

## CHRIST-HONORING MUSIC FOR WORSHIP – LESSON 1

### I. What is music and where did music originate?

Definitions of music:

(Oxford American Dictionary) “the art or science of combining vocal or instrumental (or both) sounds to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion.”

(Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words) : symphony (Greek)=a sounding together.

“In the beginning God created...” Gen. 1.1

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible (horatos) and invisible (aoratos), whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him.” Col. 1.16. God is the Imperial One, the Creator, He is the reason for all, He has the right to rule. Music is part of all things.

“Before God created man, he created the heavens and the earth. The world was brought into being and set in motion at the will of God and according to his laws. A part of these laws was the eternal concept of seven days ending with a Sabbath and a new beginning on the eighth day. God, without doubt, created music in the beginning to conform to these laws. The eighth note of the musical scale is essentially the same as Sunday of the next week. Sunday is the eighth day or the day of the rebeginning of the same sequence, just like the eighth note of the musical scale starts the sequence all over again. The concept of seven degrees in a musical scale cannot be improved. The number seven is always the number of perfection in the Scripture, and eight is the number of regeneration and rebeginning. (Garen L. Wolf, CHURCH MUSIC MATTERS, p. 16.)

Our case: **music is moral.** (The opposing view will come later.)

Why? All things created by God are moral and therefore, personal, meaning they are important to Him. He obviously thought about music before He created it. Let us examine this in light of Scripture and in the light of His creation. Music must be important to God, because He instructs us to use it to praise Him. And there are over 500 references to it in the Bible.

Paul asks for us to be clear in the language we use, and he compares this to the clarity of music. I Cor. 14.6-8: ...”and even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?” Sounds=voice.

The Hebrew word, *zimrath* (song) is derived from *zamar*, which means plucking strings with the fingers. *Zimrath* is used in three verses in the Old Testament, Ex. 15.2a, Ps. 118.14, and Is. 12.2: once each in a book of the law, of poetry, and of prophecy. Each verse says essentially the same thing, that the Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation. Rejoicing in our salvation is directly connected to singing. In fact, the only ground of our rejoicing is salvation through Christ.

Job 38:4 : (Job) “where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding.” Verses 6-7: “where upon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

Adam was commanded to have dominion over all around him, which had to include music. We know that there was music before the Flood because in the first reference to music in the Old Testament, in Gen. 4.21, “and his brother’s name was Jubal: he was the father of such as handle the harp and organ.” By the time of Jacob, we have a record of songs, the frame drum (*toph*, translated tabret in the KJV) and lyre (*kinore*, or harp).

God sings. Zeph. 3.17: “The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with **singing**.”

Music is a part of the nature of God. He not only sings, but He plays the trumpet. Zech. 9.14: ...”and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet” (shophar, or ram’s horn).

**Jesus sang** the Passover with his disciples in the Upper Room. Will He blow the last trump? He also sings, referenced in Rom. 15.9 (Ps. 18.49), and Heb. 2.11-12 (Ps. 22.22).

The heavens and earth were created before man, as we have just seen from Job 38. We know from science that the universe produces sounds Any musical sound sets up with its vibrations, a harmonic series of tones which we can’t hear. Some of these overtones are not musical, but most of which are called the harmonic series. Early composers didn’t know what today’s science knows, but they followed the musical laws they knew to produce music. Early astronomers and mathematicians learned to explain the harmonic series by ratios and implied that creation was structured according to harmonics. Johannes Kepler calculated that the planetary orbits, when expressed in mathematical ratios, are closely related to musical intervals. (Kimberly Smith)

In his book, *THE WORLD IS SOUND*, Joachin-Ernst Berendt (an evolutionist) deals with the idea that science and musical harmonics are related. "A synthesized sound recording was made based on how the positions of the visible planets would sound if placed on a keyboard. The sound spectrum of the six, including Earth, covers eight octaves, almost identical with the human hearing range." Mercury "chirps" Mars "slides up and down" several notes, " Jupiter "has a majestic tone reminiscent of a church organ." NASA has found that sounds around Earth resemble dolphin clicks. (Berendt)

(Note from Kimberly Smith's book, *MUSIC AND MORALS*):

"It is thought that Moses and other Old Testament writers also knew about harmonics because they used these same principles in their music, writing in both major and minor keys. Suzanne Haik-Vantoura, *THE MUSIC OF THE BIBLE REVEALED* (Berkeley, CA: BIBAL Press, 1991) 128-130, 506-509. Musical symbols called cantillation signs, occur within the entire Hebrew Bible. Many of these have been deciphered and some of the music has been recorded. Because of the music's continuity in style, Haik-Vantoura believed that just as the text was inspired by God, so was the music which was written to accompany the text."

## **II. Music in the Free Presbyterian NA Denomination**

### **OUR MUSIC**

You will find in all of our churches a great love for singing to the Lord. Not only because God has called upon His people to "enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise" (Psa. 100:4), but because He has put a "new song" in our mouths to magnify His greatness and His goodness (Psa. 40:3). We believe the Bible clearly directs us to use music that will reflect the majesty and glory of our God and of the gospel message.

The music we use in our worship (whether vocal or instrumental) clearly reveals that we are "new creatures in Christ," that old things have passed away and all things have become new. The devil has his own music, which the world – wittingly or unwittingly – employs to honor him. But we believe that this kind of music has no place in the life of the Church, which is not to be "conformed to this world," but "transformed" into the image of Christ (Rom. 12:2). We reject the modern-day notion that says in order to reach the world with the gospel, we need to use the world's music. We therefore refuse to use Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) and any style of music that, in our estimation, not only denigrates Christ and His gospel, but also reflects the spirit of the world, a spirit that is given over to entertainment instead of to the worship of God and the edification of the saints.

As a consequence, we make good use of the oldest hymnbook of the Church – the Psalms – as well as the great old hymns of the faith, which are so rich in doctrine and Christ-honoring music. The Lord has “put a difference” between His people and the world (Ex. 11:7), a difference we want to be seen in our praise and worship of the Triune God.

(From the booklet of the North American Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church, SEPARATED UNTO THE GOSPEL).