



COVENANT

Bible-Presbyterian Church

Preaching Christ for His Glory and His Kingdom

Order of Worship — 7 October 2018

Theme for the Year: "King Jesus Must Reign" (1 Corinthians 15:25)

Prelude	<i>The Lord Is in His Holy Temple</i>
Call to Worship	
*Opening Hymn	13 - <i>Rejoice, the Lord Is King!</i>
*Invocation & † <i>Gloria Patri</i>	
Scripture Reading	Revelation 22:1-13
The Lord's Supper	
Hymn	228 - <i>Communion Hymn</i>
Hymn	414 - <i>Revive Us Again</i>
Tithes & Offering	
*†† <i>Doxology</i> & Offertory Prayer	
Scripture Reading	Ecclesiastes 9:11-18
Hymn	TP 1:1-6
Confession of Faith & Pastoral Prayer	
Sermon	"Ability and Wisdom Are Not Always Rewarded"
*Closing Hymn	644 - <i>We Want You Over There</i>
*Benediction & <i>Threefold Amen</i>	
Silent Prayer & Postlude	
Announcements	<i>*Congregation standing</i>

†Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:
And to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning,
Is now and ever shall be:
World without end. Amen.

††Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

Covenant Bible-Presbyterian Church meets every Sunday at 10:00 am
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The Worship of God and "Contemporary" Trends

Life Worship and Direct Worship

There is a worship that involves the whole person, every minute of the day for his entire life - whatever he does, he is to glorify God. This can be termed as life worship.

This is seen in many passages of the Bible - chiefly, 1 Corinthians 10:31 - "*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*"

A person may do anything that is not sinful to the glory of God. He may eat, drink, watch TV, work, play sports, go to war, and listen to popular music to the glory of God.

But God also commands a worship that is specific - using words and songs to glorify him. This can be called direct worship. This is the worship given to God by his people in their public gathering.

This kind of worship is governed by a principle called the Regulative Principle of Worship; that the Christian must worship God in Spirit and in Truth - and whatever is not commanded in worship is forbidden.

God is to be worshiped with praises that please him and not with idols. Everything is to be authorized by the Scriptures.

A good example of this was the Puritans. They were well-known for their strictness in direct worship but lavish in their life. Their practice reflected their theology.

They removed the paintings and the statues from churches, banned musical instruments, and only used the Psalms to worship.

But the very same Puritans would place these works of art and musical instruments in their homes to enjoy.

They believed that God created all life to be enjoyed to his glory. While they were

austere and solemn in their worship - and they wore their formal black to worship - in life, they were trendy.

In fact, they were criticized for wearing fashionable clothing.

John Owen was well-known for his purple brocade outfits and tall powdered wigs. Our theology should affect our practice. They were very Biblical but contemporary.

Praise in Direct Worship

Why the Puritans removed musical instruments and sang only Psalms is not the purpose of our study. But they did so because of their convictions.

They believed that God was to be worshiped not according to their preferences, but according to Scripture. There are Scriptural principles guiding us to worship God. We are to worship in Spirit and in Truth.

But because it is in truth, direct worship is verbal - the saints in heaven and the angels spoke and sang their worship. Hence, instrumental "worship" without words is not worship.

We worship God through singing - but the songs used must be scriptural to glorify God and edify believers. The music used must also be fitting to worship God.

Music used in the world for entertainment - and even listened to or played to the glory of God - may not be fitting for worship.

In the Old Testament worship, the music that was used in life worship - like timbrels were not used in the temple - which had its own authorized instruments.

Direct worship is also congregational. The idea of having someone worship for you is unbiblical. While the Old Testament formal worship of God had Levitical choirs, there is no longer a need for choirs today to worship on

behalf of the people because all Christians are priests of God.

If there are choirs, they serve a very different purpose today - to teach and exhort people the Word of God. They most certainly do not give an offering of praise to God.

Because direct worship is so important to God, what we sing and how we sing in worship are important. The words matter, the music matters, and our participation matters.

The Words Matter

Colossians 3:16 speaks about worshiping God with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The church must sing the psalms.

But the church should not only sing the Psalms. It must sing hymns that speak explicitly of Christ, which is what the church in heaven sings now (Revelation 5:9). Therefore, whatever songs then, of any age, which are faithful in doctrine, may be employed.

Since the Psalter is God's inspired hymnbook, all human composed hymn must meet certain standards.

Firstly, it ought to be Psalm-like - since we worship an intelligent God, who loves to hear his words sung to him, the words of our worship must be biblical and cerebral. Hymns should be doctrinally clear and not ambiguous.

Secondly, they must be edifying. While praise is meant for God, it serves a second purpose of instruction (Col 3:16). The praises of God's people are means by which God conforms us to his will.

Thirdly, the hymns must be a balance of objectivity and subjectivity. Objective hymns focus on the truths of the Bible. Subjective hymns deal with how the worshiper feels.

It is not only important to have doctrinally correct hymns, but hymns

that deal with the whole breadth of human emotions.

While churches are burdened to teach their people how to think biblically, few teach them how to feel biblically.

Unfortunately, much of the human emotions found in the hymns have been sanitized, and much that passes for subjectivity is sentimentality. The Psalms embrace the very emotions most hymns try to avoid.

It is without a doubt that many contemporary songs fail the test in their content, their theology, and their biblical objectivity and subjectivity. But so do many old hymns.

A test of how biblical a song is, is not its age. Granted, there are many contemporary Christian praises which are terrible - but there are many which are far superior than some old hymns.

Martin Luther wrote his hymns because the Old Catholic ones were in Latin - unbiblical and not understood by the people - so he wrote words and tunes that could be sung understandably.

The Music Matters

While we are told much about the words of worship, being the Psalms and scriptural hymns, we are not told much about what genre of music should be used.

Admittedly there is no such thing as a sacred genre of music. If there were, God would have told us.

Psalmists, hymnodists, and their musicians down the ages have always composed their songs to the genre of their times.

While there has always been the intention to make their songs different than the music sung in the world, it was always of the same contemporary genre.

We see this even in our own hymnals - hymns from the 18th century sound different from hymns of the 19th

century. There was more syncopation and folksy rhythm in the revival hymns.

So new or contemporary is not bad. But even though the music may have been from the genres of the time, they were not exactly the same as the music of the world. They were modified.

Martin Luther did use contemporary musical material for some of his hymns, but he would alter the rhythm, smoothing it out, making it more stately or noble.

Similarly, the tunes that were used for Calvin's Psalter, written by Louis Bourgeois, were so contemporary that Queen Elizabeth I derisively called them the Genevan "jigs."

But even though they were written in the contemporary genre, Calvin said, *"Touching the melody, it has seemed best that it be moderated in the manner we have adopted to carry the weight and majesty appropriate to the subject, and even to be proper for singing in the Church."*

So, the music used was contemporary, but modified. Why?

Calvin said, *"And in truth we know by experience that singing has great force and vigor to move and inflame the hearts of men to invoke and praise God with a more vehement and ardent zeal. Care must always be taken that the song be neither light nor frivolous; but that it have weight and majesty (as Augustine says) and also, there is a great difference between music which one makes to entertain men at table and in their houses, and the Psalms which are sung in the Church in the presence of God and his angels."*

And this is what most hymn writers have done down the ages. They have used the contemporary genre, but modified it for the use of the church.

This was because they believed that church music should be sacred. In life, you can listen to popular music to the

glory of God; but church music should be different from the world.

While a Christian may enjoy popular music, it probably isn't the best music to be used in church.

And while a Christian may love opera, it also isn't the best music to be used in church.

The purpose of church music is not to be beautiful - it is meant to support the words.

Old hymns and new hymns must always be evaluated by their theology, their message, their objectivity and subjectivity, and that the music employed - while contemporary in genre - should be distinct from that of the world.

To the traditionalists - many old hymns fail the test and many new hymns pass with flying colors. To the reactionaries - many new hymns fail the test and many old hymns make the mark.

Therefore, a good way to regulate what the church sings is to get a good hymnal, preferably from a Reformed heritage - which has been edited by theologians for content.

Therein, you find trusted and biblical hymns from ages past, and the incorporation of new theologically sound hymns, that have stood the test.

Our Participation Matters

Worship takes work and participation. No one understands the words of "Come Thou Fount" - like "here I raise mine Ebenezer" without understanding the Bible. That takes work.

And no one can worship without putting in the heart. Spirit and Truth!

Much of contemporary worship is meant to work up the heart alone and not the mind. While this is a sweeping statement, much evidence can be seen in the sentimental music and worship sessions in many Christian churches today.

But it is not only contemporary. This is something very old.

Speaking about the grand music of the cathedrals, Theodore Beza, said, *"As far as the instruments are concerned, we do not condemn music...But we see, as has happened under the papacy, that the organ does not communicate, and all that is heard is how lovely the voices together, without any understanding, through which not the heart and spirit but only the ears are entertained...But what is played on the organ or sung with many voices the common people do not understand; rather, the spirit is centered only in the attractiveness of the song, which alone strikes the ear and entertains the same."*

And this is often the problem with contemporary music trends - which, actually, are not very contemporary after all, but medieval.

But traditionalists forget that it happens also in traditional churches. While contemporary songs are eschewed, and hymns promoted; the songs the choirs sing can be so fantastical in their arrangement, that they may as well be sung in Latin!

But church music should be simple because worship is simple.

Terry Johnson has written, *"Everything about our worship is to be simple. Nothing is to be clever. Nothing is to draw attention to the learning, the wisdom, the sophistication, the beauty, [or] the complexity of the medium."*

Therefore, simple music, intelligent and biblical words, and heartfelt singing by all the people in the congregation done with preparation and understanding is pleasing to God.

Conclusion

In life, we can do all things to the glory of God. In church, we cannot. We can only do what God allows in worship - and that alone glories God.

And this has nothing to do with traditional or contemporary. Whether or not a hymn is old or contemporary is not the litmus test. Whether the musical genre employed is old or new is not the point.

Contemporary trends are not all that contemporary - and they can be good or bad. Blind traditionalism can also be bad for the church.

There are many questions that will remain unanswered or unsatisfactorily answered. One issue is that of association.

Many contemporary songs - while biblical - may be written by unseparated Christians or charismatic Christians. Fundamentalists get all heated up when it comes to this.

But at the same time, many hymns with Scriptural words have been written by people of questionable background.

"Faith of Our Fathers" is sung often enough during Reformation Day, but it was written by an Anglican Priest who supported the Oxford Movement. To him, the "faith of our fathers" was the faith of his Catholic fathers!

Many hymn tunes were also composed by profane persons - like Mozart.

If we were to weed out every hymn with questionable association - then we would only sing the Psalms - because every hymn composer was a sinful human being.

Consistency may be comfortable and easy - but the New Testament church is called to be mature and discerning.

So, enjoy music to the glory of God - whatever it is you like - provided it is not sinful - enjoy. Praise God with the psalms and hymns. Whether hymns are old or contemporary, be sure they are biblical.

And while there is nothing wrong with the introduction of contemporary biblical

hymns to the church, it should be done wisely and discretely.

But we remember one thing - on this side of eternity, there will be no perfection - even in our praises - because they come from sinful hearts.

But God is pleased to accept what we bring to him, because of Christ.

~ Pastor, also published in Life Bible-Presbyterian Church Weekly Bulletin of 7 October 2018.

Our Visit to the Olive Plantation

The drive to the olive farm started off with a shower of rain and by the time we were out of the city, the sun shone.

There were small pockets of wild flowers along the way. I thought they became a happy talking point on the bus.

There were also a large number of Canola oil farms.

The lush green fields and trees were a sight to see. In all that we saw in nature, God's hand was visible.

When we arrived, we were welcomed by John Esslemont, a Scottish gentleman who owned the Esslemont Estate olive plantation.

He ushered us to the main house for morning tea and it was just lovely. John's wife, Margaret, made cake, cupcakes, scones, and brownies - all made without butter but with olive oil.

Then we saw how the olive oil was processed.

From the beginning of time to the present moment we have had olives. Do we all know what goes into processing olive and table olives?

For olive oil, harvesting starts in November to mid-March. Each tree is vibrated for 15 seconds to shake off the fruit. There were 2,000 trees in the plantation we visited. It would take 3 days to complete the harvesting of olive berries.

The olive berries are washed a few times over a few months in a processor. Then the seeds are automatically removed and turned into paste.

This paste "waste" is then used as mulch in the olive groves. From harvesting to bottling oil, the process can take up to 1 1/2 years.

After the explanation, we were able to purchase the oil and olives - we did well!

From there we went into Today town for lunch. We all split up and went to different restaurants for lunch.

No surprise, it was a very quiet bus ride home.

We thank Leo for a safe trip, and we thank Jimmy and Yen Fye for arranging this trip. We all look forward to the next one.

~ Josephine Austin



Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 45. Which is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Q. 46. What is required in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

Ability and Wisdom Are Not Always Rewarded
Ecclesiastes 9:11-18

People don't always get the reward or the results that they think they should. Recently a homeless man was promised monetary rewards for spending his last \$20 on a stranded woman. Yet the money did not come to him - she spent it on lavish expenses on herself. Other examples abound of people who should have received rewards, but never did.

1. Our Abilities Don't Guarantee Results
 - a. Abilities don't always pay off
 - b. Time and chance are to blame
 - c. The command to enjoy can't always be carried out
2. Our Wisdom Doesn't Guarantee Rewards
 - a. Wisdom does pay off
 - b. But wisdom isn't always respected
 - c. Wisdom doesn't stand a chance against sinners

Christ was the wisdom of God - he came with the gospel, but the wisdom of man rejected Christ and crucified him. God's wisdom was rejected as foolishness. But those who are rich toward God will be rewarded one day - not now - but one day. Unless we have this understanding, our lives will be miserable. But we must understand that all we have in this life is far better than we deserve. Because God in his wisdom sent the wise, strong, and powerful king to earth, to be a servant, that he might be killed by sinners, to save us.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How much does injustice and unfairness eat you up? Do you think it is because you forget what rewards you truly have when Christ comes? Or do you feel you ought to have your rewards now?
2. Are you rich toward God?

Worship Service Roster

<i>Service</i>	<i>This Week (7.10.18)</i>	<i>Next Week (14.10.18)</i>
Speaker	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Worship Leader	Mark Chen	Johnson Lim
Pianist	Ian Tay	Nancy Lim
Welcomers	Ian & Merrill Read	Danny & Susie Tan
Offering Stewards	Chris Budiman*, David Lim* Rex Sriharan, Ken Hong	John Tan*, Yen Fye Yap* Jansen Ng, Ken Chong
Ushers	Joyce Ng, Sharon Sriharan	Faith Chiu, Jerome Ng
Kitchen Duties	August Ng*, Peggy Woo Helen Wong, May Poon	Jenni Budiman*, Grace Wang Julian Poon
PA Duty	Raymond Woo	Ian Tay
<i>Prayer Meeting</i>	<i>12 October 2018</i>	<i>19 October 2018</i>
Facilitator	Mark Chen	Mark Chen
Pianist	Nancy Lim	Jerome Ng

Announcements

1. A warm welcome to all worshipers. May God richly bless you. Please stay behind after the service for fellowship and tea.
2. We are celebrating the Lord's Supper today. First time visitors wishing to partake the Lord's Supper should see an elder before the service.
3. Next week's message: "The Power of Folly" (Ecclesiastes 10:1-20).
4. Next week's Junior Worship message: "An Amazing Testimony" (Acts 9:10-31). Speaker: Grace Wang.
5. Church Family BBQ. Sunday, 11 November 2018, 12pm at Bicton Quarantine Park. Cost: \$5/adult and \$3/child under 12. Please register with and pay Jacob or Marilyn by Sunday, 4 November.
6. Books for sale from Pro Ecclesia Bookroom (Armadale) in the foyer today.

Appointments for the Week			Last Lord's Day Tithes & Offering, & Attendance	
WED	10:00 am	Craft Group	General Fund - \$2,992.70 (*DD - \$200.00). Missions Fund - \$600.00 (*DD - \$100.00, #822 - \$350.00). Building Fund - \$400.00 (*DD - \$400.00). Total Tithes & Offering - \$3,992.70. Attendance - 138. *DD: direct deposit	
FRI	7:30 pm	CBI & Prayer Meeting		
SAT	4:30 pm	JF & TF		
	7:30 pm	Men's Bible Study		
SUN	9:00 am	Sunday School		
	10:00 am	Worship Service		

Elders: **Mark Chen (Pastor)** 6114 4242, 0415 932 373. **Jimmy Orchard** 0413 274 407.
 Deacons: **Johnson Lim** 0402 145 682. **Jacob Woo** 0421 212 206. **Vincent Chiu** 0417 929 149.