Memorials of Frances Ridley Havergal* James Nesbet & Co, London, 1881.

Heath, R. *The Little Prophets of the Cevennes* *IN* Contemporary Review 49 Jan. 1886 Isbister and Co., pps. 117-131.

Hervey, Arthur *IN* Fuller, J. M. (Ed.) *The Student’s Commentary on the Holy Bible* John Murray, London, 1879.

Holliday, William L. *A Concise Hebrew And Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Based Upon the Lexical Work of L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner* Eerdmans, Grand Rapids Michigan, 1971.

Idelsohn, A. Z. *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development* 1967.

Johnston, E. B. *Dance* *IN* Bromily, G. B. (Gen. Ed.) The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1979, 1:856-858.

Kavanaugh, Patrick *The Spiritual Lives of Great Composers* Word Publishing, Keynes, England, 1992.

Keil, K. F. *Biblical Commentary of the Prophecies of Ezekiel* Tr. James Martin T. & T. Clark, 1876 Repr. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids Michigan, 1950.

Kidner, Derek *Psalms 1-72* Inter-Varsity Press, London, 1973.

Kilmer, A. D., Crocker, R. L., and Brown, R. R. *Sounds from Silence. Recent Discoveries in Ancient Near Eastern Music* Berkeley: Bit Enki Publications, 1976 – booklet and stereo record.

Kirby, G. W. *The Church* *IN* Tenny, Merrill C. (Gen. Ed.) The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible in Five Volumes Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1976, I:845-857.

Kittel, G. and Friedrich, G. (Ed.) *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 10 vol., Eerdmans, Mitchigan, 1964-1976.

Liardon, Roberts *I Saw Heaven* Harrison House, Tulsa Oklahoma, 1983.

Lawson, James Gilchrist *Deeper Experiences of Famous Christians* Warner Press, Anderson, Indiana, 1911.

Lightwood, James T. *Hymn-Tunes and their Stories* C. H. Kelly, London, 1905.

Lindsay, Gordon (Ed.) *Men Who Heard From Heaven Voice of Healing* Dallas, Texas, 1953.

Malz, Betty *My Glimpse of Eternity* Hodder and Stroughton, London, 1977.

Malz, Betty *Supernatural Living* Hodder and Stroughton, London, 1982.

Martin, R. P. *Hymns in the N.T. IN* Bromily, G. B. (Gen. Ed.) The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1979, II: 788-790.

Mishna (This is ancient book)

Mencken, H. L. *Menchken’s Dictionary of Quotations on Historical Principles From Ancient and Modern Sources* Collins, London, 1942.

Monty, Shirlee *May’s Boy*: An Incredible Story of Love Mowbray Unity Press, London, 1981.

Moody, Raymond A. Jr. *Life After Life* Stackpole Books, Pennsylvania, 1976.

Morris, Leon (1) *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary* Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Second Ed, 1985.

Morris, Leon (2) *The Book of Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary* Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Second Ed, 1987.

Moule, H. C. G. *Studies in Romans* Krugel, Grand Rapids, Mitchigan, 1977.

Myers, John *Voices From the Edge of Eternity* Spire Books, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1968.

Olson, Bruce *Bruchko* Creation House, Florida, 1978.

Orr, J. Edwin *The Eager Feet: Evangelical Awakenings, 1790-1830* Moody Press, Chicago, 1975.

Osis, Karlis and Haraldsson, Erlendur *At the Hour of Death* Avon Books, New York, 1977.

Owens, Jimmy & Carol *Words and Music: A Guide to the Writing, Selecting and Enjoying Christian Songs* Word, Waco, Texas, 1984.

Payne, J. Barton *1,2 Chronicles* *IN* Frank E. Gaebelein (Gen Ed) The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Volume 4 Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988.

Pollock, John *Moody Without Sankey* Hodder and Stroughton, London, 1966.

Pratney, Winkie A. *Revival: Principles to Change the World* Whitaker House, Springdale, PA, 1983.

Rawlings, Maurice *Beyond Death’s Door* Shelton Press, London, 1978.

Rawlings, Maurice *Before Death Comes* Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1980.

Roberts, Debbie Rejoice: *A Biblical Study of the Dance* Revival Press, Bedford Texas, 1982.

Rossi, Sanna Barlow God’s City in the Jungle Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, 1975.

Ryden, Ernest Edwin *The Story of Our Hymns* Augustana Books, Rock Island, Illinois, 1930.

Sankey, Ira D. *My Life and Sacred Songs* second edition Hodder and Stroughton, London, 1906. *The Story of The Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs and Solos*, 1907 reprinted by A M S Press, New York.

Saunders, Frederick A. *Physics and Man*  *IN* Scientific American, July, 1948.

Schaeffer, Francis *The God Who is There* Hodder and Stroughton, London, 1968.

Schlink, Basilea *What Comes After Death? The Reality of Heaven and Hell* Lakeland, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1976.

Shea, George Beverly *Then Sings My Soul* Hodder and Stroughton, London, 1968.

Shepherd, M. H. Jr. *Hymns* *in* Buttrick, George Arthur (Gen. Editor) The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible Abingdon, Nashville, 1976, Vol II: 667-8.

Sheppard, W. L. Limmer *Great Hymns and Their Stories* Religious Tract Society, London, 1923.

Sherley-Price, Leo (trans.) *Bede: A History of the English Church and People* Middlesex, Eng., 1968.

Smith, Malcolm *Turn Your Back on the Problem* Logos International, Plainfield, New Jersey, 1972.

Speiser, E. A. *Hurrians* *IN* Buttrick, George Arthur (Gen. Editor) The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible Abingdon, Nashville, 1976, Vol II: 664-6

Springer, Rebecca *Within Heaven’s Gates* Whitaker House, Springdade, Pennsylvania, 1984.

Stevenson, Burton The Home Book of Quotations: Classical and Modern 10th edition, Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1967.

Stewart, James A. *Invasion of Wales by the Spirit Through Evans Roberts* Christian Literature Crusade. Fort Washington, Pennsylvania, 1963.

Stuart, Douglas *The Communicator’s Bible Commentary:* *Ezekiel* Gen. Ed. Lloyd J. Ogilvie Word, Dallas, Texas, 1989.

Styll, John *The Heart of the Matter: The CCM Interviews Volume 1* Star Song Communications, Nashville, Tennessee, 1991.

Tan, Paul Lee *Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* Assurance Publishers, 1979.

Taylor, John B *Ezekiel* Tyndale OT Commentaries, Ed. D. J. Wiseman, Downers Gr. Ill., Inter-Varsity, 1969.

Telford, John *The Methodist Hymn-Book Illustrated* Charles H. Kelly, London, 1906.

Tucker, Ruth A (1) *Stories of Faith, Inspirational Episodes for the Lives of Christians* Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1989.

Tucker, Ruth A and Liefeld, Walter *Daughters of Church: Women and Ministry From New Testament Times to the Present*  Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1987.

Urquhart, Colin *When the Spirit Comes* Hodder and Stroughton, London, 1974.

Warren, James I, Jr O For A Thousand Tongues: The History, Nature, and Influence of Music in the Methodist Tradition Francis Asbury Press, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988,

Werner, E *Music / Musical Instruments* *IN* Buttrick, G. A. (Gen. Ed.) The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1962, 3:457-476.

Wesley, John *The Works of John Wesley* Wesleyan Conference Office, London, 1872.

White, John Wesley *Re-entry* World Wide Publications Minneapolis, Minn., 1971.

Whittaker, Colin *Great Revivals* Radiant Books, Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, Mo, 1984.

Wilcock, Michael *The Message Of Chronicles: One Church, One Faith, One Lord* Inter-Varsity, Leicester, England, 1987.

Wilson, Geoffrey B. *Ephesians* Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1978.

Young, Robert *Young’s Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* Third Ed. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1898.

Zimmerli, Walther *Ezekiel* *2* Tr. James D. Martin Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1983.

**SOURCES**

1. Our Lord [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. James 1:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Job 21:22; Psalm 94:10; Proverbs 2:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Isaiah 28:24ff [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Job 35:11 – note also Job 32:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 1 Corinthians 4:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. **CHAPTER 1**

   Stevenson, page 1360 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
8. Shakespeare, eat your heart out. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. Brown and Butterworth, page 108-109 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
10. **See Appendix**, Note 1.1 for general comments on the nature of this evidence. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
11. Ecclesiastes 12:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
12. Psalm 103:22; 145:10; 150:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
13. Psalm 19:1-4 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
14. Psalm 148:3-4, 7-10 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
15. Isaiah 43:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
16. **See Appendix**, Note 1.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
17. Isaiah 44:23. Other instances, more clearly musical in some translations, are 1 Chronicles 16:32f; Psalm 96:11f; 98:7f; Isaiah 14:7f; 35:2; 49:13; 52:9; 55:12; Jeremiah 51:48. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
18. Stevenson, page 1360 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
19. 1 Chronicles 16:32f [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
20. Psalm 96:11-13 and 98:7-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
21. Psalm 98:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
22. **See Appendix**, Note 1.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
23. Stevenson, page 1360 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
24. Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 103:20f; 148:2; Isaiah 6:3; Ezekiel 3:12; Luke 2:13; Revelation 4:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
25. 2 Peter 2:11; Psalm 103:20; 2 Thessalonians 1:7. The stone rolled back in Matthew 28:2 may have weighed as much as 4 tonnes. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
26. Daniel 9:21; Acts 12:6f; Revelation 14:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
27. Judges 6:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
28. Genesis 19:11; 2 Samuel 24:16; 2 Kings 19:35; Revelation 9:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
29. Genesis 24:40; Exodus 23:20; Daniel 6:22; Matthew 4:5f [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
30. Numbers 29:16; Isaiah 63:9; Acts 5:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
31. Revelation 7:4; 14:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
32. Job 33:23; 2 Samuel 14:17, 20 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
33. Implied in Matthew 24:36; Daniel 9:22; Revelation 7:13, 14a [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
34. Judges 13:6; Acts 6:15; Revelation 10:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
35. Matthew 28:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
36. Revelation 10:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
37. Judges 13:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
38. Isaiah 63:9; Matthew 18:10 **See Appendix** Note 1.5 for more on this whole subject. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
39. Job 38:7; Luke 20:36 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
40. Isaiah 6:4f; Daniel 10:5f; Revelation 4:1; 10:3; 18:2. A strictly literal interpretation of Revelation 4:8, if assumed to continue without pause, would imply powers of endurance and voice far beyond anything we possess. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
41. Mencken, page 825 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
42. Luke 2:13f. See Appendix, Note 1.6 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
43. E.g. Revelation 8:6f. See also Exodus 19:16,19; Matthew 24:31 and **see Appendix**, Note 1.7 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
44. The best manuscripts indicate that ‘us’ in the King James Version of Revelation 5:9f should read ‘them’. This change is significant because the singers were not human. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
45. E.g. Exodus 15:1ff; Numbers 21:17; Deuteronomy 31:30ff; Judges 5:1ff, 2 Samuel 22:1ff; Psalms, Song of Solomon; Isaiah 5:1ff; 26:2ff; Habakkuk 3:1ff; Revelation 5:9; 15:3f; also **see Appendix**, Note 1.9 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
46. Isaiah 40:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
47. Critchley and Henson, page 218 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
48. Matthew 26:30 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
49. **See Appendix**, Note 1.10 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
50. Zephaniah 3:17 **See Appendix**, Note 1.11 [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
51. Kavanaugh, page 130 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
52. Halter, page 12 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
53. **CHAPTER 2**

    Schaeffer, page 69-73 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
54. Examples are given in Chapter 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
55. Used by permission [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
56. If you think this prophecy to be premature, I don’t know what you will make of Revelation 22:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
57. Orr, page 100 [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
58. 1851-2 [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
59. Because it was in an angelic language? [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
60. Brown and Butterworth, page 391-2 [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
61. Wesley, vol. X, page 56 [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
62. Heath, page 121, 126 [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
63. Revelation 16:5f; 18:20,21,24 [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
64. Hebrews 1:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
65. For example, 1 Kings 19:5f [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
66. For example, Daniel 10:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
67. For example, 2 Kings 6.16f Psalm 34:7, Acts 12:6ff [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
68. For example, Psalm 91:11f; Daniel 6:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
69. 1 Corinthians 11:10, cf Ephesians 3:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
70. Luke 15:7,10 [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
71. Compare Luke 15:23-25 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
72. Luke 2:10-14 [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
73. E.g. Psalm 103:20-21; 148:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
74. Hebrews 2:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
75. Zephaniah 3:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
76. Urquhart, page 90 [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
77. Cf James 4.2b [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
78. John 16:24b [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
79. Compare **Appendix**, Note 1.7 [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
80. Hebrews 1:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
81. From a magazine article published November 1976. At that time Longino was senior pastor of Valley Community Church in Louisville, Kentucky. He is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in that city. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
82. Graham, page 48 [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
83. Darnall, page 1-44, 54 [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
84. Darnall, page 40 [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
85. Darnall, page 42 [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
86. Ephesians 2:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
87. Malz, 1982, page 131 – Malz, 1977, page 86-87 is less specific, merely indicating that it was more than four-part and once stating it was in ‘many’ parts [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
88. Malz, 1977, page 87. In a church service in Africa she spoke of hearing ‘beautiful, melodious tones’ ‘in all the languages of the world.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
89. Malz, 1977, page 110 [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
90. Details of Dr Eby’s experienced have been gleaned from his book and from an audio tap of a message he delivered. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
91. It was later confirmed by a neurosurgeon who wanted to perform an autopsy on the body. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
92. See **Appendix**, Note 2.3 for further information about Dr. Eby, [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
93. Grof and Halifax, page 132-5 [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
94. Rawlings, 1978, page 91 [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
95. Malz, page 49-50 [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
96. 2 Kings 6:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
97. 2 Kings 6:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
98. E.g, Numbers 12:6; 24:16; 1 Samuel 3:1; Ezekiel 1:1; Acts 10:3; Revelation 1:9f [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
99. Daniel 10:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
100. Acts 22:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
101. For example, 2 Corinthians 12:1,4; Revelation 10:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
102. Colossians 2:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:2f; Galatians 1:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
103. Baker, page 54, 71 [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
104. Baker, page 70 [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
105. Baker, page 58 [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
106. Baker, page 55-56, 71 [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
107. Baker, page 56 [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
108. Beeson & Hunsicker, page 86-87 [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
109. Havergal, page 151-152 [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
110. Baker, page 87-97 [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
111. Egg Davis, page 38, 40, 47, 49 [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
112. Egg Davis, page 25, 27, 31 [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
113. Egg Davis, page 24, 40 [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
114. Davis, page 60 [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
115. Egg Davis, page 28, 92 [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
116. Davis, page 27-28, 49, 60, 100 [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
117. Davis, page 26 [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
118. Davis, page 23 [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
119. Davis, page 50, 83, 159 [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
120. Davis, page 127-28, 152 [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
121. Davis, page 22, 25, 31, 40, 44, 84, 87, 92, 164 [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
122. Davis, page 22, 87 [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
123. Davis, page 87 [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
124. Davis, page 87 [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
125. Page 48, 129, 143 [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
126. Springer, page 113, 120, 122 [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
127. Springer, page 37 [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
128. Springer, page 69-70 [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
129. Springer, page 85 [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
130. Springer, page 57 [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
131. Springer, page 41, 78 [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
132. Springer, page 58-59 [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
133. E.g. Springer, page 41 [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
134. Springer, page 56 [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
135. Springer, page 41, 81 [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
136. Springer, page 35 [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
137. Springer, page 21 [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
138. Springer, page 47 [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
139. Springer, page 53, 102-103 [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
140. Springer, page 56-57 [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
141. Springer, page 58, 81, 105 [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
142. Springer, page 57, 80 [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
143. Springer, page 85, 87 [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
144. Springer, page 23 [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
145. Genesis 18:1-8; 19:1-3; Luke 24:41-43 [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
146. Liardon, page 14-15, emphasis Liardon’s [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
147. Acts 16:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
148. Lindsay, page 151-2 [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
149. 2 Corinthians 12:14; Revelation 10:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
150. **See Appendix**, Note 2.4 [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
151. 1 Chronicles 9:33 [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
152. Hebrews 8:2,5; 9:11f, 23f; cf Exodus 25:40; 1 Chronicles 28:11f, 19 – also note Psalm 78:69 GNB and other references cited in this section [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
153. Revelation 5:6, 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
154. Revelation 5:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
155. Revelation 8:3-5; 9:13; Isaiah 6 may also be relevant; cf Exodus 30:1-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
156. Revelation 11:19, note also Revelation 15:5-8; Psalm 11:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
157. Hebrews 7:24-26; 8:1-2 [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
158. 1 Kings 6:23-35; 2 Chronicles 3:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
159. Revelation 5:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
160. Revelation 7:9-15 [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
161. 1 Chronicles 9:33 [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
162. Cooper, page 284 [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
163. 1 Chronicles 16:31-34; Psalm 96:10-13; 98:4-9; 103:20-22; 150:6; Isaiah 44:23; 49:13; Jeremiah 51:48 [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
164. Revelation 5:8-14 [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
165. Genesis 3:17f; Jeremiah 12:4, 11 [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
166. Romans 8:19-23; Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:20; 2 Peter 3:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
167. Judges 14:5f; 15:14f; 16:3, 15-17, 28 [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
168. Genesis 21:19; 2 Kings 6:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
169. 1 Kings 18:46 [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
170. Acts 8:39 [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
171. Matthew 14:25-29 [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
172. Daniel 3:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
173. 2 Corinthians 5:1f [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
174. Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
175. 1 Corinthians 15:52; Philippians 3:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
176. Romans 8:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
177. 1 Corinthians 15:42, 52 [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
178. 1 Corinthians 15:53 [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
179. 1 Corinthians 15:44 [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
180. 1 Corinthians 15:48 [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
181. 1 Corinthians 15:43 [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
182. 1 Corinthians 15:43; Philippians 3:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
183. Isaiah 33:24; Revelation 21:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
184. However, **see Appendix,** Note 1.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
185. 1 Corinthians 13:9-12; John 3:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
186. Acts 2:4-12 [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
187. Revelation 15:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
188. **See** **Appendix**, Note 3.2 for a discussion of the uniqueness of this expression, [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
189. **CHAPTER 3**

     Beattie, page 21 [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
190. Saunders – I have yet to meet a computer that can speak as well as we can, let alone rival human ability in singing lyrics. [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
191. Revelation 14:1-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
192. Psalm 33:1; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Isaiah 42:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
193. Revelation 14:1f [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
194. But note verse 3a [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
195. Revelation 14:4f [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
196. Cf Romans 8:26; 11:26 [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
197. Mencken, page 827 [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
198. Psalm 19:1; 148:2-12; Isaiah 43:7, 21; 60:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
199. Luke 20:34-36; Revelation 20:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
200. 1 Peter 3:9-13; 1 Corinthians 13:9f; Revelation 20:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
201. Romans 4:23f; 15:4; 1 Corinthians 9:10; 10:11; 1 Peter 1:10-12 [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
202. Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26 [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
203. Acts 16:25f [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
204. 1 Corinthians 14:26 [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
205. Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
206. James 5:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
207. Tan, page 309, 440 [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
208. 1 Corinthians 14:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
209. Ephesians 5:18f [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
210. 1 Corinthians 14:15,26 [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
211. Matthew 26:30; Hebrews 2:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
212. In *Revelation* [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
213. **See Appendix**, Note 1.9 [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
214. John 10:35 [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
215. 2 Timothy 3:16f [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
216. Romans 15:4 – see also Acts 26:22 b; Romans 4:22-24; 1 Corinthians 9:9f; 10:11; 1 Peter 1:11f [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
217. Psalms [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
218. Shepherd, page 668 [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
219. 1 Corinthians 14:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
220. Acts 16:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
221. For a sample of the Biblical support for this statement, see 1 Kings 10:12 – ‘psalteries for the singers’ ; 1 Chronicles 15:16, 19; 2 Chronicles 5:12; 23:13; Psalm 33:2; 71:22; 98:5; 147:7; 149:3; Isaiah 38:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
222. 1 Chronicles 23:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
223. 1 Samuel 16:16-18 [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
224. 1 Chronicles 23:5; Amos 6:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
225. Psalm 104:33; 146:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
226. Psalm 47:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
227. Verse 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
228. Verse 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
229. Psalm 92:1, 3; 147:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
230. 1 Chronicles 9:33 cf Psalm 134:1; 84:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
231. 1 Chronicles 9:27 [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
232. Psalm 51:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
233. Psalm 51:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
234. Lamentations 3:22f [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
235. Psalm 33:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Isaiah 42:10; Revelation 5:9; 14:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
236. Job 5:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
237. Psalm 150:3-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
238. See ‘wordless praise,’ chapter 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
239. Psalm 33:3; 1 Chronicles 15:22. **See Appendix**. Note 4.1 for indications that Jewish singers were of a high standard. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
240. Romans 8:32 [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
241. E.g. Malachi 1:6-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
242. Psalm 42:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
243. Psalm 4:1; 28:2; 142 [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
244. Psalm 51 [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
245. Psalm 10, 69, 79 [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
246. Psalm 68:3; 72:1ff; 125:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
247. Psalm 63:1-8 [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
248. Psalm 65:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
249. Psalm 68:7-10 [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
250. Psalm 6:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
251. Psalm 25:7, 11, 18 [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
252. Psalm 19:12-14; 139:23; 119:10; 141:3-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
253. Psalm 90:12; 119:18, 169 [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
254. Psalm 25:5; 31:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
255. Psalm 90:14-17 [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
256. Psalm 144:12-14 [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
257. Psalm 51:8, 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
258. Psalm 109 [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
259. Psalm 17:13; 71:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
260. Psalm 56:1f [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
261. Psalm 10:15; 68:1f; 140:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
262. Verse 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
263. Note also Isaiah 38:9-20; Jonah 2:2-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
264. A ‘son of Asaph,’ cf Nehemiah 7:44 [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
265. Nehemiah 11:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
266. Acts 16:25; 1 Corinthians 14:15; James 5:13-15; Revelation 5:8-9 – Ephesians 5:19-20 comes close to being a fifth reference. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
267. Psalm 137 [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
268. **See Appendix**, Note 1.2 [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
269. Isaiah 48:20f [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
270. Psalm 95:3-5; 96:4-6; 98:1-3 – similar examples are found in Psalm 33, 47, 105, 107, 135, 136, 147, 149 [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
271. Verse 8 [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
272. Psalm 108:3 – note also 1 Chronicles 16:8f; Psalm 9:11; 18:49; 57:9; 96:1, 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
273. Acts 16:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
274. Ephesians 5:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
275. Psalm 34:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
276. 2 Chronicles 29:28 [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
277. 2 Chronicles 23:13 NASB [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
278. E.g. Psalm 136 [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
279. See chapter 11 [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
280. Best & Huttar, page 315 [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
281. Genesis 15:16; Leviticus 18:24f; Deuteronomy 7:16, 20-24; 20:16f [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
282. Numbers 31:3, 7, 12-16; Judges 1:24-2:2; 1 Samuel 15:2f, 9-11, 32f; note also Jeremiah 48:8, 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
283. 2 Chronicles 20:15 b – note also 1 Samuel 17:45-47; 1 Chronicles 5:22; Zechariah 14:2f [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
284. Exodus 17:11, note verse 16 [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
285. Joshua 10:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
286. 2 Samuel 22:35 [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
287. 2 Kings 6:8-12 [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
288. Isaiah 37:36 – note also Exodus 14:14; Judges 5:4, 19f, 23, 31; Isaiah 9:11-13; 13:3-5; 34:2-8 [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
289. Psalm 24:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
290. cf Numbers 33:4; 1 Samuel 17:43 b; 1 Kings 20:28; 2 Kings 18:32b-35; 19:9-12, 22f, 27f, 34; 1 Chronicles 14:11f [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
291. 2 Corinthians 10:3f; Ephesians 6:11-17; 1 Timothy 1:18; 6:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
292. Numbers 10:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
293. Joshua 6:4-6 [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
294. Judges 7:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
295. **See Appendix**, Note 4.2: Trumpets in War [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
296. 2 Chronicles 20:21ff [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
297. 2 Chronicles 20:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
298. 2 Chronicles 20:27f [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
299. 2 Maccabees 12:37 [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
300. Isaiah 30:29, 32 [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
301. Payne, page 423-4; NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, Jerusalem Bible [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
302. 1 Samuel 16:16f, 23 [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
303. Cf Leviticus 17:7; Deuteronomy 32:17; Psalm 106:37; 1 Corinthians 10:19-21; Revelation 9:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
304. 1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 6:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
305. , page 16 – other references include, page 22,43,45,49,72,73,80,95,111 [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
306. 2 Chronicles 29:25-30 [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
307. 1 Samuel 15:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
308. 1 Chronicles 13:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
309. 1 Chronicles 13:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
310. 1 Chronicles 15:2, 13-15; Numbers 1:50 [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
311. 2 Chronicles 5:11-14 [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
312. 1 Samuel 10:5f [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
313. 2 Kings 3:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
314. See also section 18, below [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
315. Psalm 42:5, 11; 43:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
316. For example, Psalm 43:3f [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
317. Including Psalm 103:1-5, 22; 104:1, 35; 116:7; 146:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
318. 1 Corinthians 14:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
319. 1 Corinthians 14:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
320. 1 Corinthians 14:26 [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
321. Psalm 66:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
322. E.g. Psalm 3:4; 6:8f; 18:6; 27:2; 28:6; 34:4, 6; 40:1-3; 116:1ff; 118:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
323. E.g. Psalm 32:3-5; 40:17; 137:1ff [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
324. James 1:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
325. Romans 5:3f; James 1:2f [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
326. 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
327. Revelation 14:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
328. Deuteronomy 31:19-21 [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
329. Ball, page 46, 57 [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
330. Joshua 1:8; Colossians 3:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
331. Ephesians 4:11-13 [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
332. The interpretation of Colossians 3:16 suggested by the bracketed words is supported by both Greek grammatical considerations and a comparison with the parallel passage in Ephesians 5:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
333. For example Psalm 1, 37, 91, 112, 127, 128, 133 [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
334. Psalm 78:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
335. Psalm 34:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
336. Psalm 49:3f [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
337. James 3:1f. The presence of ‘we’ in James 3:1 shows that James was including himself. He was clearly referring to those who aspired to be good teachers, not those who sought to be judgmental or to lord it over others. This is what makes his statement so staggering. [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
338. Mencken, page 825 [↑](#endnote-ref-83)
339. Andrew Fletcher, quoting an unnamed source in 1704 [↑](#endnote-ref-84)
340. Avery, page 65 [↑](#endnote-ref-85)
341. E.g. Ezra 9:5-15; Daniel 9:4-20 [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
342. This is an indirect appeal to the Biblical record. [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
343. From *Acts* to *Revelation* [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
344. 1 Corinthians 9:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
345. Philippians 1:15-18 [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
346. Pollock, page 75, 223 [↑](#endnote-ref-86)
347. Acts 16:23-25, 30-34 [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
348. See chapter 8, section 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
349. 1 Corinthians 14:24-25 [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
350. Psalm 6:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
351. Psalm 49:1; note also Psalm 117:1 and Isaiah 48:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
352. Romans 15:9, 11 – quoting Psalm 18:49 and 117:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
353. 2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49; Romans 15:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
354. Deuteronomy 32:5f,18,36f [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
355. Psalm 94:5-12 [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
356. Psalm 82:2f [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
357. Psalm 96:2,3 (= 1 Chronicles 16:23-24), Psalm 96:10. Psalm 105:1f (= 1 Chronicles 16:8f) is similar. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
358. Styll, page 26-27 [↑](#endnote-ref-87)
359. Psalm 40:3, NIV [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
360. Owens, page 110 [↑](#endnote-ref-88)
361. Acts 2:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
362. James 5:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
363. Isaiah 54:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
364. Acts 8:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
365. Acts 20:37 [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
366. Ezra 3:10-13 [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
367. E.g. 2 Samuel 1:17ff; 3:33f; 2 Chronicles 35:25; Psalm 137; Jeremiah 9:20 – some translations – and Matthew 9:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
368. Brown and Butterworth, page 158 [↑](#endnote-ref-89)
369. Mencken, page 1128 [↑](#endnote-ref-90)
370. Cf the book of Lamentations [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
371. *Christianity Today*, August 6,1982, page 26 [↑](#endnote-ref-91)
372. Psalm 130:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
373. Romans 12:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
374. E.g. Psalms 6, 10, 11, 12, 13 [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
375. 2 Chronicles 35:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
376. 2 Samuel 14:2 (?); Jeremiah 9:17 – literal translation [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
377. Habakkuk 3:17-19 [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
378. Paraphrase of Proverbs 25:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
379. Job 2:11b-13 [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
380. Paraphrase of Ecclesiastes 3:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
381. Nehemiah 12:27-43 [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
382. 2 Samuel 6:12-16; 1 Chronicles 15:1-29 [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
383. 2 Chronicles 20:17-22 [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
384. Joshua 6:3ff [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
385. Brown and Butterworth, page 185 [↑](#endnote-ref-92)
386. Tan, page 879 [↑](#endnote-ref-93)
387. E.g. Exodus 15:20f; Psalm 149:3; 150:4; Luke 15:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
388. 2 Samuel 6:5, 15; 1 Chronicles 15:27ff [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
389. 2 Samuel 6:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
390. 2 Samuel 6:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
391. 2 Samuel 6:16, 20, 23 [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
392. Exodus 15:20; Judges 11:34; Psalm 150:4; Jeremiah 31:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
393. Exodus 15:20f; 1 Samuel 18:6; 21:11; 2 Samuel 6:14f; 1 Chronicles 15:16, 29, 29 – 1 Chronicles 13:8 may also include a reference to dancing [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
394. Psalm 149:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
395. Cf 1 Samuel 21:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-302)
396. E.g. RV, RSV, NEB, GNB. [↑](#footnote-ref-303)
397. Psalm 150:3-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-304)
398. Johnson, page 857 [↑](#endnote-ref-94)
399. 1 Samuel 10:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-305)
400. Luke 15:25; 7:32; Matthew 11:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
401. Luke 6:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
402. Psalm 30:11; Jeremiah 31:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-308)
403. 1 Corinthians 6:13,20; 2 Corinthians 4:10-11; Philippians 1:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-309)
404. Matthew 25:14-30 [↑](#footnote-ref-310)
405. Roberts, page 39; Douglass, page 11 [↑](#endnote-ref-95)
406. Cross & Livingstone, page 43 [↑](#endnote-ref-96)
407. Quoted in Roberts, page 40-41 [↑](#endnote-ref-97)
408. Isaiah 30:29; Matthew 26:17,30 [↑](#footnote-ref-311)
409. E.g. Psalm 45 [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
410. E.g. 2 Chronicles 35:24f [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
411. E.g. 1 Kings 1:39f [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
412. E.g. 1 Samuel 18:6f [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
413. E.g. Isaiah 5:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-316)
414. E.g. Genesis 31:27 [↑](#footnote-ref-317)
415. E.g. Numbers 21:17; Nehemiah 12:27 [↑](#footnote-ref-318)
416. E.g. Isaiah 16:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-319)
417. E.g. Isaiah 14:11; 16:10; 24:8f; Lamentations 5:14; Ezekiel 26:13; Revelation 18:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-320)
418. Werner, page 457 [↑](#endnote-ref-98)
419. 2 Chronicles 23:18 – see also 5:6, 12; 29:27f; 31:2; 35:14-16 [↑](#footnote-ref-321)
420. ‘Arakin 11a [↑](#footnote-ref-322)
421. Isaiah 26:1a [↑](#footnote-ref-323)
422. E.g. Genesis 4:23; Luke 1:46-55 [↑](#footnote-ref-324)
423. Numbers 21:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-325)
424. 2 Samuel 3:31-35 [↑](#footnote-ref-326)
425. 1 Samuel 18:6-7 [↑](#footnote-ref-327)
426. Chacour, page 83-4 [↑](#endnote-ref-99)
427. Blume, page 600 – quoted in Fortunato, page 61 [↑](#endnote-ref-100)
428. Fortunato, page 57-64 [↑](#endnote-ref-101)
429. **See Appendix**, Note 4.6: *Music While You Work* [↑](#footnote-ref-328)
430. Matthew 5:45 [↑](#footnote-ref-329)
431. Amos 5:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-330)
432. Lamentations 3:14,63; Job 30:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-331)
433. Amos 6:4-6; Ecclesiastes 2:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-332)
434. Psalm 69:12; Isaiah 24:8f [↑](#footnote-ref-333)
435. Isaiah 23:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-334)
436. Isaiah 5:12; Amos 5:23f; 6:3-6 [↑](#footnote-ref-335)
437. Exodus 32:18f [↑](#footnote-ref-336)
438. Daniel 3:5-15 [↑](#footnote-ref-337)
439. Mencken, page 825 [↑](#endnote-ref-102)
440. **CHAPTER 5**

     Pollock, page 125 [↑](#endnote-ref-103)
441. Pollock, page 124 [↑](#endnote-ref-104)
442. Pollock, page 124-5 [↑](#endnote-ref-105)
443. Hart, page 72 [↑](#endnote-ref-106)
444. Hart, page 63-64 [↑](#endnote-ref-107)
445. Sankey; Brown and Butterworth, page 453-454 [↑](#endnote-ref-108)
446. Sheppard, page 179-180 [↑](#endnote-ref-109)
447. Telford, page 78-79 [↑](#endnote-ref-110)
448. Brown and Butterworth, page 531-532; Duffield, page 448-449 [↑](#endnote-ref-111)
449. Brown and Butterworth, page 44; Duffield, page 388 [↑](#endnote-ref-112)
450. Telford, page 441 [↑](#endnote-ref-113)
451. Hart, page 92 [↑](#endnote-ref-114)
452. Beattie, page 117-118 [↑](#endnote-ref-115)
453. Hart, page 64-65 [↑](#endnote-ref-116)
454. Beattie, page 116 [↑](#endnote-ref-117)
455. Hart, page 98 [↑](#endnote-ref-118)
456. Beattie, page 107-108; Tan, page 886 [↑](#endnote-ref-119)
457. Sankey; Duffield, page 19 [↑](#endnote-ref-120)
458. Telford, page 410-411 [↑](#endnote-ref-121)
459. Tan, page 882-883 [↑](#endnote-ref-122)
460. Hart, page 113 [↑](#endnote-ref-123)
461. Hart, page 185-186 [↑](#endnote-ref-124)
462. Story obtained through personal correspondence with Mrs. Bull [↑](#endnote-ref-125)
463. Telford, page 74 [↑](#endnote-ref-126)
464. Beattie, page 121 [↑](#endnote-ref-127)
465. Pratney, page 176 [↑](#endnote-ref-128)
466. Quoted in Whittaker, page 112 [↑](#endnote-ref-129)
467. Job 30:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-338)
468. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 – note also Matthew 24:31; 1 Corinthians 15:52 [↑](#footnote-ref-339)
469. Exodus 15:1-21; Psalm 105:43; 106:11f [↑](#footnote-ref-340)
470. For example, 1 Samuel 10:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-341)
471. 1 Chronicles 25, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-342)
472. For example, 2 Chronicles 30:9,12,21 – note also 2 Chronicles 23:11-13. It has been suggested that from David onwards, every major religious reformation in the Old Testament involved the restoration of Levitical music – 2 Chronicles 29:25; 34:12; 35:15; Ezra 3:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-343)
473. Psalm 137:1-6 [↑](#footnote-ref-344)
474. Isaiah 35:6,10; Jeremiah 31:1,4; 33:11; Ezra 3:10f; Nehemiah 12:27ff; 13:10f – note also Isaiah 30:26,29,32 [↑](#footnote-ref-345)
475. Luke 2:13f; 1:46-55; 68-79; 2:29-32 [↑](#footnote-ref-346)
476. See also 1 Corinthians 14:26a [↑](#footnote-ref-347)
477. Revelation 14:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-348)
478. Telford, page 32 [↑](#endnote-ref-130)
479. Change the World School of Prayer, D-127 [↑](#endnote-ref-131)
480. Brown & Butterworth, page 69 [↑](#endnote-ref-132)
481. Atkinson, page 296 [↑](#endnote-ref-133)
482. Telford, page 149 [↑](#endnote-ref-134)
483. Dr. Stroughton, quoted in the beginning of Telford. [↑](#endnote-ref-135)
484. Telford, page 198 [↑](#endnote-ref-136)
485. Telford, page 45 [↑](#endnote-ref-137)
486. Telford, page 40 [↑](#endnote-ref-138)
487. Beattie, page 33 [↑](#endnote-ref-139)
488. Telford, page 102 [↑](#endnote-ref-140)
489. Shepherd, page 44 [↑](#endnote-ref-141)
490. Telford, page 111 [↑](#endnote-ref-142)
491. Pollock, page 75, 223 [↑](#endnote-ref-143)
492. Ryden, page 436-437 [↑](#endnote-ref-144)
493. Telford, page 294-295; Duffield, page 166 [↑](#endnote-ref-145)
494. Gillman, page 131 [↑](#endnote-ref-146)
495. Beattie, page 114-115 [↑](#endnote-ref-147)
496. Kavanaugh, page 21 [↑](#endnote-ref-148)
497. Gillman, page 132 [↑](#endnote-ref-149)
498. Psalm 19:1-2 [↑](#footnote-ref-349)
499. Owens, page 160-163 [↑](#endnote-ref-150)
500. **CHAPTER 6**

     Brown and Butterworth, page 326-327 [↑](#endnote-ref-151)
501. E.g. Joshua 9:14-20; 2 Samuel 21:1f; see also 1 Corinthians 4:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-350)
502. John 11:49-51 [↑](#footnote-ref-351)
503. Chapter Four [↑](#footnote-ref-352)
504. 1 Chronicles 13:1-4, 9f [↑](#footnote-ref-353)
505. 1 Corinthians 14:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-354)
506. Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-355)
507. Kittel, 8:499 [↑](#endnote-ref-152)
508. Avery, page 214, 225 [↑](#endnote-ref-153)
509. Brown and Butterworth, page 304; Lightwood, page 355-356 [↑](#endnote-ref-154)
510. Douglass, page 39 [↑](#endnote-ref-155)
511. **See Appendix**, Note 6.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-356)
512. E.g. Psalm 9, 22, 45, 56-60, 69, 75, 88 [↑](#footnote-ref-357)
513. E.g. Psalm 57 [↑](#footnote-ref-358)
514. Cf Isaiah 65:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-359)
515. Adapted from a brief account by Avery, page 100. [↑](#endnote-ref-156)
516. Olson, page 151-153 [↑](#endnote-ref-157)
517. Romans 14:1- 15:3; 1 Corinthians 8 [↑](#footnote-ref-360)
518. Acts 17:28a and b [↑](#footnote-ref-361)
519. 1 Corinthians 15:33; Titus 1:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-362)
520. Avery, page 127 [↑](#endnote-ref-158)
521. Cf Psalm 1:1f [↑](#footnote-ref-363)
522. Acts 17:28a and Titus 1:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-364)
523. Acts 17:28b and 1 Corinthians 15:33 [↑](#footnote-ref-365)
524. Moule, page 31 [↑](#endnote-ref-159)
525. Temple, page 45 [↑](#endnote-ref-160)
526. Telford, page 137 [↑](#endnote-ref-161)
527. Telford, page 87 [↑](#endnote-ref-162)
528. Telford, page 13 [↑](#endnote-ref-163)
529. Ryden, page 437 [↑](#endnote-ref-164)
530. Havergal, page 63 [↑](#endnote-ref-165)
531. Havergal, page 267-268 [↑](#endnote-ref-166)
532. From a recording of a seminar given by Girade for musicians [↑](#endnote-ref-167)
533. E.g. Psalm 78, 106, 114, 136 [↑](#footnote-ref-366)
534. Exodus 15:2a – note also Isaiah 12:2b [↑](#footnote-ref-367)
535. Psalm 118:15f,28 [↑](#footnote-ref-368)
536. Exodus 15:6, 26 [↑](#footnote-ref-369)
537. E.g. Psalm 120:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-370)
538. Verse 22 [↑](#footnote-ref-371)
539. 1 Corinthians 14:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-372)
540. Cf Romans 8:26 [↑](#footnote-ref-373)
541. E.g. Numbers 10:10; 1 Chronicles 15:16, 19-21, 28; 25:1,6; 2 Chronicles 5:12f; Psalm 33:2; 81:2f; 92:1-3, 98:5f; 149:3; Isaiah 38:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-374)
542. 2 Chronicles 29:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-375)
543. The Treasury of David [↑](#endnote-ref-168)
544. 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 5a, 16- 18, 39 [↑](#footnote-ref-376)
545. 1 Corinthians 14:5f, 13-20, 27f [↑](#footnote-ref-377)
546. 2 Timothy 3:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-378)
547. 1 Corinthians 12:10f; Acts 2:4; 10:45f; 19:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-379)
548. 1 Corinthians 6:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-380)
549. 1 Corinthians 14:17f [↑](#footnote-ref-381)
550. 1 Corinthians 14:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-382)
551. 1 Corinthians 14:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-383)
552. James 2:2-4, 9; Hebrews 13:2; 3 John 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-384)
553. 1 Corinthians 14:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-385)
554. 1 Corinthians 14:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-386)
555. Cf 1 Corinthians 14:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-387)
556. 1 Corinthians 14:4, 16, 17, 28 [↑](#footnote-ref-388)
557. E.g. 1 Corinthians 14:26-30 [↑](#footnote-ref-389)
558. Judges 7:18; 2 Chronicles 20:21f [↑](#footnote-ref-390)
559. Shea, page 154 [↑](#endnote-ref-169)
560. 1 Corinthians 12:6-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-391)
561. 1 Corinthians 13:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-392)
562. 1 Corinthians 14:4f, 12, 16, 19, 26; Romans 15:1-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-393)
563. 1 Corinthians 14:18f, 28 [↑](#footnote-ref-394)
564. Cf Romans 14 [↑](#footnote-ref-395)
565. Proverbs 25:20 Cf Ecclesiastes 3:4; Romans 12:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-396)
566. Matthew 7:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-397)
567. 1 Corinthians 9:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-398)
568. Havergal, page 315-17 [↑](#endnote-ref-170)
569. Joshua 6:20; 1 Samuel 17:20; 2 Chronicles 13:15; Jeremiah 50:15 and elsewhere [↑](#footnote-ref-399)
570. Ezra 3:11, 13; Psalm 47:1; 66:1; 81:1; 95:1f; 98:4; 98:6; 100:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-400)
571. Ezra 3:10-13. See also Nehemiah 12:43 [↑](#footnote-ref-401)
572. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-402)
573. Revelation 1:10; 4:5; 5:2, 12; 6:1; 10; 7:2, 10; 8:5, 13; 10:3; 11:12, 15, 19; 12:10; 14:2, 7, 9, 15, 18; 16:1, 17, 18; 18:2; 19:1, 6, 17; 21:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-403)
574. 1 Corinthians 6:19f [↑](#footnote-ref-404)
575. E.g. Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:12-58; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4; Philippians 3:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-405)
576. E.g. Luke 12:42ff; 1 Corinthians 4:1f; Titus 1:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-406)
577. Hebrews 13:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-407)
578. Philippians 4:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-408)
579. John 15:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-409)
580. Isaiah 64:6 – literal translation. See also Ezekiel 36:17. Philippians 3:8 – note also Titus 1:15f. [↑](#footnote-ref-410)
581. Proverbs 16:2; Jeremiah 17:9; 1 Corinthians 4:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-411)
582. 1 John 3:8f [↑](#footnote-ref-412)
583. E.g. Philippians 2:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-413)
584. E.g. 1 Corinthians 10:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-414)
585. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-2; Ephesians 5:4-6; Revelation 21:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-415)
586. Mark 6:12; Luke 13:3; 24:47; Acts 3:19; 17:30; 26:20; 2 Corinthians 7:9f; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 2:16, 21f [↑](#footnote-ref-416)
587. Matthew 6:12-15; 18:21-35; see also Matthew 5:23f [↑](#footnote-ref-417)
588. E.g. Matthew 7:1f [↑](#footnote-ref-418)
589. **CHAPTER 7**

     CCM, November 1983, page 62 [↑](#endnote-ref-171)
590. Hebrews 13:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-419)
591. Revelation 3:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-420)
592. *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, 15.8.84, page 5 [↑](#endnote-ref-172)
593. Liardon, page 8-9 [↑](#endnote-ref-173)
594. 1 Corinthians 2:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-421)
595. Morris (1), page 58 [↑](#endnote-ref-174)
596. Havergal, page 239 [↑](#endnote-ref-175)
597. Havergal, page 214 [↑](#endnote-ref-176)
598. Judges 7:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-422)
599. Judges 7:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-423)
600. Psalm 27:1; 59:16f; 73:26; 84:5, 7; 2 Corinthians 12:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-424)
601. Psalm 52:5-7; John 15:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-425)
602. 2 Corinthians 12:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-426)
603. 2 Corinthians 12:1, 7, 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-427)
604. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29; Matthew 11:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-428)
605. 1 Samuel 9:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-429)
606. 1 Samuel 10:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-430)
607. 1 Samuel 11:12f [↑](#footnote-ref-431)
608. 1 Samuel 18:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-432)
609. Proverbs 29:23 – see also Proverbs 11:2; 16:18; 18:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-433)
610. 1 Samuel 18:7f [↑](#footnote-ref-434)
611. 2 Samuel 1:17-27 [↑](#footnote-ref-435)
612. 1 Samuel 13:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-436)
613. 1 Samuel 18:18-23; 22:22; 24:4-7, 14; 25:32-35; 26:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-437)
614. E.g. 2 Samuel 3:38f; 5:12; 6:9, 14, 21f; 7:18-22; 9:3f, 11; 15:30; 16:5-13; 19:21-23; 22:1ff; 24:10, 17 [↑](#footnote-ref-438)
615. Luke 14:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-439)
616. Matthew 4:1-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-440)
617. John 5:30 [↑](#footnote-ref-441)
618. 1 Corinthians 2:4-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-442)
619. 2 Corinthians 6:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-443)
620. Acts 19:13-17 [↑](#footnote-ref-444)
621. Cf Matthew 6:5; Luke 18:11-14 [↑](#footnote-ref-445)
622. **CHAPTER 8**

     1 Telford, page 95 [↑](#endnote-ref-177)
623. 1 Chronicles 16:23; Psalm 30:4; 67:4; 68:32; 96:2; 98:4; Proverbs 29:6; James 5:13; Revelation 5:9f [↑](#footnote-ref-446)
624. Matthew 14:28f [↑](#footnote-ref-447)
625. Isaiah 6:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-448)
626. 1 Chronicles 17:1-6 [↑](#footnote-ref-449)
627. 2 Chronicles 26:16-21, note also 1 Samuel 13:9-14 [↑](#footnote-ref-450)
628. Numbers 16:8-10,33,39f [↑](#footnote-ref-451)
629. Leviticus 10:1f [↑](#footnote-ref-452)
630. E.g. Jeremiah 23:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-453)
631. Romans 10:15 cf Matthew 9:38 [↑](#footnote-ref-454)
632. James 3:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-455)
633. Acts 9:15; 13:2; 22:10; 26:14-18 [↑](#footnote-ref-456)
634. Galatians 1:11-20 [↑](#footnote-ref-457)
635. Romans 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-458)
636. John 5:19,30f [↑](#footnote-ref-459)
637. Hebrews 5:4f [↑](#footnote-ref-460)
638. John 3:34; 6:38; 7:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-461)
639. Cf Hebrews 5:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-462)
640. Numbers 3:6, 12; 8:16, 19 [↑](#footnote-ref-463)
641. 1 Chronicles 25:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-464)
642. Cf 1 Chronicles 25:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-465)
643. **See Appendix**, Note 0.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-466)
644. Crouch, page 143 [↑](#endnote-ref-178)
645. Chapter 4, section 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-467)
646. Green, page 174-5, 183,187 [↑](#endnote-ref-179)
647. Tucker & Liefeld, page 256 [↑](#endnote-ref-180)
648. Styll, page 102 [↑](#endnote-ref-181)
649. Psalm 147:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-468)
650. Ephesians 5:19f [↑](#footnote-ref-469)
651. 1 Chronicles 16:4,7; see also 2 Chronicles 5:13; 20:21; 31:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-470)
652. 1 Chronicles 15:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-471)
653. 2 Chronicles 29:30 – see also 30:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-472)
654. 2 Chronicles 23:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-473)
655. Psalm 71:23 – see also Proverbs 29:6; Zechariah 2:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-474)
656. Mark 7:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-475)
657. Shea, page 145 [↑](#endnote-ref-182)
658. Ephesians 5:18f [↑](#footnote-ref-476)
659. Kittel and Friedrich, 8:498 [↑](#endnote-ref-183)
660. Wilson, page 113-4 [↑](#endnote-ref-184)
661. Quoted in Wilson, page 112 [↑](#endnote-ref-185)
662. Psalm 69:12; Isaiah 5:11f; 16:10; 24:8f [↑](#footnote-ref-477)
663. Job 35:10; Psalm 32:7; 40:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-478)
664. For example, Psalm 22; 110 [↑](#footnote-ref-479)
665. Deuteronomy 31:16-21, 29f; 32:1-43 [↑](#footnote-ref-480)
666. For example, Psalm 46:10; 50:7-23; 81:7-16; 91:14-16 [↑](#footnote-ref-481)
667. Exodus 15:1; Deuteronomy 18:18; 31:30 [↑](#footnote-ref-482)
668. Judges 4:4; 5:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-483)
669. 2 Samuel 22:1f; Acts 2:29f [↑](#footnote-ref-484)
670. Isaiah 5:1ff; 23:15f; 26:2ff [↑](#footnote-ref-485)
671. Habakkuk 1:1; 3:1-19 [↑](#footnote-ref-486)
672. Revelation 1:3; 5:9ff; 15:3ff [↑](#footnote-ref-487)
673. Exodus 15:20f [↑](#footnote-ref-488)
674. 1 Chronicles 25:1-7; 2 Chronicles 5:12; 35:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-489)
675. 1 Chronicles 25:5; 2 Chronicles 29:30; 35:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-490)
676. Psalm 50:16, note also verse 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-491)
677. 2 Chronicles 20:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-492)
678. Cf 1 Chronicles 25:1f; 2 Chronicles 5:12; 35:15; Ezra 2:41; 3:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-493)
679. 1 Kings 8:33,35,37,41f,46f; 9:2-9; 11:11-13 [↑](#footnote-ref-494)
680. Jonah 2:2-9; Zephaniah 3:14,17; Ezekiel 19:1-14; 32:2,16 [↑](#footnote-ref-495)
681. Luke 1:46-55, 68-79 In their headings the NIV, NKJ, NRSV and GNB actually call Mary’ s utterance a song and the NIV does this for Zechariah utterance as well. Luke specifically calls Zechariah’ s utterance a prophecy. [↑](#footnote-ref-496)
682. 2 Chronicles 35:25 – see especially NASB, GNB, NIV [↑](#footnote-ref-497)
683. 2 Kings 3:15ff [↑](#footnote-ref-498)
684. 1 Samuel 10:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-499)
685. Kavanaugh, page 32 [↑](#endnote-ref-186)
686. **See Appendix**, Note 8.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-500)
687. Luke 22:64 [↑](#footnote-ref-501)
688. Revelation 1:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-502)
689. Revelation 2:1 – 3:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-503)
690. 1 Corinthians 14:24f [↑](#footnote-ref-504)
691. John 4:17-19 [↑](#footnote-ref-505)
692. Numbers 11:29 [↑](#footnote-ref-506)
693. Acts 2:16-18 [↑](#footnote-ref-507)
694. E.g. Numbers 12:6; 1 Samuel 3:1. The prophetic books are filled with accounts of dreams (e.g. Daniel 2:45; 4:19; 7:1) and visions. [↑](#footnote-ref-508)
695. **See Appendix**, Note 8.5 for further Biblical information about the gift of prophecy, [↑](#footnote-ref-509)
696. Acts 11:28; 21:10f [↑](#footnote-ref-510)
697. Acts 16:19; 18:9-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-511)
698. 1 Corinthians 14:39, note also verse 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-512)
699. Cf Acts 11:28 [↑](#footnote-ref-513)
700. John 4:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-514)
701. Revelation 2:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-515)
702. The Greek word is a broad one. Grudem, page 175, specifically mentions that what Peter had in mind could possibly include singing. [↑](#endnote-ref-187)
703. John 5:30; 14:24; 16:13; 1 Peter 4:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-516)
704. Owens, page 163-166 [↑](#endnote-ref-188)
705. Psalm 37:4; Acts 2:16-18 [↑](#footnote-ref-517)
706. Tan, page 888-9 [↑](#endnote-ref-189)
707. Douglass, page 61 [↑](#endnote-ref-190)
708. Chapter 4, section 13 [↑](#footnote-ref-518)
709. Psalm 119:54 [↑](#footnote-ref-519)
710. Colossians 3:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-520)
711. Styll, page 9, 16, 17 [↑](#endnote-ref-191)
712. 2 Chronicles 35:3 (cf 2 Chronicles 17:8-9; 30:22; Nehemiah 8:7-8) [↑](#footnote-ref-521)
713. Rossi [↑](#endnote-ref-192)
714. Douglass, page 37, 80 [↑](#endnote-ref-193)
715. Shepherd, page 9-10 [↑](#endnote-ref-194)
716. Based on Exodus 34:29-30,35 in the Vulgate version. [↑](#footnote-ref-522)
717. Exodus 15:2; Psalm 118:14; Isaiah 12:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-523)
718. 2 Chronicles 29:27; Psalm 42:8; 137:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-524)
719. See chapter 4, section 18 [↑](#footnote-ref-525)
720. 2 Chronicles 23:18; Best & Huttar, 4:315 [↑](#footnote-ref-526)
721. Cf Revelation 5:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-527)
722. Manning, page 44-44, cited in Warren, page 63 [↑](#endnote-ref-195)
723. Owens, page 150 [↑](#endnote-ref-196)
724. Matthew 25:14-30 [↑](#footnote-ref-528)
725. Chapter 7 and in part of chapter 4, section 1 (including the note attached to it) [↑](#footnote-ref-529)
726. Psalm 68:25; Nehemiah 12:31ff [↑](#footnote-ref-530)
727. 2 Chronicles 20:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-531)
728. Chapter 4, Section 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-532)
729. 2 Chronicles 23:13; see also 2 Chronicles 8:14, NIV and note Nehemiah 9:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-533)
730. 2 Chronicles 34:12f, Anchor Bible [↑](#footnote-ref-534)
731. E.g. Psalm 22:22,25; 26:12; 35:18; 40:9f; 42:4; 57:9; 68:26; 96:3; 107:32: 108:3; 109:30; 111:1; 116:13f,18; 149:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-535)
732. 1 Corinthians 14:40 [↑](#footnote-ref-536)
733. E.g. 2 Chronicles 5:13f; Psalm 133; Jeremiah 32:39-41; John 17:21; Acts 2:1f; 4:24,31-33; Romans 15:5f; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 1:27; 2:2; 1 Peter 3:8f [↑](#footnote-ref-537)
734. Matthew 18:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-538)
735. Kittel and Friedrich, ix: 304-309 [↑](#endnote-ref-197)
736. Tan, page 880 [↑](#endnote-ref-198)
737. 1 Corinthians 14:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-539)
738. Green, page 200 [↑](#endnote-ref-199)
739. Proverbs 8:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-540)
740. 1 Kings 4:32 [↑](#footnote-ref-541)
741. **See Appendix**, Note 8.2 for more on this [↑](#footnote-ref-542)
742. E.g. Exodus 35:26,35; 1 Kings 7:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-543)
743. E.g. Psalm 121 [↑](#footnote-ref-544)
744. 2 Chronicles 20:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-545)
745. Romans 12:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-546)
746. Galatians 3:2-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-547)
747. Exodus 19:5f [↑](#footnote-ref-548)
748. Numbers 8:6-19 [↑](#footnote-ref-549)
749. Bible scholar, Braun (page 246), concludes from an analysis of 1 Chronicles chapters 15-16 that Levitical musicians were considered ‘pre-eminent among the Levites’ [↑](#endnote-ref-200)
750. E.g. Deuteronomy 14:27; 18:6; Judges 17:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-550)
751. E.g. Joshua 21 [↑](#footnote-ref-551)
752. E.g. 1 Chronicles 9:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-552)
753. 1 Chronicles 9:33; Ezekiel 40:44 (Hebrew text, **see Appendix,** Note 3.1) [↑](#footnote-ref-553)
754. E.g. Numbers 21:1-3; 2 Chronicles 29:34; 30:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-554)
755. 2 Chronicles 23:19; Psalm 24:3f; cf Exodus 18:10-13; Joshua 7:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-555)
756. Amos 5:23f [↑](#footnote-ref-556)
757. Amos 8:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-557)
758. 2 Chronicles 8:14; Leviticus 1:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-558)
759. Owens, page 68 [↑](#endnote-ref-201)
760. Isaiah 6:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-559)
761. Cf Numbers 14:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-560)
762. 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-561)
763. James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-562)
764. Augarde, page 167 [↑](#endnote-ref-202)
765. 2 Samuel 23:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-563)
766. E.g. 2 Samuel 16:6ff [↑](#footnote-ref-564)
767. E.g. Psalm 51:1-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-565)
768. E.g. 2 Samuel 12:15ff [↑](#footnote-ref-566)
769. Psalm 143:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-567)
770. Psalm 139:23f [↑](#footnote-ref-568)
771. 1 Samuel 13:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-569)
772. 1 Chronicles 23:3-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-570)
773. 1 Timothy 3:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-571)
774. Tucker & Liefeld, page 256, quoting Kenneth Osbeck [↑](#endnote-ref-203)
775. Telford, page 214 [↑](#endnote-ref-204)
776. Crouch, page 84 [↑](#endnote-ref-205)
777. I obviously do not mean innovative *doctrines!* [↑](#footnote-ref-572)
778. Winkie Pratney: *The Absolutes of Wonder,* Tape 2 [↑](#endnote-ref-206)
779. For example, 1 Samuel 18:6f; 2 Samuel 19:35; Ecclesiastes 2:8; and, possibly, Ecclesiastes 7:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-573)
780. For example, Exodus 15:20f; Judges 5:1; 2 Chronicles 35:25; Psalm 68:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-574)
781. **See Appendix**, Note 4.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-575)
782. Leviticus 6:18; Numbers 3:22,28,34. **Appendix**, Note 8.3 explains how music also opened doors for boys. [↑](#footnote-ref-576)
783. Ezra 2:65; Nehemiah 7:67 [↑](#footnote-ref-577)
784. Ezra 2:41; Nehemiah 7:44 [↑](#footnote-ref-578)
785. **See Appendix**, Note 8.4 [↑](#footnote-ref-579)
786. Exodus 15:1,20 [↑](#footnote-ref-580)
787. Judith 15:13-16:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-581)
788. Judges 5:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-582)
789. Judges 5:28ff [↑](#footnote-ref-583)
790. Hervey, page 82 [↑](#endnote-ref-207)
791. Matthew 27:51 [↑](#footnote-ref-584)
792. 1 Timothy 2:9-14. **See Appendix**, Note 8.5 [↑](#footnote-ref-585)
793. Tucker and Liefeld, page 257 [↑](#endnote-ref-208)
794. Telford, page 71 [↑](#endnote-ref-209)
795. Colossians 2:19 NASB, emphasis mine [↑](#footnote-ref-586)
796. See also Ephesians 4:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-587)
797. Galatians 5:22f [↑](#footnote-ref-588)
798. 2 Chronicles 5:13f [↑](#footnote-ref-589)
799. 1 Corinthians 3:3f [↑](#footnote-ref-590)
800. Galatians 5:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-591)
801. James 1:2, note also verse 12 and Romans 5:3ff [↑](#footnote-ref-592)
802. 1 John 4:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-593)
803. 1 Chronicles 25:6 – see also verse 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-594)
804. 2 Chronicles 20:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-595)
805. 2 Chronicles 29:30 [↑](#footnote-ref-596)
806. Wilcock, page 105 [↑](#endnote-ref-210)
807. Shea, page 125 [↑](#endnote-ref-211)
808. Acts 4:19f; 5:28f; Daniel 3:10-12; 6:7-10; Deuteronomy 18:18-20 [↑](#footnote-ref-597)
809. 1 Kings 13 [↑](#footnote-ref-598)
810. Luke 22:25f; 1 Peter 5:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-599)
811. Hebrews 13:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-600)
812. Ephesians 4:1-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-601)
813. Philippians 2:3-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-602)
814. 2 Chronicles 35:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-603)
815. 2 Chronicles 35:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-604)
816. Ephesians 4:11f [↑](#footnote-ref-605)
817. Avery, page 73 [↑](#endnote-ref-212)
818. E.g. Avery, page 72 [↑](#endnote-ref-213)
819. Avery, page 80 [↑](#endnote-ref-214)
820. Beattie, page 85 [↑](#endnote-ref-215)
821. Avery, page 75 [↑](#endnote-ref-216)
822. 2 Chronicles 35:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-606)
823. David, Asaph, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-607)
824. Cf Ezekiel 33:32 [↑](#footnote-ref-608)
825. Styll, page 98, 103 [↑](#endnote-ref-217)
826. Douglass, page 98 [↑](#endnote-ref-218)
827. 1 Luke 10:30ff [↑](#footnote-ref-609)
828. Romans 10:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-610)
829. Jeremiah 17:9; Proverbs 16:2, 25; 1 Corinthians 4:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-611)
830. Micah 7:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-612)
831. Psalm 139:23f [↑](#footnote-ref-613)
832. Matthew 7:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-614)
833. Romans 2:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-615)
834. 1 John 5:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-616)
835. James 3:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-617)
836. Matthew 15:3-8; 1 Timothy 5:8; 1 Peter 3:1-7 [↑](#footnote-ref-618)
837. Matthew 5:23f [↑](#footnote-ref-619)
838. Matthew 6:15; 18:21-35 [↑](#footnote-ref-620)
839. Isaiah 5:11ff; Amos 6:3-7 [↑](#footnote-ref-621)
840. Psalm 137:5f. The words added in brackets are suggested by earlier verses in the psalm. [↑](#footnote-ref-622)
841. **CHAPTER 9**

     Cornwall, page 16-17 [↑](#endnote-ref-219)
842. **CHAPTER 10**

     Winkie Pratney: *The Absolutes of Wonder,* Tape 2 [↑](#endnote-ref-220)
843. Ryden, page 89 [↑](#endnote-ref-221)
844. Augarde, page 210 [↑](#endnote-ref-222)
845. For example, 2 Kings 6:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-623)
846. Note chapter 8, section 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-624)
847. Acts 22:7,9; Revelation 5:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-625)
848. Exodus 31:3-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-626)
849. Numbers 22:28 [↑](#footnote-ref-627)
850. Psalm 18:34, note also Psalm 144:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-628)
851. For example, Acts 4:13; 1 Corinthians 1;26-29 [↑](#footnote-ref-629)
852. From an audio of a message by David Pawson [↑](#endnote-ref-223)
853. Buckingham, page 39-40 [↑](#endnote-ref-224)
854. Monty, page 102-4, 112-4 [↑](#endnote-ref-225)
855. Monty, chapter 11 [↑](#endnote-ref-226)
856. Monty, page 86, 95 [↑](#endnote-ref-227)
857. Monty, page 100, 139 [↑](#endnote-ref-228)
858. Bede, iv 24 – Sherley-Price, page 250-253 [↑](#endnote-ref-229)
859. c.673-735 AD [↑](#footnote-ref-630)
860. Brown and Butterworth, page 32 [↑](#endnote-ref-230)
861. Kavanaugh, page 17, 20 [↑](#endnote-ref-231)
862. Related to me in person by Glennis, a woman well known to me. [↑](#endnote-ref-232)
863. Stewart, page 15-16 [↑](#endnote-ref-233)
864. E.g. Revelation 5:9f [↑](#footnote-ref-631)
865. Isaiah 6:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-632)
866. Avery, page 249 [↑](#endnote-ref-234)
867. Shepherd, page 37-38 [↑](#endnote-ref-235)
868. Shepherd, page 32-33 [↑](#endnote-ref-236)
869. Ryden, page 427-428 [↑](#endnote-ref-237)
870. Shepherd, page 98 [↑](#endnote-ref-238)
871. Havergal, page 104-105 [↑](#endnote-ref-239)
872. Havergal, page 135-136, 239 [↑](#endnote-ref-240)
873. Havergal, page 174 [↑](#endnote-ref-241)
874. Tan, page 892 [↑](#endnote-ref-242)
875. From an audio tape of a message by David Pawson [↑](#endnote-ref-243)
876. Quoted with Brett’ s permission [↑](#endnote-ref-244)
877. Shea, page 36, 152 [↑](#endnote-ref-245)
878. Pollock, page 157 [↑](#endnote-ref-246)
879. 2 Peter 2:21; Luke 12:47f; John 15:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-633)
880. cf Matthew 15:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-634)
881. Ezekiel 20:1-3,31; 14:3,7f – see also Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 1:25-30; Jeremiah 14:10-12; Zechariah 7:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-635)
882. Owens, page 21 [↑](#endnote-ref-247)
883. **See Appendix**, Note 0.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-636)
884. Luke 15:18,21-24 [↑](#footnote-ref-637)
885. Cf 1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 6.1; [↑](#footnote-ref-638)
886. Owens, page 123 [↑](#endnote-ref-248)
887. 1 Chronicles 25:1-8, especially 7,8 [↑](#footnote-ref-639)
888. Described in chapter two [↑](#footnote-ref-640)
889. Ephesians 5:31f [↑](#footnote-ref-641)
890. Matthew 25:14-30 [↑](#footnote-ref-642)
891. Matthew 11:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-643)
892. Romans 15:18f [↑](#footnote-ref-644)
893. 1 Corinthians 4:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-645)
894. Psalm 51:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-646)
895. Havergal, page 217 [↑](#endnote-ref-249)
896. **CHAPTER 11**

     1 Volume 9:119 [↑](#endnote-ref-250)
897. 1 Chronicles 16:41; 2 Chronicles 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21; Ezra 3:11; Psalm 118:1-4; Jeremiah 33:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-647)
898. Psalm 107:1f – Psalm 118:1-4 is similar [↑](#footnote-ref-648)
899. Psalm 115:9-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-649)
900. Exodus 15:1-2, 21 [↑](#footnote-ref-650)
901. See chapter 8, section 15 [↑](#footnote-ref-651)
902. Judges 5:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-652)
903. Nehemiah 12:31,40; see also 12:24 [↑](#footnote-ref-653)
904. 1 Chronicles 16:34-36; Psalm 106:1, 47-48 [↑](#endnote-ref-251)
905. Brown, Colin 3:672; Eadie, page 409 [↑](#endnote-ref-252)
906. E.g. Keil’ s commentary on 1 Chronicles 15:19. The Mishna: Tamid 7:3 hints that the cymbal signaled the commencement of a song. [↑](#endnote-ref-253)
907. Idelsohn [↑](#endnote-ref-254)
908. Kilmer, Crocker, and Brown [↑](#endnote-ref-255)
909. Biblical Archaeology Review, Vol. 6 (5), 1980, page 14-25 [↑](#endnote-ref-256)
910. Speiser [↑](#endnote-ref-257)
911. E.g. 1 Kings 9:20f [↑](#footnote-ref-654)
912. Fortunato, page 24 [↑](#endnote-ref-258)
913. White, *Re-entry* [↑](#endnote-ref-259)
914. Psalm 7 title and Habakkuk 3:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-655)
915. John 2:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-656)
916. For example, consider Genesis 4:8, 21 [↑](#footnote-ref-657)
917. Chapter 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-658)
918. Cf 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 [↑](#footnote-ref-659)
919. Numbers 11:29; Acts 2:16-17 [↑](#footnote-ref-660)
920. Psalm 36:6 b; 104:14; 145:14-16; Isaiah 43:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-661)
921. Genesis 3:17; note also Isaiah 24:3-6 [↑](#footnote-ref-662)
922. Romans 8:18-23 [↑](#footnote-ref-663)
923. Matthew 10:29 [↑](#footnote-ref-664)
924. **Appendix**, Note 1.4 expounds this more fully. [↑](#footnote-ref-665)
925. Romans 8:19-23 [↑](#footnote-ref-666)
926. Scripture in Song Recordings [↑](#endnote-ref-260)
927. Borge and Sherman, page 15-16 [↑](#endnote-ref-261)
928. For example, Psalm 95:4-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-667)
929. Chapter two [↑](#footnote-ref-668)
930. Crouch, page 62-63, 102-102 [↑](#endnote-ref-262)
931. **See Appendix**, Note 0.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-669)
932. Cf Acts 17:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-670)
933. Psalm 84:7; Job 17:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-671)
934. 2 Corinthians 3:18; note also 2 Peter 3:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-672)
935. Daniel 11:32 [↑](#footnote-ref-673)
936. Proverbs 4:18 [↑](#footnote-ref-674)
937. Cf Philippians 2:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-675)
938. **APPENDIX**

     Harris, Archer and Waitke, page 851 [↑](#endnote-ref-263)
939. Exodus 32:17f [↑](#footnote-ref-676)
940. Smith, page 13 [↑](#endnote-ref-264)
941. Pollock, page 24-25. Samuel Logan Brengle’ s experience had remarkable similarities, not least of which was the feeling of being in love with all creation – Edman, page 11-12 [↑](#endnote-ref-265)
942. Smith, page 52,63 [↑](#endnote-ref-266)
943. Finney, page 29 [↑](#endnote-ref-267)
944. Lawson, page 195-6 [↑](#endnote-ref-268)
945. Lawson, page 168 [↑](#endnote-ref-269)
946. Baker, page 70, 110 [↑](#endnote-ref-270)
947. E.g., page 22, 127-128, 143 [↑](#endnote-ref-271)
948. Davis, page 36 [↑](#endnote-ref-272)
949. Liardon, page 12 [↑](#endnote-ref-273)
950. Whittaker, page 112; cf Proverbs 12:10 [↑](#endnote-ref-274)
951. E.g. Psalm 36:6 b; 104:10-30; 136:25; 145:15-16; 147:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-677)
952. E.g. 1 Chronicles 16:32-33; (Psalm 96:11-13; 98:7-9); Psalm 103:22; 145:9-11; 148:7-13; 150:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-678)
953. **See Appendix**, Note 1.6 [↑](#footnote-ref-679)
954. Revelation 5:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-680)
955. Deuteronomy 22:10; 25:4; 2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Corinthians 9:9-10 [↑](#footnote-ref-681)
956. Matthew 6:26-32 [↑](#footnote-ref-682)
957. Job 38:1-41:34 [↑](#footnote-ref-683)
958. Jonah 1:17; 4:6-7 [↑](#footnote-ref-684)
959. Jonah 3:7-8 [↑](#footnote-ref-685)
960. The last verse in Jonah [↑](#footnote-ref-686)
961. Genesis 8:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-687)
962. Genesis 9:9-16 [↑](#footnote-ref-688)
963. Exodus 23:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-689)
964. Numbers 22:32-34 [↑](#footnote-ref-690)
965. Deuteronomy 28:4,11,18,31,32,32-41. See also Genesis 6:13; Jeremiah 12:4,11; Hosea 4:2-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-691)
966. Isaiah 11:6-8; 65:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-692)
967. Colossians 1:20; Ephesians 1:10 [↑](#footnote-ref-693)
968. Romans 8:18-23 [↑](#footnote-ref-694)
969. Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-695)
970. 1 Corinthians 6:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-696)
971. Hebrews 2:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-697)
972. Matthew 16:16f [↑](#footnote-ref-698)
973. E.g. Luke 4:34, 41; 8:28 – note also Acts 16:16-19 [↑](#footnote-ref-699)
974. Revelation 4:8; Isaiah 6:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-700)
975. Ezekiel 1:5-8 [↑](#footnote-ref-701)
976. E.g. Joshua 6:5; 2 Chronicles 13:14f; Psalm 47:5; 98:6; Amos 2:2; Zephaniah 1:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-702)
977. Werner, 3:473 [↑](#endnote-ref-275)
978. Kittel and Friedrich, V11:80 [↑](#endnote-ref-276)
979. Mishna: Rosh ha-Shanah 4:8; see also Pesahim 5:5; Sukkah 5:4; Tamid 7:3 [↑](#endnote-ref-277)
980. Like most Hebrew words, there are many alternative English spellings of this word [↑](#endnote-ref-278)
981. Kittel and Friedrich, V11:75 [↑](#endnote-ref-279)
982. Cf 2 Chronicles 5:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-703)
983. , page 474 [↑](#endnote-ref-280)
984. Kittel and Friedrich, V11:75 [↑](#endnote-ref-281)
985. Eg see Mishna: Tamid 7:3 [↑](#endnote-ref-282)
986. Psalm 47:1 b [↑](#footnote-ref-704)
987. Douglass, page 7 [↑](#endnote-ref-283)
988. For instance, contrary to common perception, the distinction is extremely blurred between to two main words for love in the Greek New Testament. [↑](#endnote-ref-284)
989. E.g. 1 Chronicles 15:24 cf verses 16:22; 1 Chronicles 16:4-6; 2 Chronicles 5:12; Ezra 3:10; Nehemiah 12:35, 41 [↑](#footnote-ref-705)
990. Genesis 31:27; Foxvog & Kilmer, p438 [↑](#footnote-ref-706)
991. Foxvog & Kilmer, page 438 [↑](#endnote-ref-285)
992. Douglass, page 8; see Mishna: Tamid 7:3 [↑](#endnote-ref-286)
993. Exodus 27:1f; 30:1 ,f [↑](#footnote-ref-707)
994. 2 Samuel 22:3; Psalm 18:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-708)
995. Mishna: Arakhin 2:3 – a reed-pipe was preferred to a pipe of bronze because its sound was sweeter [↑](#footnote-ref-709)
996. Mishna: Rosh Ha-Shanah 3:2 [↑](#endnote-ref-287)
997. The Talmud: R. H. 26a, referred to in Werner, page 437 [↑](#endnote-ref-288)
998. Mishna: Kinnim 3:6 [↑](#endnote-ref-289)
999. Ginzberg, page 101 [↑](#endnote-ref-290)
1000. Werner, page 437 [↑](#endnote-ref-291)
1001. Exodus 15:1-18,21; Numbers 21:17-18; Deuteronomy 31:22-32:44; Judges 5:1-31; 1 Samuel 18:7; 2 Samuel 3:33-34; 22:2-51; 1 Chronicles 16:7-36; Song of Solomon; Isaiah 5:1ff; 23:16; 26:1ff; Habakkuk 3:2-19; Revelation 5:9-10,13; 15:3-4 [↑](#footnote-ref-710)
1002. E.g. 1 Samuel 2:1-10; the entire book of Lamentations; Isaiah 6:3; 23:15-16; Ezekiel 19:1-14; 22:2ff; 32:2,16; Jonah 2:2-9; Daniel 2:20-23; 4:34 b-35; Amos 5:1-2; Luke 1:46-55, 68-79; 2:14,29-32 [↑](#footnote-ref-711)
1003. See for yourself: 2 Samuel 1:17-27; 1 Chronicles 29:10-13; Isaiah 12:1-6; 38:9-20; Jonah 2:2-9; and verses around Isaiah 42:10; 44:23; 49:13; Jeremiah 20:13; Zephaniah 3:14,17. [↑](#footnote-ref-712)
1004. Brown, 3:674; Kittel and Friedrich, V111:501; The Interpreter’ s Dictionary of the Bible 2:668; Kirby, 1:850; Martin, 2:789; Douglas, page 549 [↑](#endnote-ref-292)
1005. Foxvog & Kilmer, page 438 [↑](#endnote-ref-293)
1006. AMP, RSV and GNB, but not KJV, NKJV, NEB, LB or NASB [↑](#footnote-ref-713)
1007. Best, 4:316 [↑](#endnote-ref-294)
1008. Luke 4:16-20 [↑](#footnote-ref-714)
1009. The Talmud: Megillah 32a [↑](#endnote-ref-295)
1010. Exodus 19:6; 20:18; Psalms 47:5; Isaiah 27:13; Matthew 24:31 [↑](#footnote-ref-715)
1011. Rawlings, page 77-78 [↑](#endnote-ref-296)
1012. Rawlings, 1980, page 18 [↑](#endnote-ref-297)
1013. Rawlings, 1980, page 21 [↑](#endnote-ref-298)
1014. Rawlings, 1980, page 19-21; Rawlings, 1978, page 21 [↑](#endnote-ref-299)
1015. Rawlings, 1978, page 24 [↑](#endnote-ref-300)
1016. Rawlings, 1980, page 70 [↑](#endnote-ref-301)
1017. Rawlings, 1978, page xi [↑](#endnote-ref-302)
1018. Rawlings, 1978, page 107 [↑](#endnote-ref-303)
1019. Rawlings, 1980, page 128 [↑](#endnote-ref-304)
1020. Moody, page 29 [↑](#endnote-ref-305)
1021. Rawlings, 1980, page 93 [↑](#endnote-ref-306)
1022. Revelation 20:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-716)
1023. Revelation 20:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-717)
1024. Numbers 11.5-6 [↑](#footnote-ref-718)
1025. Matthew 4:5-6 [↑](#footnote-ref-719)
1026. Matthew 12:24 [↑](#footnote-ref-720)
1027. Revelation 16:10-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-721)
1028. 2 Corinthians 12:1-4 [↑](#footnote-ref-722)
1029. Acts 14:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-723)
1030. 2 Corinthians 12:2f [↑](#footnote-ref-724)
1031. Contrast Acts 14:19 with Acts 20:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-725)
1032. Schlink, page 72 [↑](#endnote-ref-307)
1033. Lindsay, page 96-100 [↑](#endnote-ref-308)
1034. Eg, Hagin, page 124 Rawlings, 1978, page 97-99; Moody, page 28; Osis, page 167-168 [↑](#endnote-ref-309)
1035. Osis, page 167 [↑](#endnote-ref-310)
1036. Moody, page 30 [↑](#endnote-ref-311)
1037. Osis, page 168 [↑](#endnote-ref-312)
1038. Myers, page 65, 171, 215, 232 [↑](#endnote-ref-313)
1039. Myers, page 206 [↑](#endnote-ref-314)
1040. Myers, page 33 [↑](#endnote-ref-315)
1041. Ezekiel 40:44, KJV, supported by RV, NKJV, NASB, RSV marg only, NRSV, NIV, marg only, but not AMP, LB, Moffatt, NEB, [↑](#footnote-ref-726)
1042. Morris (2), page 182 [↑](#endnote-ref-316)
1043. Septuagint, Targum, Syriac, Arabic, Vulgate [↑](#footnote-ref-727)
1044. 2 Chronicles 7:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-728)
1045. 2 Chronicles 7:6; 30:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-729)
1046. Ie not used in the RSV, NASB, LB, GNB, NEB, NKJV or KJV, [↑](#footnote-ref-730)
1047. 2 Chronicles 29:26f; Nehemiah 12:36; cf 1 Chronicles 23:5; 2 Chronicles 7:6; Amos 6:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-731)
1048. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-732)
1049. Babylonian Talmud: ‘Arakhin 11a [↑](#endnote-ref-317)
1050. Numbers 10:9; Josh. 6:4-6; Judges 7:22 [↑](#footnote-ref-733)
1051. 2 Chronicles 20:21ff – note verse 28 – Isaiah 30:29, 32; 1 Samuel 16:16f, 23; 2 Maccabees 12:37 [↑](#footnote-ref-734)
1052. E.g. Job 39:24f; Jeremiah 4:19-21; 6:1, 17; 42:14; 51:27; Amos 3:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-735)
1053. For example, NIV, RSV, NRSV, NEB and the Anchor Bible, but not the NASB [↑](#footnote-ref-736)
1054. Jonah 3:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-737)
1055. Cf the NEB and GNB versions [↑](#footnote-ref-738)
1056. Especially the NEB [↑](#footnote-ref-739)
1057. Feinberg, page 280 [↑](#endnote-ref-318)
1058. Ezekiel 28:2,12 [↑](#footnote-ref-740)
1059. 1 Samuel 9:16; 10:1; 15:17; 2 Samuel 7:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-741)
1060. Ezekiel 28:16,18 [↑](#footnote-ref-742)
1061. Eg Gardiner, Keil [↑](#endnote-ref-319)
1062. E.g. NASB, RSV, NRSV, NEB, NIV, GNB, AMP, Moffatt, but not Jerusalem Bible [↑](#footnote-ref-743)
1063. Adam Clarke’ s Bible Commentary on 2 Chronicles 34:12 [↑](#endnote-ref-320)
1064. 2 Chronicles 34:12f [↑](#footnote-ref-744)
1065. Isaiah 16:10 is perhaps the best reference, but see Note 1.2. Also listed are Numbers 21:17; Judges 9:27; Jeremiah 31:4-5, 7; 48:33 – Werner, p 458 [↑](#footnote-ref-745)
1066. As clearly stated in the NEB Apocrypha – 1 Esdras 5:58-62, but not so clearly in the RSV Apocrypha. [↑](#footnote-ref-746)
1067. Ezra 3:10ff [↑](#footnote-ref-747)
1068. And even this minor exception seems far from certain. [↑](#footnote-ref-748)
1069. 1 Samuel 11:10-15 [↑](#footnote-ref-749)
1070. 1 Samuel 27:1ff [↑](#footnote-ref-750)
1071. 2 Samuel 15:18; 18:2 and, perhaps, 6:10-12 [↑](#footnote-ref-751)
1072. Psalm 16:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-752)
1073. Acts 2:25-31; 13:34 [↑](#footnote-ref-753)
1074. Quoting Psalm 45:6f [↑](#footnote-ref-754)
1075. Hebrews 10:5-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-755)
1076. Psalm 40:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-756)
1077. Luke 1:67f Note also Luke 2:26-28; 10:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-757)
1078. Romans 8:26 [↑](#footnote-ref-758)
1079. 1 Corinthians 14:16-17 [↑](#footnote-ref-759)
1080. Acts 2:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-760)
1081. E.g. Numbers 11:25,26,29; 1 Samuel 10:6,10; 19:20,23; Zechariah 7:12; Luke 1:67f Acts 2:17-18; 19:6; 1 Corinthians 12:7ff [↑](#footnote-ref-761)
1082. Ephesians 5:18-19 [↑](#footnote-ref-762)
1083. 1 Corinthians 14:26 [↑](#footnote-ref-763)
1084. 1 Kings 4:31 [↑](#footnote-ref-764)
1085. Proverbs 31:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-765)
1086. Proverbs 31:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-766)
1087. 2 Samuel 2:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-767)
1088. Zechariah 4:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-768)
1089. E.g. 2 Kings 2:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-769)
1090. Note also ‘sons of the singers’ (Nehemiah 12:28) which probably combines both meanings of the ‘son’. [↑](#footnote-ref-770)
1091. E.g. Psalm 30:11: Jeremiah 31:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-771)
1092. See chapter 4, section 16 [↑](#footnote-ref-772)
1093. Kidner, page 35 [↑](#endnote-ref-321)
1094. 1 Chronicles 15: 17,19 cf 25:1 (Many Bible characters had more than one name.) [↑](#footnote-ref-773)
1095. Talmud:’Arakhin 2:6 [↑](#endnote-ref-322)
1096. Edersheim, page 80 [↑](#endnote-ref-323)
1097. 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-774)
1098. Titus 2:3f [↑](#footnote-ref-775)
1099. 1 Timothy 2:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-776)
1100. 1 Corinthians 11:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-777)
1101. 1 Corinthians 14:29; 1 Thessalonians 5:20f [↑](#footnote-ref-778)
1102. 1 Timothy 2:11,12,14 [↑](#footnote-ref-779)
1103. Exodus 15:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-780)
1104. Judges 4:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-781)
1105. 2 Kings 22:11-15 [↑](#footnote-ref-782)
1106. Luke 2:36 [↑](#footnote-ref-783)
1107. Isaiah 8:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-784)
1108. Acts 21:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-785)
1109. Section 15 [↑](#footnote-ref-786)
1110. 2 Timothy 3:1-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-787)