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MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND MUSICIANS IN THE WORSHIP OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

By

THEODORE E. LODDER

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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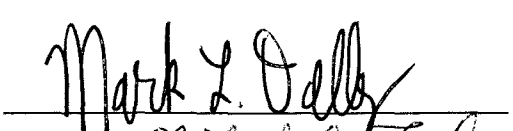
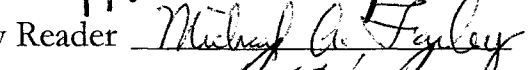
Dr. Mark L. Dalbey, Faculty Advisor 
Dr. Michael A. Farley, Second Faculty Reader 
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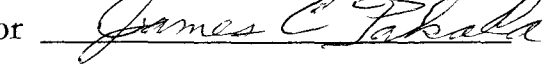
Rev. James C. Pakala, Library Director 

ABSTRACT

In the Canadian Reformed Churches there is both a shortage of qualified organists and a growing number of musicians who play musical instruments other than the organ, resulting in much discussion and debate about which musical instruments are the most appropriate for worship. A lack of biblical awareness and leadership concerning music in worship, combined with limited or mediocre resources and training, cultural influences, and other factors, have contributed to the present situation. This study explores, analyzes, and critiques this situation on the basis of biblical-theological and confessionally Reformed principles, taking into consideration the historical, philosophical, practical, and pastoral factors related to musical instruments and musicians in worship.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I dedicate this work to Marina, my Beloved, who truly lives up to her second name, which means "Wisdom," and is a continual reminder to me of the wisdom and love of Christ Jesus. Just as you fill our home with music, so you fill my heart with song to God!

Alongside her, my dear and loyal children Joshua, Katie, Nathan, Austin, Rebekah, and Timothy have given and sacrificed far more than they know. Each of you, too, make me sing for joy to the LORD!

Furthermore, I am deeply indebted to my God-fearing parents for lovingly nurturing in me, by word and example, the great worth, joy, and beauty of biblical, Reformed worship. Your joyful love for Christ and your reverent humility before God I will never forget.

Also, I am grateful to the flock of Christ in Cloverdale Canadian Reformed Church at Surrey, British Columbia, where God has allowed me to pastor since 2005. The members and leadership of this beautiful and lively congregation have offered great encouragement, generosity, patience, and sacrifice in countless ways, making it possible for me to bring this study to completion. With fond memories, I am also grateful to the brothers and sisters of the Canadian Reformed Church at Taber, Alberta who gave me some extra time to begin this program of study. To all those pastors, church musicians, office bearers, and others who participated in the study in one way or another, especially those from the Canadian Reformed Churches at Aldergrove, Langley, and Surrey-Maranatha who volunteered to participate in the focus groups, my sincere thanks for your eager involvement and the fellowship we were able to enjoy.

Furthermore, I am indebted to my teachers and editors, and many other ministerial colleagues, friends, family, and musicians who offered their encouragement, advice, expertise, and help in far more ways than can be recounted here.

Finally, all these offerings of thanks I bring to my God and Father and his Son Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, to whom alone be praise and honour and glory and power, for ever and ever! (Rev. 5:13)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The declining availability of organists within the Canadian Reformed Churches is at least one factor that has drawn recent attention to the question of which musical instruments are most suited for use in public Christian worship. Among others who have addressed this matter,[1] one veteran Canadian Reformed pastor, Dr. James Visscher, has asked whether the organist will go the way of the dinosaur. "Does this same future await the organist, and in particular the church organist in the ranks of the Canadian Reformed Churches?"[2] Not only is there a shrinking supply of organists, according to Visscher's observations, but in some congregations, there is not even a single organist. Sometimes pianists are asked to play the organ, even if they have not been trained to do so. Alternatively, churches have turned to the piano to replace the organ: "Needless to say this last situation [the shortage of trained organists] has forced some churches to make more use of the piano, since pianists are not in short supply."[3]

There is hardly any question about whether the organ "has come to be an integral part of the service of the Western Church,"[4] or of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Rather, the question is what the future holds for the organ in worship.

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[1] E.g., H.F.W. Roth, "A Dearth of Organists: What Now?" *Reformed Music Journal* 14 no. 1 (January 2002); P. Janson, "Editorial: On Shortage of Organists," *Reformed Music Journal* 4 no. 3 (July 1992).

[2] J. Visscher, "The Organist as Dinosaur," *Clarion* 7 May 2004, 234.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Gerhard Kappner, "The Church Service and Music," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 12 (1956): 254. Cf. John Ferguson, "Instrumental Music in Service to the Text," *The Complete Library of Christian Worship* Vol. 4, *Music and the Arts in Christian Worship*, Robert E. Webber, ed. (Nashville, TN: Star Song Publishing Group, 1993), bk. 1: 394.

Related to the issue of the shrinking supply of organists is the question of what the alternatives are. Is there a need to introduce other instruments in worship? If there are more trained pianists than organists, should piano play a more dominant role? Furthermore, considering all the other musical instruments that are available and the wide variety of musical talent within the body of Christ, should these be employed? Does Scripture warrant and even command the use of a broad spectrum of instruments?

Beyond these biblical, theological, and historical considerations is the pastoral one. What practices and choices best serve the unity and edification of the congregations to the glory of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? Music is either unifying or divisive, and we must strive for the former.[5] As church musical scholar Erik Routley notes, "it should be one of the marks of the church's special genius that its music can be satisfying both to the musician of fastidious standards and to the nonmusical worshipper."[6]

To neglect such an important matter as music in the worship of the church, and how that music is made, would not merely impoverish the church; it would also dishonour God. Carl Halter has expressed it thus: "The church which neglects its music or assigns to it a purely pedestrian function robs itself outrageously, and it flies in the face not only of the experience of the church but also of the will of God."[7]

Statement of Problem

Singing and making music to the Lord is one of the pivotal liturgical activities of Christ's church in her Lord's Day worship services. There are weighty scriptural and church

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[5] Erik Routley, *Music Leadership in the Church* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967), 90.
[6] Ibid, 91.
[7] Carl Halter, *The Practice of Sacred Music* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955), 11.

historical grounds for devoting considerable attention to which musical instruments are most suitable for inclusion in the church's song. What are the best criteria for making this choice? How has the organ become the preferred instrument to the exclusion of others in most Canadian Reformed Churches, as in many other churches? What alternatives are there, and what might be the reasons for exploring them? Why is this issue so emotionally charged? How do factors such as architecture, finances, culture, location, congregational size, and musical expertise influence the selection of instruments and musicians?

Before becoming a pastor, the author of this study received musical training on the pipe organ, and accreditation from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, both in musical performance and theory. He served as organist in two congregations in Ontario, provided service playing in a number of other churches in need of organist supply, and even had the opportunity to work for a pipe organ builder for a few months while attending university. Having been on the organ bench, in the pew, and on the pulpit, the researcher is aware of the many joys and frustrations, questions, and challenges that face musicians, congregations and church leaders. He has also become aware of the lack of knowledgeable leadership and meaningful attention to this crucial aspect of the church's worship. The folding of the quarterly publication *Reformed Music Journal* after only fifteen years is just one lamentable commentary on church music in the Canadian Reformed Churches.[8] This researcher's hope, then, is that this study will benefit the churches, both in assessing and in addressing the present state of affairs, so that the church's song does not go silent or suffer

[8] N. Kobald, "Dear Readers," *Reformed Music Journal* 15 no. 4 (October 2003), 74-75.

in any way, but continues to flourish for the glory and praise of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore why the musical instrument of choice in the worship of the Canadian Reformed Churches is typically the organ, while other instruments are generally used only as supplements or alternatives to the organ, and to analyze and critique those choices in light of biblical-theological principles. My research questions will be

1. What biblical-theological and confessional principles are being followed in establishing the role of musicians and the choice of instruments for worship?
2. What historical and philosophical considerations have been determinative?
3. What practical and pastoral considerations come into play?
4. How are musicians, office bearers, and congregations interacting with each other?

Significance of the Study

In a lead editorial in the Reformed quarterly for office bearers, *Diakonia,* Visscher asserts that

> the music ministry in many of our [Reformed Churches] is at a crossroads. The number of truly qualified organists is dwindling, which means that more and more people are being pressed into service, who lack training and ability. As a result congregational singing declines, the psalms and hymns that are sung are criticized, the instrument used receives a bad reputation, and the true worship of the Lord suffers.... If our churches are convinced that the music of the church is an important aspect of the church's worship then they need to stop treating it like a step child and become more involved.[9]

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[9] J. Visscher, "Something for Everyone," *Diakonia* 13 no. 2 (September 1999), 25-26.

Theology and music, two of the researcher's favorite subjects, have found a loyal ally in one another and have discovered a most pleasant encounter in the subject at hand. The researcher has observed during years of experience in the pew, on the organ bench and on the pulpit that a commitment to musical awareness and excellence is a great distance from where it should be in the Canadian Reformed Churches. Little wonder that musicians often experience isolation from the congregation, congregations fail to appreciate musicians and their music, and office bearers are bewildered.[10] The liturgical centrality of music in the Christian church offers no sanction for this state of affairs.

Definition of Terms

Throughout this study the following key terms will be used according to their defined usage:

1. **Musical Instrument:** In biblical usage, a skillfully crafted sound apparatus (Heb. כֵּלִים, *kelim*) which functions as a vehicle to carry musically the Word of God in the song of God's people.[11]
2. **Song:** According to biblical usage, this word covers both instrumental and vocal music,[12] and the performance thereof.[13]
3. **Liturgy:** Originating from the Greek word λειτουργία *(leitourgia),* which finds its fulfillment in Christ (Heb. 8:2, 6; 10:11-13), liturgy refers to the service of

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[10] Cf. G. Van Dooren, "About Organists and Pulpiteers," *Clarion* 5 November 1977, 458-459.

[11] Cf. Paul S. Jones, *Singing and Making Music: Issues in Church Music Today* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2006), 24.

[12] Peter J. Leithart, *From Silence to Song: The Davidic Liturgical Revolution* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003), 110.

[13] John W. Kleinig, *The LORD's Song: The Basis, Function and Significance of Choral Music in Chronicles* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 64, 86. This will receive elaboration later.

worship that takes place when "God and his people meet each other in the assembly of the exalted Christ."[14]

4. **Organology:** The descriptive and analytical study of musical instruments, including the classification of instruments from different epochs and cultures. Although this term has occasionally been applied to the study of pipe organs, its standard meaning is derived from the Greek *organon,* meaning tool or instrument.[15]
5. **Pipe Organ:** A keyboard instrument whose tone is produced by a vibrating column of air within the given pipework, which may contain one or more keyboards connected mechanically, pneumatically, electrically, or electro-pneumatically to one or more sets (ranks) of pipes, which are positioned on a windchest which channels the air to the selected pipes.[16]
6. **Tracker Pipe Organ:** A pipe organ with a mechanical action that links the keys or pedals activated by the organist directly with the valves that allow air to flow into pipes of the corresponding notes.
7. **Digital Organ:** An organ that makes use of sound sampling or digital synthesis technology to reproduce the sounds of organ pipes, usually functioning as an alternative to the pipe organ or as a hybrid combination with it, particularly when space or funding is limited.

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[14] K. Deddens, "A Few Notes About the Worship Service," *Diakonia* 4 no. 1 (September 1990), 12; cf. K. Deddens, *Where Everything Points to Him* (Neerlandia, AB: Inheritance Publications, 1993), 15-16.

[15] Peter Williams, "Organology," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* Vol. 13, Stanley Sadie, ed. (Hong Kong: MacMillan, 1980), 784.

[16] James Robert Davidson, *A Dictionary of Protestant Church Music* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1975).

8. **Registration:** The combination of stops (registers), which each activate a set (rank) of pipes with one particular sound, which an organist chooses for playing music.[17]
9. ***Organum:*** This Latin word was used as a reference, among other things, to counterpoint and instruments, and also to organs of learning, of authority, of liturgy, and of the human body.[18] Even as late as the Carolingian period *organum* meant "organized ensemble music."[19]
10. ***Book of Praise—Anglo-Genevan Psalter:*** The worship book compiled, published and used by the Canadian Reformed Churches, which contains the metrical psalms adopted by general synod as well as hymns approved by general synod.[20] When it was first published in 1972, "English metrical versions of all the Psalms could be sung for the first time to the authentic Genevan melodies of the sixteenth century."[21] The Canadian Reformed Churches are presently undertaking an extensive revision of the *Book of Praise,* including adapting the text of the psalms and some of the hymns into contemporary English usage and adding nineteen new hymns.
11. **RCCO:** The Royal Canadian College of Organists
12. **Regulative Principle of Worship:** An application of the second commandment of God's law, which forbids believers from worshipping God "in

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[17] Oswald G. Ragatz, *Organ Technique: A Basic Course of Study* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979), 39.
[18] Peter Williams, *The King of Instruments: How Churches Came to Have Organs* (London: SPCK, 1993), 8.
[19] Ibid, 84.
[20] *Book of Praise: Anglo-Genevan Psalter* (Winnipeg: Premier, 2010)
[21] Ibid, v.

any other manner than he has commanded in his Word"[22] (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 35, q/a 96; cf. Westminster Confession of Faith, 21).[23]

[22] See also Mark L. Dalbey, "A Biblical, Historical and Contemporary Look at the Regulative Principle of Worship" (D. Min. diss., Covenant Theological Seminary, 1999), 6-7. For more on the Regulative Principle of Worship, see Richard J. Gore Jr. *Covenantal Worship: Reconsidering the Puritan Regulative Principle* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2002) and Jeffrey J. Meyers, *The Lord's Service: The Grace of Covenant Renewal Worship* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003), 297-314.

[23] All references to the Belgic Confession and Heidelberg Catechism are taken from the *Book of Praise: Anglo-Genevan Psalter* (Winnipeg: Premier, 2010). For the Westminster Confession, one of the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church in America and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Joel R. Beeke and Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Reformed Confessions Harmonized: With an Annotated Bibliography of Reformed Doctrinal Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999) has been consulted.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Musical Instruments and Musicians in Worship in the Bible

Biblical and Confessional Framework

The Old Testament

Musical Instruments and Musicians among the Patriarchs

Musical instruments were an integral part of the human cultural enterprise right from the beginning. Early in the Bible is found the story of Jubal, who is named "the father of all who play the harp and flute" (Gen. 4:21). From the earliest references to musical instruments in the Bible, furthermore, there is every indication that musical instruments were mostly used to accompany singing. Laban told his fugitive son-in-law Jacob, who had fled with Laban's daughters and grandchildren, that he would have wanted to host a festive send-off "with joy and singing to the music of tambourines and harps" (Gen. 31:27).

Musical Instruments and Musicians during the Exodus

The prophetess Miriam, and the women who joined her in praising God after the exodus, sang and danced to the accompaniment of tambourines (Exod. 15:20-21). The first recorded instance of God explicitly commanding his people to use musical instruments in worship appears already in the Pentateuch. In the wilderness, God commanded Moses to make two trumpets of hammered silver (Num. 10:1-10). These trumpets, as it says there, were to be used to gather the assembly or the leaders, to signal the breaking of camp, to

invoke Yahweh's help during war, and to commit the offerings to God as a memorial during the appointed feasts and times of rejoicing.

Musical Instruments and Singing in the Old Testament

There are a number of instances in the Old Testament where singing is not specifically mentioned in connection with the use of musical instruments. In most of these instances, however, it is quite possible, even likely, that those who played the instruments also sang if they were able. The company of prophets, for example, whom Saul met after he was anointed Israel's first king by Samuel, prophesied to the accompaniment of lyres, tambourines, flutes, and harps (1 Sam. 10:5). Also, Saul, when he was continually tormented by an evil spirit, hired David to play the harp as a means of soothing him (1 Sam. 16:15-23). With respect to the latter, since David was not only a musician but also a poet and song-writer, as is clear from the many psalms which he composed, it is likely that the music he made for Saul was instrument-accompanied song. With respect to the former, 1 Chronicles 25:1 calls the musical ministry of the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun "the ministry of prophesying," suggesting the possibility that the prophesying of the company of prophets which Saul joined was in the form of song. Even the trumpet blasts from the rams' horns during the fall of Jericho (Josh. 6) were accompanied by a loud shout from the people.

Musical Instruments and Musicians before and during David's Kingship

Even before David organized the Levitical ministry of song, the Israelites made music before the LORD with instrument-accompanied song. When they were in the process of bringing the ark of God back to Jerusalem, "David and the whole house of Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with songs and with harps, lyres,

tambourines, sistrums, and cymbals" (2 Sam. 6:5). Clearly music-making, while not yet highly organized, was an integral aspect of Israelite life, culture, and worship.

When the ark finally arrived in Jerusalem, one of the first things David did was appoint some of the Levites to the ministry of music and song. They were "to minister before the ark of the LORD, to make petition, to give thanks, and to praise the LORD, the God of Israel: Asaph was the chief, Zechariah second, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-Edom and Jeiel. They were to play the lyres and harps, Asaph was to sound the cymbals, and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests were to blow the trumpets regularly before the ark of the covenant of God" (1 Chron. 16:4-6). When David appointed these Levites, he also committed to them a psalm of thanks to the LORD (1 Chron. 16:7-36), which was surely to set the tone for their ministry and music-making with instruments and song.

Of the 38,000 Levites, David set aside 4000 for the ministry of music (1 Chron. 23:3-5). More than one-tenth of the Levites, therefore, a generous tithe, spent their time of holy service making music. Clearly, David allocated a considerable portion of the human resources at the temple to the ministry of music.

The Place and Role of Musical Instruments and Musicians under David's Reign

The ministry of song to which the Levites were called was a service[24] (1 Chron. 6:31, 32). As such, these Levites were "put in charge of the service of song" (1 Chron. 6:31). They

[24] The Hebrew verb that is used for "ministry" is the Piel of שׁרת, meaning "to serve, minister, be in service of God," William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988). Here it is in the form of an active participle.

were to lead the praises of God's people (2 Chron. 23:13).[25] In other words, the musicians were to *serve by leading,* and to *lead by serving.*

By definition, musical instruments had a specific function. They were called instruments *for* song or instruments *of* song, *kele shir* (כְּלֵי־שִׁיר) (1 Chron. 15:16; 16:42; 2 Chron. 5:13; 7:6; 23:13; 29:27; 34:12; Neh. 12:36; Amos 6:5). The root meaning of the Hebrew word *keli* (כֶּלִי) is "useful object."[26] Occurrences of this word refer to objects, then, that have a particular utilitarian function—carrying, storing, containing, furnishing; or serving as a tool or weapon of war.[27] The particular function of musical instruments, then, was to carry, lift up, and enhance holy song.

The appointed musicians were by no means expected to be subdued in their music-making, as suggested already by their sheer number. When the ark was brought to Jerusalem, the musicians were commissioned to "play loudly on musical instruments, on harps and lyres and cymbals, to raise sounds of joy" (1 Chron. 15:16, ESV; cf. 15:28). They were to play מַשְׁמִיעִים, "to be heard"; thus, "the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away" during the rebuilding of the wall (Neh. 12:43). The musical instruments, likewise, were described as instruments of power (כְּלֵי־עֹז) (2 Chron. 30:21; 1 Chron. 13:8).

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[25] Ibid. The Hebrew verb that is used for "leading" is the Hiphil ידע, meaning "to make known, to teach" here in the form of an active participle. In meaning, the Hiphil form can causative, permissive, declaratory, or "expressive of the development of a state or quality," A. B. Davidson, *An Introductory Hebrew Grammar* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1966), § 24.1.1.b; cf. E. Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), § 53.2. In the Hiphil form, then, this word suggests that there was a teaching aspect to the musical ministry of the Levites, an aspect to which this study will return later.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

While the Levites were to play their instruments loudly, the music they made was to blend well with the words being sung. The musical instruments of the Levites were actually called "instruments for sacred song" (כְּלֵי שִׁיר הָאֱלֹהִים) (1 Chron. 16:42). The voices and instruments were to blend together into one sound, rather than competing to be heard. They were to join "in unison, as with one voice (קוֹל־אֶחָד), to give praise and thanks to the LORD" (2 Chron. 5:13).

David's Musical Instruments—the LORD's Musical Instruments

The musical instruments were also called "the LORD's musical instruments, which King David made for praising the LORD" (2 Chron. 7:6). In other words, although David was the one who had manufactured them and they were always closely identified with him (1 Chron. 23:5; 2 Chron. 29:26-27; Neh. 12:36), the musical instruments belonged to none other than the LORD himself. Indeed, they were manufactured "for praising the LORD" (2 Chron. 7:6). The Chronicler makes clear, furthermore, that the Levitical ministry of music—instruments and musicians included—had been "commanded by the LORD through his prophets" (2 Chron. 29:25) and therefore was not merely dreamed up by David.

At the height of his kingdom's splendour, Solomon imported unprecedented amounts of almugwood. This high quality wood was used not only to make supports for the temple and royal palace, but also to make harps and lyres for the musicians (1 Kings 10:11-12). These musical instruments, then, displayed the splendour and glory of Israel's king and kingdom—and especially the glory of Israel's God, Yahweh!

Musical Instruments and the Spiritual Vitality of Israel

The health and vitality of music and song in Israel was an indication of the nation's spiritual condition. On the one hand, the silence of musical instruments, the unemployment of musicians, and the fading away of joyful song were sure symptoms that God had removed his favour and brought judgment on account of the rebellion and subsequent deformation of his beloved nation (Neh. 13:10; Ps. 137; Jer. 7:34; Ezek. 26:13; Amos 5:23). On the other hand, a sure sign of spiritual revival and reformation was the restoration of Davidic worship, when musical instruments would once again come to life, voices of joy and gladness would again be heard, and the Levitical musicians would have their jobs back (2 Chron. 23:18; 35:15; Neh. 13:10-12; Jer. 33:10-11; Amos 9:11-12).

Musical Instruments and Musicians in the Psalms

The Book of Psalms is full of exhortations to praise God with the sound of instruments and song. Some of the most prominent examples, from Psalms 33, 92, 98, 144, and 150, follow here:

> Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous;
> it is fitting for the upright to praise him.
> Praise the LORD with the harp;
> make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.
> Sing to him a new song;
> play skillfully, and shout for joy. (Ps. 33:1-3)

> It is good to praise the LORD
> and make music to your name, O Most High,
> to proclaim your love in the morning
> and your faithfulness at night,
> to the music of the ten-stringed lyre
> and the melody of the harp. (Ps. 92:1-3)

> Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth,

burst into jubilant song with music;
make music to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the sound of singing,
with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—
shout for joy before the LORD, the King. (Ps. 98:4-6)

Of David.

Praise be to the LORD my Rock,
who trains my hands for war,
my fingers for battle....
I will sing a new song to you, O God;
on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music to you,
to the One who gives victory to kings,
who delivers his servant David from the deadly sword. (Ps. 144:1, 9-10)

Praise the LORD.

Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens.
Praise him for his acts of power;
praise him for his surpassing greatness.
Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise him with the harp and lyre,
praise him with tambourine and dancing,
praise him with the strings and flute,
praise him with the clash of cymbals,
praise him with resounding cymbals.

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD. (Ps. 150)

Also in the Psalms, then, instruments and singing are of a piece. They are typically mentioned together. When the one is mentioned, the other is implied.

Psalm 144, which is from the hand of David, implies a close relationship between war and song. The war-king is also the song-king. The semantic relationship between musical instruments (כְּלֵי־שִׁיר) and weapons of war (כְּלֵי מִלְחָמָה) is anything but

incidental. Musical instruments—instruments of power (כְּלֵי־עֹז)—are arguably the most effective weapons of war that King David wields.[28]

Musical Instruments and Selah

A term that occurs often—more than seventy times—in the Book of Psalms, and is particularly relevant to the matter of musical instruments in worship, is the Hebrew word *Selah* (סֶלָה). It must be acknowledged at the outset that there has been uncertainty about the meaning of this term among lexicographers and commentators. Koehler and Baumgartner call it "obscure"[29] and Holladay calls it "unexplained."[30] A common thread in the suggestions and explanations offered, however, is that *Selah* is a "musical or liturgical marker," in the words of Dr. James A. Swanson.[31] Some have suggested that it means "pause," as translated by the New Jerusalem Bible,[32] or "Silence!" according to the eminent Hebrew scholar, William Gesenius.[33] Old Testament commentator Franz Delitzsch believes that "in a psalm where סֶלָה is appended...the stringed instruments,...and the instruments generally, are to join in in such a way as to give intensity to that which is being sung."[34]

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[28] Cf. 2 Chron. 20:21 where Jehoshaphat, after consulting with the LORD, appoints musicians to lead the army into battle with song. David, similarly, had used his music-making with an instrument to drive evil spirits from Saul (1 Sam. 16:14-23).

[29] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

[30] Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament.*

[31] James A. Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew* (Bellingham, WA: Logos, 1997).

[32] Ibid.

[33] William Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures,* Samuel P. Trigelles, transl. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).

[34] Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 1:31.

A closer look at the semantic root of this word supports Delitzsch's assertion about *Selah.* Brown, Driver, and Briggs suggest that the word is, in fact, a verb in the imperative mood, meaning "lift up" or "exalt," from the Hebrew verb *salal* (סָלַל).[35] Gesenius connects it to the verb *salah* (סָלָה), "to be quiet, to be silent," and to the noun *seleh* (סֶלֶה), "rest, silence," and designates its form as Milel.[36] In this same entry, however, where he comments that this word has "been so much discussed and tortured by the conjectures and blunders of interpreters," Gesenius argues that "it seems to have been used to mark a short pause in singing the words of the psalm, so that the singer would be *silent*, while the instrumental music continued."[37] In support of this interpretation, Gesenius mentions firstly, that the Septuagint always renders this Hebrew word *diapsalma* (διάψαλμα), which means "interlude"; secondly, that its usual position in the middle of the psalms where a section is finished implies that it was used to divide the respective psalms into strophes; and thirdly, that in Psalm 9:17 *Higgāyōn Selah* (הִגָּיוֹן סֶלָה) is used, "which should apparently be rendered '*Instrumental music—pause*,' i.e. the instrumental music was to continue while the singer paused."[38] This explanation seems the most plausible, especially considering the fact that almost all the occurrences of this word are in the Psalms, many of which call for the use of musical instruments.

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[35] Francis Brown, Samuel R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906); cf. Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic Dictionary* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1998).

[36] Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures.*

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

While the two most likely meanings of *Selah,* "Silence!" on the one hand and "Strike it up!" on the other, initially seem to contradict each other, the meaning of the related Hebrew words along with the locations and uses of this word in the Psalms strongly suggest that *Selah* designated an instrumental interlude (in the middle of a psalm) or crescendo (at the end of a psalm)[39] during which the voices went momentarily silent and the musical instruments swelled to punctuate and intensify the words being sung.

Preliminary Summary of Old Testament on Musical Instruments and Musicians in Worship

Right from the beginning, musical instruments and musicians made an integral contribution to human life and culture by means of the music and song they produced. Long before David organized the Levitical ministry of music, God's people were using musical instruments to praise and worship him. God specifically commanded them to do so even as early as their sojourn in the desert. The evidence suggests that the playing of musical instruments and singing were typically combined.

King David organized and supervised the ministry of music and song by appointing a handsome tithe of Levites to this ministry, giving them specific instructions, and providing them with the resources they needed to fulfill their task. These Levite musicians were to serve by leading and to lead by serving. Musical instruments, furthermore, were the tools—the temple implements—which David gave the Levites to carry, lift up, and enhance the holy song of God's people for the worship and praise of God. They were fittingly called, therefore, *the LORD's instruments* and *instruments of sacred song.*

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[39] In Psalms 3, 9, 24, and 46 there are *Selahs* at the end.

The musicians were expected to make music that was loud, moving, and impressive—even fearful, for they were wielding instruments of power. Fearful, for King David, the music-king was also the war-king, and the musical instruments he entrusted to the Levites were his most powerful weapons of war. There is something dangerous about the ministry of song inaugurated by King David!

When the kingdom of Solomon was at its pinnacle, the splendour and quality of the musical instruments displayed the splendour of Israel's great King, Yahweh. When musical instruments came to life and voices of joy and gladness sang; when the Levitical musicians had work and their mighty *Selahs* punctuated the people's praise; that was a sure sign of the health, vigour, and strength of God's beloved nation!

The New Testament

New Covenant Fulfillment of Davidic Worship

The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the inauguration of the New Covenant does not represent the complete abolition of Old Covenant worship, resulting concurrently in the complete abandonment of musical instruments and musicians. Rather, in Jesus Christ, Old Covenant worship, including the Davidic ministry of liturgical music and song, reaches its fulfillment. Jesus declares in his Sermon on the Mount: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matt. 5:17). After his resurrection from the dead, the Lord Jesus tells his confused disciples: "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44). When he receives from the Lord God the throne of his father David (Luke 1:32), Jesus sings God's praises using psalms composed by his father David. "He says, 'I will declare your name to

my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises'" (Heb. 2:12; Ps. 22:22; cf. Rom. 15:7-13).

Pauline Use of Psalmos *and* Psallo

The Septuagint translates "psalm" with the Greek word *psalmos* (ψαλμός), which means "song of praise, psalm,...music made with an instrument."[40] Gerhard Delling defines this word as the state of "plucking" a bow or of "playing" a stringed instrument.[41] This is the same noun that Paul uses in Ephesians 5:19-20 in his exhortation to believers about being filled with the Holy Spirit. In this passage Paul uses the verbal form of this word, *psallo* (ψάλλω), which Greek lexicographer Horst Balz defines as "sing, sing praise."[42] Paul writes there: "Speak to one another with psalms (ψαλμοῖς), hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music (ψάλλοντες) in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

A closer look at the verb *psallo* (ψάλλω) suggests that its meaning includes the aspect of instrumental accompaniment. Delling points out, for example, that this word originally meant "to touch," then "to pluck" the string, leading to the definition: "to play a stringed instrument."[43] Greek linguists Timothy and Barbara Friberg write that this word means: "strictly, *strike the strings* of an instrument; hence, *sing to the accompaniment of a harp*; in the NT *sing praises*." [44] If one should ask why Paul would command the believer to sing to the

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[40] Johan Lust, Erik Eynikel and Katrin Hauspie, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003).

[41] Gerhard Delling, "Psalmos," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 8:491.

[42] Horst Balz, "Psallo," *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament,* Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 3:495.

[43] Delling, "Psallo," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* 8:490.

[44] Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000).

accompaniment of musical instruments "in your heart," as the NIV translates, it could be pointed out that the Greek phrase *tei kardiai* (τῇ καρδίᾳ) can also be rendered "with your heart" (ESV)—that is, *with all your heart,* or *with your heart fully engaged.* Balz asserts that τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν τῷ κυρίῳ "refers to 'singing aloud' (cf. 1 Cor. 14:26) and collective singing in the assembly: Τῇ καρδίᾳ refers not to inwardness but to full participation."[45] Furthermore, the fact that Paul also uses the word *adontes* (ᾄδοντες), "singing," in combination with *psallontes* (ψάλλοντες), "making music with instruments," strengthens the case; for otherwise readers would be left wondering why Paul would use the word *psallontes* in addition to the word *adontes,* if both words mean the same thing. Paul, then, is undoubtedly espousing Davidic-style worship along the lines of Psalms 33, 98, 144, and 150, as cited earlier.

Pauline Use of Musical Instruments

When Paul uses musical instruments to illustrate his point concerning edifying speech in the church in 1 Corinthians 14:7-8, furthermore, in no way does he condemn or revile musical instruments. On the contrary, he states that the members of the church should produce edifying, intelligible speech, just as musical instruments such as harps, flutes, and trumpets should produce clear, distinct notes and sounds. Paul also tells the believers that the great resurrection of the dead at the return of Jesus Christ will be announced by the trumpet (1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16). Arguably, Paul is assuming the presence and playing of musical instruments among the assembled believers.

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[45] Balz, "Psallo," *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament,* 3:495.

Musical Instruments in the Revelation to John

In the Revelation to John, which begins dramatically with a voice that sounds like a trumpet (Rev. 1:10; cf. 4:1), the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders play harps (Rev. 5:8); angels blast trumpet-calls (Rev. 8-11); and the worshipping multitude around God's throne, whose sound is "like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder," resembles the sound of "harpists playing their harps" (Rev. 14:2). The sound of musical instruments and songs is everywhere in the eschatological worship before God, for David's royal Son Jesus Christ is sitting on his throne!

Preliminary Summary of New Testament on Musical Instruments and Musicians in Worship

Old Covenant worship, including the Davidic ministry of liturgical music and song, reaches its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Jesus sings God's praises with the music composed by his father David—the Psalms. The Greek word by which Jesus himself designates these songs, ψαλμός, actually means "song of praise, music played with an instrument." Paul calls upon believers to speak such songs to one another with music, ψάλλοντες, that is, to the accompaniment of instruments. He also assumes the believers' acquaintance with a variety of musical instruments like those that had been used in Old Testament worship when he uses the sound of musical instruments as an illustration for edifying speech in the church, and when he offers comfort concerning the resurrection of the dead. Finally, as David's royal Son takes his throne in the Revelation to John, the mighty sound of musical instruments and songs powerfully emanates from God's presence through all creation!

The Reformed Confessions

Although the Reformed confessions to which the Canadian Reformed Churches bind themselves, the Three Forms of Unity, do not address the subject of musical instruments and musicians in particular, Articles 7 and 25 of the Belgic Confession (BC), and Lord's Day 35, q/a 96 of the Heidelberg Catechism (HC) do provide some clear direction.

BC Article 7 on the Whole Manner of Worship which God Requires

The sufficiency of Holy Scripture, including its teaching on the worship of God, is the subject of Article 7, with which the church confesses:

> We believe that Holy Scripture fully contains the will of God and that all that man must believe in order to be saved is sufficiently taught therein. The whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in it at length. It is therefore unlawful for any one, even for an apostle, to teach otherwise than we are now taught in Holy Scripture: yes, *even if* it be *an angel from heaven,* as the apostle Paul says (Gal. 1:8). Since it is forbidden to add or to take away anything from the Word of God (Deut. 12:32), it is evident that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects.

Our confession declares here, not merely that Scripture says something about worship, but that "the whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in it at length." The church of the New Covenant is simply not permitted to ignore the length to which the Holy Spirit goes in teaching about Old Covenant worship, particularly of the Mosaic and Davidic eras which are described in expansive scriptural detail. On the topic of musical instruments and musicians, furthermore, the Christian church is duty-bound to heed the in-depth writings of Holy Scripture concerning the Davidic liturgical period.

BC Article 25 on the Fulfillment of the Law in Christ

Article 25, which addresses the relationship between the Old and New Covenants, also offers some guidance that is vital to the Christian church's perspective on musical instruments and musicians in worship. This article states that

> We believe that the ceremonies and symbols of the law have ceased with the coming of Christ, and that all shadows have been fulfilled, so that the use of them ought to be abolished among Christians. Yet their truth and substance remain for us in Jesus Christ, in whom they have been fulfilled. In the meantime we still use the testimonies taken from the law and the prophets, both to confirm us in the doctrine of the gospel and to order our life in all honesty, according to God's will and to his glory.

The New Testament offers no indication whatsoever that musical instruments are among the shadows of the law that ought to be abolished, as is clearly the case with the sacrifices and other associated ceremonies of the law. On the contrary, as has just been observed in the New Testament, musical instruments and musicians in the Revelation to John make the song of the Lamb ring forth from the multitude of worshippers around God's throne like never before.

HC Lord's Day 35, q/a 96 on the Manner of Worship

The Heidelberg Catechism also addresses the manner of worship in its formulation concerning the second commandment of God's law, where it says that the faithful may not "worship him in any other manner than he has commanded in his Word." The positive thrust of this teaching, then, is that we are to worship God only as he has so prescribed in his Word, namely, in the Old and New Testaments.

Interpretation of Biblical Data by Various Scholars

If, as Erik Routley contends, "the Bible says virtually nothing about church music,"[46] how is one to find guidance on this subject *in* Scripture? Routley also provides the answer when he adds that "what it does say is of great assistance to us in determining the decisions we have to make in church music."[47] One might argue, however, not only on the basis of

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[46] Routley, *Music Leadership in the Church,* 54.
[47] Ibid.

what this chapter has already presented from Holy Scripture itself, but also on the basis of what follows from the study thereof, that the Scriptures say *a lot* about church music—perhaps not as much as one might wish, but certainly *enough,* since God himself is their perfect author.

The Old Testament

Preliminary Remarks

In Gen. 4:20-22, as Routley points out, music-making with instruments is established "as one of the traditional and immemorial activities of mankind."[48] Music is an important aspect of the cultural enterprise, as Jeremy Begbie also asserts.[49] By the time of David, as noted earlier, "more than 10 percent of the people serving in the temple ministries were musicians. Their music occupied a central place in the worship of God's people."[50] Dr. Mark Dalbey of Covenant Theological Seminary writes: "The sheer number (4000 out of 38,000) of Levites devoted to music and song reveals the vital importance David placed on music in the worship of God (1 Chron. 23:3-5)."[51]

Biblical Data Concerning Musical Instruments

Scholars have devoted considerable research to determining which instruments were actually known and used by the people of God in the Bible.[52] They generally concur that they

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[48] Routley, *Music Leadership in the Church,* 54.

[49] Jeremy Begbie, *Resounding Truth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 63.

[50] Harold M. Best and David K. Huttar, "Music in Israelite Worship," *The Complete Library of Christian Worship* Vol. 1, *The Biblical Foundations of Christian Worship,* Robert E. Webber, ed. (Nashville, TN: Star Song Publishing Group, 1993), 227.

[51] Dalbey, "A Biblical, Historical and Contemporary Look at the Regulative Principle of Worship," 10.

[52] The most helpful sources include Curt Sachs, *The History of Musical Instruments* (New York: Norton, 1940); Alfred Sendry, *Music in Ancient Israel* (London: Vision Press, 1969); Jeremy Montagu, *Musical Instruments of the Bible* (London: Scarecrow Press, 2002); Joachim Braun, *Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine: Archaeological, Written, and Comparative Sources,* Douglas W. Stott, trans. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Sol Baruch Finesinger, "Musical Instruments in the OT," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 3 (1926), 21-76; Ovid R. Sellers, "Musical Instruments of Israel," *Biblical Archaeologist* 4 no. 3 (September 1941), 33-47; Ivor H. Jones, "Music and Musical

have far from complete knowledge of the nature of these instruments and, in many cases, even their identity.[53] Ovid Sellers writes, for example:

> A great handicap in the study of musical instruments of the Hebrews is the lack of objective evidence in Palestine. Due to the climate of the Holy Land all the wood, reed, hide, and gut which went into the ancient instruments long ago has disintegrated; and sculptured scenes showing musicians, which have taught us so much about the instrumentalists of Babylonia and Egypt, were forbidden by the second commandment.[54]

Even if one does not grant the claim of Sellers about the second commandment, the lack of objective evidence remains undisputed. Furthermore, biblical scholar Ivor Jones, among others, has cautioned against "the acceptance without further inquiry of the translations used for musical instruments in modern versions of the Bible."[55]

Kleinig on the Basis, Function, and Significance of Music in Chronicles

While preparing a seminary course on worship in the Old Testament, John W. Kleinig made the discovery that "even though much work had been done on the identification and nature of the musical instruments used in Israel's worship, no scholar had considered the ritual function and theological significance of sacred song within the sacrificial ritual as described in Chronicles."[56] This is something that Kleinig sets out to

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Instruments," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 4. David Noel Freedman, ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 930-939; Willi Apel, ed. "Instrument," *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Oxford: Grove, 1969), 412-416; and D.A. Foxvog and A.D. Kilmer, "Music," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* Vol. 3, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 436-449.

[53] T. C. Mitchell has pointed out, for example, that "the identification of the Hebrew names of instruments in the Old Testament with those represented in the actual corpus is inevitably a matter of uncertainty," in "The Music of the Old Testament Reconsidered," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 124 (1992), 130. Mitchell also provides a useful tabulation of the various translations, 139. Edo Skülj, too, discusses "the way in which the names of different musical instruments in Psalm 150 were translated in different periods and what was meant by single terms" in "Musical Instruments in Psalm 150," *The Interpretation of the Bible: The International Symposium in Slovenia* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 1117.

[54] Sellers, "Musical Instruments of Israel," 35.

[55] Jones, "Music and Musical Instruments," 934; cf. Sellers, "Musical Instruments of Israel," 35, who claims that the English words used in the English versions are often inconsistent and misleading.

[56] Kleinig, *The LORD's Song*, 7.

address in his study on the subject. He examines "the reasons for the Chronicler's portrayal of sacred song as a part of the sacrificial worship at the temple."[57]

1. The Relationship between the Mosaic and Davidic Liturgy

Kleinig observes that while the central figure in the institution of the Levitical ministry of music was David, according to the Chronicler (1 Chron. 6:31-47), by the command of God through his prophets Nathan and Gad (2 Chron. 29:25), David "did not...supplant Moses but rather supplemented his work."[58] The duties assigned to the Levites by David signify continuity with those assigned by Moses.

> The temporary responsibility of the Levites for the transportation of the ark was part of a larger and more permanent duty to minister to the LORD who sat enthroned above it and met with his people there. This ministry, which was performed 'in' or 'with the LORD's name' (Deut. 18:5, 7), was carried out by the Levites as they proclaimed that name to the people in songs of praise. So then, while liturgical song was not explicitly instituted in the Pentateuch, it was held to be included in the commission of the Levites by the LORD to minister in his name.[59]

Also Kleinig observes that the use of trumpets had already been prescribed by Moses (Num. 10). Furthermore, 2 Chronicles 23:18 indicates that Moses had prescribed that the burnt offerings be brought to the accompaniment of song, as do those passages in Deuteronomy where the bringing of sacrifices is combined with "rejoicing" (12:6-7,11-12, 18; 16:10-11; 26:11; 27:6-7). On the basis of 2 Chronicles 23:18, together with 1 Chronicles 15:16 and 2 Chronicles 29:30, Kleinig concludes that "the choral rite was therefore instituted to create rejoicing, first during the transferal of the ark, and then during the presentation of the public burnt offerings, as God had commanded in Deuteronomy."[60]

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[57] Ibid, 14.
[58] Ibid, 28.
[59] Ibid, 34.
[60] Ibid, 37-38.

2. David's Supervision over the Levitical Ministry of Music

Kleinig points out that, while the organization of the Levitical ministry of music was largely left up to the chiefs of the Levites, according to 1 Chronicles 15:16 and 16:5-6 David did in fact "specify the instruments which were to be used—harps, lyres, and cymbals—as well as the purpose of the performance, which was to stimulate festive rejoicing."[61] Furthermore, "David not only determined which instruments were to be used...but also made provision for their care in 16:42."[62]

David is said to have made the instruments (1 Chron. 23:5; 2 Chron. 7:6) and they are called the instruments of David (2 Chron. 29:26-27), as noted above. Yet, it was by the LORD's command that these instruments were instituted, which gave them their significance and power,[63] as noted earlier.

3. The Continuation of the Davidic Liturgy

Having been decreed by the LORD through Moses, and established through David, the Levitical ministry of music was then continued by Solomon and the kings who followed him. "From the time of Solomon, liturgical music was regarded by Chronicles as an essential part of properly constituted worship at the temple in Jerusalem," writes Kleinig, as shown in 2 Chronicles 23:18 and 35:15.[64] "Since choral music was part and parcel of orthodox worship, its maintenance and restoration was a mark of faithfulness to the LORD," he asserts.[65] The continuation of the ministry of music by the kings who followed David

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[61] Ibid, 47.
[62] Ibid, 54.
[63] Ibid, 78.
[64] Ibid, 61.
[65] Ibid.

supports the previous observation of the close connection between the kingship and liturgical music in Israel.

4. A Definition of Liturgical Song

If Kleinig is correct that liturgical song in the Old Testament is "a ritual enactment with sacred words that were sung at a sacred place at sacred times with the help of sacred instruments by sacred people,"[66] then such song includes much more than words and music. It also includes the performance of that music by particular people at a particular time and place with particular instruments. This brings this study to a consideration the biblical evidence as to the instruments used in liturgical song.

5. The Meaning of Kelim

Returning now to a closer study of the Hebrew word כֵּלִים, the musical instruments, as indicated by their name, according to Kleinig, are properly viewed as "Temple Vessels."[67] They are called "vessels", כֵּלִים *(kelim)*, along with the other *kelim* which were used for the rituals in the tabernacle. There were the *holy vessels* (כְּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ, *kele haqqodesh,* 1 Chron. 9:29; 22:19; 2 Chron. 5:5), and the *vessels of service* (כְּלֵי הָעֲבוֹדָה, *kele ha'aboda,* 1 Chron. 9:29; 23:26; 28:13b). But there were also the *vessels of song* (כְּלֵי־שִׁיר, *kele shir,* 1 Chron. 15:16; 16:42; 2 Chron. 7:6; 34:12 etc.).[68] Further discussion of musical instruments as vessels of song—*instruments of song*—will ensue shortly.

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[66] Ibid, 64.
[67] Ibid, 77.
[68] Ibid, 78.

6. The Musical Instruments of the Old Testament Liturgy

Kleinig goes on to enumerate the various instruments that were used. The silver trumpets, חֲצֹצְרֹת כֶּסֶף, *chazozeroth keseph* (Num. 10:2), were "the only instruments ordained by the LORD in the Pentateuch for use in public worship (Num. 10:10)."[69] As a rule, they were played only by the priests. "Since the trumpets had no valves, their range was probably limited to three or four notes which were used in different combinations of intensity and duration."[70] The function of the trumpet was not to sound a tune or to accompany a song, but to give various signals (cf. Num. 10:3-7), such as at the coming and presence of the ark (1 Chron. 13:8; 15:24, 28; 16:6); the falling prostrate of the congregation during worship (2 Chron. 29:27-28); and the calling for prayer in the temple or on the battlefield (2 Chron. 13:14; cf. Sir. 50:16-19; 1 Macc. 3:50-54; 4:40; 5:31-33; 2 Macc. 15:25-26).[71]

> The ritual significance of blowing the trumpets is expressed most clearly in Numbers 10:9-10. They brought the people to the LORD's remembrance; they proclaimed his presence and announced his help to the people. Together with the song of thanksgiving and praise, they proclaimed the LORD's presence at the ark in Jerusalem (1 Chron. 16:4); together with the music of the full Levitical choir, their fanfare announced the entrance [of] the LORD into the temple at its dedication (2 Chron. 5:12-14).[72]

A fanfare of trumpet blasts, or something similar, seems appropriate as a musical announcement of the beginning of worship.

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[69] Ibid, 79.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid, 79-80.
[72] Ibid, 81.

The cymbals, מְצִלְתַּיִם, *mezeltaim,* were used in pairs, as their dual noun form indicates.[73] They were made of bronze (1 Chron. 15:19) "and probably consisted of two metal plates with reflexed rims about 20-30 centimeters wide."[74] Delitzsch believes that the cymbals were used by the three choirmasters "instead of wands for beating time."[75] The Dutch musician and author D.W.L. Milo believes, similarly, that they were used to mark the rhythm.[76] According to Kleinig, however, "the cymbals were not used by the precentor to conduct the singing by beating out the rhythm of the song, but rather to announce the beginning of a song or a stanza in the song."[77] As such, they were "wielded by the head of the choir on ordinary occasions (1 Chron. 16:5b) or by the three heads of the guilds on extraordinary occasions (1 Chron. 15:19)."[78] Cymbals had an announcing function, says Kleinig, as is borne out by the use of הַשְׁמִיעַ, *hishmia,* to describe their function and significance. This verb means "to make a proclamation." "The clashing of the cymbals not only summoned the congregation to attend to the performance of the song, but also announced the LORD's acceptance of the sacrifice."[79] The function of cymbals, then, seems to be more diverse than Kleinig grants.

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[73] Ibid, 82; cf. E. Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar,* § 88.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 1:31.
[76] D.W.L. Milo, *Zangers en Speellieden: Bijdrage tot de Ontwikkeling van een Calvinistische Kerkmuziek* (Goes, Nederland: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1946), 58.
[77] Kleinig, *The LORD's Song,* 82.
[78] Ibid, 82-83.
[79] Ibid, 83-84.

7. Instruments of Song

This study now returns to a further discussion of musical instruments as vessels of song or instruments of song. The lyre (כִּנּוֹר, *kinnor)* and harp (נֵבֶל, *nebel)* were called instruments of song (2 Chron. 5:13) or instruments of God's song (1 Chron. 16:42).[80] Their purpose was "to accompany the songs of praise and thanksgiving to the LORD (1 Chron. 23:5; 2 Chron. 5:13; 7:6)."[81] Kleinig notes that "apart from the specialized use of the lyre in prophecy (1 Chron. 25:3), the lyres and harps were always played together at the temple."[82] There was a significant connection, not only between the musicians and their instruments, but also between the instruments and the songs they sounded forth:

> The musicians who played them would themselves have sung the song to their own accompaniment as was normally the case in the ancient orient. Hence they were called *meshorerim* (1 Chron. 9:33; 15:16, 19, 27; 2 Chron. 5:12, 13; 20:21; 23:13; 35:15a), which shows that they were both singers and instrumentalists. The song of the LORD was thus performed to the accompaniment of the stringed instruments. In fact, 2 Chronicles 29:28 goes so far as to imply that the divinely appointed instruments were themselves active agents in the production of sacred song. Because of its accompaniment by these instruments of song (1 Chron. 16:42; 2 Chron. 5:13), it was as if the song was 'singing' its words rather than being sung.[83]

J.H. Eaton, in a paper read at the Joint British-Dutch Old Testament Conference, held at Woudschoten, the Netherlands in 1982, confirms this association when he writes that "the sacred music in the Ancient Near East and in Israel is inseparable from singing. Instrumental

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[80] Ibid, 84.
[81] Ibid, 86.
[82] Ibid, 85.
[83] Ibid, 86. Sendry, *Music in Ancient Israel,* 431-432, makes the remark in this connection that the choice of instruments was by no means arbitrary and that according to a Talmudic saying, "the instruments were but to sweeten the voice."

playing may have provided preludes, intervals, and postludes, but the singing was central."[84] Clearly, there was an intimate connection between the playing of the instruments of song and the words that were sung.

The close connection between word and song implied by the foregoing is rather dubiously contested by Ulrich Leupold, who challenges what he calls "virtual dogma among liturgiologists" that "the principal purpose of music in Biblical worship is that of serving as a vehicle of the word."[85] He labels this negatively, as "a merely utilitarian connection between music and worship."[86] While one would not insist that music or musical instruments are *only* a vehicle of the Word, that does seem to be a primary function, as will be seen now.

8. The Functions and Powerful Effect of the Various Musical Instruments

The instruments had the following division of functions, according to Kleinig:

> The trumpets, which were instituted by the LORD through Moses, announced the presentation of the burnt offering at the temple and called for the prostration of the people. They served to proclaim the LORD's presence at the temple. The cymbals, which were instituted by the LORD through his prophets, announced the performance of the sacred song by the Levitical choir. They served to announce the LORD's acceptance of the burnt offering. The lyres and harps, which were also instituted by the LORD through his prophets, accompanied the singing of the LORD's song. They served to praise the LORD in the performance of the sacred song.[87]

At the same time, however, all the instruments used in worship had a common, unifying purpose. They combined all the music and song into קוֹל־אֶחָד, *qol echad*, that is "one voice" or one sound[88] (2 Chron. 5:13). This does not necessarily refer to unison singing, as some have argued, but rather "a synchronized mass performance, in which the instrumental

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[84] J.H. Eaton, "Music's Place in Worship: A Contribution from the Psalms," Oudetestamentische *Studiën* Deel XXII: *Prophets, Worship and Theodicy: Studies in Prophetism, Biblical Theology and Structural and Rhetorical Analysis and on the Place of Music in Worship* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984), 94.

[85] Ulrich S. Leupold, "Worship Music in Ancient Israel," *Canadian Journal of Theology* 15 (1969), 178.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Kleinig, *The LORD's Song*, 87.

[88] Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament.*

music combined with the singing to achieve a unified, harmonious effect,"[89] as alluded to earlier.

The functions of bringing God's people to remembrance before the LORD (Num. 10:10; cf. 1 Chron. 16:4-6) and proclaiming God's presence (2 Chron. 5:13), although initially confined to trumpets and cymbals, were also extended to all the instruments.[90] They were all instruments of power (כְּלֵי־עֹז, *kele oz*, 2 Chron. 30:21; 1 Chron. 13:8), as has already been noted, not because they were loud, in Kleinig's opinion, but because they were powerful in their effect upon the people, evoking the LORD's presence and power (cf. Ps. 21:13): "Both strength and joy come from him and are given to those who acknowledge his sovereignty in their praise (1 Chron. 16:27-28). So, since the musical instruments moved people to present their offerings to the LORD with thanksgiving (2 Chron. 30:22), they were powerful in conveying his power and joy to them through the performance of sacred song."[91] One need not create a dilemma between the actual loudness of the instruments and the powerful effect they produced.

Kleinig presents the following table as an aide to understanding the function, role, significance, etc. of the various instruments and their players, as he perceives them:[92]

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[89] Kleinig, *The LORD's Song*, 87.
[90] Ibid, 87-88.
[91] Ibid, 88-89.
[92] Ibid, 99. How precisely Kleinig arrives at certain details, such as the number of instruments used, is not clear.

	Trumpets	*Cymbals*	*Lyres and Harps*
Normal number	Two	One	Two harps and nine lyres
Institution	Moses	Nathan and Gad: David	Nathan and Gad: David
Players	Priests	Leader of the Levitical choir	Levitical musicians
Class	Sounding instruments	Sounding instruments	Instruments of song
Status	Holy instruments	Instruments of service	Instruments of service
Role	Proclamation *(hizkir)*	Announcement *(hishmiah)*	Thanksgiving and praise *(hoda/hillel)*
Ritual function	Announcement of burnt offering and of congregational prostration	Announcement of sacred song and call for congregational attention	Accompaniment of sacred song
Ritual significance	Proclamation of divine presence	Proclamation of divine acceptance of the sacrifices	Proclamation of divine goodness and generosity

9. The Appointment of the Levitical Musicians

Not only the musical instruments, but also the musicians, were prescribed by royal statute (1 Chron. 6:32; 2 Chron. 8:14; 23:18; 29:25; 35:15a). The Levites were given the charge of making music with instruments. As Kleinig points out,

> The Chronicler maintains that the most significant innovation of David in his organization of the choral service was the decision to appoint the musicians from the Levites (1 Chron. 15:16; 16:4; 23:5). This, however, was not done under his own authority but at the command of the LORD through Gad and Nathan (2 Chron. 29:25).... So important was their Levitical status for the Chronicler that he not only traced the Levitical origins of the three heads of guilds in 1 Chron. 6:33-47 but also repeatedly referred to the musicians as Levites (1 Chron. 16:4; 2 Chron. 5:12; 7:6; 8:14; 29:25; 30; 30:21-22; 31:2).[93]

The musicians were subordinate to the priests.[94] Yet, they belonged to those Levites who were most like the priests, similarly vested at the session of the ark (1 Chron. 15:27) and at the dedication of the temple (2 Chron. 5:12).[95] They also had to be sanctified for service like the other Levites: "Since the singers were involved in the performance of the sacrificial ritual

[93] Ibid, 91.
[94] Ibid, 93.
[95] Ibid, 93-94.

at the temple, they were considered holy and required to sanctify themselves for their ceremonial duties. They were thus not merely assistants to the priests but also ministers of the LORD who helped administer his affairs."[96] The principle which one would do well to heed in this respect is that the liturgical musician provides a holy service to God and his people that is, therefore, to be taken seriously.

10. The Participation of the Congregation in Making Music to the LORD

The appointment of liturgical musicians, to be sure, does not suggest that the congregation was passive. Rather, the musicians "addressed them directly and invited them to join in its praise (1 Chron. 6:8-13),"[97] says Kleinig, in agreement with the earlier discussion about the combination of instruments and voices. The call for the congregation to respond in worship, he too suggests, "was probably signaled by a fanfare from the trumpets accompanied by the other instruments which were therefore called instruments of praise (1 Chron. 23:5)."[98]

Leithart on the Davidic Liturgical Revolution

Another scholar who has made a significant contribution to the awareness and appreciation of the Davidic ministry of song is Peter Leithart, a Reformed pastor, theologian, and prolific scholar, who builds on Kleinig's approach.

1. The Relationship between Mosaic and Davidic Worship

Israel's worship during Moses' time was silent, Leithart contends. "Trumpets were blown over the morning and evening ascension offerings (Num. 10:9-10), but no other

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[96] Ibid, 94.
[97] Ibid, 95.
[98] Ibid.

liturgical music is explicitly mentioned."[99] But under David, the scene changes substantially, with far-reaching implications for worship:

> By contrast...the worship of the Davidic tabernacle was mainly worship in song, and the Levitical choir and orchestra was later incorporated into temple worship in the days of Solomon. When Christians sing hymns and psalms in worship, when we play organs and pianos, guitars, and trumpets, we are heirs of the Davidic "liturgical revolution."
>
> Because David's reign saw the inception of worship through song, the portions of the Bible that describe this period, especially Chronicles, provide more material on worship music than any other sections of the Bible. Attention to these passages will help to address both long-standing and contemporary debates about church music. Reformed liturgists have long debated the propriety of instrumental music in worship, for example, and there are no passages of Scripture more relevant to this question than those having to do with the Davidic tabernacle.[100]

Leithart asserts that "Chronicles presents David as a new Moses, who, with the great prophet, co-founded the worship of Israel," indicating a number of parallels between the two.[101]

2. The Relationship between Old and New Covenant Worship

Explaining why careful attention should be devoted to the Old Testament when one considers liturgical music, Leithart warns against the danger of Marcionism among those with a strict application of the Reformed regulative principle of worship[102] who defend a sharp separation between the Old Testament and the New. Jeffrey J. Meyers, pastor of Providence Reformed Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, addresses and challenges this incipient Marcionism along the same lines as Leithart.[103] By contrast, R. Scott Clark,

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[99] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 14.

[100] Ibid, 14-15. Leithart's observation about the abundance of biblical data related to liturgical song is certainly consistent with the Belgic Confession (Art. 7), which says that the whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in the Bible at length.

[101] Ibid, 25-27.

[102] Ibid, 15ff.

[103] Meyers, *The Lord's Service,* 304-314.

professor of church history and historical theology at Westminster Seminary in California, distinguishes sharply between Old and New Covenant worship. He argues that today's church is not permitted to pattern Christian worship on the temple, except metaphorically.[104] But Leithart convincingly defends his particular conviction that "the tabernacle of David was an historical prototype of crucial features of New Covenant worship"[105] with an extensive exegesis of Amos 9:11-12, the passage cited by James at the Council of Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts 15, arguing that the New Covenant worship was prophesied by Amos to be a "revival of the joyous worship of the Davidic tent."[106]

3. The Genealogical Hinge-Position of the Levitical Musicians

The genealogies offered in Chronicles, Leithart observes, place the Levites at the center of its structure, "the hinge on which the world-genealogy turns."[107] The Levitical musicians, in turn, are placed at the center of the Levitical genealogies. "Not worship in general, but specifically musical worship, worship in song, is the Chronicler's central concern. In the context of the genealogies, the focus on Levitical song is making a large point about the role of music in human history. Adam's race is created for song," says Leithart in agreement with earlier observations, "destined to become a great Levitical chorus. And song is the means (or one of the means) by which Adam's race will reach this end."[108]

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[104] R. Scott Clark, *Recovering the Reformed Confession: Our Theology, Piety and Practice* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2008), 244.
[105] Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 32.
[106] Ibid, 87.
[107] Ibid, 29.
[108] Ibid, 29-30.

4. The Ministry of Music and the Ministry of Defense

Dutch pastor C. André has argued from these genealogical lists in Chronicles, in fact, that the ministry of music was even more important and central to the well-being and protection of God's people than the army. "In Chronicles the list of musicians comes before the list of the army officers; a war could not be won if God was not praised first. The affairs of the ministry of defense were subordinate to the ministry of liturgy! The praise of God had to be learned and well organized, for the safety and well-being of the people was served by it."[109] The earliest strains of music in the Bible suggest that music for Israel was actually one way of doing war, or at least was an important aspect of it, as noted earlier. Routley has pointed out, likewise, that the "first sacred song" mentioned in the Old Testament, in Exodus 15, is essentially a war song accompanied by timbrels and dancing.[110] The literature review will return to this matter later.

5. Christological Character of Worship Foreshadowed by David

The Levitical priests were allowed to minister before the ark (1 Chron. 16:4, 6, 37)[111] in what Leithart believes was a one-room tent, the ark being the only piece of furniture.[112] This did not happen later in the temple (1 Chron. 25).[113] "The ark-shrine was thus not only a sign of Yahweh's access, but also symbolized the position of the Davidic king. As a new Moses, David could enter before Yahweh and speak 'face to face' with him; as a new Adam, the 'son' of Yahweh, David could enter to speak with his Father; as the anointed of the

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[109] C. André, "Does God Still Do Great Things For Us? (II)," *Diakonia* 5 no. 4 (June 1992), 109.
[110] Routley, *Music Leadership in the Church,* 54.
[111] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 35.
[112] Ibid, 33ff.
[113] Ibid, 36.

Lord, David could even take a seat, enthroned at his Father's right hand."[114] Here Leithart is hinting at the Christological character of worship that was already beginning to come into focus in the Davidic king, a pivotal aspect relating to musical instruments and musicians in worship that this study will return to later.

6. The Cosmic Character of the Davidic Liturgical Music

Under the Davidic administration, Leithart remarks in agreement with Kleinig, the scope of worship is cosmic. The psalm in 1 Chronicles 16 "is structured as a series of concentric circles: initially, Israel is called to praise (vv. 9-22), then the nations join in (vv. 23-30), and finally the entire cosmos rejoices at Yahweh's coming and his enthronement in Jerusalem (vv. 31-33)."[115] Connecting this with the role of the Levitical musicians, Leithart writes: "Like a pebble dropped into a pool, the song of Israel reverberates until it causes the seas to roar, the trees to sing, and the heavens to ring with praise. Just as the Levitical singers were at the center of the Chronicler's genealogies, so they sing now at the center of a universal choir."[116] Leithart and Begbie would agree with each other on the cosmological significance of the church's music. Musicians, with their creation-wrought instruments, invite all creation in turn to resound the praises of the Creator. In the words of Psalm 98:

> 1 Sing to the LORD a new song,
> for he has done marvelous things;
> his right hand and his holy arm
> have worked salvation for him.
> 2 The LORD has made his salvation known
> and revealed his righteousness to the nations.

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[114] Ibid, 37.
[115] Ibid, 49.
[116] Ibid, 49-50.

3 He has remembered his love
and his faithfulness to the house of Israel;
all the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.
4 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with music;
5 make music to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the sound of singing,
6 with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—
shout for joy before the LORD, the King.
7 Let the sea resound, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.
8 Let the rivers clap their hands,
let the mountains sing together for joy;
9 let them sing before the LORD,
for he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples with equity.

Eaton, too, makes this point when he writes that the temple music

> is intended as part of a greater symphony of heaven and earth. When the temple hymns proclaim that the Lord is now manifest as King, triumphant and glorious, they envisage a community of heaven and earth joining with them in the obeisance and music.... All above and below are to join in this music of praise; as Psalm 148 has it, the angels, the heavens and their lights, the heavenly ocean, earth, land and sea, fire, hail, snow, frost, wind, mountains, all peoples and entire peoples. Each being has its own music to offer; according to Psalm 98:5-9 men raise the sound of singing, lyres, trumpets, and horns, while the sea roars and rivers clap and mountains give ringing cry.[117]

The music of the temple animates the music of the universe. The implication of this for church musicians is that quality church music ought to be produced and promoted, with the support and encouragement of the church.

7. The Levitical Transportation Duties Expanded by David to Include Music

Leithart compares the tasks of the Levites during the times of Moses and David thus: Under the Mosaic system, Levitical 'ministry' consisted of guarding the sanctuary, aiding priests in their work, and assisting the people in their worship. Levites did not,

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[117] Eaton, "Music's Place in Worship," 99.

> however, sing or play musical instruments. Yet, David cites the Law as the basis for organizing the Levites as a musical troupe. *Sharat* or 'service' has been transformed or expanded to encompass musical performance.[118]

He goes into the exegetical semantics of this, looking at the Hebrew words *nasa', massa', 'abad,* and *'abodah.*[119] For the Levites,

> physical labor...has become musical performance, and David has applied the Law's requirement that Levites perform *'abodah* to a requirement that they sing.... The re-established *'abodah* of Yahweh's house includes the *'abodah* of instrumental and choral music....
>
> After the establishment of a permanent, fixed 'place' for the Lord's throne and his house, the earlier Levitical duty of physically 'transporting' and 'servicing' the tabernacle and its furnishings was transformed into a musical 'bearing' of God's name and throne. David applied and expanded the Levitical law, and in so doing radically revised the job description of the Levites, but he did this without cancelling the Mosaic laws of worship. If the Levites were responsible for the physical 'exaltation' of Yahweh's throne, they were also legitimately responsible for the verbal and musical exaltation of his name.[120]

The Levites had the task not only of carrying the temple and its vessels, but also of carrying the song of God's people with their musical instruments. Along these same lines, Eaton stresses that the playing of instruments and singing were both offered to the Lord: "they sounded for him, not for the pleasure of the congregation. Instrumental skill was not abstracted from the totality of worship."[121]

8. The Gradation of Musical Instruments and Musicians in Davidic Worship

With respect to the gradation of musical instruments used in Davidic worship, Leithart provides the following chart in relation to the gradation of persons and space:[122]

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[118] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 59.
[119] Ibid, 59ff.
[120] Ibid, 62-63.
[121] Eaton, "Music's Place in Worship," 103.
[122] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 67.

Status of Person	*Space*	*Instrument*
Priest	Holy Place	Trumpet
Levite (assisting priest)	Courtyard	Harp, Lyre, Cymbal, etc.
Israelite	Courtyard	Voice

9. The Functions of Musical Instruments and Musicians in Davidic Worship

According to the arrangement of the music ministry under David, music functioned as memorial song, Leithart remarks, reminding God of his promises to his people when they went to war against their enemies, as in Numbers 10:9, 10.[123] Furthermore, music functioned in conjunction with sacrifice, and was therefore to be done continually, *tamid* (1 Chron. 23:30-32):[124] "The ascent of sound before Yahweh delights him just as the ascending smoke soothes his anger."[125]

10. Liturgical Hermeneutics, the Regulative Principle, and Regulation by Analogy

In his final chapter, Leithart addresses the regulative principle of worship, and the matter of liturgical hermeneutics, namely, how Christians are to apply Scripture to worship.[126] He makes a case for regulation by analogy.[127] Leviticus, as the book which provides the most information about worship, needs to figure prominently in such a scheme. "The Levitical system provides a great deal of instruction for both the theology and practice of Christian worship," he writes.[128] Dalbey rightly observes in his doctoral study on the regulative principle that "issues of continuity and discontinuity as well as promise and

[123] Ibid, 68-69.
[124] Ibid, 71.
[125] Ibid, 72.
[126] Ibid, 101.
[127] Ibid, 102ff.
[128] Ibid, 106.

fulfillment are ongoing sources of discussion and debate in understanding the entire Biblical revelation God has given to his people."[129] The position of Clark, mentioned earlier, is an example of a strict application of the regulative principle of worship. On the premise that Christian worship can only be patterned on the worship of the temple metaphorically, Clark takes a position against musical instruments in worship[130] and asserts that their introduction into Reformed worship "marks a retreat from our confession on grounds that are less than compelling."[131] One may wonder, in light of the biblical and confessional framework laid out earlier, how Clark's position can be maintained.

In his discussion of this matter, Leithart returns to the connection between Old and New Testament worship: "In purely historical terms, if we want to understand the New Testament's descriptions of worship, we are forced to examine the Old Testament worship."[132] His fundamental claim is that "sacrificial worship did not cease with the coming of the New Covenant, but was transformed into a 'spiritual sacrifice' and 'sacrifice of praise.'"[133] Regarding the coordination of music with sacrifice, Leithart says the following: "Like the burned portion of a tribute offering, music was a 'memorial'; when the Levites played instruments and sang they were 'standing to serve' as the law required; their divisions were described as 'watches,' and their singing was considered a new form of 'labour,' analogous to the transport of the tabernacle during the Mosaic period."[134] Leithart invites further contemplation on the specific dimensions of liturgical music, drawing from the

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[129] Dalbey, "A Biblical, Historical and Contemporary Look at the Regulative Principle of Worship," 8.
[130] Clark, *Recovering the Reformed Confessions,* 244, 266-269, 289.
[131] Ibid, 268-269.
[132] Ibid, 107.
[133] Ibid, 108.
[134] Ibid, 109.

theology of worship music in Chronicles, where "the Chronicler applies the terminology of sacrifice to the offering of musical worship."[135] He observes that "'song' *(shir)* covers both instrumental and vocal music."[136] Furthermore, after David's time the vessels of the temple included musical instruments. "Men are voiced instruments of worship, and music from instruments is analogous to human singing."[137] As the literature review will show shortly, James B. Jordan makes a similar claim.

11. Instrumental Song the Norm in Scripture

Leithart goes on to suggest that "Scripture contains no examples of unaccompanied singing. Instrumental music in worship is perfectly admissible, and even prescribed."[138] André makes a similar point:

> The service of reconciliation demands festive music. All sacrifices without praise are meaningless and demand musical instruments (1 Chron. 16:6) to give the service of reconciliation added power and splendour (2 Chron. 5:1ff, 26,25ff; 30:21). There must be music in the life of God's people. It is a bad sign when musical instruments fall silent among God's people. It means that the service of reconciliation no longer makes an impression and that the refrain: "Praise the Lord for he is good" is no longer heard. And where that happens, death conquers life (1 Chron. 16:34; cf. Is. 24:8; Jer. 33:11; 7:34; Ezek. 26:13).[139]

While Leithart's claim that there are no examples of unaccompanied song in Scripture is debatable, there certainly is solid support for his assertion that God strongly desires instrumental music in worship. De Visser takes a mediating position when he writes:

> On the one hand, we have the abundance of calls in the Old Testament to praise the Lord with the accompaniment of musical instruments. This needs to carry weight in our reflection on Christian worship. On the other hand, it is true that there is no injunction in the New Testament to use musical instruments.... I suggest that two principles may be drawn from the Biblical evidence. First, congregational singing is

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[135] Ibid, 109-110.
[136] Ibid, 110.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid, 111.
[139] André, "Does God Still Do Great Things For Us? (II)," 109.

> essential in Christian worship. Second, the use of musical instruments is allowed, perhaps even recommended, but not essential.[140]

As will be seen later in this study as well, while there is strong biblical support for the first principle, it is harder to find support for the second.

12. The Church's Song is Christ the King's Song

Another important point that Leithart makes is that the church's song is the King's song (Ps. 22:22; Heb. 2:12): "Gathered for worship, united in song, the body of Christ, along with the Head, is Christ offering praise to his Father. The Greater David gives praise by our hand."[141] This awareness leads André to speak of Christ as "the liturgist of God (Heb. 9:11ff.)."[142] This song of the church, furthermore, is a means of seeking God, Leithart adds. [143] Since song is "a way of memorializing the Lord's name," according to the Chronicler, and since God is the audience of such music, "his musical tastes must be determined and determinative."[144] As such, liturgical music "does not merely ascend to the heavens as a memorial to a distant God, but calls on God to draw near. And when the praises of the people of God ascend, God descends in glory."[145] German church musician Gerhard Kappner also highlights this when he asserts that everything changed with the coming of Christ: "He accomplishes in his person the one, true and perfect service of God, and besides and beyond that there is no true and perfect service."[146] On this Christological aspect, too, Leithart and Begbie are in full agreement, as will be observed later—an aspect that is pivotal

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[140] Arjan de Visser, "Church Music in Calvin's Tradition (II)," *Clarion* 20 November 2009, 591.
[141] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 113.
[142] André, "Does God Still Do Great Things For Us? (II)," 111.
[143] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 113.
[144] Ibid, 116.
[145] Ibid, 117.
[146] Kappner, "The Church Service and Music," 244.

to understanding the task of musicians in the church's song as they make music before the Lord with their musical instruments.

13. The Impressive Power and Impact of the King's Song

The musical instruments that accompanied the song of God's people in the Old Testament, which "were not merely lyrical, meditative instruments like the harp and lyre, but also cymbals and trumpets,"[147] suggest "that the music was loud, vigorous and powerful," says Leithart. He goes on to assert, therefore, that "the church in song should sound like the glory-cloud that it is—the sound of many waters, a great voice that breaks the cedars of Lebanon, a sound that strikes fear in our enemies." [148] Dalbey remarks, in this connection, that the most common notation in the Psalms was *Selah*, "which is generally understood to call 'for a musical interlude by the instrumentalists, or a dramatic crescendo in sound,'"[149] as noted earlier.

This observation about the intensity of the church's song is best qualified by Kleinig's earlier comment that "power" does not simply or even necessarily refer to the *volume* at which the instruments were played but principally to the great *impact* the instruments had on the people. Leithart seems to grant this point when he says that since the church in song is also prophetic, it must also be edifying (1 Cor. 14:2-3), *creating* feelings of joy (2 Chron. 29:30b). [150] As a fruit of the Spirit, joy is something that has to be given by the Spirit, and the Spirit is pleased to use "instruments of power" (2 Chron. 30:21b) to

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[147] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 121.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Dalbey, "A Biblical, Historical and Contemporary Look at the Regulative Principle of Worship," 12.
[150] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 121.

communicate his power: "We sing 'until there is rejoicing' with 'instruments that produce power.' Through song the Spirit builds up the body of Christ and produces his fruit." [151]

14. Liturgical Music and the Eschaton

Leithart positions the Davidic liturgical administration in the context of Israel's eschatological movement through redemptive history, noting that "whenever Israel moved closer to her 'end,' her *'eschaton,'* Davidic music revived."[152] A similar observation is made by Dalbey, who says that

> singers accompanied by musical instruments led the praises of God at key points...when reform took place in the land. The instrumentalists and singers led the joyful worship and praise of God when Joash was announced as king during the attempted overthrow of David's line by the wicked Athaliah; when King Hezekiah purified the temple and restored proper sacrifices; and when King Josiah restored worship in the temple in his day (2 Chron. 23:13; 29:25-30; 34:12).[153]

For the church, which is being brought to her *Eschaton* in Jesus, Leithart claims, "song is an act of faith, eschatological faith that David's tent has been raised, that Zion is exalted as chief of the mountains, that the nations are streaming to worship there."[154] Dalbey points in the same direction when he writes, "Now as the fulfillment of temple sacrifices and worship, Jesus is to be worshipped and adored with great magnificence and grandeur. All that glorified God in temple sacrifice is now focused on the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ."[155]

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[151] Ibid, 123.
[152] Ibid, 129.
[153] Dalbey, "A Biblical, Historical and Contemporary Look at the Regulative Principle of Worship," 11.
[154] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 129-130.
[155] Dalbey, "A Biblical, Historical and Contemporary Look at the Regulative Principle of Worship," 14.

Jordan on the Coming of the Kingdom, Liturgical Warfare, and Musical Instruments

1. The Coming of the Kingdom and Musical Instruments

Jordan, Reformed biblical scholar, international theologian and founder of Biblical Horizons, points out the connection between musical instruments and the kingship. "The coming of the Kingdom," he avers, "requires music *with instruments*.... The enemy has kept the Church from this reality almost from the start."[156] He then demonstrates this from 1 Samuel 9 and 16:

> When Saul was anointed the first full king of Israel (cp. Judg. 9 for the first semi-king), the second thing that happened to him was that a group of prophets met him "with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre." They were prophesying, and Saul joined in with them (1 Sam. 10:5-10). The meaning of this was that Saul was to organize these prophets into a worshipping band and to write the prophetic words for them to sing. Saul failed to do this, and it fell to David to do it. Heretofore, however, there had been no mention of music in the worship of Yahweh, and no mention of music in connection with prophecy. With the coming of the kingdom was the coming of musical worship.
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> In 1 Samuel 16:13-23, when the Spirit departed from Saul and came upon David, the first thing we are told is that David played the harp and drove evil spirits from Saul. Here again, the mark of the coming of the king is the coming of music, musical instruments the playing of which banish evil spirits.[157]

The relationship between the coming to life of musical instruments and the arrival of the kingdom is plain.

Psalm 98, Jordan believes, is a kingdom-advent celebration in which singing with musical instruments figures prominently:

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[156] James B. Jordan, "Worship Music, Part 2: Musical Instruments," *Rite Reasons: Studies in Worship* 94 (October 2007).

[157] Ibid.

> Consider how singing and playing musical instruments are paired at the center of Psalm 98 (vv. 4-6), celebrating the arrival of the king:
>
> Shout joyfully to Yahweh, all the land;
> Break forth
> and sing for joy
> and make music.
> Make music
> **to Yahwheh**
> with the lyre;
> With the lyre
> and the voice of song.
> With trumpets and the sound of the ram's horn
> Shout joyfully before the King, Yahweh.
>
> Here we see three aspects of Temple praise. The first and last mentioned are the "breaking forth" of sounds from trumpets and ram's horns. The second and penultimate is singing. Around the center is making music by plucking lyres.[158]

The tradition of singing Psalm 98 during Advent and Christmas to celebrate the arrival of King Jesus is fitting indeed—all the more so with musical instruments!

With this insight into the association between the arrival of the king and the coming to life of musical instruments, Jordan locates the advent of singing with instruments within the context of redemptive history, too:

> Why are instruments kingly? Because they are of the land, not of the Garden of Eden. Like the free food of the Garden, man's original music was merely vocal. In order to make bread, one would have to go out of the sanctuary Garden area into the kingly Field/Land area, where the grain plants grew. Making bread requires wisdom and skill and tools. Bread is an 'advanced' form of the original fruit of the Garden, which came without work. Similarly, musical instruments are tools, the formation of which requires wisdom (the kingly attribute), and which are power-extensions of the original human voice.
>
> This is why, when the King comes, musical instruments also arrive.[159]

Music is one of the means by which man exercises his dominion over the creation that God has given him, moving out from the garden into the world as vice-regent or steward-king.

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[158] Ibid.

[159] Ibid. For more on the movement from the Garden of Eden to the land (or world), see James B. Jordan, *Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999), 143-163.

Jordan's explanation helps one to understand the relatively subdued sound of song with musical instruments during the Mosaic period, before the arrival of the *king,* and also during the captivity in Babylon, after the fall of the *kingdom.* God's people hung their harps on river-shore trees and held their tongues in Babylon (Ps. 137:2, 4) precisely because they were mourning the decline of the kingdom and the defeat of the king.

2. Liturgical Warfare and Musical Instruments

The link between song and war, mentioned in the previous section, is another aspect of musical instruments upon which Jordan elaborates when he says that *"musical instruments are weapons in the hands of God's holy warriors.* These weapons are to be used first of all in the arena—the time and place of special worship—because it is during this time that we are in closest encounter with the principalities and powers that can be defeated only by liturgical warfare."[160] Jordan illustrates the point he is making, with two examples from world history and culture:

> When the French state outlawed the singing of Genevan Psalm 68, it was because that powerful Protestant war-psalm was frightening the Catholics as the Protestants sang it all week long. And then the French had to outlaw whistling the tune.
>
> The film *The Mission* shows how music had a way of charming the savage natives of South America and opening them up to the gospel. There is no doubt in my mind that Christians marching through the streets of any Islamic country singing vigorous psalm chants and metrical psalms would utterly destroy Islam. The Church, however, has almost never used this weapon, as we shall see.[161]

Jordan then explains his depiction of musical instruments as weapons of worship with Psalms 144 and 149:

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[160] James B. Jordan, "Worship Music, Part 3: Weapons of Worship," *Rite Reasons: Studies in Worship* 95 (November 2007).

[161] Ibid.

> The overlap of holy war and liturgy is so complete that when David begins Psalm 144, "Blessed be Yahweh, my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle," we are not sure if the hands and fingers manipulate weapons or musical instruments, for the only activity that David himself engages in with his hands is to play the ten-stringed harp (v. 9).
>
> In a similar vein, Psalm 149 begins with a call for Israel to praise with dancing and sing with timbrel and lyre (v. 3), but then moves to "let the high praises of God be in their throat and a two-edged sword in their hand to execute vengeance on the nations...."[162]

There is good reason, indeed, that the Spirit reveals King David's *musical facility and flair* in Saul's company (1 Sam. 16) before telling of his *military pluck and valour* in the face of Goliath and the Philistines (1 Sam. 17), and then tops it off with the song of the women of Israel who welcomed David home from his *military victory* with their *musical psaltery*—"with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes" (1 Sam. 18). This ordering of events in this inspired account is anything but pure coincidence!

Jordan locates this link, too, between musical instruments and weapons of war, within the context of redemptive history:

> When Israel came out of Egypt, after several generations of being workers and artisans, but never warriors, they did not know how to fight. God fought for them. But God wanted them to learn how to make war. He gave them laws for war through Moses in Deuteronomy 20, and he says in Judges 3:1-2 that he left some of the Canaanites around so that the sons of Israel might be taught war. The book of Judges shows us what this means: that war is fought first by faith and then by wisdom and skill.
>
> War is linked with song in the Victory Song at the Red Sea (Exod. 15) and the Song of Deborah (Judg. 5). At a more personal level, the Song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2) is about victory over her enemies. These precede the coming of the kingdom and of the king and of the Psalms. (All three of these mighty war songs are linked with or are by women, and so is the Song of Mary.)[163]

He then combines the two aspects of the coming kingdom and war as related to instrumental music-making as follows:

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[162] Ibid.

[163] James B. Jordan, "Worship Music, Part 4: An Army of Lions," *Rite Reasons: Studies in Worship* 96 (March 2008).

> When Israel prematurely demanded a king, they wanted someone to "go out before us and fight our battles" (1 Sam. 18:20). So, when God sent Samuel to anoint Saul, it was such a leader that was being chosen—and indeed, to begin with, Saul did go out before the people and fight (1 Sam. 11). Later on, Saul lost his nerve and it was young David who "went out before" them and fought Goliath for them.
>
> Now we can go back to 1 Samuel 10 again. Saul has been anointed War King of Israel. The first thing that happens is that he is given bread, much as bread is brought to Yahweh at the Tabernacle. He is Yahweh's representative as political leader (vv. 3-4). But then immediately, as sign of his War-Kingship, Saul encounters singing prophets wielding musical instruments, the true weapons of war. It is as he joins with them that he is changed into another man (v. 6).
>
> Saul is to write War-Psalms for these prophets to sing, probably based in part on what they are already singing. He is to organize them into an army of psalm-warriors around the throne of God. He fails to do so, and it becomes David's job.
>
> The Psalms are war songs. They are written by the lion of Judah. They are sung by *the* Lion of Judah. They are not pretty songs. The Psalms are *roars!*
>
> It is as Saul joins with the instrument-wielding singing prophets that he is changed into another man (1 Sam. 10:6). Let me repeat: *It is as Saul joins with the instrument-wielding singing prophets that he is changed into another man (1 Sam. 10:6).* [164]

If the church is to be a kingdom-awaiting, valiant people, she does well to heed such pleas as Jordan here makes for vigorous, instrument-wielding music and song—music and song that both expresses and instills pluck and valour in worshippers of the King who is coming in victory!

Haïk-Vantoura and Sendry on the Music Academy Founded by David

1. The Davidic Academy of Music and Excellence

Another scholar who provides an extensive analysis of the biblical data is the French organist, teacher, composer, and music theorist, Suzanna Haïk-Vantoura, well-known among

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[164] Ibid.

biblical scholars for some rather provocative and original ideas about Israel's music.[165] "Never before the time of David and Solomon would the sacred music of the Hebrews have enjoyed such a perfect set of circumstances for development, nor would it ever again. Under these great kings it received the ultimate impulse which put it at the height of its special destiny."[166] This had to do, in large part, with the "veritable academy of sacerdotal music" [167] founded by David. A process of selection was involved in the recruiting the most skillful musicians (1 Chron. 25:7).

> But these master musicians were devoted to training beginners. "They were divided by lots into their [twenty-four] sections, the small as well as the great, the teachers as well as the apprentices" (1 Chron. 25:8). Thus these twenty-four sections of twelve masters each were filled out in their formation with persons of lesser training who were in training under the practiced ear of musicians well-versed in their art. It could not be more explicit.[168]

She concludes that "this could be the proof of nothing else but an obvious desire for excellence"[169] in Davidic music.

This claim of Haïk-Vantoura is supported by Sendry, who writes that the Levite who was placed as head over the singing, Kenaniah, was given this responsibility "because he was skillful at it (1 Chron. 15:22)."[170] Add to this the plausible suggestion made by Dr. Leonard R. Payton, at one time Chief Musician at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Austin, Texas: based on the observation that the chief musicians, Heman, Ethan, and Asaph, came from the three separate clans of Levi, he asserts that "musical skill and wisdom necessitated

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[165] Cf. Begbie, *Resounding Truth,* 318, note 43.
[166] Suzanne Haïk-Vantoura, *The Music of the Bible Revealed* (Berkeley, CA: Bibal Press, 1991), 22.
[167] Ibid, 114.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Sendry, *Music in Ancient Israel,* 433.

drawing from a whole tribe rather than a narrower pool, as was the case with the priest."[171] Music for God deserved the care and attention of the most gifted people available!

2. The Discriminating Choice of Musical Instruments and Musical Style

Furthermore, "the quality of music was also overseen in the choice of the instruments approved for use in religious celebration: instruments which David 'invented' especially for this purpose."[172] When Israel made use of the surrounding culture, Haïk-Vantoura writes, "it made choices. For example, it did not use (at least in religious services) gigantic instruments, like certain Egyptian harps that were only played by two persons."[173] Later, for example, "the prophet Amos (8th century B.C.E.) raged against the voluptuous people and their 'noisy songs' (Amos 6:5). So a distinction was made between healthy vigour and squalling."[174]

This assessment of Haïk-Vantoura sounds more plausible than the debatable one given by Routley and other scholars that there were "two sides" to Israel's music, namely the "folk," untamed, secular music of the prophets, contrasted to the tamed, liturgical, sacred music of the Levites, leaving one with the task "to harmonize the ecstatic and the disciplined."[175] The biblical evidence neither suggests nor supports such a bifurcation. On the contrary, by its very nature the music-making of the prophets was sacred.

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[171] Leonard R. Payton, "Congregational Singing and the Ministry of the Word," *Reformation and Revival* 7 no. 1 (Winter 1998), 128.

[172] Haïk-Vantoura, *The Music of the Bible Revealed,* 114.

[173] Ibid, 119.

[174] Ibid, 119-120.

[175] Routley, *Music Leadership in the Church,* 58.

3. The Distinctive Nature of the Davidic Musical Instruments

With respect to the nature of the musical instruments that were used by the Israelites, Haïk-Vantoura claims that the excavation of ancient instruments confirms the affinity for "the heptatonic (a seven-note, diatonic scale), which is the same as ours today."[176] Concerning the most common instruments that were used, the stringed variety, she surmises that it is hard to establish the difference between the *kinnor* (lyre) and *nebel* (harp). It is likely that they were quite small, since they could be carried in procession (1 Sam. 10:5). "Whatever the case, the *kinnor* and *nebel* were specially fashioned for the sacred service during the reign of Solomon, 'from algum wood' (2 Chron. 9:11), whereas cypress wood is cited for instruments used in open-air worship (2 Sam. 6:5). Their strings were of gut. We can deduce from all this that they had a timbre which was plain, yet sweet, even if not very brilliant."[177] Eaton confirms this when he suggests that "the sound of the smaller lyre would be light and in the higher range. To the psalmists it seemed *na'im,* 'sweet, lovely' (Ps. 81:3), but still with *higgayon,* 'resonance' (Ps. 92:4)."[178]

Cymbals, according to Haïk-Vantoura, probably "gently accented the prominent syllables in order to ensure the simultaneousness of the very large performing ensemble."[179] The "high sounding" or "loud sounding" cymbals mentioned in Psalm 150 were also sometimes used.[180] "With the exception of these particular cases," she insists, "there is no question whatsoever of there being a demonstration of brute force in the sacerdotal

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[176] Haïk-Vantoura, *The Music of the Bible Revealed,* 128.
[177] Ibid, 416.
[178] Eaton, "Music's Place in Worship," 87.
[179] Haïk-Vantoura, *The Music of the Bible Revealed,* 416.
[180] Ibid.

music."[181] Harold Best, organist and composer who for many years served as dean of the Conservatory of Music at Wheaton College, likewise asserts that "the lack of mention of a large percussion group as well as the absence of a corps of dancers might indicate an attempt to evade a similarity to pagan forms of worship."[182] There is no doubt, of course, that Israel's worship was different compared to the practice of the Phoenicians, among whom flutes and drums were used during the human sacrifices to Moloch, according to Plutarch's report, "so that the cries of the wailing should not reach the ears of the people."[183] If Haïk-Vantoura and Best mean to suggest, however, that the music produced by God's people was rarely loud, there is much evidence to the contrary, as already noted.

About the nature of the instruments used by the Israelites, Sendry claims that little is known: "Despite all the importance of music in the popular life of the ancient Hebrews, the Biblical chroniclers, unlike the writers of other nations, have not revealed to us anything about the nature of their coeval musical instruments.... Here and there an adjective, such as 'sweet,' 'pleasant,' 'solemn,' and the like, is all we learn about their sonorities."[184] Most of what is known is based on pictorial representations that come from the peoples surrounding the Israelites: "The pictorial representations in Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and partly also in Greek and Roman antiquities, furnish us a working basis for drawing reasonable conclusions about the instruments of the ancient Hebrews."[185] Besides this, "the etymology

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[181] Ibid.
[182] Best and Huttar, "Music in Israelite Worship," 228.
[183] Sendry, *Music in Ancient Israel,* 54-55.
[184] Ibid, 263.
[185] Ibid.

of Hebrew names of instruments affords valuable information as to their origin, and sometimes also their sound quality."[186]

4. The Particular Function of the Davidic Musical Instruments

Of all the instruments it can be said, according to Haïk-Vantoura, that they "had only the goal of *supporting the chorus or soloist.*"[187] She must mean by the soloist the voice of the one who was playing the instrument, since she has pointed out that never did anyone perform singly in any temple service.

5. The Impressive yet Discreet Impact of the Davidic Musical Instruments

Overall, the instruments, while producing an impressive effect, did not draw attention to themselves: "The instrumental ensemble attached to the sacred service was generally not very conspicuous (harps, lyres and cymbals); we know that David had deemed it good to create special instruments for this effect," Haïk-Vantoura claims. In some instances, though, there was an impressive output of sound: "At the inauguration of Solomon's Temple, the Chronicler reports no less that 120 trumpets—an impressive number!"[188]

At the annual festivals, too, the music created by the instruments would apparently be more exuberant than usual. Sendry cites the Mishnah as indicating that the flutes, for example, would only be played on twelve days of the year.

> The artistic implication of this regulation is obvious: the music of the regular services was solemn with largely subdued orchestral colours, as evidenced by the predominance of stringed instruments. But at the great joyful festivals, the general character of the accompanying orchestra has been enlivened by

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[186] Ibid. In the subsequent pages, Sendry goes on to enumerate all the instruments mentioned in the Bible, and attempts a description of each of them.

[187] Haïk-Vantoura, *The Music of the Bible Revealed,* 416.

[188] Ibid, 422.

> the added bright colours of pipes. The joyful mood created thereby among the masses of worshippers is attested in a rabbinical commentary: "The flute-playing, sometimes five and sometimes six days"—this is the flute-playing at the Bet ha-She'ubah.... "He that never has seen the joy of the Bet ha-She'ubah has never in his life seen joy."[189]

While Leithart's comment about the impressive volume of Israel's worship music may be brought into question by these latter comments and observations of Haïk-Vantoura and Sendry, one must avoid drawing firm conclusions about Old Testament practice from later, uninspired sources such as the Mishnah.

6. Ensembles of Musicians the Norm versus Soloists

The music that was performed by the Levites, according to Haïk-Vantoura, was "both *choral* and *instrumental.* In fact, there was no service of worship celebrated in the Great Temple without a minimum of 12 singers and 12 instrumentalists."[190] Sendry provides some related data from the Mishnah on the regulations that were in place, at least later in Israel's history, when he notes, for example, that twelve was the minimum number of singers permitted, whereas the maximum was unrestricted.[191] The number of instruments, however, was governed differently: "They played never less than two harps *(nebalim)* or more than six, and on never less than two flutes *(chalilim)* or more than twelve."[192] Also, "there were never less than two trumpets, and their number could be increased without end; there were never less than nine lyres *(kinnorot),* and their number could be increased without end; but of cymbals there was but one [i.e. one pair]."[193] As just mentioned, it is important to remember that whatever authority the Mishnah and other extra-biblical documents have, as human

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[189] Sendry, *Music in Ancient Israel,* 424-425.
[190] Haïk-Vantoura, *The Music of the Bible Revealed,* 126.
[191] Sendry, *Music in Ancient Israel,* 424.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.

historical accounts they are subordinate to the divine authority of Holy Scripture; as such they cannot be cited with ultimate authority.

The New Testament

Literature on musical instruments and musicians in the New Testament will now be considered. One of the foremost questions that arises is this: what is the church to conclude from the relative silence of the New Testament regarding musical instruments? This chapter has already noted Leithart's warning against a Marcionistic reading of the Bible, with its sharp separation between the Old and New Testaments. In other words, one must remember that in spite of what the New Testament *does not* say about liturgical music, there is a lot that the Old Testament *does* say which still applies in the New.

Jordan on New Testament Worship and Musical Instruments

1. Worship in Spirit and Truth (Jn. 4:21-24) and Musical Instruments

Jordan draws attention to the connection between Old and New Covenant worship, and its implications for instrumental music and song, with an explanation of Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman about who are true worshippers in John 4:21-24. One reads there, toward the end of the Lord's long conversation with her:

> [19] "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet.[20] Our fathers
> worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we
> must worship is in Jerusalem."
> [21] Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will
> worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.[22] You
> Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know,
> for salvation is from the Jews.[23] Yet a time is coming and has now come
> when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for
> they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.[24] God is spirit, and his
> worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth."
> [25] The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When
> he comes, he will explain everything to us."
> [26] Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

Jordan, in harmony with his previously mentioned explanation of the Old Testament data, explains this passage as follows:

> The fullness of the Spirit was at the Temple.... Also,...a God-given sound of music was at the Temple; out among the Gentiles that Breath-Spirit was nowhere as complete.... The healthy and wholistic worship is in Jerusalem and is of the Judahites, the royal tribe. The connection between Temple worship and royalty is most important, for after all it was David who wrote the texts and music of the Temple worship, and to David was given the plan for the first temple. Healthy and mature worship comes along with the coming of the kingdom.[194]

Here again, Jordan shows the link between instrument-rich, musical worship and the arrival of the King and his Kingdom.

Temple worship, Jordan continues, is Trinitarian and happens in union with Christ. The Father (first Person) seeks worshippers, as Jesus says (Jn. 4:23). Their worship "takes place in the Temple, in Spirit (the third Person) and Truth (the second Person).... Worshipping in Truth is worshipping in union with Christ, worshipping along with the Word of God. In the Temple, the Psalms were the worship texts. To worship using those texts was and is to worship in Truth, in union with Christ who sings all these texts."[195] Jesus is the Davidic King, the greater-than-David King, who from his throne leads the church in music and song.

> Worshipping in Spirit, according to Jordan, does not merely mean worshipping with a proper heart-attitude. The Spirit is the Breath of God and the Music of God.... The Spirit provides the environment of worship, gathering the people together as the Divine Matchmaker bringing the Bride to the Groom. That environment of glory is seen in the Glory Cloud Chariot [Ezek. 1]. It is an environment of great noise and music, which is duplicated in the Temple praise. The huge sound of music, with its trumpets, massed strings, cymbals, and other instruments, plus the voices of the Levites, flowed out over the mountains from the heights of Jerusalem. This is what worship in Spirit is.

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[194] James B. Jordan, "Worship Music, Part 1: Worship in Spirit," *Rite Reasons: Studies in Worship* 93 (September 2007).

[195] Ibid.

The words of Jesus, who inaugurated the New Covenant worship by his coming, are thus seen by Jordan in the context of the Old Covenant.

> Where the Spirit is, there is impressive music. As Jordan says,
> The Spirit is the out-loudness of the Word of God, and when the Spirit makes the Word out loud, he converts silent Word into vibrations that are always musical in nature. All sound is musical, one way or another.
> The nature of Worship in Spirit is nowhere better described than in the last Psalm:
> Praise Yah!
> Praise the Mighty One in his sanctuary!
> Praise him in his strong firmament!
> Praise him for his mighty acts!
> Praise him for his immense greatness!
> Praise him with blast of trumpet!
> Praise him with harp and lyre!
> Praise him with tambourine and dance!
> Praise him with strings and flute!
> Praise him with sounding cymbals!
> Praise him with clashing cymbals!
> Let everything that breathes praise Yah!
> Praise Yah!
> All these various ways of putting vibrations into the air are considered "breath." They are human versions of the Breath of God. If everything that has breath is to praise Yah, then it is preeminently the Spirit who does so. When Jesus speaks of worshipping in the Spirit, we should think of Psalm 150.[196]

2. The Spirit, Psallo, and Musical Instruments

In a related article, Jordan connects this understanding of worship in Spirit to Paul's teaching in Ephesians, when he says that Paul "is quite clear about the link between the Holy Spirit and music, including instrumental music: 'Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and Spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord' (Eph. 5:18-19)." Jordan comments on the earlier mentioned combination of *psallontes* with *adontes* by stating that while the verb *psallo* "often simply means 'sing,' its pairing here with

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[196] Ibid.

'singing' indicates its other and earlier meaning, 'plucking a musical instrument' or simply 'playing.'"[197] This seems the most plausible interpretation.

3. Revelation, the Arrival of the King, and Musical Instruments

Jordan combines his explanation of John 4 and Ephesians 5 with his earlier explanation from the Old Testament that the coming to life of musical instruments coincides with the magnificent arrival of the King: "The coming of the King in Revelation 4-5 is marked by music. The twenty-four 'elders' (archangels) *speak* their worship in chapter 4, but when the Lamb comes and takes the Book of Rule, they take up harps and sing in chapter 5. Again, the coming of the Kingdom is marked by singing with lots of instruments."[198] Musical instruments and musicians, in the rubric put forth by Jordan, serve a vital function in the worship of the Christian church, rendering it worship that is "in Spirit and in Truth."

Possible Reasons for the Relative Silence of Musical Instruments in the New Testament

There is another set of factors, furthermore, that needs to be remembered. Best remarks, for example, that "the primitive church was transient, temporarily quartered in homes, ships, beaches, and public squares. It often was hidden away from those who tried to stamp it out. It had no time for anything but the most simple musical devices and activities in its own worship."[199] Apparently the so-called gong in 1 Corinthians 13:1, according to William Klein, may not have been a musical instrument at all, since the Greek word χαλκός *(chalkos)* found there "is never used in any ancient text as a musical instrument."[200] Klein

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[197] Jordan, "Worship Music, Part 2: Musical Instruments."
[198] Ibid.
[199] Best and Huttar, "Music in New Testament Worship," 233.
[200] William W. Klein, "Noisy Gong or Acoustic Vase? A Note on 1 Corinthians 13:1," *New Testament Studies* 32 (1986), 287.

suggests that this instrument was more likely to be the ancient equivalent of the modern microphone or amplifier, an acoustic vase which was used to project voices and music.

However, Dr. Paul Jones, organist and music director of historic Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, points out that while there may be no direct references to the use of musical instruments in New Testament worship, this does not necessarily mean that they were not used.

> It is possible that instruments were included or used minimally because of their association with the pagan and idolatrous worship of the Romans and Greeks. This would qualify as a cultural or associative exclusion and not one prescribed by Scripture for all people, places and times. It is also possible that instruments fell out of use during the time of the Roman persecution of Christians. Trumpets and cymbals tend to draw attention, something that Christians in hiding would undoubtedly strive to avoid.[201]

Begbie suggests that the relative silence of musical instruments in the worship of the New Testament church is "in part because of the Pharisees' hostility to instruments, and in part because of the deep grief over the temple and the land, and over the loss of the Levitical musical ministry."[202]

Jones also makes an interesting comment on 1 Corinthians 14. Here Paul addresses the matter of order in worship, concerned that everything be done so that the church may be built up (v. 5). Jones writes,

> It is within this context that he says: "Now brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is being played? And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle (1 Cor. 14:6-8)?" Paul may simply be making an allusion within the realm of sound, but it is interesting at least that his discussion of order in worship refers to musical instruments. Whether or not this had anything to do with the first-century church's use of instruments in worship, it could

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[201] Jones, *Singing and Making Music,* 27-28.
[202] Begbie, *Resounding Truth,* 72.

> certainly by application point to the need for clarity and order when instruments are used.[203]

Furthermore, from the Greek word ψάλλω *(psallo)* used in Romans 15:9 and Ephesians 5:19, twice in 1 Corinthians 14:15, and once again in James 5:13, it could be argued that the New Testament says more about musical instruments in worship than is sometimes granted. Jones, in agreement with Jordan, explains that this word means "to strike the strings of an instrument," hence "sing to the accompaniment of a harp."[204]

The fairly common belief, as suggested by Clark for example, that the silence of musical instruments in the New Testament church is due to the influence of the synagogue, where musical instruments were purportedly not used,[205] is certainly not uncontested. As will be noted later, Sendry believes that the use of musical instruments, so much a part of Israel's life during the Davidic era, "survived in some form, if only in isolated instances."[206] Eaton, too, believes that the horn *(shophar)* "survived in rites of the synagogue."[207]

Instrumental Musical in the Revelation to John

Thomas Allen Seel, a United Methodist scholar and minister of music, has developed a thorough-going theology of music from the Revelation to John.[208] His findings, too, confirm that the relative silence of the New Testament concerning musical instruments in worship should not be overstated. After sharing his observation that "the Book of Revelation contains more instruments by name than the remainder of the New

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[203] Jones, *Singing and Making Music,* 28.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Clark, *Recovering the Reformed Confession,* 245.
[206] Sendry, *Music in Ancient Israel,* 182.
[207] Eaton, "Music's Place in Worship," 93.
[208] Thomas Allen Seel, *A Theology of Music for Worship Derived from the Book of Revelation* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1995).

Testament,"[209] Seel shows how in this final book of the Bible "instrumental solo and ensemble music...is reserved exclusively as a heralding device...or as accompaniment to singing."[210] Of Seel's final "Theology of Music for Worship," the third, fourth, eighth, and tenth points read as follows:

> (3) Instrumental accompaniments (specifically, timbres which blend with the human voice) are used to aid in the vocal response to the Godhead.
> (4) Instrumental heralding (specifically, the trumpet call) is used to announce the revelation of the Godhead....
> (8) A sense of unity *[koinonia]* is perceived via the dynamics of antiphonal and responsorial response by the various groups....
> (10) Music dramatically involves all the senses of humanity and all the collective resources available in all Creation.[211]

From an eschatological point of view, it is once again apparent, musical instruments can hardly be labeled ancillary to divine worship.

Musical Instruments and Musicians in Worship through History

Curt Sachs on the Chronology of Early Musical Instruments

Curt Sachs, one of the founders of modern organology—the study of musical instruments—and author of the standard-setting encyclopedia of musical instruments, the *Real-Lexikon der Musikinstrumente,*[212] provides a comprehensive historical study of musical

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[209] Ibid, 86.

[210] Ibid.

[211] Ibid, 123-127. He applies this "Theology of Music" to "Implications for Today's Church Musicians" (135-149). The appendices include "Song Texts" in the Book of Revelation as they have been identified by various authors and Seel himself (155-159), "References to Music" in the book (161-162), and "Contemporary Definitions for Worship" (187-192), all of which combine to make this a highly serviceable volume for the church musician, pastor and liturge.

[212] Curt Sachs, *Real-Lexikon der Musikinstrumente* (New York: Dover Publications, 1964). Cf. Howard Mayer Brown, "Sachs, Curt," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* Vol. 16, Stanley Sadie, ed. (Hong Kong: MacMillan, 1980), 374. There he writes: "Curt Sachs was a giant among musicologists, as much because of his astounding mastery of a number of subjects as because of his ability to present a comprehensive view of a vast panorama." He also mentions that Sachs "not only devised (together with Erich von Hornbostel) the classification scheme for instruments that has gained universal acceptance, but he also wrote the standard dictionary (the *Real-Lexikon*), the best history of instruments and a model catalogue of one of the world's greatest collections." Sachs also plays an important role in the classification of musical instruments, according to Klaus Wachsmann, "Instruments, classification of," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* Volume 9, Stanley Sadie, ed. (Hong Kong: MacMillan, 1980), 238. There Wachsmann writes, "of the scholarly systems

instruments, an essential component of this study. He first attempts to determine what motivated humans to develop musical instruments in what he calls the primitive and prehistoric epoch,[213] and proposes an admittedly "rough chronology"[214] of early instruments, divided into three strata.[215] He then attempts to reconstruct the history of musical instruments through Antiquity,[216] including an enumeration of the instruments of biblical times,[217] the Middle Ages,[218] and the Modern Occident.[219] For all three epochs, he also includes numerous sections on the organ, which he calls "the last step in the mechanization of human blowing."[220]

Sendry on the History of Instrumental Music in Relation to the Biblical Data

Sendry, a Hungarian-American conductor and composer frequently cited already in this study, is one of the foremost authorities on the history of music in Ancient Israel. He admits that the subject presents no small challenge, since "probably no other epoch of music history has been treated in a more diversified and contradictory manner than that of Ancient Israel."[221] He claims that a "close interrelation" existed among the ancient civilizations of the Near-East, and that music, too, had "common cultural undercurrents."[222] Among other things, "instruments of music were interchanged and knowledge of their use was

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that explicitly claim world-wide validity, the most comprehensively argued is that devised in 1914 by Hornbostel and Sachs."

[213] Sachs, *The History of Musical Instruments,* 25ff.
[214] Ibid, 64.
[215] Ibid, 60ff.
[216] Ibid, 67-203.
[217] Ibid, 105-127.
[218] Ibid, 207-293.
[219] Ibid, 297-453.
[220] Sachs, *The History of Musical Instruments,* 143.
[221] Sendry, *Music in Ancient Israel,* 31.
[222] Ibid, 35.

disseminated."[223] Musical instruments "were considered *objets de luxe* in Oriental life, and as such, they were among the most desirable articles of trade."[224] While few would deny that cultural undercurrents influenced Israel just as they did other nations in antiquity, Haïk-Vantoura's earlier comment should be remembered, that when Israel made use of the culture of the surrounding nations, it made discriminating choices, and did not blindly adopt the practices of its neighbours.

Sendry studies the music of Sumeria, Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Chaldea, Phoenicia, Phrygia, Lydia, Greece, and Canaan, exploring the various instruments probably used in these nations, the education that was offered to musicians, and the influences they might have exerted on the Israelites. Sendry believes that there was among the Israelites a "transformation of the music of the pagan Canaanite rites into the spiritually loftier music of the Jewish cult."[225] At the same time, Sendry suggests, Israel

> could never have created its own musical art, had it not been gifted by nature in matters musical. From Egypt and the desert, Israel brought to Canaan the joy of singing, a vivid phantasy in music, as well as a wealth of old songs. Its natural gifts must have been stronger than the music found in Canaan. This explains why Jewish music prevailed, despite its still undeveloped form. The musical culture of the Israelites, coming into bloom relatively soon after the conquest of Canaan, approximately in Samuel's time, shows that the Hebrews succeeded rapidly in overcoming pagan preponderance and in finding their own form of musical expression—a development leading within a remarkably short period to the highly organized musical institutions of David and Solomon.[226]

Sendry notes the remarkable fact that "the musical references in the Bible are almost the first records in the history of mankind that afford a comprehensive insight into the musical culture of a people of high antiquity"[227] and explains that "the Biblical authors took it for

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[223] Ibid, 35.
[224] Ibid, 35.
[225] Ibid, 59.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid, 60.

granted that the people were thoroughly familiar with musical matters, so that they considered it unnecessary to indulge in long descriptions and minute details."[228] He mentions the beginning of the Old Testament, to which this chapter referred earlier:

> There music is mentioned as being one of the three fundamental professions: that of the herdsman, of the metal forger, and of the musician (Gen. 4:20-22). Even in those archaic times, music was looked upon as a necessity in every day's life, enjoying equal rights with the other two primitive professions, as a beautifying and enriching complement of human existence.[229]

As noted earlier, music occupied an important place in the world God created right from the start.

Quasten on Instrumental Music and Worship in Antiquity

Instrumental Music and Veneration of the Gods

In a study translated into English for the National Association of Pastoral Musicians of America, French historian of religions Johannes Quasten also offers one of the most comprehensive surveys of music and worship in antiquity.[230] Music was seen in antiquity, he asserts, as a means of pleasing the gods. "In keeping with this is the explanation Horace gives for sacred music when he calls it a means of appeasement which, like the fragrance of incense and the blood of animals, disposes the gods to act favourably toward men."[231] This idea is also articulated, for example, by Censorinus:

> Music is pleasing to the gods, for if it were not pleasing to the gods, then the public games which are intended to placate the gods would not have been instituted; the flutist would not attend prayers of supplication offered in sacred shrines; the triumph in honour of Mars would not be celebrated to the accompaniment of flute music or the trumpet's blast; the cithara would not be dedicated to Apollo, nor would flutes and other instruments be dedicated to the Muses; flutists would not be permitted to perform in public, to eat on

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[228] Ibid.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Johannes Quasten, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (Washington, DC: National Association of Pastoral Musicians, 1983).
[231] Ibid, 1.

> the Capitol or to roam about the city on the Ides of June, drunken and disguised in whatever they choose to wear.[232]

The sarcophagus of Hagia Triada indicates, Quasten observes, that among the Greeks "flutes were played at sacrifices as early as 1300 BC."[233] Actually, "the link between music and cult is even more apparent among the Romans than among the Greeks.... Cicero reports that the law of the Twelve Tables required that the veneration of the gods be accompanied by singing and the music of lutes and flutes. Accordingly, in nearly every sacrificial representation a flutist is portrayed."[234] The importance of this link between music and cult in Roman ritual "has its clearest expression in the so-called *tubilustrium.* This is a feast which had as its purpose the purification or cleansing of the trumpets used at sacrifices."[235]

Instrumental Music, Strange Noises, and Demons

According to what can be gathered from the writings of Pliny, Plutarch, and Cicero, writes Quasten, "flute playing at the sacrifices was aimed at the elimination of disturbances from strange noises.... The sound of the flute and of the tambourine was supposed to cover the screams of the children sacrificed to Saturn so that they would not be heard. Therefore it was most important that music played during a sacrifice not be interrupted."[236] Quasten believes there was a deeper reason for the loud music produced, namely "the belief of the ancients in the magical power of music—and of noise—to drive away the demons."[237] This was done by means of cymbals and bells. "According to Plutarch," furthermore, "the

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[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid, 2.
[234] Ibid, 4.
[235] Ibid, 6.
[236] Ibid, 15.
[237] Ibid, 15-16.

inhabitants of Argos blew trumpets on the feast of Dionysos so as to call the god up from the depths of the river Lerne for the sacrifice."[238]

Instrumental Music, Religious Ecstasy, and Sumptuous Revelry

In the mysteries, writes Quasten, initiates were apparently brought to religious ecstasy through the music of instruments, particularly the Phrygian flute.[239] To the accompaniment of tambourines, cymbals, rattles, horns, and flutes, apparently the worshippers of Cybele, "in a state of enthusiasm approaching madness, would untie, pull and shake their hair and then lash themselves with whips."[240] Quasten here cites Catullus, who tells the story of a young servant of the goddess calling to his companions,

> Come, follow me to the house of Phrygian Cybele, to the grove of the Phrygian goddess! There sounds the clang of cymbals, there echo the tambourines, there the Phrygian flutist plays upon his deep-sounding, twisted reed. There the Maenads, adorned with ivy, toss their heads wildly. There they celebrate the holy rites to the sound of shrill screams. There the roving band pursues the goddess. There would we also hurry with quickening dance-step![241]

The pagan use of music and instruments was in sharp contrast to what was permissible among the Jews. Philo, a Hellenistically educated Jew, wrote about the Jewish "Feast of Fasting," the Day of Atonement:

> Now, many a man from the false religions, which are not ashamed of criticizing what is noble, will ask, how can there be a feast without carousing and overeating, without the pleasant company of hosts and guests, without quantities of unmixed wine, without richly set tables and highly stacked provisions of everything that pertains to a banquet, without pageantry and jokes, bantering and merry-making to the accompaniment of flutes and citharas, the sound of drums and cymbals and other effeminate and frivolous music of every kind, enkindling unbridled lusts with the help of the sense of hearing? For in and through the same [pleasures] those persons openly seek their joy, for what true joy is they do not know.[242]

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[238] Ibid, 17.
[239] Ibid, 36.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Ibid, 52.

The contrast between the sumptuous pagan use of music and musical instruments, and that of God's people, could hardly be greater.

The Sensuous Use of Musical Instruments Criticized by the Philosophers

Even among philosophers, however, the sensuous use of musical instruments was criticized to the extent that the concept of spiritual sacrifice was developed, Quasten asserts. A certain Apuleius of Madaura even "distinguished visible gods, the heavenly bodies, and invisible gods." He "considered music unworthy of the highest god."[243] Celsus, too, as cited by Origen, warned against those who have too great a fleshly pleasure in "a desire for blood, the smell of fat, sweet sounds and other such things."[244] Quasten comments,

> The notion expressed in these words of Celsus was not new. It had long been thought that music pertained only to the lowest gods, the demons, and that the highest divine being had no need of melodies and sounds. Theophrastus of Eresos (c. 373-287 B.C.), as Porphyry tells us, had already hinted at something similar: he had allotted the sacrificial victims to the spirits of the third rank, the demons, the sonorous offering of hymns to the spiritual powers of the second rank, but only the silent offerings of the intentions to the highest god.[245]

One need not go as far as Quasten in agreeing with O. Casel that "early Christianity adopted the concept of the 'spiritual sacrifice' from pagan philosophy and applied it to its own liturgy."[246] There is no doubt, however, that Christians were not the only ones to react to the sensuous use of musical instruments among pagans. In this context, Paul's teaching concerning the music-making of Christians in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 makes good sense. "In both passages he adds what seems to be a warning against a purely aesthetic pleasure in singing: such singing must take place 'in our heart.' This articulates well the

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[243] Ibid, 53.
[244] Ibid, 54.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid, 59.

primitive Christian position on liturgical singing," Quasten claims. "Only insofar as singing is the expression of an inner disposition of devotion does it have any meaning."[247] This comment concerning Paul's teaching, though true, must be tempered with the statement presented earlier in this study, namely, that Paul is not addressing the inner disposition alone.

Christian Song versus Pagan Clamour

Quasten then cites the *Oracula Sybillina,* which probably appeared around 180, where Christian song is sharply contrasted with pagan sacrifice, and where aversion to pagan cultic music is expressed: "[Christians] do not pour out in libation upon the altar the blood of the victims; no kettle drum is heard, no cymbal, no many-holed flute, instruments full of senseless sounds, not the tone of the shepherd's pipe, which is like the curled snake, nor the trumpet, with its wild clamour."[248] Clearly Christians had a distinct musical culture which contrasted greatly with that of the pagans.

The Early Church Fathers, Frivolous Music, and God's Concession to Israel's Weakness

This historical setting helps one better understand the strong words of the early church fathers on music in general and on musical instruments and those who played them in particular.[249] Concerning the evils of "the music of the idols," Clement of Alexandria wrote in *Paedagogus*,

> When a man occupies his time with flutes, stringed instruments, choirs, dancing, Egyptian krotala, and other such improper frivolities, he will find that indecency and rudeness are the consequences. Such a man creates a din with cymbals and tambourines; he rages about with instruments of an insane cult.... Leave the syrinx to

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[247] Ibid.

[248] Ibid, 60.

[249] David W. Music, *Instruments in Church: A Collection of Source Documents* (Kent, England: Scarecrow Press, 1998) is a helpful resource which provides a brief survey of what some of the early church fathers said about musical instruments. It also covers the Bible, the Medieval Era, the Reformation, and the eighteenth to twentieth centuries.

> shepherds and the flute to superstitious devotees who rush to serve their idols. We completely forbid the use of these instruments at our temperate banquets.[250]

In this section to which Quasten refers, Clement cites Paul's warning in Romans 13:12-13, where Paul admonishes Christians to put aside the deeds of darkness, and to "behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy." A reading of this section of the *Paedagogus* gives a keen sense of the pagan revelry which Clement and the other early church fathers so despised.[251]

Likewise, Routley recounts how Ambrose also fulminated against the evils of instrumental music:

> And so it is justly said, "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning and follow strong drink" (Isa. 5:11), when they ought to be rendering praises to God; for this should they rise before dawn and run to meet the Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2), who visits his own and arises upon us if we have bestirred ourselves for the sake of Christ and not of wine and luxury. They are singing hymns—will you cling to your harp? They are singing psalms; what business have you with a psaltery and drum? Woe indeed to you for abandoning your salvation and choosing death. (Deut. 30:19)[252]

Theodoret of Cyrus, furthermore, cites Amos 5:23 in support of the notion, says Quasten, that "God had permitted the Israelites a lesser evil in order to prevent a greater one. During her long sojourn in Egypt, Israel had learned and adopted the wicked customs of the Egyptians." God was simply allowing them the use of instrumental music as they gradually separated themselves from the worship of idols.[253] Chrysostom purportedly agreed with this notion that instrumental music was God's concession to Israel's weakness, stating that the Jews "played these instruments in the past on account of the dullness of their understanding

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[250] Quasten, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity,* 61.

[251] Clement of Alexandria, "Paedagogus," *The Ante-Nicene Fathers,* Vol. 2, *Fathers of the Second Century,* Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 2:4.

[252] Routley, *The Church and Music: An Enquiry into the History, the Nature, and the Scope of Christian Judgment on Music* (London: Duckworth, 1967), 238.

[253] Quasten, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity,* 63-64.

and so that they might be drawn away from idols. As [God] conceded sacrifices to them, so he also allowed this, for he accommodated himself to their weaknesses."[254] Quasten agrees with this conjecture of the church fathers: "The magnificent ceremonial of the pagan religions with which Israel was surrounded demanded some concessions to the sensuousness of the Jewish people so that there would be no danger of their giving in to an idol worship more pleasing to the eye and ear than their own cult. Thus the explanations of Theodoret and Chrysostom appear to be fully justified."[255] It is questionable, however, whether this conjecture can be proven. Dr. Klaas Schilder, an important and highly-regarded spiritual ancestor to the Canadian Reformed Churches, characterizes the position of Chrysostom and Theodoret as seriously lacking, both from a philosophical and a biblical-theological perspective.[256]

The Actual Musical Practices of the Patristic Church

Whether the theory most widely accepted by the early fathers always resulted in a compatible practice is not certain. Clement of Alexandria allowed for the cithara and lyre at meals, including the community meal of Christians, the *agapē*. "Since the lyre and cithara were tolerated at the *agapē* in Clement's time," writes Quasten, "the supposition that they were used in the liturgy appears justified, for in this time the liturgy was still very closely bound up with the *agapē*." [257] A comment by Hilary of Pontiers also nudges in this direction. In his introduction to his commentary on the Psalms, "he distinguishes four techniques of

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[254] Ibid, 64.

[255] Ibid, 65.

[256] Klaas Schilder, *Om Woord en Kerk: Preeken, Lezingen, Studiën, en Kerekbode-Artikelen,* Vol. 2, C. Veenhof, ed. (Goes, Nederland: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1949), 91. In this article, Schilder remarks on the irony of those who embrace the use of the organ in worship without relinquishing the philosophy that opposed it.

[257] Quasten, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity,* 73.

music in worship—*canticus,* which is unaccompanied singing, *psalmus,* instrumental playing, *canticus psalmi,* antiphony in which the instrument leads, and *psalmus cantici,* antiphony in which the singing voices lead."[258] Also, in his Commentary on the Psalms, Basil mentions the spiritual quality of the psaltery, "in as much as it produces sound not from its lower but from its upper parts,"[259] and therefore considers it the appropriate instrument for music in worship.[260]

Even though the beauty of the human voice was far preferred over lifeless, soulless instruments, silence was still considered better than both: "No cithara, no flute, or any other musical instrument produces such a [lovely] sound, which one can perceive, than when those holy ones [the monks] sing in deepest silence and solitude,"[261] said Chrysostom. If Chrysostom is to be taken literally, which is likely according to Quasten, then even "singing and melody were conceived of as a concession to man's weaknesses."[262] A closer look at this passage does not confirm this interpretation of Quasten, for Chrysostom speaks there about how these monks "sing the prophetic hymns with much harmony, and well composed tunes."[263] Chrysostom's point, then, is that unaccompanied singing is far lovelier than the sound of instruments.

Musical Instruments and the Allegorical Apologetic in the Patristic Church

How, then, did the church fathers reconcile their opposition to musical instruments with the Bible's frequent mention of them? The allegorical approach, it seems, served well

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[258] Routley, *The Church and Music,* 46.
[259] Ibid, 48.
[260] Ibid, 236.
[261] Quasten, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity,* 92.
[262] Ibid, 93.
[263] Chrysostom, "Homily 14 on 1 Timothy," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Vol. 13, *Saint Chrysostom,* Philip Schaff, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 456.

here, with one of the most outstanding examples being found in Eusebius's commentary on Psalm 92:2-3:

> This passage bids us rehearse the divine truth at the break of day.... For when in days gone by the peoples of the Circumcision worshipped God by types and figures, it was appropriate that they should sing the praises of God with psaltery and harp, and indeed that they should show forth that same praise on the Sabbath day.... Now when we read this in the Apostle—"To be a Jew is not be a Jew outwardly; to be circumcised is not to be circumcised outwardly, in the flesh. He is a Jew indeed who is one inwardly; true circumcision is achieved in the heart, according to the spirit, not the letter of the law, for God's, not man's approval" we can say that we are this fashion "Jews inwardly" when we sing God's praise in spiritual songs, with a living psaltery and an ensouled harp. The measure of God's acceptance of the singing of a Christian congregation, and of his delight in it, is the unanimity of mind, passion and sentiment, the unity of faith and piety with which we sing together the melodies of our praises. The same apostle commands us to exhort one another in "psalms and hymns and spiritual music" (Eph. 5:19); here then is the spiritual psalmody, the spiritual harp in our worship. Another line of thought shows the harp as the symbol of the whole body, by whose movements and actions the soul pours out worthy praise to God. The ten-stringed psaltery, by the same token, is the worship of a sanctified spirit through the five senses of the body and the five senses of the soul; upon which the same apostle says "I mean to use mind as well as spirit when I offer prayer, use mind as well as spirit when I sing psalms" (1 Cor. 14:15).[264]

Another striking example of such an allegorical interpretation of instrumental music comes from Origen, in his commentary on Psalm 150:

> The harp *(cithara)* is the active soul, which is moved by Christ's commands. The timbrel *(tympanum)* is the mortification of natural desire by moral rectitude. The dance *(chorus)* is the unison of rational souls speaking the same words together, forgetting their differences. The stringed instruments *(chordae)* represent the agreement between the music of instruments and the music of virtue. The organ *(organum)* is the Church of God, consisting of souls contemplative and active. The 'loud' cymbal *(benesonans)* is the active soul made prisoner by the desire for Christ; the 'high-sounding' cymbal *(iubilationis)* is the pure mind informed by Christ's salvation.[265]

Origen's commentary on Jeremiah 5:5 offers another striking example: "Divine speech, bracing the hearer and equipping him for war against the unruly passions and against the

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[264] Routley, *The Church and Music*, 234-235.
[265] Ibid, 232.

enemies of virtue," writes Origen, "equipping him also for the heavenly feast (for it is understood in both senses) is always the interpretation of the trumpet in Scripture."[266]

Possible Influences on the Patristic Church

Whether or not the church fathers adequately resolved the strain between their theory of unaccompanied singing and the Bible's support of musical instruments in worship, there seems to have been two streams of influence on the early Christian church, according to Haïk-Vantoura: the music of the synagogue which was guided by "paralyzing principles" determined by "exclusive traditions" and the "licentious kinds of music of diverse origins."[267] She suggests that "this is why Clement of Alexandria felt constrained to forbid an adulterated form of Christian monody...'belonging to those men who placed flowery wreaths on their heads and who enjoyed hearing songs of the style of debaucherous women.'...'Strangled' by these strict measures and others," she writes, "the song of the church was purified."[268] Yet, according to Sendry, as mentioned earlier, "the playing of instruments in the synagogue survived in some form, if only in isolated instances."[269] The validity of Haïk-Vantoura's claim, again, is open to debate.

The Influence of the Patristic Church on the Sixteenth Century Reformers

Routley summarizes the position of the Patristic church on church music by saying that "its writings and decisions show a keen awareness of the power of music and a desire to guard Christians against music that will damage their faith."[270] This stance of the early church also goes a long way in explaining the position of those leaders of the Reformation of the

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[266] Ibid.
[267] Haïk-Vantoura, *The Music of the Bible Revealed*, 141.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Sendry, *Music in Ancient Israel*, 182.
[270] Routley, *The Church and Music*, 55. See also Old, *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship*, 265-266.

sixteenth century, such as Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin, who opposed the use of musical instruments in worship.

The Sixteenth Century Reformers on Musical Instruments and Musicians in Worship

As the prolific Presbyterian pastor, theologian, and patristic scholar Dr. Hughes Oliphant Old has written, "The Reformers had no objection to music as long as it was reverent and simple enough for the people to sing and understand. It was against overly complicated and sumptuous music that the Reformers objected."[271] Zwingli's disapproval of music in worship remains largely unexplained, according to Old, and he never tried to justify it on theological grounds.[272]

Calvin on Musical Instruments and the Old Testament Shadows

From Calvin's point of view, writes Old,

> Musical instruments belonged to the worship of the Old Covenant and were part of the shadows of things to come which passed away with the coming of Christ. The elaborate musical settings of the papal church, Calvin saw as an imitation of the temple liturgy. The purpose of music, as he understood it, was to inspire the prayer of the Church, especially the prayer of praise and thanksgiving. The music was to remain simple, so that it might remain the praise of the whole congregation. The musical accompaniment was to be definitely secondary to the texts that were sung.[273]

Old believes that of all the Protestant Reformers, Calvin was the most clearly influenced by the early church fathers, especially Chrysostom and Augustine, in his understanding of church music.[274]

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[271] Old, *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship,* 60.

[272] Ibid, 263. See also Lukas Vischer, ed., *Christian Worship in Reformed Churches Past and Present,* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 12; Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 368; and Payton, "Congregational Singing and the Ministry of the Word," 123, where he writes: "Zwingli owed much of his reforming spirit and treatment of Scriptures to Erasmus who held a 'radical antimony between flesh and spirit, form and content.' Let us call this what it is, namely, Gnosticism."

[273] Old, *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship*, 265.

[274] Ibid, 265-266.

In his treatment of the subject, Robert Stevenson mentions that Calvin, in a sermon on 1 Samuel 18, said this from the pulpit:

> It would be too ridiculous and inept imitation of papistry to decorate the churches and to believe oneself to be offering God a more noble service in using organs.... All that is needed is a simple and pure singing of the divine praises, coming from the heart and mouth, and in the vulgar tongue.... Instrumental music was tolerated in a time of the Law because the people were in infancy.[275]

Calvin followed the same sort of argument in his commentary on Psalm 92:

> In the fourth verse, he more immediately addresses the Levites, who were appointed to the office of singers, and calls upon them to employ their instruments of music—not as if this were in itself necessary, only it was useful as an elementary aid to the people of God in these ancient times. We are not to conceive that God enjoined the harp as feeling a delight like ourselves in mere melody of sounds; but the Jews, who were yet under age, were astricted to the use of such childish elements. The intention of them was to stimulate the worshippers, and stir them up more actively to the celebration of the praise of God with the heart. We are to remember that the worship of God was never understood to consist in such outward services, which were only necessary to help forward a people, as yet weak and rude in knowledge, in the spiritual worship of God. A difference is to be observed in this respect between his people under the Old and under the New Testament; for now that Christ has appeared, and the Church has reached full age, it were only to bury the light of the Gospel, should we introduce the shadows of a departed dispensation. From this, it appears that the Papists, as I shall have occasion to show elsewhere, in employing instrumental music, cannot be said so much to imitate the practice of God's ancient people, as to ape it in a senseless and absurd manner, exhibiting a silly delight in that worship of the Old Testament which was figurative, and terminated with the Gospel.[276]

Calvin even goes so far as to pronounce, in his commentary on Psalm 71,

> To sing the praises of God upon the harp and psaltery unquestionably formed a part of the training of the law, and of the service of God under that dispensation of shadows and figures; but they are not now to be used in public thanksgiving.... [Musical instruments] are banished out of the churches by the plain command of the

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[275] Robert M. Stevenson, *Patterns of Protestant Church Music* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 14.

[276] John Calvin, *Commentary on the Psalms,* Vol. 2, James Anderson, transl. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981).

> Holy Spirit, when Paul, in 1 Corinthians 14:13, lays it down as an invariable rule, that we must praise God, and pray to him only in a known tongue.[277]

Dr. Arjan de Visser, professor of Diaconiology and Ecclesiology at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary also discusses Calvin's position on musical instruments in worship.[278] He summarizes Calvin's position against the use of musical instruments in worship as follows.

> First, Calvin argues that musical instruments belong to the shadows of the Old Covenant that have since been fulfilled in Christ.... Second, Calvin argues that instrumental music is not fitting for the sober kind of worship which is pleasing to God.... In Calvin's thinking simplicity goes together with 'intelligibility.' Whatever is done in worship must be simple and understandable so that the whole congregation may be edified. In this context Calvin refers to the warnings of the Apostle Paul against speaking in tongues (1 Cor. 14).[279]

In his evaluation of Calvin's position de Visser writes, "We confess that the sacrifices and ceremonies and symbols of the law have ceased with the coming of Christ, and that all shadows have been fulfilled (BC Article 25). At the same time we believe that teaching and singing and other elements of Old Covenant worship have not been abolished but continue to play an important role in New Covenant worship."[280] These two elements were noted earlier in this chapter. Singing, he continues, "was fitting in temple worship in Jerusalem and it continues to be fitting in the worship of the congregation of Christ (the temple of the Holy Spirit). If singing is appropriate in both covenants, why would instrumental accompaniment not be?"[281] With respect to Calvin's use of 1 Corinthians 14, de Visser

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[277] Ibid.

[278] Arjan de Visser, "Church Music in Calvin's Tradition (I)," *Clarion* 6 November 2009, 568. He spoke on this topic at the annual convocation evening of the seminary on September 11, 2009.

[279] de Visser, "Church Music in Calvin's Tradition (II)," 590.

[280] Ibid.

[281] Ibid.

mentions that Schilder found Calvin's interpretation "too strange"[282] and argues that "instrumental music is something totally different" from the speaking in tongues that Paul is discussing there, since instruments are "intended to support and enhance the singing of God's praises. It does not take the place of 'intelligible' speaking or praying, but rather supports it."[283] This interpretation of Schilder is in harmony with our earlier comments on the other Pauline passages related to singing.

The Positions of Calvin and the Early Church Fathers on Instrumental Music Compared

While Calvin was undoubtedly influenced by the patristic view on musical instruments, Calvin Stapert, professor of music at Calvin College, claims that Calvin did not express the same vehemence against musical instruments as the church fathers did:

> He objected to instruments in communal worship but his objection did not go beyond that. In his commentary on Psalm 33 he merely remarked that "if believers choose to cheer themselves with musical instruments, they should, I think, make it their object not to dissever their cheerfulness from the praises of God." That is a long way removed, for example, from the fourth-century Alexandrian canon, which legislated: "When a reader learns to play the cithara, he shall be taught to confess it. If he does not return to it, he will endure his punishment for seven weeks. If he persists in it, he must be discharged and excluded from the church."[284]

Evidence for such a moderate position on Calvin's part, however, is certainly not widespread in his writings.

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[282] Ibid.

[283] Ibid.

[284] Calvin Stapert, "Instruments in Worship," *The Complete Library of Christian Worship,* Vol. 4, *Music and the Arts in Christian Worship,* Robert E. Webber, ed. (Nashville, TN: Star Song Publishing Group, 1993), bk. 1: 392.

The Irony of Zwingli

Calvin was not the only Reformer who expressed his opposition to musical instruments in Christian worship, though—so did Zwingli. But the great music historian Friedrich Blume, once dubbed the dean of German and international musicology, notes the intriguing fact that, despite being the most opposed to the use of any music in worship, Zwingli was apparently the most musically gifted of the three great Reformers,[285] and suggests that he only wanted music excluded as a temporary measure;[286] whether this was actually so cannot be said with certainty.

The Perils of the Organ during the Reformation

The organ, too, was the object of severe criticism during the Reformation. Dr. Jannes Smith, organist, pastor and recently appointed professor of Old Testament at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary, mentions that Desiderius Erasmus, a Dutch humanist who exercised great influence during the Reformation, put the following words in the mouth of a certain Menedemus:

> I wonder sometimes what possible excuse there could be for those who spend so much on building, decorating and enriching churches that there's simply no limit to it.... What's the good of the vastly expensive organs, as they call them?... What's the good of that costly musical neighing when meanwhile brothers and sisters, Christ's living temples, waste away from hunger and thirst?[287]

Erasmus, who was clearly not in favour of "neighing" organs in worship, objected to their great expense.

One result of the extreme position of the Reformers, says Blume, was the demolition of organs in German-speaking Switzerland, although such extreme measures were not

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[285] Friedrich Blume, *Protestant Church Music: A History* (New York: Norton, 1974), 509. Cf. G. Van Rongen, *Our Reformed Church Service Book* (Neerlandia, AB: Inheritance Publications, 1995), 55.

[286] Ibid, 510.

[287] Jannes Smith, "Where Pulpit, Pipes and People Meet: Guidelines for Congregational Singing in a Reformed Church" (Unpublished Liturgics Paper: Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary, 1997), 15.

followed everywhere in Switzerland, least of all in Basel where Johannes Oecolampadius served as pastor.[288] According to Stevenson, in fact, "the last organ in a Geneva church (a survival from a Roman monastery) was melted down in order to obtain tin from the pipes."[289] Shortly before Calvin's death, when his authority in Geneva was well established and largely uncontested, the minutes of the town council of August 17, 1562 declared: "It has been thereupon ordained that [the organ] shall be melted, that the Hospital shall take what it needs, and that the rest shall be kept in pigs."[290] Such actions were even more common in England. A tract entitled *The Praise of Music* carried a notice that "not so few as one hundred organs were taken down and the pipes sold to make pewter dishes."[291] The General Assembly even went out of its way to congratulate the Westminster Assembly on the removal of the organs at Westminster Abbey.[292] So sweeping was the campaign against organs in Scotland, Stevenson observes, that by 1727 the organ in the Episcopal church at Aberdeen was the only one left standing.[293]

Jordan describes how the Puritans, who "did not believe that congregational singing in worship should be accompanied by musical instruments,"[294] viewed organs. "Since the organ was associated in many minds with the imposition of 'Romish' practices by Archbishop Laud, reaction against the organ was natural, and sadly many organs were destroyed in the early days of the Civil War," says Jordan. "The creation of the disciplined New Model Army by Cromwell in 1644," however, "put a stop to most of this wanton destruction. Cromwell was partial to the organ, and Cromwell had an organ installed at his

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[288] Ibid, 510-511.
[289] Stevenson, *Patterns of Protestant Church Music*, 15.
[290] Ibid, 16.
[291] Ibid.
[292] Ibid, 14.
[293] Ibid, 17.
[294] James B. Jordan, "Puritanism and Music," 120.

palace at Hampton Court."[295] Jordan later remarks that "the rationale for avoiding instruments was that the New Testament nowhere commands it; but it is generally acknowledged—by those who favour instruments—that the real reason for eschewing instruments was out of reaction to Rome."[296]

According to Albert Schweitzer, the famous Alsatian organist, theologian, and philosopher, the position of the organ was not only severely restricted or banned by the Swiss and English Reformers, but also by Luther and the Roman Catholic Church.

> In the Lutheran and even in the Catholic churches at that time it fared almost the same. It had always had, indeed, its adversaries. No less a person than St. Thomas Aquinas had declared war on it, not regarding organ music, or indeed instrumental music in general, as calculated to stimulate devotion. In the sixteenth century, however, complaints against it arose on all sides, and the Council of Trent (1545-1563), which dealt with all the doubtful questions relating to the church and its service, was compelled to enact severe regulations against the erroneous and too prevalent employment of the organ in worship. Catholics and Protestants alike at that time imposed on it a term of penance, in order that it might alter its ungodly nature, in default of which the Church would excommunicate it.[297]

What little attention Martin Luther actually gave to the organ was mostly in the form of scorn, according to Schweitzer.[298]

Although there was certainly a principle at stake in this widespread disdain for the organ, Schweitzer also mentions two practical factors that explain why organs merited this low position, namely, their primitive construction and their intemperate use. They had "heavy keys which did not permit of polyphonic singing, while their crude, untempered tuning made it as a rule impossible to play on them in more than one or two keys." As a result, the organist was tempted to use distracting techniques, and also to play secular songs. "In 1548 an organist in Strasbourg was dismissed from his post for having played French

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[295] Ibid.
[296] Ibid, 127-128.
[297] Albert Schweitzer, *J.S. Bach,* Vol. 1, Ernest Newman, transl. (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 25.
[298] Ibid, 24-25.

and Italian songs during the offertory."[299] About Luther's adverse opinion concerning the organ, Routley writes:

> Perhaps Luther's neglect of the organ is not difficult to understand if it be remembered, first, that organs in those days were exceedingly primitive and, to the discerning ear, not apt to beautify the service in the way to which our own generation is accustomed, nor to do more than support the pitch of the singers; and secondly, that the practice of the day was in any case to sing church music *a capella* and that we continue to hold that accompaniment on an instrument destroys the beauty of sixteenth century polyphony. Luther's neglect of the organ, in fact, is neglect and not positive criticism of the kind which the early Fathers leveled at the fault and which the later Puritans certainly aimed at the organ.[300]

While Aquinas's objection to the organ was a matter of principle, Schweitzer claims, Luther's was practical. This may also explain the sentiment of the Italian Reformer, Peter Vermigli, who believed that organs had no role in worship "since from their rumbling nothing of the Word of God may be understood."[301]

The Dislodging of the Patristic Position during the Reformation

Recapitulating the place musical instruments have held in worship throughout the span of history—from the church fathers to the Reformation, Old states the following, in light of the scriptural narrative:

> Old Testament worship did include the use of musical instruments. The worship of the temple was accompanied by elaborate musical settings. The Church of the New Testament probably did not admit the use of musical instruments; however, this cannot be learned from the New Testament itself and certainly there is no Scriptural injunction against it. Whatever else one might say about the musical accompaniment of early Christian worship would be rather speculative. The Scriptures themselves do not even suggest that it should be restrained, simple or unadorned. If the early Reformed Church was of that opinion, it was probably more because of the warnings of the Church Fathers than because of the directions of either the Old or New Testament.[302]

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[299] Ibid, 26.

[300] Routley, *The Church and Music,* 121.

[301] Joyce Irwin, "Music and the Doctrine of Adiaphora in Orthodox Lutheran Theology," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 14 no. 2 (1983), 168.

[302] Old, *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship,* 268-269.

Lutheran scholar Joyce Irwin makes the case, however, that among the Reformers there was by no means a consensus, and that the position of the Patristic Church was being dislodged during the Reformation, as is clear from the debates among Reformed church leaders at the time. She mentions a debate between the Swiss Reformer Theodore Beza and Jakob Andreae, a Lutheran. Whereas Andreae wanted Beza to admit that musical instruments "are not only not forbidden but rather expressly commanded in order that one praise God therewith, as is written in Psalm 150,"[303] Beza was prepared to concede, "I do not believe that we are bound to install organs in the churches again. Where they still exist, one may use them as he wishes. But that it is necessary from the instruction and commandment of God to play on the organ and in the church, I do not hold."[304] Dalbey also mentions Martin Bucer, the great Swiss Reformer at Strasbourg, who apparently allowed instruments to be utilized.[305]

Irwin points out that the Reformed theologians at Zerbst-Anhalt were much more hostile, however, to the Lutheran position. They insisted that the musical forms of the Old Testament were only a *'typos* or image of the joyful sermon of the gospel which in the New Testament would sound quite loudly through the whole world."[306] They did not leave room for *adiaphora.* They drew the strongest response from the theological faculty at Wittenberg, about whom Irwin says: "Although they stopped short of labeling music a command of God, they are certain of the value of both vocal and instrumental music. 'Instrumental music

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[303] Joyce Irwin, "Music and the Doctrine of Adiaphora in Orthodox Lutheran Theology," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 14 no. 2 (1983), 161.

[304] Ibid, 162.

[305] Dalbey, "A Biblical, Historical and Contemporary Look at the Regulative Principle of Worship," 24.

[306] Joyce Irwin, "Music and the Doctrine of Adiaphora in Orthodox Lutheran Theology," 163.

is in itself such a gift of God as to move the hearts of men with power even when no human voice sings along."[307] They defended music without words and found it "unrealistic to suppose that when all kinds of wind and stringed instruments were played in the temple, the listeners were always able to hear and understand the words being sung," writes Irwin. "To be deprived of the gift of music was in the Old Testament a punishment of God (Jer. 7:16, 34). There is no reason to think it otherwise in the church."[308] Thus, the strict position of the church fathers concerning musical instruments was being resolutely dislodged during the Reformation, especially by the Lutherans, even if there was still strong resistance among the Reformed. In fact, as has just been shown, even the Reformed were no longer unilaterally opposed.

The Organ

Since organs occupy such a prominent place in the worship of the Canadian Reformed Churches and far beyond, more attention will now be devoted to what has been written about this intriguing instrument, which Wolfgang Mozart dubbed the king of instruments.[309]

Williams on the Colourful History of the Organ

The Heathen Origin of the Organ

Organist and professor of music Peter Williams, one of the leading authorities on the history of the organ, states that until the early seventh century AD, anyone traveling around the world of Christendom "would have seen no organs in churches anywhere," except on

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[307] Ibid, 164.
[308] Ibid.
[309] Williams, *The King of Instruments: How Churches Came to Have Organs,* Epigraph.

rare occasions as part of "great and pompous outdoor processions" which might have brought a few of the instruments into a church along the route.[310] Generally people of that time associated instruments with rowdy events such as "street-carnivals, hippodromes and theatres."[311] The church's resistance to the organ is described thus by Quentin Faulkner, an American professor of organ, music theory and history:

> The early church's rejection of instruments in worship and its mistrust of instrumental music of any kind is well known. In particular, the Roman *hydraulis* or water organ, a predecessor of the medieval church organ, was linked with pagan rites, games and theater. The early church writers had no more use for the organ than for any other pagan instrument. St. Jerome (fourth century) spoke out sharply against the organ, warning that Christian virgins should be deaf to its music.[312]

For a long time, the sound of the organ would hardly make a person think about church. Dutch liturgist, the late Rev. G. Van Rongen, who also served as Reformed pastor both in America and Australia, says that the organ was originally a "purely heathen" instrument.[313]

The Meaning of Organum

Williams makes the important point, largely unacknowledged by other scholars, that the terminology surrounding the organ has been misleading.[314] The Latin word *organum* was used in several different ways, as a reference, among other things, to counterpoint and instruments, and also to organs of learning, of authority, of liturgy, and of the body.[315] Even as late as the Carolingian period *organum* meant "organized ensemble music."[316] This means that the assertion made by another musical scholar, C. F. Abdy Williams, that "with the

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[310] Ibid, 1.
[311] Ibid.
[312] Quentin Faulkner, "The History of the Organ in the Christian Church," *The Complete Library of Christian Worship* Vol. 4, *Music and the Arts in Christian Worship,* Robert E. Webber, ed. (Nashville, TN: Star Song Publishing Group, 1993), bk. 1: 397.
[313] G. Van Rongen, *Zijn Schone Dienst* (Goes, Nederland: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1956), 133.
[314] Williams, *The King of Instruments*, 7.
[315] Ibid, 8.
[316] Ibid, 84.

exception of the trumpet, horn and oboe, the organ is the most ancient wind instrument in use amongst cultivated musicians at present,"[317] is not defensible and is probably based on a misunderstanding of this Latin term.

The Organ as Royal Accoutrement

Peter Williams offers a history of organs, including the Roman water-organ, or *hydraulis,* the Greek water-organ, the Byzantine organ, and even the Arabic organ.[318] He mentions that

> one recent answer to how the organ came to be a church instrument has centered on the very possibility that the Frankish kings did use organs (presumably the Byzantine gift in the first instance) as royal accoutrements. Originally "an instrument of the imperial court-music," it somehow "found its way into the inside of Frankish churches," and from there, "evidently in the train of Benedictine reform," was "taken over into English churches' in the tenth century."[319]

While he observes there is certainly mention of organs in association with churches and monasteries at this point in history, Williams is reluctant to conclude that they had a prominent place in worship.[320] He argues, in fact, that the organ was rarely used in the regular worship services of the church before the fifteenth century.[321]

Historical Evidence on Organ Construction

As for what early organs were like, little evidence is available, according to Williams.[322] For medieval drawings of organs, the best source remains the *Utrecht Psalter.* [323]

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[317] C. F. Abdy Williams, *The Story of Organ Music* (Detroit: Singing Tree Press, 1968), 1-2.

[318] Williams, *The King of Instruments*, 15ff. See also, Peter Williams, *A New History of the Organ from the Greeks to the Present Day* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1980).

[319] Williams, *The King of Instruments,* 37.

[320] Ibid, 40ff.

[321] Ibid, 77.

[322] Ibid, 100-101.

[323] Ibid, 108ff; cf. Koert van der Horst, William Noel and Wilhelmina C. M. Wüstefeld, *The Utrecht Psalter in Medieval Art: Picturing the Psalms of David* (Hes, Nederland: 't Goy, 1996). In the year that this work was

The most complete remains, Williams claims, were found in Aquincum, c. 225.[324] The most complete description is provided by Wulfstan, c. 990.[325] Finally, the most complete treatise is offered by Theophilus, c. 1125.[326]

Faulkner on the Acceptance, Demise, and Restoration of the Organ in the Church

Faulkner places the acceptance of the organ into the church as early as the twelfth century.[327] "By the thirteenth century," he claims, "most major churches in Europe—abbeys and secular cathedrals—possessed an organ, and by the fifteenth century, many of them had two: one for solo performances and a smaller one to accompany and support choral singing."[328] The organ's golden age, Faulkner claims, was the Renaissance: "By that time, its mechanism was much refined and improved, and sixteenth-century writings attest to the high proficiency level attained in organ performance."[329] He explains: "There was enormous activity in organ building at this time; ordinary parish churches as well as prominent ones acquired organs. By the Reformation, the organ's place in worship was so well established that its use continued undisturbed among Lutherans and Anglicans, even though Luther and others were in fact less enthusiastic about it,"[330] as will be shown shortly.

Then came the demise of the organ, during the baroque era in Southern Europe. "Calvinism stifled organ music in Switzerland, and Puritanism inflicted mortal wounds on it in Great Britain," says Faulkner, mentioning the Ordinance of 1644 which mandated the demolition of organs in Great Britain.[331]

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published, the author's graduating class donated this volume to the library of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary.

[324] Ibid, 112.
[325] Ibid, 114ff.
[326] Ibid, 121ff.
[327] Faulkner, "The History of the Organ in the Christian Church," 397.
[328] Ibid, 400.
[329] Ibid, 401.
[330] Ibid, 402.
[331] Ibid.

Then in the early seventeenth century, "Protestant north Germany found a new purpose for the organ: to accompany congregational singing. Thus the organ continued to be assured a secure place in the church, not only for philosophical and theological reasons but also for practical ones."[332] Through the following centuries, the organ continued to remain the dominant church instrument, in spite of its trials:

> The latter part of the eighteenth century witnessed the rapid decline and trivialization of the organ and its music, a trend that prevailed through the first half of the nineteenth century.... In spite of this decline, however, the organ continued to solidify its position as the musical instrument of the church. By the nineteenth century its sound had come to be regarded as the epitome of churchliness; even those church bodies whose Puritan heritage had hitherto rejected the organ now began to embrace it.[333]

The mid-nineteenth century revival of the organ was confined mostly to the church.[334] "The notion that the organ is the church's proper instrument is still strong in many quarters, but the idea has powerful detractors. The rise of styles of worship that deemphasize or exclude the organ while featuring the use of other instruments underlines the gradual dethronement of the organ as the special instrument of the church."[335] While the organ certainly has its detractors, John Ferguson claims that "in most churches, the pipe organ continues as the primary instrument for the leading of congregational song."[336]

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[332] Ibid.
[333] Ibid, 403.
[334] Ibid.
[335] Ibid, 404.
[336] Ferguson, "Instrumental Music in Service to the Text," 394.

Other Accounts of the History of the Organ

A brief historical survey of the organ is also provided by professor of music Carl Halter, who places the construction of the first organ around 250 B.C. by the Greek engineer Ktesibios.[337] Halter also traces the history of the organ until the present day.

Kappner states that the organ "was only able to establish its place in the Roman Catholic and Reformed (Calvinist) Churches after many trials and specific conditions,"[338] and that since then, the organ "has come to be an integral part of the service of the Western Church."[339]

Reformed Synodical Pronouncements against the Organ in Worship

In the Reformed churches in the Netherlands, to which the Canadian Reformed Churches trace their theological roots, synodical decisions were made which cast great suspicion on organs. The Provincial Synod of Dordrecht made the following decision in 1574: "Concerning the playing of organs in the churches, we hold that it ought to be wholly dismissed, according to the teaching of Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:19. And although it is still used in some of these churches only at the end of the preaching as the people depart, it would serve best to let it be forgotten...and it is a concern that it will hereafter be used for superstition."[340] This decision was supported by the National Synod of Dordrecht in 1578,[341]

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[337] Halter, *The Practice of Sacred Music,* 22ff.

[338] Kappner, "The Church Service and Music," 254-255.

[339] Ibid, 254.

[340] F.L. Rutgers, ed., *Acta van de Nederlandse Synoden der Zestiende Eeuw* (Dordrecht: J.P. van den Tol, 1980), 174. For a discussion of this decision, see Jan Roelof Luth, *"Daar wert om't seerst uytgekreten...": Bijdragen tot een Geschiedenis van de Gemeentzang in het Nederlandse Gereformeerde Protestantisme (1550-1852)* Vol. 1 (Kampen: van den Berg, 1986), 101-102. Smith comments in his footnote that he read somewhere that the Frisian title of this study means: "There's an awful lot of hollering going on...," "Where Pulpit, Pipes and People Meet," 16.

[341] Rutgers, *Acta van de Nederlandse Synoden der Zestiende Eeuw,* 253.

and also by the National Synod of Middelburg in 1581.[342] Smith claims that "the reason for the opposition to organ playing is mainly that they were used for the playing of worldly music,"[343] and that for this reason, it was viewed by its critics as idolatry. Whether the churches complied with these rulings is another matter. Canadian Reformed organist Sander Vanderploeg has claimed that not all the churches did: "Because of the great autonomy of the various local congregations, the use made of the organ differed greatly. In some places it was totally banned; in other places the melody of the psalm to be sung was played on the organ after which the congregation sang it unaccompanied, and as a rule it was played when the churchgoers left the building."[344] This was by no means accepted practice, however, in all the churches. In Arnhem, for example, when the city magistrates decided to repair the organ in the Reformed church, the church officials objected, stating among other things that "the ministers, elders and deacons have promised with mouth, hand, and name to uphold the decisions made by the Synod of Middelburg (1581)."[345]

From to Suspicious Intruder to Prized Fixture

This opposition to the organ in worship, however, did not last long. As early as 1641, the Dutch poet and composer Constantijn Huygens, while warning against the "unedifying" use of the organ for "worldly entertainment," also made a plea for the organ's return to the worship service in his treatise *Gebruyck en Ongebruyck van't orgel in de kercken van der Vereenighde Nederlanden (Use and Non-Use of the Organ in the Churches of the United Netherlands),* published in

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[342] Ibid, 409.
[343] Smith, "Where Pulpit, Pipes and People Meet," 16.
[344] S. Vanderploeg, "Psalmen Datheni," *Reformed Music Journal* 2 no. 1 (April 1990), 53.
[345] Ibid.

1641 and republished in 1659 and 1661.[346] Vanderploeg cites Huygens as follows: "Among us we often hear more howling and screaming than human singing.... The tones are all garbled as with birds of different beaks (kiremirkens). The timing is contrary, like well-buckets, the one is up as the other is down. There is much bellowing, as if singing is a matter of deafening others."[347] To deal with this situation, the organ was seen as beneficial for congregational song. A few centuries later, as previously noted, Schilder also contested the Reformed synod's earlier interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:19 against the use of the organ.[348] Deddens claims that as a result "the struggle about organs is now part of history as far as the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands are concerned.... The organ and organist now have a fixed place in our worship services."[349] The struggle over whether the organ is *allowed* in worship is now history; the struggle over its solitary presence, however, is not, as the literature review will soon reveal.

Other Philosophical and Theological Considerations Concerning Musical Instruments and Musicians in Worship

Professor of music Calvin Johansson is certainly on the mark when he says, "It is a critical necessity in choosing music that every church musician formulates a solid underlying philosophical rationale that is coherent, comprehensive, and creative."[350] Musicians "cannot afford to be haphazard, careless, or indiscriminate in coming to grips with the issues."[351] As he states elsewhere, furthermore, "The church's music has been affected in every age by the

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[346] Deddens, *Where Everything Points to Him,* 129.
[347] S. Vanderploeg, "Psalmen Datheni," 56.
[348] Schilder, *Om Woord en Kerk,* Vol. 2, 93-94.
[349] Deddens, *Where Everything Points to Him,* 129.
[350] Calvin M. Johansson, *Music and Ministry: A Biblical Counterpoint* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 4.
[351] Ibid.

prevailing worldview or spirit of that age."[352] For this reason, this study will now consider some philosophical considerations regarding musical instruments and musicians in worship.

Begbie's Christian Ecology of Music

Begbie, a British musician and theologian already mentioned, provides a healthy dose of Christian wisdom concerning the world of music in his recent book, *Resounding Truth.* He begins with the sobering observation that the subject of music is noticeably absent from theological discourse.[353] In his estimation, the most common use of music in our culture is to create or change moods. "At best music is a distraction from the urgent and pressing demands of daily living, a luxury for those who have the time and money to use and enjoy it."[354] The question he wishes to ask in this book is "What can Christian theology bring to music?"[355] In Part 1, "Music in Action," he asks what music means, taking Scripture into account. In Part 2, "Encounters," he offers an historical perspective. In Part 3, as indicated in his section title, he aims to set "Music in a Christian Ecology."

Music as Bounded Activity

Begbie introduces the concept of differentiation, which is defined as "the way in which music has become a fairly specific, specialized, and clearly bounded activity, and with this, the way in which quite sharp demarcations between different types of music have developed."[356] Included in this relatively recent phenomenon is the advent of the individual musician, with his particular work, written in a score in a particular musical notation, in contrast to "so-called primitive music [which was] typically an expression of a collective

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[352] Calvin M. Johansson, *Discipling Music Ministry* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 35.
[353] Begbie, *Resounding Truth*, 13.
[354] Ibid, 14-15.
[355] Ibid, 19.
[356] Ibid, 31.

experience, an inextricable part of everyday social experience, not the work of a single individual."[357]

The Expressivist Philosophy of Music Prevalent in the Church

There exists today also in the church an expressivist philosophy, Begbie believes, that the function of music is to express feelings,

> that music is fundamentally an outward expression of one's inner life, usually one's emotional life, and that the main value of music in worship is to give vent to inner feeling, albeit under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Songs are the outward expression of the songwriter's unique and interior emotion, aimed at provoking in the congregation a corresponding release of emotional energy.[358]

He suggests that careful thought be given to the fact that "such beliefs are relatively recent and fairly localized, inherited in large part from nineteenth-century Europe."[359] Jordan's explanation of the biblical-theological meaning of what worshipping in Spirit is (Jn. 4:21-24; cf. Ps. 150; Eph. 5:18-19) proffers a helpful corrective to this individualistic, human-centred philosophy. Church music should be first and foremost an utterance of the Breath-Spirit of God, and only thereafter an expression of the sanctified human spirit.

Music and Musicians as Power-Holders

According to Begbie, people need to be aware that musical practices are socially and culturally embedded:[360] "Music not only reflects and emerges out of our social-cultural world but up to a point it also *constructs* it."[361] He also makes an important point about the role of music in power relations: "A worship leader exercises power, as does a DJ in a club or a

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[357] Ibid, 31-32.
[358] Ibid, 38.
[359] Ibid.
[360] Ibid, 42.
[361] Ibid, 44.

concert violinist in a recital hall."[362] Routley makes a similar observation about the power of the organist, when he says that "no musician is from the beginning placed in a position of so much potential power over others as is the organist."[363] He compares the organist to the virtuoso pianist and the most eminent conductors: "But the organist, without making any effort at all, without any practice, without the possibility of being restrained by anything but an explosive upsurge of public opinion, can make more physical noise and exercise more affective power over other people than anybody."[364] De Visser, speaking along the same lines, expresses appreciation for Calvin's concern about the damage that music, including musical instruments, can do: "After all," writes de Visser, "it is true that music has the power not just to enhance and support worship but also to distract from worship. Who has not had the experience that the organist's or pianist's playing was so dominant, hectic, frivolous, or even beautiful, that we forgot about what we were singing and focused on the musical accompaniment?"[365] Church musicians exercise great power, for good or for ill.

Musical Instruments and Musicians as Creatures of God

Begbie also discusses music in relation to God's created order:[366] "Music is not solely about what we make and hear," he writes.[367] The materials that produce sound are a creation of God, as is the human body. The human body is itself, in fact, a musical instrument.[368] Jordan makes a similar point: "When you speak, your vocal chords vibrate. This is the equivalent to a stringed instrument. Also, wind goes through your throat and face. This is

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[362] Ibid, 46.
[363] Erik Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith* (Carol Stream, IL: Agape, 1978), 99.
[364] Ibid.
[365] de Visser, "Church Music in Calvin's Tradition (II)," 591.
[366] Begbie, *Resounding Truth,* 46.
[367] Ibid, 47.
[368] Ibid, 47.

equivalent to a wind instrument. Finally, with your tongue, teeth and lips you create percussive effects. *Your body is a musical instrument,* an instrument created and designed to hymn God."[369] The music that sounds from us, then, either brings God praise or it brings him grief over his creation.

The Philosophy of Music in Historical Perspective

Pythagoras and the Great Tradition

Begbie provides a helpful survey of the philosophy of music in historical perspective. He confirms what Canadian musicologist and Lutheran pastor Ulrich Leupold has expressed, namely, that "our age takes it for granted (firstly) that music is made to be heard and (secondly) that it serves to express and inspire feelings.... But pre-western cultures regarded it under a much wider scope."[370] He begins with Pythagoras (sixth century B.C.) who "emerges as the key ancient figure, credited with having discovered that number underlies musical pitch."[371] Pythagoras believed that musical harmony gives expression to the cosmic order. In the Pythagorean vision, "the whole cosmos, the planetary and stellar spheres with their orderly revolutions, [was] seen as a vast musical instrument with each component attuned according to the same scheme of ratios as obtains in our mortal music."[372] According to Plato, music is not only a model of cosmic harmony, but actually implants it in the soul.[373]

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[369] James B. Jordan, "Worship Music, Part 2: Musical Instruments."
[370] Leupold, "Worship Music in Ancient Israel: Its Meaning and Purpose," 176-177.
[371] Begbie, *Resounding Truth,* 79.
[372] Ibid, 80.
[373] Ibid.

Augustine and Boethius and the Great Tradition

Augustine and Boethius largely sanctioned this "Great Tradition." For Augustine, music was primarily a discipline concerned with numbers *(numerus)* and was the science of measuring well *(bene modulandi).*[374] Especially noteworthy is his treatise *On Music,* written in the form of a dialogue between a master and his disciple, in which Augustine spends six books of considerable length discussing the philosophy of music.[375] In Book One, he provides a definition of music, including "the species and proportion of the number-laden movements"; in Book Two he discusses the "syllables and metrical feet" of music; in Books Three through Five he covers rhythm, meter, and verse; and in Book Six, "the mind is raised from the consideration of changeable numbers in inferior things to unchangeable numbers in unchangeable truth itself."[376]

According to Begbie, Augustine emphasized that, as with all created things, worshippers must love music "towards God."[377] He cites Carol Harrison on Augustine as follows:

> As with all temporal manifestations of music (as harmony, unity, order...) in the created realm, therefore, whilst appreciating the beauty of music as it is sung in the Church, Augustine never ceases to emphasize the need to move beyond and through it: beyond and through the temporal, mutable and bodily towards the eternal, immutable and spiritual. For as long as he is caught up in the sheer beauty, delight and pleasure of the temporal manifestations of music, for that moment he knows that he is distracted from God and risks taking it as an end in itself.[378]

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[374] Ibid, 84.

[375] Augustine, "On Music," *The Fathers of the Church,* Vol. 4, *Saint Augustine,* Robert Catesby Taliaferro, transl. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 159-489.

[376] Ibid, 167.

[377] Begbie, *Resounding Truth,* 86.

[378] Ibid.

Yet, it was Boethius, more than anyone else, according to Begbie, who formed the musical mind of medieval culture. In Boethius's conception, music is to be understood rather than done, so that composers and performers rank far below musical thinkers.[379] In order of importance, the three levels of music, in his thinking, were *musica mundana,* cosmic music, *musica humana,* human music, and *musica instrumentalis,* the music actually heard as number made audible. Boethius's musical vision had great influence, Begbie believes, well into the fifteenth century, including the development of the eight modes in the medieval period,[380] in which theory and practice were pulled closer together.

The Value and Longevity of the Great Tradition

Reformed European musicologist Jan Smelik has summarized the Great Tradition this way:

> The music-making man knew himself to be taken up in the cosmos that existed to the glory of God. He also knew himself to be connected with the heavenly liturgy, the praise of the angels. In making music, man reached his purpose and goal for which he was created, namely, the praise of God. Briefly, that was the theological goal of music, as it existed from Augustine to the fifteenth century.[381]

There is great merit, according to Smelik, in the medieval view that there is a clear relation between creation and music. Music is a creation gift of God, *donum Dei.*[382] Much as Leithart's emphasis was noted earlier, music in worship makes creation resound, "which leads us to perceive clearly the invisible qualities of God" *(Belgic Confession,* Article 2).[383] In fact, "By means of music a man—with intellect and emotions, body and soul—reaches his

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[379] Ibid, 87ff.
[380] Ibid, 91.
[381] Jan Smelik, "Theology and Music," *Diakonia* 7 no. 2 (December 1993), 43.
[382] Ibid, 47.
[383] Ibid, 48.

original purpose and goal: the praise of the Name, together with the Creation (Pss. 19, 98; Is. 44:23; Rev. 5:13) and the angels (Pss. 103:20; 148:2)."[384]

The Collapse of the Cosmological and the Rise of the Anthropological Conception of Music

While much can be learned from the Great Tradition, Begbie characterizes this long period in the history of music as a time when theories were "becoming too big for their boots,"[385] when they "creaked and groaned under the weight of what flesh-and-blood musicians were adding to the repertoire. Venerated ancient wisdom could not easily match up with what was being sung, played, and enjoyed in everyday life."[386] Begbie hastens to add, however, that what came thereafter was not necessarily an improvement. He mentions the lamentable shift from the cosmological conception of music to the anthropological, "from justifying music in terms of the cosmos at large to justifying it solely in terms of human needs and aspirations."[387] While a tone of exaggeration can be detected in Daniel Chua's words, he certainly goes to the heart of the matter, in Begbie's estimation, when he characterizes this shift as follows: "The harmony of the spheres has collapsed into the song of the self."[388] This collapsed conception of music has lasted well into our time. As German-American musicologist Willi Apel expresses it: while previously "justification for music was considered to have its origin in the state, in the universe, or in God, today music has lost these transcendental affiliations."[389]

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[384] Ibid.
[385] Begbie, *Resounding Truth*, 92.
[386] Ibid, 93.
[387] Ibid, 94.
[388] Ibid.
[389] Willi Appel, ed., "Aesthetics of Music," *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 15.

The Critical Turn in the Christian European Conception of Music

Moving into the sixteenth century, one encounters different streams of thinking concerning music. On the one hand, Martin Luther places music alongside theology, even stating that "next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise."[390] Luther was far less restrained than his contemporaries and the medieval church in this respect. He believed, says Begbie, that music intensifies the Word and that musical instruments sharpen the musical endeavour.[391] John Calvin, on the other hand, while he believed that music is a gift of God for our spiritual enjoyment,[392] also believed that instruments belong to the Old Covenant shadows. Begbie makes the rather unflattering assertion, in fact, that Calvin is responsible for taking music one step further away from the Great Tradition of the medieval era, seeing it more as a human practice and enterprise, signaling a "critical turn in European Christian thinking about music."[393] Zwingli went even farther, being greatly influenced by the humanism of Erasmus which wanted to distance itself from the medieval conception of music.[394] Although he was the most musical of the three, he was the most negative about church music. He said, for example:

> Farewell, my temple-murmurings! I am not sorry for you. I know that you are not good for me. But welcome, O pious, private prayer that is awakened in the hearts of believing men through the Word of God. Yes, a small sigh, which does not last long, realizes itself and goes away quickly. Greetings to you, common prayer that all Christians do together, but in Church or in their chambers, but free and unpaid; I know that you are the sort of prayer to which God will give that which he has promised.[395]

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[390] Begbie, *Resounding Truth,* 98.
[391] Ibid, 104.
[392] Ibid, 108.
[393] Ibid, 112.
[394] Ibid, 113.
[395] Ibid, 115.

Clearly for Zwingli, silent prayer was far superior to prayer in song.

Tugged from its cosmological context, Begbie states, music needed a new home. The supremacy of the verbal paradigm spelled trouble for instrumental music, which was considered "the fly in the ointment."[396]

The Forward Thrust of the Anthropological Shift

Thinkers such as German theologian and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher nudged the anthropological turn in music even further, says Begbie. For Schleiermacher the essence of religion was not knowing, but feeling, for which music provides the best form of expression, since music "begins...where other languages no longer reach."[397] Philosophers such as Arthur Schopenhauer developed this line of thinking about music.[398] Likewise, the twentieth century philosopher Benedetto Croce "believed expression to be an aesthetic value—indeed the aesthetic value, the single criterion of aesthetic success,"[399] according to British philosopher and aesthetician Roger Scruton. Michael Hamilton, professor of history and coordinator of the Pew Scholars Program, confirms the widespread popularity of this notion when he says that "music for baby boomers is the mediator of emotions, the carrier of dreams, and the mark of social location."[400] As a reaction to this largely anthropological shift in music, Begbie claims, Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth, who believed that

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[396] Ibid, 130.
[397] Ibid, 151.
[398] Ibid.
[399] Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 148.
[400] Michael S. Hamilton, "The Triumph of the Praise Songs: How guitars beat out the organ in the worship wars," *Christianity Today* 12 July 1999, 30.

Mozart's music gives voice to creation praising God, attempted to "reroot thinking about music in creation at large."[401]

A Christian Ecology of Music

Begbie proceeds, next, to develop a "Christian ecology"[402] for music. By this he means two things. First, it is "something like a 'guiding framework,' a network of beliefs or faith commitments that together shape and pattern our perception of the world."[403] Second, it includes a focus on "'the doctrine of creation': an account of God as Creator, what kind of world God creates and relates to, and what our role in relation to the created world at large might be."[404] His aim in developing such a Christian ecology is to locate "music within the wide ecology of Christian belief, while paying special attention to the doctrine of creation,"[405] in order to counteract the "demise of the medieval scenario in which human beings were seen as inhabitants of a God-given order."[406] For him, one of the most critical questions to emerge is this: *"to what extent is music grounded in or obliged to be faithful to a world we did not make, a world that we did not fashion but that is in some sense given to us?* This is the challenge the Great Tradition puts to us."[407] He does not want to turn back the clock, but rather to consider *"how God's shaping of the world might shape our own* (a more Biblical approach)."[408]

The Ethical Dimension of Musical Materials and Music-Making

This certainly goes against the notion which even some Christians, such as Barry Liesch, hold; Liesch makes this contradictory assertion: "I do take the position that music

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[401] Begbie, *Resounding Truth*, 156.
[402] Ibid, 185.
[403] Ibid.
[404] Ibid, 186.
[405] Ibid.
[406] Ibid.
[407] Ibid, 187.
[408] Ibid.

materials are morally neutral; any style is *theoretically permissible but not necessarily appropriate."*[409] This is a wide departure from Augustine, who stresses that music is subject to aesthetic and ethical judgment when in Book Six *On Music* he makes a distinction between what is ugly and what is beautiful; between what is foul and what is pleasing. Augustine's musical master says at one point to his disciple, for example:

> What is in light itself holding the origin of all colours (for colour also delights us in the forms of bodies), what is it in light and colours we seek if not what suits the eye? For we turn away from too great a flare, and we are unwilling to face things too dark, just as also in sounds we shrink from things too loud, and do not like whispering things. And this is not in the time-intervals, but in the sound itself, the light, you might say, of such numbers, whose contrary is silence, as darkness to colours.[410]

Some sounds are pleasing while others are not. Sound always does something to our wills, our emotions, and our senses, according to Augustine—something that those making music and those listening to it ought to realize.

Smelik, in line with Augustine and contrary to what Liesch suggests, argues that there certainly is an ethical aspect to music.[411] Thus, "the origin and purpose of music teaches us that we need to manage this creation gift not as consumers but as stewards. For there is—I think—a difference between the development of creation and the consumption of it."[412] Even secular writers will acknowledge that music submits to certain universal laws. As Scruton wrote recently, for example, "Cultural variations do not alter the fact that all musical people, from whatever tradition, will divide the octave into discrete pitches or pitch areas,

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[409] Barry Liesch, *The New Worship: Straight Talk on Music and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 204.

[410] Augustine, "On Music," 6.13.38.

[411] Smelik, "Theology and Music," 48.

[412] Ibid.

and hear intervening pitches as 'out of tune'."[413] He presses the moral dimension of music even further, when he later writes, "Since imitation is the way in which we form our characters, it follows that music has a vast moral significance. This was the basis for Plato's suggestion that certain modes should be banned from the ideal republic, in which no music would be permitted that did not contribute to the growth of virtue among the youth."[414] He also cites the well-known saying of Plato in his *Republic:* "The ways of poetry and music are not changed anywhere without change in the most important laws of the city."[415] As will be observed shortly, however, Scruton fails to recognize the moral significance of music as an aspect of God's created order.

The Centrality of Christ in the Theology of Church Music

Christ Jesus stands central in Begbie's conception of church music, as with Leithart, since it is Christ who *"opens up to us the mind and heart of the Creator, revealing the why of creation, the way in which the Creator relates to creation, and the goal for which all things were created."*[416] There is no way to think of creation apart from Christ. Routley has made a similar point, namely, that the intimate relationship between Christ and the church, as expressed by Paul in Ephesians 1:16-23, should be evident in all church music. "It is therefore to be expected that in all matters of behaviour the church will show the humiliation and the resurrection of Christ."[417] For this reason, Routley registers his distaste for "beauty-hunting" in church music, the "craving for

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[413] Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music,* 16.
[414] Ibid, 118.
[415] Ibid, 457.
[416] Begbie, *Resounding Truth,* 189.
[417] Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith,* 66.

attractiveness," and resists the temptation of the church to "try to be greater than its Lord."[418]

The Centrality of the Body of Christ in the Theology of Church Music

Closely associated with the centrality of Christ in the theology of church music is an awareness of the catholicity of the *body of Christ,* something to which Routley also draws our attention:

> Assertiveness talks; modesty listens. The best church musicians have always been the best listeners. When the precentor of Coventry Cathedral writes so memorably in his booklet *Evensong in Coventry Cathedral* that the church's worship is "a conversation which began long before you were born and will continue long after you are dead," he is saying exactly what we need at this moment. The great church musician listens to the conversation already going on before joining it.[419]

Routley commends a healthy dose of Christian humility, befitting the body of the crucified and risen Lord.

The Good World is Not God

Also central to the Christian ecology, according to Begbie, is that *"the good world is not God."*[420] Other Christian writers have issued the same warning. Johansson, for example, outlines the problems of aestheticism and concludes that when it is used as a philosophy for church music, "we run the risk of elevating art to a place where beauty becomes God, or if not thought to be God, is at least equal to God, or thought of as essential to knowing God."[421]

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[418] Ibid, 67.
[419] Ibid, 89.
[420] Begbie, *Resounding Truth*, 194.
[421] Johansson, *Music and Ministry*, 5.

Human Beings, Creation, and the Double Musical Movement

Furthermore, writes Begbie, *homo sapiens* "is given a singular calling: not simply to acknowledge the cosmic symphony, but also to enable, articulate, and extend it in ever fresh ways."[422] Since humans are the image of God, our mandate is dominion as loving priests of creation, not domination which is a charter for destruction and plunder. "The phrase is apt, for it speaks of a double movement. *On behalf of God,* as God's image bearers, humans are to mediate the presence of God *to the world* and in the world, representing this wise and loving rule. But this is so that *on behalf of creation* humans may gather and focus creation's worship, offering it back *to God,* voicing creation's praise."[423] Begbie helps the reader visualize this: "Michelangelo takes the grains of marble and carves *David;* Vivaldi takes catgut, horsehair, and wood and makes *The Four Seasons."*[424] Along the same lines, Johansson seeks to place church music within the rubric of what he calls the church's mission of Christian maturation.[425]

Reclaiming the Creation-Gift of Music for the Church

There is no doubt that other theologians, too, have been trying to recover this awareness of music as a part of God's creation. According to the nineteenth century European theologian Abraham Kuyper, "art is no fringe that is attached to the garment, and no amusement that is added to life, but a most serious power in our present existence. Art reveals ordinances of creation which neither science, nor politics, nor religious life, nor even

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[422] Begbie, *Resounding Truth*, 201.

[423] Ibid, 203. Routley has argued along the same lines that the church is "a prophetic and priestly institution" that "has something to say" and that "we are instruments of the church's speech" in "The Vocabulary of Church Music," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 73 no. 2 (January 1963), 135.

[424] Begbie, *Resounding Truth*, 252.

[425] Johansson, *Discipling Music Ministry,* 14-19.

Biblical revelation can bring to light."[426] This sort of healthy respect for God's gift of music was what Luther had in mind when he wrote in the preface to the *Geistliches Gesangbuechlein* of 1524: "I am not of the opinion, as are the heterodox, that for the sake of the Gospel all arts should be rejected and eliminated; rather, I feel strongly that all the arts, and particularly music, should be placed in the service of him who has created and given them."[427] This goes a long way in explaining the greater awareness and attention devoted to church music in the Lutheran tradition than in other Protestant or Reformed circles.

Begbie concludes by repeating what is "arguably the most important question facing the theology-music conversation in the present climate: *Is music in any way grounded in or obliged to be faithful to a world that we did not make but that is in some sense given to us?*"[428] He has brought his readers a long way in discovering an answer to that question.

The Philosophical Notion that Music is Autonomous

Scruton, as mentioned earlier, fails to recognize the moral significance of music as an aspect of God's created order. He writes, "In listening to music, we are attending to an appearance, not for the sake of information, but for its own sake. I have no other reason for attending to the music, than the fact that it sounds as it does."[429] Clearly, in his conception, music is autonomous. Historical theologian Joseph Fitzer, too, despite writing in a Christian liturgical journal, asserts something similar when he says that instrumental music is "music in

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[426] Johansson, *Music and Ministry,* 95-96.
[427] Halter, *The Practice of Sacred Music,* 11.
[428] Begbie, *Resounding Truth,* 307.
[429] Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music,* 221.

the pure state, music on its own terms: music, and only music. Only when music is freed from the word can it be present in its full power."[430]

The concept of music as autonomous is by no means uncontested, especially by Christian philosophers, musicologists, and liturgists. For example, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship senior research fellow Emily Brink and director John Witvliet, both music professors at Calvin Theological Seminary, insist that "good liturgical music not only excels in the criteria of its own genre, but also enables the actions of corporate worship. Liturgical music, in other words, must be functional; it does not serve as an end in itself."[431] Routley, too, proposes the aesthetic principle that "the Biblical theologian will not want to use language suggesting that beauty is an autonomous or absolute category."[432] This stream of thought, of course, has a long tradition in the Christian church, going back at least as far as Augustine, who expressed his keen awareness of the human propensity to idolize music, when he wrote in his *Confessions* these now well-known words: "Yet when it happens to me to be more moved by the singing than by what is sung, I confess myself to have sinned criminally, and then I would rather not have heard the singing."[433]

The Exegetical and Word-Submitting Function of Music in Christian Worship

One would do well to compare Fitzer's earlier comment that music needs to be "freed from the word," to church musician John Ferguson's assertion that musicians need to be "obsessed by words." In Ferguson's opinion, "the musician (composer or performer)

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[430] Joseph Fitzer, "Instrumental Music in Liturgy," *Worship* 45 no. 9 (November 1971), 543.

[431] Emily R. Brink and John D. Witvliet, "Music in Reformed Churches Worldwide," *Christian Worship in Reformed Churches Past and Present,* ed. Lukas Vischer (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 339.

[432] Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith,* 31.

[433] Augustine, "Confessions," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Vol. 1, *St. Augustine,* Philip Schaff, ed. (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1974), 10:33. In the introduction to his translation of Augustine previously mentioned treatise *On Music,* Taliaferro comments: "For anyone reading the treatise *On Music* and then Books 10 and 11 of the *Confessions,* the dovetailing of the themes is striking." See Augustine, "On Music," 163.

functions exegetically to proclaim and, in the process, to interpret the text,"[434] particularly the text of Scripture or the text derived from Scripture in the church's song. This better position aligns with that held by Best, who insists that "the arts are to be sworn to humble service. They are to be hidden behind the Word and the sacraments and are to be dedicated to function on behalf of their increase."[435] Even as a musician himself, he has the humility to acknowledge about music in worship that "we have placed far too much faith in it and not nearly enough in the power of the Word, the authority and sweep of fearless prophecy and earnest, yet hope-filled, intercessory prayer."[436] He makes the sobering remark that "our present-day use of music as the major up-front device for worship" is an indication that worshippers have "begun the trek into idol territory."[437] By way of contrast, Roger Sherman, Seattle organist and radio host, makes the intriguing observation that in the design of older churches and organs, the organist could usually not be seen. The organist's role, he says, "was to become invisible.... Heard, but not seen, the organist freed the congregation from visual distraction to experience the music as a form of prayer."[438]

Deddens conveys how the eminent Dutch church organist Jan Zwart recognized the serving, prophetic aspect of church music during his career. He tells how Schilder wrote in commemoration of Zwart that in his music-making "art's norms were obeyed and the

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[434] Ferguson, "Instrumental Music in Service to the Text," 394.

[435] Harold M. Best, *Unceasing Worship: Biblical Perspectives on Worship and the Arts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 179. Cf. Abraham Kuyper, *Our Worship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 52. There he says: "Art that insists on a role other than *serving* in worship invariably ends up in control and thereby places itself in opposition to the purpose and character of the worship service."

[436] Ibid, 140.

[437] Ibid, 166.

[438] Roger Sherman, "Organs and the Music of Heaven," *Reformed Music Journal* 7 no. 1 (January 1995), 16.

church's 'credo' was honoured."[439] When Zwart's tombstone was unveiled, Schilder apparently said, "His life's work was to prophesy from the organ bench, and when we say that we give true expression to what motivated this man."[440] Zwart clearly saw his musical skill as a gift to be used in submission and service to the Word of God. Likewise, Payton believes that music's "Biblical role puts it squarely within the ministry of the Word as a partner to preaching."[441]

The Distinguished Position of Music in Reformed Christian Worship

Threats to Liturgical Music

Musician Dwight Steere warns, however, against swinging to the opposite extreme of seeing the Word, particularly the preaching of the Word, as the only thing that really matters in the worship service. He tells this memorable anecdote: "'Preacher,' said a member to his pastor at the close of a rural church service, 'it took you thirty-five minutes today to get rid of the preliminaries!' To this church member—I did not say worshipper—the only significant part of the service he had attended was the sermon."[442] In this view, music and song are merely an optional—even distracting—accessory to worship.

If the concept of ethical neutrality has been identified as a threat to church music, so has the obsession with democracy or public opinion. Routley says this about how church music has been handled by the church itself: "The establishment most to be feared, for its impatient scorn or its raised eyebrows, is the Christian congregation. This is natural in a day when words such as 'participation,' 'communication,' and 'democracy' are widely used. It is

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[439] Deddens, *Fulfill Your Ministry,* 98.
[440] Ibid.
[441] Payton, "Congregational Singing and the Ministry of the Word," 121.
[442] Dwight Steere, *Music in Protestant Worship* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1960), 11.

public opinion which determines both what will prove practical in a church and what will bring a publisher a good return on his outlay."[443] One of the painful results of this, according to Routley, is that "we must face the persistent generosity with which the church has for many generations now offered hospitality to the second-rate."[444]

Liturgical Music, Mission, and Order

Leithart draws attention to another aspect of spiritual song, to which this literature review will return later: church music and song has a mission function, he asserts, to make God's name known.[445] He also comments that the nature of song, normally as an expression of joy and victory, influences its placement in worship.[446] Song does not merely find a distinguished place in worship, but needs to have a proper place. This aspect of the placement of the church's song is worth further exploration and discussion.

The Church in Song and the Glory-Cloud

Earlier, this study noted Leithart's comment that "the church in song should sound like the glory-cloud that it is—the sound of many waters, a great voice that breaks the cedars of Lebanon, a sound that strikes fear in our enemies."[447] Jordan makes a related comment about church music produced during the Reformation when he writes: "It is noteworthy that in times of great revival in the church, as at Pentecost and at the Reformation, there is a great release from the bondage of sin and fear, and consequently great joy and strength. This is why Reformation music, in its original meters and tempos, is so lively, rhythmic, and

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[443] Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith,* 2-3.
[444] Ibid, 30.
[445] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 126.
[446] Ibid, 127-128.
[447] Ibid, 121.

forceful."[448] Even with its negative view of musical instruments in worship, the Calvinist Reformation still recovered a great deal of the musical vitality and power of Christian worship that had been lost through the ages. Jones ably demonstrates this when he reflects on the great impact of Calvin on church music.[449] He traces in detail the development of the many psalters published by Calvin over the period of a quarter century, culminating in the *Genevan Psalter*;[450] he also provides an intriguing survey of numerous historical contributors to music in the Reformed tradition in several lands which provide further evidence of Calvin's widespread musical impact.[451]

Practical and Pastoral Considerations on Musical Instruments and Musicians in Worship

Besides biblical, historical and philosophical considerations relating to musical instruments and musicians in worship, the consulted literature also addresses matters of a more practical and pastoral nature. Attention will now be given to these latter considerations, including musical training and education, choice and combinations of musical instruments, the role of church musicians, the relationships and responsibilities involved, and other practical matters.

Musical Training and Education in the Church

In the literature, a fair bit of attention is devoted to the importance of musical training and education, not only of the musicians themselves on their own instruments, and

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[448] James B. Jordan, "Puritanism and Music," *Views and Reviews: Open Book Occasional Papers* Vol. 5 (Niceville, FL: Biblical Horizons), 131.

[449] Paul S. Jones, "Calvin and Music," *Calvin and Culture,* David W. Hall and Marvin Padgett, eds. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2010), 217-253.

[450] Ibid, 234. He comments specifically on the "vitality and energy" of its rhythms and believes that "the breadth and quality of [its] melodies and metric forms…[are[unmatched in any other metrical psalter," 234.

[451] Ibid, 241-248.

in the fundamentals of musical history, theory and practice, but also of the education of Christian worshippers in general. As an underlying principle for church music education, Routley stresses an attitude of humility and modesty, as noted above. "Assertiveness talks; modesty listens," he says. "The best church musicians have always been the best listeners." [452] If every Christian musician and worshipper would remember that the church's worship is *a conversation which began long before I was born and will continue long after I am dead,* to paraphrase Routley and his precentor friend,[453] there would be noticeable progress in restoring a good tone for the ongoing discussion. Who would question the wisdom of carefully listening to the conversation already going on before joining in?

The Davidic Academy of Music as Model for the Present

Haïk-Vantoura mentions the "veritable academy of sacerdotal music" [454] founded by David and noted much earlier in this study as one of the reasons for the advanced development of music in worship during his time. The mastery of musicians, according to Sendry, "was maintained on a high level by the strict discipline of the guild of musicians and by constant musical rehearsals. For these Levites were provided with special rooms, as stated in the Bible (Ezek. 40:44) and in the rabbinic literature."[455] Evidently, David and those who followed recognized the importance of giving musicians not only time and money, but also space, for developing their musical skills on their instruments. Deddens rightly points out, in this connection, that musical talent is not all that is needed for church musicians. Training is

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[452] Ibid, 89.
[453] Ibid.
[454] Haïk-Vantoura, *The Music of the Bible Revealed*, 114.
[455] Sendry, *Music in Ancient Israel,* 425.

also essential.[456] De Visser stresses, too, that "it is important that accompanists are sufficiently skilled so that their playing will facilitate (not frustrate) congregational singing," but also that a church musician "needs a good understanding of liturgical principles." [457] After mentioning a society that the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands have set up "which offers courses for aspiring accompanists," he suggests that "it would be a good idea if we could have such courses here in Canada as well."[458]

Music Education for All Church Members

Music education for the church in general also receives some attention. Johansson believes that the musicians themselves need to be instrumental in providing such instruction. Musicians, in his view, should not just provide a commodity of music. They need to be teachers.[459] Furthermore, in Johansson's opinion, a church that is well-educated with respect to music begins with well-educated pastors, but he fears that seminaries often do not prepare pastors to provide such musical awareness and leadership.[460] He suggests "systematic teaching programs" for congregations through various means, such as classes or mid-week services, and at various times, such as prior to worship, in the preaching, during announcement time, or in the church bulletin.[461] Meyers offers a helpful bibliographical essay in which he introduces and comments on a wide variety of resources on music which would prove helpful for developing a church music curriculum.[462]

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[456] Deddens, *Fulfill Your Ministry,* 98-99; cf. Milo, *Zangers en Speellieden,* 218.
[457] Arjan de Visser, "Church Music in Calvin's Tradition (III)," *Clarion* Year-End 2009, 622.
[458] Ibid.
[459] Johansson, *Discipling Music Ministry,* 10-11. See earlier discussion on the leading task of the Levitical musicians, which included the aspect of teaching (cf. 2 Chron. 23:13, where the Hiphil active participle of יָדַע is used, meaning "to make known; to teach").
[460] Ibid.
[461] Ibid, 113.
[462] Meyers, *The Lord's Service,* 429-431.

Musical Training for Pastors, Seminaries, and Other Schools

Jones, likewise, suggests that "institutions of higher learning, particularly seminaries, could be at the forefront... in church music";[463] he cites Frank E. Gaebelein, prolific writer, one time editor of *Christianity Today* and evangelical educator, who fifty years ago said that "among Christian workers the pastor can least of all afford to remain musically illiterate," and Martin Luther who five hundred years ago commented, "We shouldn't ordain young men to the ministry unless they be well schooled in music."[464] To strengthen his point, Jones cites Gaebelein once again on his assertion that a musical reformation is necessary:

> The call is for Christian education to lead the way to higher things. But that call will not be fully answered until our schools, colleges, and seminaries espouse a philosophy of music befitting the Gospel. So long as the lower levels of an art so closely linked to man's emotions are cultivated at the expense of the best, we shall continue to have Christian leaders many of whom are deaf to the nobler elements of spiritual song. Evangelicalism is due for a musical reformation. The reformation will come only when Christian education, having set its face against the cheap in this greatest of the arts, seeks to develop in its students, response to a level of music worthy of the deep things of God.[465]

All levels of Christian education, according to Jones, need to be enlisted in training the next generation. "Church and academic musicians must patiently seek to love, learn, and educate."[466] Liesch actually dedicates an entire chapter to the subject of "Why Seminaries Should Teach Worship."[467]

Payton, even though he himself is the musician in the equation, makes a bold statement about musicians and their relationships with pastors: "I speak as a musician: Pastors trust musicians far too much and make disciples of them far too little. The theology-

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[463] Jones, *Singing and Making Music,* xii.
[464] Ibid.
[465] Ibid, xii-xiii.
[466] Ibid, xiii.
[467] Liesch, *The New Worship,* 229-233. Worship, of course, embraces much more than music.

free musician will usually make theological decisions that run afoul of the preacher's work. Don't trust the musicians, teach them!"[468] He later remarks in this connection that "a Levitical musician reached maturity at age thirty, not age twenty as in the case of the unspecialized Levite (1 Chron. 23:3, 5, 24)."[469] Clearly, a higher level of maturity was required for the Levite who was to serve as a musician. "One wonders what the state of church music today would be," Payton comments, "were musical leadership withheld until age thirty."[470] In his closing appeal to pastors, in fact, Payton tells pastors, *"First, retake ecclesiastical authority over the music,"*[471] and among other things *"register complaints with [your] seminaries over the miniscule and sometimes nonexistent place music holds with the Master of Divinity training."* [472] Pastors, in Payton's estimation, play a large role, for good or for ill, in the leadership of the church's musicians.

The Priesthood of All Believers as Grounds for Musical Education in the Church

As grounds for educating the congregation musically, internationally acclaimed organist and composer Austin Lovelace and co-author William Rice appeal to the Protestant concept of the "priesthood of all believers," which, in their estimation, is all too easily forgotten. They cite John Wesley's "Rules" to help improve congregational singing and encourage congregational practicing.[473] They then devote an entire chapter to the topic of "Music in Christian Education."

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[468] Payton, "Congregational Singing and the Ministry of the Word," 124.
[469] Ibid, 129.
[470] Ibid.
[471] Ibid, 158.
[472] Ibid, 159.
[473] Austin C. Lovelace and William C. Rice, *Music and Worship in the Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1976), 153ff.

Church Music Education Essential for the Future

The importance of educating children in church music is also stressed by church organist and long-time editor of *Reformed Music Journal,* Norma Kobald. She cites the Dutch church musician Hans Kriek, who said, "I think that the future of church music is far more dependent on the way we deal with our children than with the question of how large a denomination is or in what kind of building the congregation meets."[474] Dutch writer H.F.W. Roth believes, in fact, that the lack of such education is one of the factors leading to the present dearth of organists.[475] Payton, too, in his recommendations to pastors, stresses the importance of educating the children of the church in music.[476]

Attempts have been made, evidently, to address this lacuna. A. Blokhuis, for example, a Canadian Reformed organ enthusiast, reports on an "Organ Concert for Elementary Students" to which five elementary schools in Greater Toronto were invited. A "large contingent of bright, eager, enthusiastic students filled the front-right section, by the organ, of Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church," he writes.[477] When the children were asked who was taking piano lessons, about forty hands "shot up."[478] When they were asked who was taking organ lessons, "one and a half hands hesitantly were raised."[479] Blokhuis then appeals to parents, "not only allow, but encourage your children to learn to play the organ."[480]

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[474] Kobald, "Church Music Education," *Reformed Music Journal* 14 no. 2 (April 2002), 22.
[475] Roth, "A Dearth of Organists," 3-4.
[476] Payton, "Congregational Singing and the Ministry of the Word," 159.
[477] A. Blokhuis, "Organ Workshop," *Clarion,* 15 October 1999, 497.
[478] Ibid.
[479] Ibid.
[480] Ibid.

Blokhuis mentions two hopeful signs for the future of church music. First of all, he comments, "the young students were mesmerized. They moved and bobbed, swaying with the music." Secondly, he reports that a local musician "is encouraging workshops, organizing and arranging worksheets and handouts, to assist teachers in their tasks of fostering love for the 'Ministry of Music' as it applies to all God's children, young and old."[481] Music education among children, then, is receiving some attention in the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Curriculum for Church Music Education

If such education is to take place, curriculum needs to be developed. I.E. Reynolds offers a useful curriculum for a course on music in the Bible. The curriculum covers topics such as musicians, the purpose of music, music in the Bible, and the methods and manner of rendering a music program; it also offers sample test questions.[482]

Striving for Excellence through Regular Practice Vital for Church Musicians

Johansson devotes considerable space to the principle of musical excellence—of "Doing One's Best."[483] At the same time, he is realistic about the church musician who, as an excuse for sloth, will say that he is doing his best. While having unattainable expectations of church musicians is not good, he comments, to expect too little is equally reprehensible.

Quality for the Creator, writes Smelik, making a similar point, should be a central concern for the church in making music to her Maker:

> The church confesses God as Creator of heaven and earth. Furthermore, she confesses that the creation and all creation gifts are given to glorify his Name. Well then, let this be seen and heard in a church service and give form to it in a good way. That has consequences for the manner you handle the gifts of creation such as

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[481] Ibid.
[482] I.E. Reynolds, *Music and the Scriptures* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1942).
[483] Johansson, *Music and Ministry,* Chapter 7.

> language and music. As church you don't resign yourself to inferior quality. You will wish to get the very best out of the available possibilities. God wants to be praised by and with his creation.[484]

This must motivate the church musician, he writes, to take his task seriously and to give attention to quality. This ties in well with the theological and musicological "creation principle" upheld by the Great Tradition, as stressed earlier not only by Smelik, but also by Leithart, Eaton and Begbie.

Excellence, on the part of church musicians, requires continual practice. Episcopal organist and director of music John Gearhart emphasizes the requirement of church musicians to practice regularly and frequently. He suggests setting aside forty-five minutes three times a week to do so, having a well planned agenda for these practices, and seeking out the best possible teacher or player to offer critique.[485] Along these same lines, the Reformed Dutch author B. Vuijk insists that "he who deserves to sit on the organ bench in order to accompany the singing congregation must invest."[486]

Character Formation Vital for Church Musicians

A number of writers have pointed to the need, not only for *skill* development of church musicians, but also *character* formation. According to Johansson, the doctrine of Jesus' incarnation demands humility of musicians, rather than artistic pride.[487] Canadian Reformed church organist Ron Dykstra likewise says that church organists must exhibit an attitude of humility and service, and warns against the perils of professionalism.[488] Similarly,

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[484] Jan Smelik, "The Attractiveness of Church Services for Outsiders," *Diakonia* 18 no. 2 (September 2004), 56.

[485] John Gearhart, "I Hate to Practice, But," *Journal of Church Music* 28 no. 2 (October 1986), 6-7.

[486] B. Vuijk, "The Lump in the Throat," *Diakonia* 2 no. 1 (September 1988), 12.

[487] Johansson, *Music and Ministry,* ? (p23 of reading notes on Philosophy of Music).

[488] Ron Dykstra, "The Disposition of the Organist," *Reformed Music Journal* 8 no. 4 (October 1996).

Deddens believes that "holiness" and "faith" are as integral to the organist as skill, and that the church musicians should be well acquainted, not only with the metrical Psalms, but also with the Holy Scriptures.[489] Lovelace and Rice insist that self-discipline, poise, inquisitiveness, flexibility, a cooperative and dependable nature, emotional maturity, and Christian commitment are all essential qualities for church musicians, at least as important as technical skill.[490]

Church Musician as Liturgical Office Bearer?

With respect to the qualifications for church musicians, Leithart contends that "Reformed churches have historically lagged far behind Lutheran and Anglican churches in their musical skill, and ordaining theologically and musically trained men to music ministry would be one way of correcting this weakness."[491] The claim about lack of musical skill in Reformed worship is corroborated by the observation of Dr. Karel Deddens that Jan Zwart, once a member in the *Reformed* churches in the Netherlands, became organist of a *Lutheran* church in Amsterdam on account of its higher view of music in worship.[492] Although at one time Routley, like Leithart, believed that musicians could be ordained, he does register a change of mind about the legitimacy of this practice.[493] Deddens, a Dutch pastor and organist who for a time served as professor of Diaconiology and Ecclesiology at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary, agrees with Routley that the organist does not

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[489] Deddens, *Fulfill Your Ministry,* 97-98.
[490] Lovelace and Rice, *Music and Worship in the Church,* 70ff.
[491] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 125.
[492] K. Deddens, *Fulfill Your Ministry* (Winnipeg, MB: Premier, 1990), 99.
[493] Erik Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith* (Carol Stream, IL: Agape), 137-138.

hold a special, ordained office within the church,[494] even though he speaks of the organist as one who "prophesies from the organ bench."[495]

The Recruitment and Regulation of Church Musicians

Related to the training of musicians, critical attention has also been devoted to the recruitment and regulation of musicians and the choice of musical instruments. Jones addresses this matter when he writes,

> Players should be skilled and should contribute to worship in meaningful, positive ways. One should not engage instrumentalists simply because they are at hand or because they are willing to play. Neither will the use of instruments or songs ensure that what is offered is pleasing to God. The prophet Amos reminds us of the trouble of those "at ease in Zion" (6:1) who are not following the Lord's commands: "Woe to those...who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp and like David invent for themselves instruments of music...but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!" (Amos 6:4-6).[496]

Clearly, it is not only important to recruit musicians, but to recruit the right *kind* of musicians. Another Canadian church organist and editor of *Reformed Music Journal,* P. Janson, commenting on the shortage of organists, recommends that churches consider sponsoring aspiring music students: "If each congregation were to sponsor the organ study of two or three students, then four or five years from now our Reformed churches would have an abundance of qualified organists."[497] Similarly, Visscher urges that "if music and song in worship are there to praise God, then let it be done to the best of our ability. Let the most skilled accompanists be found, trained and supported."[498] Roth, addressing the problem of the dearth of organists, comes with a dozen proposals, including placing this matter on

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[494] Deddens, *Fulfill Your Ministry,* 97.

[495] Ibid, 98.

[496] Jones, *Singing and Making Music,* 24. Deddens, *Fulfill Your Ministry,* 100, likewise finds inexcusable what once happened, when an accordionist was asked to play the organ in church.

[497] P. Janson, "Editorial: On Shortage of Organists," 69-70.

[498] J. Visscher, "Shall We Sing?" *Clarion* 31 December 2004, 612.

consistory, classis and synod agendas, recruiting qualified and professionally trained organists to set up some sort of church-sponsored music institute or academy which would develop regional and national organist training programs, publish a periodical for prospective organists and those in training, and investigate the training of musicians who play other instruments.[499]

The Remuneration of Church Musicians

Deddens tackles the often thorny issue of the remuneration of church musicians. He counters the notion that just because their task is a labour of love, they should not be provided with monetary support.[500] He convincingly argues that financial support should be offered to enable them to maintain and improve their skills.[501]

The Choice of Musical Instruments for Worship

Various Opinions on the Best Kind of Organ

Various sets of criteria have been put forward with respect to the choice of musical instruments to be used in worship. For those who are settled on organ as the preferable instrument for worship, there is still the question of what kind of organ. Reformed Dutch writer Wim Kloppenburg, for example, weighs the digital organ against the pipe organ, asserting that the former "ought to be banned from the worship service."[502] Dutch pipe organ advocate Wietse Meinardi is also convinced that the pipe organ has a superior sound.[503] Another musician who believes that "the organ is the proper instrument for the

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[499] Roth, "The Dearth of Organists," 6.
[500] Deddens, *Fulfill Your Ministry,* 100.
[501] Ibid, 101.
[502] Wim Kloppenburg, "Genuine or Imitation?," *Reformed Music Journal* 11 no. 3 (July 1999), 77.
[503] Wietse Meinardi, "Only the Original Sounds Better," *Reformed Music Journal* 9 no. 3 (July 1997).

sanctuary" is Steere,[504] who addresses such matters as cost, type and style of organ, and the best position for the organ and console.[505] A.E. Harvey has yet another perspective on the organ. He wonders whether the expense of pipe organs is justified, and suggests that perhaps smaller scale organs are sufficient for the task.[506]

The Organ Put to the Test

Kobald, while not ruling out other musical instruments for use in worship, suggests that general neglect of congregational singing, even by consistories, has led to the decreasing interest in organ.[507] De Visser believes that "it may be helpful to reaffirm that the church organ is an excellent instrument for the accompaniment of congregational singing," and that the Canadian Reformed Churches should "work responsibly with the organ tradition we have. There is no need to idolize the organ but it is also short-sighted to say that the organ is outdated and needs to be replaced by other instruments. The sustained sound of the organ provides a strong foundation for congregational singing."[508] For de Visser "this does not mean that the organ is the only instrument that can be used to accompany congregational singing. Pianos and guitars can be used profitably as well, especially now that we have the technological means to amplify the sound of such instruments."[509] Yet, the limitations of other instruments needs to be remembered, says de Visser: "Flutes and trumpets can play the melody of a song but they do not offer a harmonic foundation upon which the singing of the congregation can rest. Percussion instruments enhance rhythm and excitement but

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[504] Dwight Steere, *Music in Protestant Worship* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1960), 45.
[505] Ibid, 45ff.
[506] A.E. Harvey, "Organs," *Theology* 67 no. 527 (May, 1964).
[507] N. Kobald, "Only the Organ?" *Reformed Music Journal* 10 no. 2 (April 1998).
[508] de Visser, "Church Music in Calvin's Tradition (III)," 623.
[509] Ibid.

they do not offer support for melody and harmony."[510] He adds that with instruments other than piano and organ "you need more instruments to acquire the same effect. You will need an ensemble of musicians or a worship band to get the job done. Soon you will have a group of people on stage with—almost inevitably—the risk that the emphasis on *congregational singing* is replaced by an emphasis on the *ensemble/band performing.*"[511]

Augments or Alternatives to the Organ Weighed

Others strongly advocate for different instruments to augment or replace the organ. Ferguson argues, for example, that organ should not be the only instrument used in worship: "My ideal collection of instruments for worship includes a good piano, handbells, Orff instruments, a good synthesizer with its own high-quality audio system, plus an ever-expanding group of instrumentalists who could be called upon to add the sounds of orchestral instruments to the congregation's song."[512] While not opposed to the organ being used in Christian worship, Carl Schalk objects to "the sometimes oppressive and continuous presence of the organ," and suggests that this instrument not be accorded such a prominent place.[513] He also addresses the challenge that often faces the smaller parish, where skilled musicians and quality instruments may be in short supply, and recommends that an "inventory of the musical talent and interest" be taken.[514] Jones suggests the following criteria for selecting musical instruments worthy of Christian worship: "Certainly acoustic instruments are preferable to electronic ones for aesthetic and other reasons....Instruments that have a historical connection with the church are perhaps more fitting than those that do

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[510] Ibid.
[511] Ibid.
[512] Ferguson, "Instrumental Music in Service to the Text," 394.
[513] Carl Schalk, "Getting More for Less," *The Christian Ministry* 13 no. 4 (July 1992), 22.
[514] Ibid, 20.

not; and instruments that have overly negative associations with secularism are probably best avoided."[515] Of the piano, Noel Magee of the St. Louis Conservatory of Music claims that many congregations are discovering it to be "an excellent instrument to lead congregational singing." She offers suggestions of how it can be intelligently used.[516]

Robert E. Webber, professor of theology at Wheaton College and editor of *The Complete Library of Christian Worship,* provides a helpful guide to the various instruments that are used in worship.[517] A useful "Table of Instrumental Combinations" for orchestra, concert band, brass choir, reed quintet, string ensembles and brass quartets, as well of combinations of these groups, is offered by John Wilson, professor and minister of music.[518] He also devotes specific attention to the organ (as well as the piano), addressing cost, space, location, and relation to the size of the sanctuary.[519] A Reformed musician in the Netherlands, Harry van Wijk, has also put together an informative article with guidelines on instrumental ensembles for worship, in which he addresses such aspects as preparation, repertoire and instrumental combinations.[520] He provides a resource list with information on literature, music and organization, too.

On account of the nature of this study, it is worth noting that Routley devotes considerable attention to alternatives to the organ, comparing various other instruments with it, in terms of how well they support congregational singing. He grants that the piano is

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[515] Jones, *Singing and Making Music,* 24.

[516] Noel Magee, "The Piano in Worship," *The Complete Library of Christian Worship* Vol. 4, *Music and the Arts in Christian Worship,* Robert E. Webber, ed. (Nashville, TN: Star Song Publishing Group, 1993), bk. 1: 409.

[517] Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship*, Vol. 4 (Nashville, TN: Star Song Publishing Group, 1993), bk. 1.

[518] John F. Wilson, *An Introduction to Church Music* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), 180.

[519] Ibid, 189-190.

[520] Harry van Wijk, "Andere Instrumenten en Begeleidingsvormen," *Steunpunt Liturgie* 13 October 2010.

"rhythmical, sensitive and flexible," but asserts that it cannot sustain tone in support of a congregation of any considerable size.[521] He also mentions the need to re-edit the vocal score which is much more urgent for the piano than for the organ.[522]

The guitar, in Routley's opinion, "is a lamentable substitute for several reasons."[523] First, the need to amplify it "seriously distorts its nature."[524] Also, "variety of tone is simply not available."[525] Third, in his opinion, "there is always a tendency for arrangers to produce exceedingly ugly harmonic progressions."[526] Next, he mentions "the inevitable danger that guitarists will contemptuously dismiss the need to lead a proper accompaniment style,"[527] as has come to be expected of well-trained church organists. Finally, he asserts that "in many ways the associations of this instrument are all wrong. Its sound tends to bring into church the atmosphere of callous slovenliness and emotional brainwashing which in secular life it has made so much its own."[528]

While Routley is in favour of "the use of occasional orchestral instruments or of small reinforcing groups (brass groups alone are practicable),"[529] his main criticism of the orchestra playing on a weekly basis – the practice in some large churches – is its "invariability of sound—which in playing successive stanzas of a hymn, we insist, is depressing."[530] Furthermore,

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[521] Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith*, 106.
[522] Ibid, 107.
[523] Ibid.
[524] Ibid.
[525] Ibid.
[526] Ibid.
[527] Ibid.
[528] Ibid.
[529] Ibid, 108.
[530] Ibid, 107-108.

> a large orchestra suggests a triumphalism which we cannot but think inappropriate. Public worship is not in *that* sense a grand occasion, and that sense in which it is a grand occasion may easily be obscured by the presence of a playing body which one normally associates with the highest of "high culture." What the guitar brings into the church in the way of inappropriate associations from one direction, the large orchestra brings from another. If the occasion is very grand and festive and unusual, like a coronation or a special festival of church music, the orchestra is less inappropriate, though its contribution to the grandeur, its diminishing of the penitence that must always precede true wonder and delight, remains even there a questionable advantage. These grand religious occasions are spiritually indigestible and should be for that reason very infrequent.[531]

All in all, then, his view of the orchestra for worship is not very favourable. Payton views triumphalist worship with similar sobriety, with his tongue-in-cheek remark that "the post-modern life is often so gray and futile that we would gladly escape to the glory of the fourth chapter of Revelation every Sunday."[532] He mocks the vain attempt. Going by Leithart's earlier comment that "the church in song should sound like the glory-cloud that it is—the sound of many waters, a great voice that breaks the cedars of Lebanon, a sound that strikes fear in our enemies,"[533] he clearly disagrees with Payton and Routley in this respect.

Routley also provides a somewhat more nuanced judgment of the electronic organ than do the others already mentioned. Going on the basic proposition that "there is no inherent inferiority in the electronic principle of sound production,"[534] he says that the question really comes down to "whether *this* electronic instrument serves the purpose better than *this* pipe organ. Inductive generalizations with moral overtones are invariably pernicious."[535] Even with this qualification, he admits that "of almost every electronic organ I have encountered I have said, *'This* one is unsatisfactory.'"[536] He ascribes this defect to the environment into which this instrument was born—"the pop culture, the greedy culture, and

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[531] Ibid, 108.
[532] Payton, "Congregational Singing and the Ministry of the Word," 120.
[533] Leithart, *From Silence to Song*, 121.
[534] Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith*, 109.
[535] Ibid.
[536] Ibid.

cut-rate ethic."[537] He dismisses the purely fiscal justification of purchasing an electronic instrument:

> Cheapness is normally the most important, [but] actually the most delusive. Churches sometimes install these instruments for the wholly spurious reason that the less money that is spent on music the better the church will be. The answer to that nonsense, especially when it is piously claimed that the church gives to missions what it withholds from music, is that music is part of the church's mission. And it is actually true that an electronic instrument designed with the needful care and skill can be quite expensive.[538]

The only advantage of the electronic organ, in his opinion, is its adaptability with respect to space in church buildings, "since the allocation of space for ranks of pipes is a greater problem than the setting up of speakers."[539] Furthermore, its "relative portability" is a great advantage in "unstable or pioneer situations."[540] In conclusion, he mentions one factory in North London that "gets as near as possible to designing these instruments with...loving care and musical sensitivity."[541]

Are Musicians to Accompany or Lead the Singing?

The question whether the church musician is to *accompany* the congregational singing, or whether his task is to *lead,* also has the attention of some authors. Kuyper says that the task of the organist

> is to lead, support, regulate, and promote the singing; the organ should never assume the right to let itself be heard. It has to serve the singing of the congregation and be wholly dedicated to improve it, to elevate it, to inspire it, and to enter into its spirit. The organ must not overpower the song, but the song must be rendered all the more gloriously because of the organ's support.[542]

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[537] Ibid, 109-110.
[538] Ibid, 110.
[539] Ibid, 110-111.
[540] Ibid, 111.
[541] Ibid.
[542] Kuyper, *Our Worship,* 56-57.

The church musician's task, in Kupyer's view, involves a combination of leading, accompanying, and enhancing the singing. Deddens shares the opinion of the eminent Dutch hymnologist and pastor H. Hasper that the organ is simply to accompany and support. Hasper even supplies a definition for this art: "Accompanying means to go along with someone. It neither means to run ahead or drag along, nor to follow or lag behind, but to be where the other is, not to lose him, if necessary to help him along, to escort him and so create a sense of security and peace."[543] If the musician does anything besides accompany the congregational singing, according to Hasper, he is guilty of neglecting his duty. Canadian Reformed church organist Dennis Teitsma, taking a slightly different position, asserts that sometimes it is necessary for the church musician to provide "a gentle but consistent coaching or pulling along."[544] Smith reconciles this ever present dilemma by suggesting that "perhaps the best solution is that the organist leads the congregation into the song and then accompanies them during the song."[545] The Levitical musician's task to serve by leading and lead by serving, as discussed earlier, still seems the most suitable model for the liturgical musician.

The Supervision of Church Musicians

How is the playing of musical instruments best regulated in churches? This question become all the more pressing in light of the reality that many of the appointed church leaders, pastors and elders alike, are responsible but not qualified in musical matters. This is the topic of an insert prepared for an office bearers' handbook and adapted from an article

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[543] Deddens, *Fulfill Your Ministry,* 100.
[544] Dennis Teitsma, *The Hymns* (Winnipeg, MB: Premier), 102.
[545] Smith, "Where Pipes, Pulpit and People Meet," 21.

written by Smelik.[546] It suggests that a consistory is wise to seek advice from those with expertise in the area of church music, making sure that a good policy is in place. Included in this insert, which assumes the use of the pipe organ as the principal instrument for worship, is the rationale for such a regulation, namely, "the declining number of organists" and the growing demand for quality music. There is also a list of Scriptural norms; a realistic set of criteria for determining who are qualified for the task of organist and what can be expected of them; a recommendation to make use of the musical diploma and certification classifications that have been developed by reputable music academies, colleges and conservatories; and a number of other practical suggestions for what else should be included in such a regulation, such as the optimal number of organists, what alternatives may be used if there are no organists, remuneration of the musician, and the interaction and responsibilities of the various persons and bodies, such as liturgy and organ committees.

Over three decades ago, Canadian Reformed minister, organist and seminary professor, the late Rev. G. Van Dooren, addressed the matter of the relationship between organists and ministers, and to a lesser degree, consistories, suggesting that "organists are all too often taken for granted."[547] They are often poorly remunerated, in spite of expenses related to lessons and the purchase of music. Van Dooren mentions the view of some that the organist "should only be thankful that he *may* play the organ."[548] After listing some of the commonly perceived idiosyncrasies of organists, he assigns to ministers the responsibility of ensuring that the organist does not deliver concerts on Sundays, of developing a good

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[546] *Diakonia,* "A Regulation for Church Music," 14 no. 4 (March 2001).
[547] Van Dooren, "About Organists and Pulpiteers," 458.
[548] Ibid.

relationship with the organist, and of making sure that the organist receives the liturgy details on time. He, too, makes the point that the minister should know something about church music, and that training in church music should be a regular part of seminary training. Kobald goes even further, with her conviction that the pastor should engage the organist more in the selection and placing of songs in the liturgy, early in the week prior to the Lord's Day, so that she can offer suggestions to the pastor and have adequate time to choose and practice appropriate music.[549] Ferguson would surely agree, since according to him, as previously noted, "the musician (composer or performer) functions exegetically to proclaim and, in the process, to interpret the text."[550]

According to Visscher, though, these matters must not simply be left in the hands of pastors and musicians, as generally happens unless something goes wrong: "If our churches are convinced that the music of the church is an important aspect of the church's worship, then they need to stop treating it like a step child and become more involved. Time will have to be set aside for the organist to meet with the church council. Discussion will need to take place as to how best to promote and stimulate this part of the church's worship."[551] Clearly, in his view, the entire church leadership plays a vital role in recognizing and fostering the integral importance of the church's musicians and music-making.

Many authors, like Steere, suggest that a committee be established to handle the music ministry of the church.[552] Lovelace and Rice believe that the minister should serve as

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[549] N. Kobald, "I Had a Dream," *Reformed Music Journal* 6 no. 4 (October 1994), 105.
[550] Ferguson, "Instrumental Music in Service to the Text," 394.
[551] Visscher, "Something for Everyone," 26.
[552] Steere, *Music in Protestant Worship,* 136ff.

the chairman of such a committee.[553] This qualification should be weighed against earlier comments, however, about the lack of musical training that most ministers have received. Not only is the involvement of the church leadership necessary, but also that of the congregation, through a representative music council or committee, Johansson remarks.[554] He, too, encourages pastors to maintain respectful dialogue with musicians.[555]

Practical Advice for the Church Organist

Much of the literature already cited also provides practical guidelines and advice for organists. Along with his previously mentioned warning about the tempting power of the organ, Routley offers the organist some good advice about how to use this mighty instrument.[556] He later addresses such matters as appropriate repertoire, tempo, modulation, and interludes.[557] Halter covers such topics as playing the music of the liturgy, the choice and presentation of organ music, special problems and techniques in service playing, and organ registration and design.[558] Smelik criticizes the tendency of some Reformed church organists to play Roman Catholic repertoire.[559] In a separate article, he offers practical hints to the church organist regarding, among other things, time signatures, tactus signs and harmonizations.[560] The hallowed Reformed tradition of organ playing before and after the worship service also receives his attention, including the history of this practice and

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[553] Lovelace and Rice, *Music and Worship in the Church,* 184ff.
[554] Johansson, *Discipling Music Ministry,* 112-113.
[555] Ibid, 114-115.
[556] Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith,* 99-105.
[557] Ibid, 118-128.
[558] Halter, *The Practice of Sacred Music.*
[559] J. Smelik, "Organ Sounds and Wrong Tracks (1)," *Reformed Music Journal* 15 no. 1 (January 2003).
[560] J. Smelik, "Practical Hints for the Organist," *Reformed Music Journal* 12 no. 4 (October 2000).

appropriate repertoire.[561] Janson, too, writes about the "pre-service prelude" and addresses the perennial question of whether the congregation should remain silent,[562] a thorny issue that Routley also tackles,[563] and comments that congregations, when they do not remain silent, are guilty of treating the organist's music "as Muzak, a background to conversation."[564]

Bringing together many of the practical aspects of church service playing in a comprehensive list of guidelines, Dutch organist Dick Sanderman offers advice on playing before and after the service; preludes, interludes, and postludes; accompaniment technique; registration for congregational singing; and other sundry matters.[565] In two earlier articles, written along with Theo Goedhart, Sanderman addresses not only organ playing before and after the service,[566] but also covers organ music during the collection and the Lord's supper.[567]

Much has been written, too, on the tempo in which the Genevan Psalms, used in the Canadian Reformed Churches, should be sung. These writers include a number of Dutch authors, such as musicologist Dr. Jan Roelof Luth,[568] well-known church organist Dirk Jansz. Zwart,[569] and others, like Milo[570] and Teitsma.[571]

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[561] J. Smelik, "Organ Playing Before and After the Church Service," *Reformed Music Journal* 12 no. 1 (January 2000).

[562] P. Janson, "Editorial: Pre-Service Organ Prelude," *Reformed Music Journal* 5 no. 4 (October 1993).

[563] Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith,* 119-120.

[564] Ibid, 119.

[565] Dick Sanderman, "Starting Points for Playing in Church," *Reformed Music Journal* 11 no. 2 (April 1999).

[566] Dick Sanderman and Theo Goedhart, "Ecclesiastical Organ Playing (1)," *Reformed Music Journal* 9 no. 3 (July 1997).

[567] Sanderman and Goedhart, "Ecclesiastical Organ Playing (2)," *Reformed Music Journal* 9 no. 4 (October 1997).

[568] Luth, *"Daar wert om't seerst uytgekreten...,"* Vol. 1, 91.

[569] Dirk Jansz. Zwart, *Het Kerklied "Om Het Behoud"* (Alphen aan den Rijn, Nederland: Repro-Holland B.V., 1981).

[570] Milo, *Zangers en Speellieden.*

Peter Pieters, a Dutch commentator on music culture, writes about the function of the prelude to congregational singing, and the importance of intonation,[572] while Evangelical Lutheran musician Willem Mudde suggests new ways of using the organ during congregational singing.[573] An emeritus Reformed pastor, A.G. Soeting, addresses the problems related to the beginning and ending of songs[574] and, in a separate piece, argues that organists should not "harmonize on the organ bench."[575] Another emeritus Canadian Reformed minister, J. Van Rietschoten, discusses the importance of pedal-playing on the organ for congregational singing.[576] The organ playing techniques related to touch, phrasing, articulation and "vertical alignment" are the subject of an article by Marilyn Stulken, an American organist and university professor.[577] Lovelace, furthermore, explains how the church musician is able to create his own hymn introductions.[578] A one-year self-training program for the beginning organ student is offered by a professor of organ at Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University, Oswald G. Ragatz, which also serves as a valuable source of repertoire for recitals and church services.[579]

Another comprehensive survey on service playing is provided by Paul Danilewski, Sub-Dean of the American Guild of Organists, who explains how to play hymn

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[571] Dennis Teitsma, *Tunes of the Anglo-Genevan Psalter* (Winnipeg, MB: Dennis Teitsma, 2005).

[572] Peter Pieters, "The Prelude to Congregational Singing," *Reformed Music Journal* 9 no. 1 (January 1997).

[573] Willem Mudde, "New Perspectives in Hymn Accompaniment," *Reformed Music Journal* 7 no. 3 (July 1995).

[574] A.G. Soeting, "Lay Talk: The Beginning and Ending of a Song," *Reformed Music Journal* 5 no. 4 (October 1993).

[575] A. G. Soeting, "Lay-Talk: About the Misplaced Vanity of Harmonizing Hymns at the Organ," *Reformed Music Journal* 5 no. 2 (April 1993).

[576] J. Van Rietschoten, "The Feet of Him Who Brings Good Tidings," *Reformed Music Journal* 4 no. 4 (October 1992).

[577] Marilyn Kay Stulken, "Hymn Performance (1)," *The Hymn* 53 no. 1 (January 2002).

[578] Austin C. Lovelace, "Create Your Own Hymn Introductions," *Journal of Church Music* 25 no. 4 (April 1983).

[579] Ragatz, *Organ Technique.*

introductions that are not excessive and do not draw attention to themselves, without requiring improvisation skills.[580] He also discusses the importance of practice and the use of voluntaries, and provides a resource list of hymn introductions, reharmonizations, arrangements for organ, concluding voluntaries, and interludes.

The literature consulted does not say much about improvisation. Scruton makes the interesting comment, however, that "a living musical culture is not merely a culture of performance. It involves arrangement, improvisation, embellishment—a constant creative playing with its own material."[581]

Acoustics, Architecture, and Other Matters Practical, Logistical, and Fiscal

In the literature, considerable attention is also devoted to matters material, practical and logistical, such as acoustics, architecture, and the purchase and care of instruments. In 2006, the American Institute of Organists put together "Guidelines for Pipe Organ Temperature Control," especially important because pipe organs are extremely sensitive to temperature and humidity changes.

Much has been written about church architecture and acoustics. The influential Dutch theologian, Abraham Kuyper, was of the opinion that "since few architects understand acoustics, it is advisable to consult an expert, even when constructing a small church....It certainly is a big mistake that so little attention is given to this matter."[582] In 1990, *The Hymn* dedicated a whole issue to the matter of acoustics, with contributions by an acoustician, an architect, a musician, an organ builder, a theologian, and a pastor. A lengthy

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[580] Paul J. Danilewski, "Resources for Creative Service Playing," *Journal of Church Music* 26 no. 8 (April 1984).

[581] Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, 455.

[582] Kuyper, *Our Worship*, 73.

annotated bibliography, compiled by Scott R. Riedel, an acoustical architectural design expert, is also included at the end of this issue.[583] The editor, Paul Westermeyer explains the reason for devoting an entire issue to this subject, when he writes, "Churches increasingly resemble padded cells; they are becoming monuments to our voracious appetites for the appearance of creature comforts and to our correspondingly weak concerns for what is genuine and what grows out of the nature and dynamics of worship. We are imprisoning ourselves in deadly, cushioned kitsch."[584] Architect Edward Anders Sövik comments that at one time "acoustical problems were solved by mounting sound absorbing materials in great quantities on walls and ceilings, and then blasting into this dead space with loud speaker systems for the spoken word, and sometimes for choir and organ as well. The result is deadly for music and for hymn-singing."[585]

Lovelace, who provides the musician's perspective, laments what his research turned up from "more than 20 years of articles published by the American Guild of Organists" that "in not one instance was there any mention or consideration" in the design of church buildings "of the song of the people."[586] He begins his article with a sobering parody: "O mumble to the Lord a tentative song. The word became mush and was unintelligible among us. Make a muffled noise to the Lord. Praise God with muted trumpet sound; praise him with inaudible cymbals. Let everything that breathes praise the Lord, acoustics permitting."[587] If this comment is offensive, the reality it describes is even more troubling. For the essentials of

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[583] Scott R. Riedel, "Worship Space Acoustics: An Annotated Bibliography," *The Hymn* 41 no. 3 (July 1990). Riedel also wrote a series of nine articles on church acoustics for the organ magazine *The Diapason* between the years 1983 and 2009.

[584] Paul Westermeyer, "Editor's Column," *The Hymn* 41 no. 3 (July 1990), 6.

[585] Edward Anders Sövik, "Architecture for Hymn Singing," *The Hymn* 41 no. 3 (July 1990), 14.

[586] Lovelace, "Good Acoustics for Music and Word," *The Hymn* 41 no. 3 (July 1990), 15.

[587] Ibid.

good acoustics to be met, Lovelace says that attention needs to be given to such things as insulating the building to reduce outside noise, positioning the organ optimally, regulating the organ for proper wind pressure, and leaving space for additional instruments, including a grand piano or harpsichord.[588]

Kobald likewise argues that it will follow from the importance of the "primary" matter of congregational singing, that the "secondary" matter of acoustics receives "due consideration."[589] Wilson, too, addresses the matter of acoustics with particular focus on the arrangement and layout of the sanctuary.[590] Acoustical considerations that specifically relate to the organ are the topic of an article by A. Reil, a Dutch organ symposium speaker, in which he addresses the widespread notion of church councils and organ builders that "for less money it can be done bigger. More seats, more options for less money is unfortunately the dominant theme of our time."[591] To illustrate his point, he writes, "If we were to put a profile of a church from each style period on paper or on slides, we would discover that there has been a drastic change. From the Gothic period to the present, the profile has changed from very high and narrow to very low and wide. If we would show these profile slides in rapid succession, we would see the church literally collapsing."[592] He laments that when it comes to the design of a building, "it's always about money."[593] Then he goes on to explain the technical aspects that need to be taken into account in organ and building design, namely, "coherence," which is the relation of the organ to the space it occupies; the scale;

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588 Ibid, 16.
589 N. Kobald, "The Trouble with Facts," *Reformed Music Journal* 8 no. 3 (July 1996), 62.
590 Wilson, *An Introduction to Church Music*, 184-188.
591 A. Reil, "The Organ and Its Relation to Acoustics," *Reformed Music Journal* 7 no. 2 (April 1995), 32.
592 Ibid, 33.
593 Ibid.

the wall thickness and alloys of the pipes which function as the "sound source"; the other materials used in the construction of the organ, such as the wood; and the influence of the surrounding case-work on the resonance and sound of the organ.[594]

Schalk recommends a reality check when he observes that

> many parishes have allowed their church buildings to become surrogate living rooms with wall-to-wall carpet, cushioned seats and an aura of comfy coziness. Worshipping at the altar of 'dry' (i.e. dead) sound, architects and church interior designers continue building and furnishing monuments to lackluster liturgy and stifled song. The symbol of the movement: padded pew. Its marching song: "Sit Down, O People of God."[595]

Again, if this comment is offensive, the reality it describes is even more troubling. Padded interiors produce poor acoustics. In this article Schalk tells the story of visiting several American churches in which he "had the opportunity to experience again the agony and the ecstasy of both good and bad acoustical environments and their effect on vitality of worship."[596] He uses the example of two contrasting churches to illustrate his point. A connection might be made between these observations about obsession with coziness and Johansson's comment that "music of the popular type that is made for reassurance, for immediate comprehensibility, for cozy comfortableness, rather than for prophetic utterance, takes away any sense of the unknown or of mystery."[597] Architecture, like music, speaks volumes.

What a contrast between the present obsession with coziness and the architectural principles followed by churches in the past! Sherman states that the purpose of ancient

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[594] Ibid, 34-38.

[595] Carl Schalk, "A Lament for Resounding Praise," *The Christian Century* 100 no. 9 (23-30 March 1983), 269.

[596] Ibid.

[597] Johansson, *Music and Ministry,* 100.

church buildings "was to transform the space which they enclosed into sacred space, where time is eternal and one can experience a foretaste of heaven and communion with the saints."[598] The organ, he says, like baptismal fonts, pulpits and altars, was seen as a "'machine' which facilitates the emergence of heaven into the space."[599] This worldview influenced the position of the large organs in northern Europe which were located "in a balcony over the main entrance, at the bottom of the tower," whose visual function was "to connect the building to heaven."[600] In many baroque churches, the best place for the very large instruments they housed was in the rear of the church where there was more room and where they would be close to the congregation.[601] Other organs were placed high on the wall of the nave or chancel, where they could project sound from high above the congregation, or elsewhere in the nave or chancel.[602]

There are also helpful resources concerning the purchase and care of organs and other useful information about these instruments. With respect to the purchase of organs, Canadian organist Lori Klingbeil offers suggestions and guidelines, along with an annotated bibliography of four helpful publications.[603] German church musician and organ specialist Hans Klotz offers a helpful handbook for organists, covering the structure, design, maintenance, and even history and function of the organ; it also includes a list of organ music.[604]

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[598] Sherman, "Organs and the Music of Heaven," 13.
[599] Ibid.
[600] Ibid, 15.
[601] Ibid.
[602] Ibid.
[603] Lori Klingbeil, "Help for Churches: How to Buy an Organ," *The Hymn* 39 no. 2 (April 1988).
[604] Hans Klotz, *The Organ Handbook* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1969).

Liturgical Change in Church Music

Dealing with change is another aspect of the church's song and music that faces Canadian Reformed Churches, a factor that is arguably more pressing than it has ever been for any of our forbearers. Leithart argues that on account of its preserving and conserving function, following "from the notion that Levitical musicians were given 'guard duty'," the style of liturgical music "should change slowly, not attempting to keep pace with every fad of entertainment music."[605] Contrast this with Liesch, mentioned earlier, who advocates for the "revolution of worship styles… sweeping across North America."[606] He advances the assumption that the church needs to conform to the surrounding culture, that she should not require non-Christians to go through a "cultural circumcision," since "there is no one 'sacred' style."[607] Rather, he argues, the church needs to become "identified with" culture in order to relate to it, in his opinion.[608] Liesch does, however, encourage churches seeking to implement change to make every effort to provide "conditions where *people can feel safe,"* to avoid lopping off that which is in place to make room for change, not to *"undertake changes in worship unless there is a certain amount of calm in the church,"* to educate people winsomely, to "obtain consensus," and to "pray about implementation long before you take action."[609] Dalbey cites Andrew Blackwood who advises gradual change as follows: "Since the peace of

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[605] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 125.
[606] Liesch, *The New Worship,* 13.
[607] Ibid, 187.
[608] Ibid, 188.
[609] Ibid, 202-203.

the local church is more vital than any improvement in the music, the pastor is careful about suggesting radical changes."[610]

The topic of change is also dealt with both by Visscher[611] and Dutch theologian C.J. de Ruijter,[612] even though neither author specifically addresses change with respect to musicians and musical instruments. Visscher talks about how to assess the change under consideration carefully, present the case clearly, create the right climate for change, implement wisely and review periodically. De Ruijter discusses the necessity of change, its extent, the wisdom required to implement it, and how the agents of change need to strive to preserve the unity of the church.

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[610] Dalbey, "A Biblical, Historical and Contemporary Look at the Regulative Principle of Worship," 52.

[611] Visscher, "Change in the Church," *Diakonia* 15 nos. 3-4 (December 2001).

[612] C.J. de Ruijter, "Handling Change," *Diakonia* 11 no. 2 (September 1997).

CHAPTER THREE: PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Stages of Journey to Topic

The project portion of this paper is a qualitative case study of musical instruments and musicians in the Lord's Day worship of the Canadian Reformed Churches. The researcher arrived at this topic through a few stages. He had already decided to focus on the theological discipline of Doxology,[613] or Liturgics as it is called at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary, where he received his initial ministerial training. Because of the researcher's love for music, his previous musical training, and his service as a church organist in a number of Reformed congregations in Ontario for well over a decade prior to becoming a pastor, he thought that it would be fitting to focus on the musical aspect of worship. For some time, already, it had been the researcher's opinion that the church's musical ministry has suffered from lack of attention, if not downright neglect and complacency, in the Canadian Reformed Churches. More recently, there has been a fair bit of discussion on the Internet among Canadian Reformed musicians and those interested in church music. The researcher's observation was that there is a great deal of confusion and also a lack of musical and liturgical sensitivity, education, and leadership within the churches. He feared that unless more attention and leadership would soon be offered, the Canadian Reformed Churches would certainly find themselves in a place of liturgical and musical confusion and strife. Conversations with professors at Covenant Theological Seminary, particularly Dr. Zack

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[613] Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

Eswine, Dr. Mark Dalbey, and Dr. Donald Guthrie, and also with European musicologist Dr. Jan Smelik, and Dr. Arjan de Visser of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary, provided the confirmation the researcher needed to settle on this topic.

Research Design

The research design of this study, as mentioned, follows a qualitative approach. Sharan B. Merriam, research and education expert and professor at the University of Georgia, describes the qualitative method as possessing the following characteristics. Firstly, it is "interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of the world and the experiences they have in the world."[614] Secondly, "the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this human instrument, the researcher, rather than through some inanimate inventory, questionnaire, or computer."[615] Thirdly, qualitative research "usually involves field work. The researcher must physically go to the people, setting, site, institution (the field) in order to observe behavior in its natural setting."[616] Fourthly, "qualitative research primarily employs an inductive research strategy. That is, this type of research builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than tests existing theory."[617] Finally, "since qualitative research focuses on process, meaning and understanding, the product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive. Words and pictures rather than numbers are used to convey what the researcher has learned about a phenomenon."[618] Merriam distinguishes

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[614] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 6.

[615] Ibid, 7.

[616] Ibid.

[617] Ibid.

[618] Ibid, 8.

qualitative research from quantitative research in this way: "In contrast to quantitative research, which takes apart a phenomenon to examine component parts (which become the variables of the study), qualitative research can reveal how all the parts work together to form a whole."[619]

When employing the qualitative method of research, one needs to remain transparent and honest about its perspectival nature and its limitations. The strength of Merriam's approach is that she admits the limitations and grapples with these factors by providing crucial checks and balances that will uphold the integrity of this research method and guard against its perils.[620] In reporting research, Merriam notes, validity, reliability, and ethics are indispensable.[621]

A Tale of Three Churches

This study's qualitative research focuses on three Canadian Reformed Churches in British Columbia's Fraser Valley: those at Aldergrove, Langley, and Surrey-Maranatha. Initially, a few churches in Ontario were considered as the primary study participants. However, the complicated logistics involved made that option less favourable from the start. Pastors from the seven neighbouring churches in the Fraser Valley (the researcher's colleagues) were then approached with the opportunity to take part in this study. Colleagues from three of these churches expressed interest. After their respective councils received the official participation requests, these colleagues were able to confirm their full support.

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[619] Ibid, 6.
[620] Ibid, 151ff.
[621] Ibid, 198-219.

Since three had been the study's target number of participating churches, this outcome was satisfactory. Since the focus groups were to be held at a research facility in downtown Vancouver, it was ideal that the participants from these three churches would be able to make the trip there without too much difficulty by means of car-pooling.

A benefit of these three churches' involvement in the study was that they each reflected in many ways the Canadian Reformed Churches in general. By Canadian Reformed standards, Langley is a large congregation, numbering close to 700 members; Aldergrove is a medium-sized congregation, with almost 300 members; and Surrey-Maranatha is a small congregation of about 150 members. Surrey-Maranatha's large building houses a restored, decades-old, quality Casavant/Haddon pipe organ, while a new Casavant pipe organ occupies the Langley church. Aldergrove has been using rented facilities until recently, and has just moved into her new church building where a restored pipe organ is being installed, one that had been assembled by Hugo Pilon, long-time organist of Bethel Canadian Reformed Church in Toronto. Both Aldergrove and Langley own quality grand pianos. From what I observed, these three churches were also divergent with respect to their musical ministries. Surrey-Maranatha has a fairly traditional approach by Canadian Reformed standards, using the pipe organ alone for Lord's Day worship, while Langley is less traditional, with a wider diversity of instruments being employed, and Aldergrove is in a situation of flux, moving from rented facilities into their own building.

The Field and the Folk

Data has been gathered by means of focus group interviews, observations, and documents.[622] During the focus group discussions, church organists and other musicians who regularly play instruments during Lord's Day worship were interviewed in two separate groups; ministers, elders, and other congregational members were also interviewed, in three separate groups.

Two of the invited organists chose not to participate. One of these organists, however, was willing to share some information about the working agreement in place between the organists and council of that particular church.

Since only two of the churches use musical instruments other than the organ in the worship services, and the two which do only make use of a few players of such instruments, there was a fairly small pool of people from which to recruit this particular focus group. Thankfully, three of the approximately six or seven available were able to participate. Only one did not reply to the study invitation. Three others were not able to participate, even though they desired to. Initially, only elders who are presently serving were going to be invited to participate in the study. However, when a satisfactory response had not been obtained, the researcher invited emeritus elders to participate, expecting that they would have more free time in their evenings. This proved to be a wise decision, for in the end a

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[622] Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education,* says this about these three means of data collection: Interviews, "conversations with a purpose," 71, have the advantage of enabling us to discover things we cannot observe, 72. The benefit of observation, when conducted carefully and thoroughly, is that the researcher doesn't depend on the interpretations of others, xiii. Documents, which according to the author "have been underused in qualitative research," 124, serve as external verification that is objective and stable. They are usually easy for the researcher to access, and can save him large amounts of time and money, 125-127. "The term *document* is broadly defined to cover an assortment of written records, physical traces, and artifacts," xiv. It includes not only written documents, but "all forms of data not gathered through interviews or observations," 113.

complete group of ten participants was gathered. With some persistent effort, the researcher was able to find a time for all four pastors to meet with him, despite the fact that they are all typically busy men with many responsibilities and overlapping travel schedules. Finally, with some help from these pastors and a few other elders, he was also able to meet his target size of ten people for the church members' focus group.

Of the thirty-two people who accepted the invitation to participate, only one was not able to make it, and that because of her newborn baby.

Letters, Mandates, and a Study

Other observations and documents gathered include correspondence from four experienced Canadian Reformed church organists, from Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia. Although their input was not specifically solicited, they had the courtesy and commitment to contact the researcher after hearing about the survey in which all the Canadian Reformed Churches had been invited to participate. Their correspondence and the resources they shared proved profitable indeed, since three of them have many decades of experience, and one of them, though much younger, has an undergraduate degree in organ performance, and is now pursuing a master's degree, also in organ performance. Besides taking further training in organ improvisation, he is also planning to fulfill the ARCCO [Associate requirements] for the Royal Canadian College of Organists (RCCO), an examination that consists of a playing section and two written portions relating to music theory, counterpoint, orchestration and the history of organ. One of the anonymous responses to the survey also stands out, from an organist who likewise has an advanced degree in music, and has moved to Europe to pursue a degree in organ performance there.

Furthermore, through the group discussions, the researcher was made aware of a number of documents which were later provided to him: the organ committee mandate from one church and, from another church, the music committee mandate. A third such document was also provided: this was a document from the latter church which their music committee, along with their pastor and council liaison, had compiled over the course of two years and submitted to the church council in 2002, entitled "The Use of Instruments in the Worship of the Church: A Report on the Biblical Principles and Historical Practice plus Recommendations."

The Researcher's Story

The researcher's own past experience is also drawn upon throughout this study. For over a decade, he served as church organist in two Canadian Reformed Churches in Ontario, prior to entering the ministry. As a teenager he was appointed as church organist in the church where he was baptized, in the charming Scottish town of Fergus, Ontario on the banks of the Grand River. He occasionally also helped out the neighbouring churches in Elora and Guelph. When attending university and seminary in Hamilton, he was appointed church organist at Ancaster, a neighbouring suburb, and was privileged to play the baroque style, European Riel tracker organ at Redeemer College University where his church's congregation worshipped for some time. When Ancaster acquired its own building, he was also appointed to the committee that had to recommend which instrument to purchase, and eventually played on the instrument that was finally chosen, a Content digital organ. At that time, he also played as guest organist at the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church in Hamilton, and at the Trinity Orthodox Reformed Church in St. Catherines, in the Niagara Peninsula, on a beautiful Casavant pipe organ, for a congregation that had been trained to

sing exceptionally well by professional church organist Dr. Christiaan Teeuwsen, who is now chair of the Department of Music at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario. The excellent musical training and leadership that Teeuwsen had provided this congregation was clearly evident and truly remarkable, and made it a joy and privilege for the researcher, as an amateur organist, to fill in from time to time.

The researcher has now also served as pastor in the Canadian Reformed Churches for well over a decade. He was ordained to the ministry in a church of 180 members in the prairie town of Taber, under Alberta's big sky and long sun. The instrument used most often for worship was a digital Johannus organ of mediocre quality, played by one experienced and Dutch-trained organist and two other organists with considerably less training and experience. The piano was used occasionally, when an organist was not available. One of the organists, in fact, preferred to play the piano since her musical training was on that instrument rather than organ.

Now ministering in the picturesque coastal metropolis of Vancouver, British Columbia, the researcher serves a 320-member church in the rapidly growing city of Surrey, located in the lovely town-center of Cloverdale, better known in the entertainment world as Smallville of Superman fame. The instrument employed for worship is a modest, well-suited pipe organ. Occasionally, the recently acquired grand piano is played before and after the service by one of the organists who was actually trained on the piano and prefers that instrument. Only when none of the organists is available will the piano be used during worship.

Interview Design

Comfortable on the Coast

In order to host the focus groups, the most suitable location had to be chosen. Although renting the facilities of Aldergrove's new church building had been considered, the researcher decided instead to hire the facilities and services of Coastal Views, a professional research facility in historic Yaletown, in the city of Vancouver. This way, he reasoned, he would not become distracted and preoccupied with organizing and setting up recording devices, catering, and other logistical matters. Coastal Views featured comfortable and professional facilities, offering both mp3 and video recordings of each focus group, and catered meals and refreshments as needed. This proved to be a good choice, which alleviated a great deal of organizational distraction on the days of the focus group interviews, allowing the interviewer to focus on the research subjects themselves and the discussions he would have with them.

The recordings made it possible for the interviewer to relax and be fully engaged in the discussion, facing and observing the participants as much as possible. Although it would have been possible to host observers and note-takers, hidden behind a one-way glass in another room, the researcher chose not to do so. Recordings would provide the researcher with adequate opportunity to engage in closer observation and take detailed notes later. Observers and note-takers, it seemed, might also create anxiety or reluctance among the participants.

Free-Flowing and Focused

Five focus groups were organized, comprised of church musicians, pastors, elders, and church members respectively, from the Aldergrove, Langley and Surrey-Maranatha

churches. A key factor in establishing the number and composition of the focus groups was *homogeneity* by means of *segmentation.* As sociologist and focus group researcher Dr. David L. Morgan has stated, homogeneity "not only allows for more free-flowing conversations among participants within groups but also facilitates analyses that examine differences in perspectives between groups,"[623] depending of course upon the maturity of the participants. Taking this into consideration, the researcher grouped organists and other musicians into two separate focus groups, as he also did with the pastors and elders. Although he had considered sub-dividing the group of church members between older and younger, he decided not to do so, since it would necessitate hosting more groups than is recommended for such a study. Finally, in each group were applied the four broad criteria presented by Merton et al., namely, "range, specificity, depth, and personal context,"[624] following a carefully prepared interview guide with low moderator involvement.[625]

Church musicians were interviewed about the nature of the support and interest they experience in their roles, by their pastors and elders and by other church members; and about their musical training and monetary compensation, the mandates they have been given, the networks of cooperation and consultation that are in place, and their own biblical and theological commitments and understanding of their roles. With respect to the musical instruments they play, they were asked to comment on the present choice and quality of these instruments, on whether according to them the choice of instruments employed in worship is a matter of preference or principle, and also on how much time they typically

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[623] David L. Morgan, *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997), 35.

[624] Ibid, 45.

[625] Ibid, 51-54.

devote to practice and training. The musicians were also asked to share some of the frustrations and joys of their task. The office bearers were asked to describe the leadership, resources, regulation, and support they provide for church musicians. Furthermore, they were asked to describe what provisions are being made for the continuation and enhancement of the church's song, and how they view their own role from a Scriptural, theological, and pastoral perspective. The interviews gave the study participants an opportunity to talk about the nature of consultation that occurs between the musicians and office bearers, particularly pastors. The participants were also asked to comment on the choice and quality of the musical instruments used in the worship of their churches, and whether the given instruments are a matter of principle or preference. Other church members were interviewed about how they experience and view the role of the musicians and the choice of musical instruments in the church's liturgy.

Every participant was given the opportunity to raise questions or points of discussion on the Demographic Questionnaire they were asked to complete, and also during the focus group interview. Furthermore, about a week before the discussion, each participant was sent a list of questions and topics which the interviewer hoped to discuss with them. To ensure optimal participation and minimal anxiety on the part of the participants, car-pooling was arranged for all group participants, meals were offered to those who had to leave home in the late afternoon or early evening, and refreshments were provided for all participants. Besides the Demographic Questionnaire, every participant was requested to fill out a "Research Subjects Consent Form," according to the requirements and guidelines of the Institutional Review Board of Covenant Theological Seminary. Accompanying each Demographic Questionnaire and Research Subjects Consent Form was a cover letter

explaining in detail the purpose and method of this research project, with an invitation to participate.

Getting the Big Picture

In preparation for the focus group interviews, an Internet survey was conducted, open to all members of the Canadian Reformed Churches, asking questions and covering topics similar to the ones that would be addressed during the interviews. Along with a letter to the council of all the churches, a church bulletin announcement was provided, listing the Internet link to the survey and the researcher's personal contact information (the latter being included for any inquiries and for the sake of those who might have been interested in participating in the survey but did not have access to the Internet).

Limitations of the Study

Since this study was conducted among the highest concentration of Canadian Reformed Churches in a large urban center, it may not reflect the circumstances of churches in isolated or rural regions of the country. Some aspects of music in worship are influenced by access to musical education and proximity to other Canadian Reformed Churches, to mention just two elements, which may differ to some degree outside the study region.

The researcher's past training and experience as church organist and his interest in pipe organ construction might be construed as creating an unhealthy bias. The researcher would like to mention, however, that his wife is a skilled violinist who has experience teaching, playing in a philharmonic orchestra, and leading chamber groups, and that the researcher's own musical interests are not restricted to the pipe organ. Furthermore, since it has been more than ten years since he shed the mantle of church organist, he believes he is

now in a more favourable position to explore the issue with an adequate measure of impartiality.

Could the title of this study have thrown up mental roadblocks for those invited to participate in the study, on the one hand, especially for those who are content with the organ and are uncomfortable with liturgical change? On the other hand, could the chosen title have predisposed those eager for liturgical change to participate because they were sympathetic to the perceived aim of the study? The researcher seriously considered these questions when choosing the title. Two factors contributed to his choice. In the first place, honesty and integrity demanded that the title of the study reflect its content. Secondly, the study's aim was conveyed as precisely and transparently as possible. The following was written to all those invited to participate in the study:

> The goal of this study is to explore and consider the past and present practices of the [Canadian Reformed Churches] concerning this subject. My research is undergirded by the conviction that the music and song in the worship of the Christian church must be for the glory of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and must be regulated by his holy Word; that it ought to maintain a consciousness of the history of the living and true worship of God's people through the generations; and that it needs to be fervent and edifying for all who gather in joyful reverence before God's throne.

Despite these caveats, the researcher is hopeful that his work will raise the level of interest in and commitment to the glorious musical imperative of the church's liturgy. It is his prayer that this study might be able to provide leadership and direction, so that the Song of the Lamb arises ever more vigorously as a sweet aroma for the LORD God. "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!" (Rev. 5:13b)

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The Role of Church Musicians

Church Musicians on Church Musicians

When asked in the focus group interviews what they consider to be their role in worship, the church musicians offered a range of responses. One organist stated that his task is "to prepare the congregation for what is to follow in worship. It's as simple as that," he stated bluntly. He pointed to the Songs of Ascent in the Book of Psalms as the basis for this mandate. He also later said that "giving the first note and intonation is the most important" and that "after that, you just go with them" – an indication that he views his task more as accompanying than leading. Generally speaking, though, the musicians stated that they believe their task is to accompany, support, and enhance the singing.

When specifically asked whether they see their role as being one of serving or leading, most of the musicians felt that there should be a combination. One musician said, for example, that he will occasionally attempt to bring the congregation "to another level" in their singing by the way he plays his instrument. Another stated that as a musician you "set the tone" for the singing. A couple others said that in general a congregation only seems willing to be led to a certain point, so that there is only so much leading a musician can do, and that in fact "sometimes it doesn't matter what you do as a musician"—your playing has "no noticeable effect."

An organist who corresponded with the researcher wrote: "Music during the worship only requires what is beneficial for the congregational singing and orderly worship. For example, a prelude to a song should only as briefly as possible identify the tune, set the pace, and determine the appropriate pitch." This same organist repeated numerous times his opinion that the musical accompaniment "can best be embellished, stimulated, carried, and guided by *one single mind.*"[626] This comment will be considered further later.

The organist's task, as expressed by the youngest of the organists who corresponded with the researcher, is to

> reflect the thoughts and themes presented in the stanzas being sung which in turn encourages and stimulates the congregation to sing and worship in a manner that best reflects the words being sung. Moreover, the music offerings before, during, and after the service all aim at preparing the worshipper's heart and mind to reverence and the promotion of the worship of God.

Elders and Church Members on Church Musicians

The elders and other church members who were interviewed also expressed a range of opinions about church musician's role. One elder mentioned that he found it plausible to see the church musician's role as "prophesying with music," although he was unsure how far this can be taken. Functionally, the church musician succeeds at this when he is "enthusiastic" and able to "draw attention to what the minister has been saying." When one elder spoke of musicians taking a *leading* role, another said that he would lean towards the position that musicians have an *assisting* role. Yet another elder, who has served in this capacity in three different churches in the Fraser Valley, insisted that musicians have a vital role in the worship service, and said that he has noticed over the years how much the

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[626] Emphasis mine.

congregations depend on their leadership. One of the other church members likewise said that when people want to sing they need instruments "to back them up or lead them" and that he could "see why they brought in instruments." Another said, with a mischievous twinkle in her eye, that churches should make sure "that the organists know how to play fast." In her opinion, too, the main task of a musical instrument and musician is to help the congregation "get to know the notes."

Pastors on Church Musicians

While the pastors spoke of the church musician's role as both supporting and leading, and "creating a worshipful mood," one of the pastors expressed his opinion that in practice the musicians do have "quite an independent role," mentioning specifically their playing during the pre-service, collection, and post-service times. "Sometimes their playing impacts the service more than you anticipate," he said. He expressed his irritation, actually, with lengthy preludes and postludes to the singing. Speaking of impact, one of the pastors said that he was once told by an organist: "I could destroy your sermon." This was not intended as a threat, according to the pastor, but as an indication that he recognized the large influence a church musician can exercise during a worship service.

Two of the pastors stressed that the musicians should support not merely the singing, but all the worship that is happening in any given service, and that it is important for them to make sure all the music they play is connected to this worship.

The Biblical Basis of the Church Musician's Role

Beyond the one response already mentioned alluding to the Songs of Ascent, for most of the musicians interviewed there was no indication of a clear consensus or strong awareness of what a biblical basis of the church musician's role might encompass. Two

musicians from one of the churches did indicate, however, that some time ago they had been involved in a thorough study of Scripture on this matter, previously mentioned, and had concluded that while much of the Mosaic administration had ended with the coming of Christ, there is no indication in the New Testament that the ministry of music and song which had developed during the Davidic administration was to be abrogated in any way, especially considering its fulfillment and climax in the Book of Revelation.

The elders spent a fair bit of time discussing the importance of the Old Testament in establishing the mandate of the church musician. One remarked that while in practice we are "pretty pragmatic," God seems to have mandated a "whole aesthetic," when he filled various artists with the Holy Spirit, as he did with Oholiab and Bezalel. Another warned that we have to be cautious about what we take from the Old Testament, since it has been fulfilled in Christ. It was also mentioned, presumably on the basis of Paul's directives in the New Testament, that in song Christians are mandated not only to address God, but also one another. There was one elder who said he was not sure whether there actually is a biblical mandate for church musicians, beyond that which is given to the whole church, namely, to praise and glorify God in song. If that activity can be enhanced by musical instruments, that would be "fine," but not necessary. One also suggested that the use of musical instruments by the musicians is a purely pragmatic choice; it may aid the singing in the same way that a microphone aids the preaching. Another elder took quite a different position, asserting that the role assigned to church musicians in the Canadian Reformed Churches is far too limited, and that it should be expanded, especially in light of the Old Testament where there were thousands of musicians employed in the ministry of music and song.

The other church members, too, reached back into the Old Testament, mentioning the music ministry instituted by David, and the many references to music and musical instruments in the Psalms, including the specific instructions named in their headings. One of the participants of this focus group, however, already early in the conversation, expressed her opinion—with provocative candour—that she does not think there should be any musical instruments at all in the worship service. She said she based this on her understanding of what the Bible says. According to her interpretation, musical instruments were used sparingly in worship, only at the time of the sacrifices, and since the sacrifices and ceremonies of the law were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, we do not need instruments anymore. In the New Testament, in her opinion, the only time musical instruments are mentioned in Revelation, they are "not real" because they are part of a vision. All God requires is "Listen to my Word and sing," she said, and he says nothing about musical instruments.

The Church Musician as Teacher

The surveys revealed, surprisingly, that many church members believe that part of the role of church musicians is to educate and train the congregation in music and song. The musicians involved in this study were asked what they thought of this. In one of the congregations, the musicians have stood up either before or during the worship service to explain how a particular song should be sung, or have written something in the bulletin. But this has not been done regularly. In another congregation, the organist regularly writes "something instructive" in the church bulletin, which is apparently helpful. Someone else pointed out, however, that the disadvantage of the written approach is that not everyone will read it before the service, if they do at all. A pastor of that particular congregation stated during his focus group discussion, however, that the organist has also offered instruction at a

series of congregational meetings. The main organist of the third congregation was of the opinion that this is totally unnecessary, suggesting that people who grow up in the church will simply learn by experience over time, and that the parents need to play a large role in this aspect of church life. Another organist challenged him with the remark that "you're talking an ideal" which is not very realistic. He was convinced, furthermore, that if church musicians desire to preserve the rich musical heritage of the church, it is necessary for them to provide such instruction and training. This same brother also thought that Christian school teachers should play a central role in this.

One of the organists with advanced training who corresponded with the researcher indicated his desire and intention to share his knowledge and skills with fellow organists and musicians in the church and local community, since he will be participating in the Eastman Rochester Organ Initiative, combined with the American Pedagogue Society's biannual conference, where he will not only learn skills in the art of improvisation, but also training in "the manner in which to teach and promote this pertinent skill."

Choice of Musical Instruments: Preference or Principle?

Another question the interviewer wished to explore with the focus group participants was whether they viewed the choice of musical instruments as a matter of preference or principle.

Pastors on Choice Musical Instruments for Worship

This study will now turn to consider the pastors' perspectives on choice of musical instruments. Although he did not say that it was a matter of principle, one of the pastors mentioned that in his congregation a decision had been made that the organ would serve as the principal musical instrument for the worship services. He said that the reason for this

decision was that some years ago there was a "movement" to have a band play during worship. Other instruments will be used on occasion, at the discretion of the main organist, although he mentioned that one of the frustrations for the main organist has been finding other instrumentalists, and getting them to practice together. His point was that there are some practical challenges associated with using multiple instruments. Many of the elderly members of this congregation, he said, prefer the *combination* of organ and piano. When the new pipe organ was being installed, he mentioned, the organist said that it was difficult to accompany the congregational singing of this large congregation Sunday after Sunday, and that he often found himself with very sore hands at the end of the Lord's Day. This pastor also commented that he felt there should only be one main organist: "If you have too many organists, they all have their own style and it confuses the congregation."

Another pastoral colleague said that the organ is most suitable, but that he had no principle objection to any other instrument. A lot depends, he felt, on the size of the congregation, and the musical talent within. The preference of another pastor was the organ or another keyboard instrument. He mentioned, however, that he has worshipped in another church where tuba, French horn, and two clarinets stood discreetly near the pulpit, and "it went very well." Yet he found himself, mostly for pragmatic reasons, quite drawn to a "Church of Christ position" where no instruments are used, especially because it resolves many of the problems we now face. In the congregation he previously served, the singing was much better, in his opinion, when it was *a capella.* Even the most gifted organists, he felt, would do well to "settle down" their playing.

This same pastor, however, wanted to discuss how churches might facilitate a movement to a broader range of instruments in worship, and questioned whether organs

really are the best instruments for leading. According to him, the organ has lost its cultural resonance, especially among the younger generations. This notion was challenged by his colleagues who still believe that the organ is "optimal in our circumstance," although it does "very much depend on the way it is used" and whether you can find a qualified organist. One pastor mentioned that in the past decade or so there has been a resurgence of interest in organs and organ building, both in churches and in concert halls, and that even the more authentic and costly tracker organ is growing in popularity. He also mentioned that in Asian countries, such as China and Japan, organs and organ music are "all the rage."

In response to one pastor's preference for *a capella* singing, another colleague said that such singing may work from time to time, but it is difficult to sustain on an ongoing basis. He has witnessed this while visiting churches in Scotland, he recalled, where a cantor is needed to hold the singing together. According to the pastor of a congregation where piano and organ are both used, there is a strong preference for piano among congregants.

Elders on Choice of Musical Instruments for Worship

When the elders were asked for their opinion concerning the choice of musical instruments in worship, one of them commented that he "wouldn't go so far as to say that musical instruments are mandated," and that "it's mostly a cultural choice. Churches of the continental tradition," he continued, "choose to use the organ." Later in the discussion he said that "whatever choice you make should enhance congregational singing." He also commented that as long as you "put the right person on the piano, it works very well." Sometimes you will have a *concert pianist,* he remarked, who does not make a very good *church pianist.* It once happened, he said, that a pianist who was very gifted at giving concerts was "not able to lead the congregational singing" in the church to which he belongs.

Among the elders, too, a few were of the opinion that instruments are not necessary at all and that in their experience *a capella* singing can be at least as good as singing that is accompanied by musical instruments. A remark was also made about the danger of musical instruments becoming the focus. One of the elders had done some research on the history of the organ, having discovered that two Reformed synods in the sixteenth century had rejected the organ, wondered how the organ has in the meantime come to a place of such prominence in Reformed churches.

The opinion of another elder was that we should more consistently follow the Old Testament model of having "a group of people" who "lead, develop, and oversee" the ministry of song and music. He also warned, especially given the cultural reality facing us, that "if we are resigned to the fact that the organ is the main instrument, it could be a problem down the road." This comment led to the observation by someone else that in his congregation, when they once "ran out of organists" they actually "imported an organist from a neighbouring congregation" and insisted "that the organ would remain the primary instrument."

Another brother raised a warning against "the danger of the praise and worship team" where the music, in his opinion, ends up becoming "completely separated from the primary focus of the preaching of God's Word." An elder of a different mind said that he has been to churches where electric guitars or drums were used in such a way that they did not draw attention to themselves but to what was being sung, and suggested that "maybe we simply lack experience with that sort of worship." Someone else then said that if the right person is in charge, and "you have a good worship team which reports to consistory," there

would be no problem. In his opinion, we should be careful about generalizing our criticism of such worship teams.

Organists on Choice of Musical Instruments for Worship

Among the organists, there was a clear preference for the organ, although none of them stated that this is a matter of principle. One organist said that he "doesn't hate the piano, but doesn't find it good to accompany a large congregation." Some of the Psalms, in his opinion, lend themselves much more naturally to the organ since they "cry out for dynamic presentation." The personal preference of another organist was organ, "if there's a good organ, and a half decent organist." He also felt that it is best if there is only one main organist. "Pianos sound harsh and tinny" in worship, said another organist, who also happens to be a pianist.

If more instruments are used, remarked one organist, the musicians need to make sure they get together and practice. The organist mentioned earlier, who wrote about the advantage of *one single mind* being in control of the singing, also wrote that "an effective pipe organ is best, for it is subject to *one mind,* capable to provide pulse, a clear melody, and appropriate harmonics like no other.... An instrument operated by *one mind* is appropriate," he repeated, "for it prevents conflict in its use and requires the least rehearsal etc." It is

> the most suitable instrument. It represents an orchestra of characteristic sounds, but above all, is capable of carrying mass singing. It not only presents the melody most clearly, but at the same time also the lively, steady pulse as well as the harmonics that colourize, characterize and join in the tune with the pulse. Congregational singing is unique, required, and incomparable with the art of choirs. The organ contributes to this uniqueness more than any other instrument.

He also made the comment that in his own congregation, where "a digital computer organ equal to 30 or more ranks" is used, "a general lack of interest, concern, and care

makes our church unworthy of a pipe organ." This musician also made a comment about the practical and fiscal advantages of a digital organ. "It is inexpensive, requires no maintenance, and it is not influenced by variations in the levels of temperature and humidity."

One organist expressed his bewilderment, during the focus group discussion, that some, including one particular minister, will "negate the importance of instruments in worship." In the opinion of this one minister, he said, "instrumentalists should be as inconspicuous as possible." In response to this sentiment, he remarked that as Reformed churches, "we're very big on the Psalms." He argued that "if we're going to continue singing the Psalms of the Old Testament, then we ought to listen to what they say, and they're full of references to musical instruments," especially in light of how they are mentioned again in Revelation. He wondered why musical instruments in worship are generally "given short shrift in our churches. Where do we find evidence," he asked, "that this gift should not be used in the church, but only in secular life?"

One of the youngest organists who corresponded with the researcher claimed: "The instrument is a matter of preference; the preference in turn becomes more or less a principle considering the rationale for the preference." At the time that the organ was introduced into the worship service, he suggested, it was "the most powerful instrument capable of leading a crowd of loudly singing worshippers." He also shared his opinion about the use of other instruments.

> There are...some disadvantages to the use of various instruments or even instrumental ensembles in the worship: while not Biblically or wrong [in principle], it requires a greater amount of coordination to organize a small group of instrumentalists, practice time, etc.; the music available to accompany the psalms or hymns would require someone capable of orchestrating the music to fit the composition of instruments in the ensemble and the possible composition of music geared specifically for the various instruments.

He summed up by stating, "Above all, the character and voicing of a good pipe organ, coupled with the abilities of a gifted organist, best compliments the voice of the congregation." A good mechanical action (tracker) organs within a vibrant acoustical environment was his preferred instrument.

Other Church Musicians on Choice of Musical Instruments for Worship

Did the other church musicians think the choice of musical instruments was a matter of preference or of principle?

Two participants from one of the three churches mentioned that they had participated in a two-year study of this matter, and produced a document (the one previously mentioned), which they agreed to share with me. While the official recommendation of this study committee was that any instrument could be played in worship, as long as it was first tested and found to be suitable for leading the singing, the conclusion of the church council was ultimately that "only the organ should be used, unless no one is available to play." It ended up becoming "a bit of a fiasco," according to one musician involved at the time.

They indicated that prior to the arrival of their present pastor, organ and piano "could only be played separately, not together," but their new pastor is quite open to having them play together, which now happens more often. One of the pianists felt that the congregation sings better with a combination of the two, but said that she prefers to "play with an organist who knows what he's doing."

One of the musicians in this focus group is a trumpet player in the same congregation; he had also been a member of this study committee. Although he often plays during "praise evenings," in official worship he only plays for special services. He has played in church services for around twenty years, and remarked that although from the very

beginning people told him they greatly enjoyed his trumpet-playing, "there's still a stigma against it," and that "the fallback position is that we're making it man-centered" when we have additional instruments. The other trumpet player emphatically opposed this position, asserting that it would be quite pleasing to God if you had a full orchestra in church and that "the emotions inspired would be much stronger." He related what he called the unforgettable experience of playing in an orchestra for a gathering at a church in another city, accompanying the singing of a few thousand people.

The latter trumpet player, who is a member of a different congregation than the former, said that he, too, is usually only asked to play for special services such as Thanksgiving and Christmas. "There's no official rule about what may be done," he said. "It is up to the musicians." According to him, this is how it should be if everything is functioning well. Although he is also a violin player, he has not yet played this instrument in a worship service in the Canadian Reformed Churches, but hopes that some day he will.

One participant mentioned that "the recurring message" he has heard over the years is that "the organ is the most suitable" for worship. One of the reasons frequently mentioned is that "it has the most variety" and is "representative of all instruments." In his opinion, while it is a very nice instrument, it does not sufficiently "reflect the range of music." "It is selected as an instrument on the basis of principle," he remarked, "but the principle is faulty." Another agreed that "that whole mentality is completely backwards." "You can only have one instrument," he exclaimed, "but that instrument has to be able to do all the instruments? It can't!"

In the opinion of one of the participants who had been part of the study committee, the "whole crux of the argument" for the use of a variety of instruments hangs on this

question: "Why would we stop using musical instruments between the Old Testament and the heavenly fulfillment" mentioned in Revelation?

When asked about why, in one particular congregation, people generally preferred the piano in worship, a pianist from that congregation commented that while this is the case, many people still prefer organists who "play with serious enthusiasm." She mentioned, however, how offended she was when someone approached her and asked whether she would take organ lessons, if paid to do so, so that she could play the organ instead of playing the piano.

The nature, versatility and timbre of the various instruments also came up in the discussion. When they were asked how they felt about improvising on their instruments, the trumpet players both said that it is particularly difficult to improvise on the trumpet. The pianist said that she does it all the time. When this pianist asked the trumpeters whether you can make the trumpet sound mournful for a song like Psalm 130, one of them said that you can achieve this effect by "stretching out the notes." He added that "if you have a lot of money, you can buy different trumpets" to vary the sound effects. Also, silver plating makes a trumpet sound very bright, he said, and a heavy copper bell produces a "very deep mellow sound."

Church Members on Choice of Musical Instruments for Worship

Coming back to the focus group of the other church members, the sister who felt that there should not be any musical instruments in worship also said that "having an organ as an aid to singing is fine." She also made the provocative comment that "the women who were playing the instruments [during the exodus] were dancing, so if we're going to use instruments, we should also have dancing in church."

The most elderly person in the group, who had earlier made the point that people need instruments to "back them up or lead them" when they sing, also said that while there is nothing wrong with trumpets, trombones and other such instruments, drums and guitars would not be appropriate for worship. He also said that if multiple instruments are used, people need to come together and practice, and he thought that might be problematic.

One of the youngest members of the group, like one of the organists mentioned earlier, remarked that if we place such a high value on psalms in worship, we should also include the instruments they mention. If Psalm 5, for example, is "For flutes," why do we not use flutes? When one of the sisters shot back that "that's beside the point," since you cannot prove that that these psalms were used in the worship service the way we use them, and that "they didn't worship the way we do," he asked why we then give the Psalms such a prominent place in worship. He also asked how a "G" on any instrument can be sinful, since "a G is always a G." In his opinion, the choice of musical instruments is very much "a cultural thing." Clashing cymbals were used in the Bible, but now we look down on them, in his words. Organs used to be played to the fighting of gladiators, and now we use them in worship. This same brother also observed that "we're now at the point where not many new people are learning organ." "I have friends who are great piano players and teachers," he commented, "but I can't think of anyone my age who's interested in organ."

Whatever instrument is used, said another sister, we need to ensure that the playing is of high quality, so that people will "want more." "Organ can be an essential part of that," she said, "but it needs to be skillfully done."

Responsibilities, Relationships and Regulations

Another aspect that was explored in the focus group interviews was how musicians, office bearers and congregations are interacting and consulting with one another. Who is responsible to whom? Who reports to whom? How is accountability ensured and implemented? What regulations are in place?

Organists on the Three R's

When the organists were asked whether they regularly meet with fellow musicians in their congregations, either formally or informally, it became clear that in one particular congregation this never happens. One organist from this church reasoned that, since there are two organists and two pianists, their approaches are substantially different, even between those who play the same instrument, so that "right away you have a lack of desire to get together." As a result, he said, "we've never had a meeting." "Knowing the personalities involved," he added, "it could be an interesting discussion." He did comment later that the musicians should be "more uniform" in their approach to playing.

The other organist from the same congregation, who is also chairman of his church's music committee, mentioned that he hoped to arrange a meeting for all the musical accompanists sometime soon. Until now, he said, it did not really make sense for them to meet, since they did not have a decent instrument. He also admitted that typically "we organists are unique individuals, not generally the kind of people who particularly want to share with people," at the same time acknowledging that such a characteristic may also be cultural or a factor of age. "We're all a bit protective of our domain," he said, "and don't like being told how to do things."

The two organists of another congregation said that they have an excellent working relationship. Since the one organist is "totally ignorant of the machine," in her own words, she frequently meets the main organist to receive training, particularly with respect to organ registration.

One of the elderly organists who corresponded with the researcher recalled, with some regret, that at one time he had wanted to discuss the style of playing, particularly tempo, with the other organists in his congregation, "but there was no interest. Everybody wanted to play as they always did, in their own way. In time, I resigned my place on the committee," he wrote.

Two organists from one congregation mentioned that they have been given a clear mandate by their church council, outlining what their function is and what is expected of them, even "how the organist has to play." As an example, they mentioned that it is specifically stipulated, "All organists shall adhere to the notation of the *Book of Praise.*" The main organist commented that some of the mandate is "a bit silly" and that he "doesn't agree with all of it," but still complies, out of respect for the council's authority. He lamented at another point during our conversation that many organists "just do their own thing" and thereby exhibit "a rebellious attitude" toward their councils. The interviewer was given a copy of their Organ Committee (OC) mandate as well.

The organists, this mandate stipulates, are to "use their skills to enhance the singing of the congregation." They are to "choose music appropriate to the theme of the services," and are to be notified of service details by the minister or elder conducting the service, "so that sufficient time is given for the organist to prepare for the worship service." Annual funds are to be set aside "to assist the organists to advance their skills (lessons and music)."

All the appointed organists serve as permanent members of the committee, along with a council-appointed chairman, and three other members of the congregation, who serve three year terms. The OC is expected to give an annual report to council, and to promote appreciation of the organ by "making the instrument available to all members who desire to practice seriously," and by organizing concerts and musical evenings. It is also charged to maintain the organ, stay in contact with the organ builder, request sufficient funds, and establish a fund for the enhancement of the organ.

When the organists were asked what sort of relationship they have with their pastors, the eldest and longest-serving organist said, "I can remember only one minister who would talk with me about the liturgy in the week leading up to the Lord's Day. The majority of ministers don't talk to you about it. They don't even get the liturgy to you in time." Another organist said that one time he was phoned at 9:00 on Sunday morning with the list of songs. Overall, however, these organists said, presently they are given the songs early enough to prepare, at the latest by Friday evening. Two organists mentioned that one previous minister always had the liturgy details to them by Tuesday and Thursday, for the morning and afternoon services respectively. This arrangement was seen as ideal, since it gives the organists more freedom with their Saturday, which they would otherwise not have free.

One of the organists who corresponded directly with the researcher shared his conviction that "the musician should never, in Reformed, Scriptural worship, become what is often referred to as a co-liturge." Another corresponding organist commented that for the past few years the organ committee of his church has not had any organists on the committee and finds it a challenge to maintain a "positively balanced relation with such a committee" which is generally ignorant about music.

Other Church Musicians on the Three R's

What did the other church musicians have to say about the mandates they have been given? One of the pianists indicated that part of the mandate for musicians in her congregation is to nurture and promote love and appreciation for the psalms and hymns in the *Book of Praise* by the choice of music for the worship services. In practice, she is unable to meet this stipulation, she claimed, simply because of the lack of available repertoire. She later provided the interviewer with a copy of the Music Committee Mandate.

This mandate stipulates that the Music Committee (MC) is expected to work closely with the minister, who "shall endeavour to have the liturgy list communicated in time for the accompanist to adequately prepare." The main task of the MC, it stipulates, is to "ensure that there is always an appointed organist or pianist to accompany the congregational singing during the worship services." The MC is also mandated to "promote uniformity in the manner in which the congregational singing is accompanied," and for that purpose to prepare guidelines to be approved by council. This committee is charged, moreover, to "encourage musical talent within the congregation and provide for further study by the organists/pianists with the aim of securing future accompaniment for congregational singing." An amount is budgeted annually for this purpose and for the purchase of music. Special music evenings of "congregational singing and instrumental music to nurture an appreciation and love for Reformed music, especially our own *Book of Praise,"* may be organized by the MC. The musicians are to act as primary advisors in issues related to the purchase, restoration and maintenance of the musical instruments. The membership of this committee consists of two of the musicians, a council liaison, two musically knowledgeable members of the congregation, and the minister. They meet "maybe twice a year." One

musician from this congregation remarked that she would prefer to see all the musicians on the committee.

A musician of another one of the churches said that he does not have an official mandate at all, as far as he knows, and as far as he is concerned "that's good." The organist does a good job of directing musical matters, in his opinion, and the consistory has confidence in him. When a musician from the other church cautioned about the possibility of such a situation leading to a "one-man show," he answered that "consistory doesn't need to micromanage every aspect of the worship service." This same musician, however, acknowledged the importance of a good relationship between the pastor and musician. "The pastor needs to tell the musician why he's choosing particular songs."

The relationships among the musicians of the church with two organists, two pianists and one trumpet player, in the opinion of those participating, are "cordial." "People respect each other and work well together," they said. Yet, "not a lot of time and energy is put into practicing together," one of them commented, "and this needs to change." There is not, however, much contact with the pastor or elders. Once in a while, one of the musicians might approach the pastor to suggest that some songs be sung *a capella* or with combined accompaniment, but otherwise the contact is minimal. When asked whether she reads through the respective songs, Scripture readings and sermon texts while preparing her music, the pianist admitted that she does not, since she usually receives the information too late in the week to do so, especially if it is before a weekend when she works.

Pastors on the Three R's

The pastors, too, shared some of their opinions and thoughts on this topic. Early in the focus group discussion, when the group was talking about the role of the church

musicians, one minister said that he felt a mandate is necessary. One of the pastors indicated that in his congregation the main organist is on the music committee—a committee that the trumpet player in this church thought did not exist, according to what he said during his focus group discussion—and the music committee, in turn, is represented on the church council. "Any issues go through the music committee to the main organist, and there generally are no issues," this pastor said. The maturity of the main church musician, combined with his musical skill, "makes him ideal for the position." Another pastor said that the music committee in his congregation "accomplishes little" when they do meet, and that they "have no policies on paper." According to him, the congregation was suffering from the lack of oversight offered by the council. The pastor of the third congregation said that "since the organ committee lacks a chairman, they can't call a meeting," even when it is necessary.

When asked about the oversight of the musicians, one pastor commented that "with a variety of musicians, oversight becomes essential," but that in his church very little oversight has been required. The pastor of a congregation with numerous musicians expressed his view that in his congregation "oversight doesn't work," and that it is "desirable, but difficult."

In only one of the three congregations is there frequent pastor-musician contact, although most of the contact is only with the main organist. This contact includes discussion "on broader liturgical matters" and is reported to be fruitful. The pastors of the other two congregations admitted that they do not have much contact with the musicians, but that they do make a point of encouraging the musicians when they play a service or a particular song

well. All the pastors felt that they send the liturgy details to the musicians well in advance of Sunday, one as early as Thursday afternoon, and another as late as Friday evening.

When the pastors were asked about how competent they felt in discussing musical matters with the church musicians, one indicated that he is not very knowledgeable about music and is, therefore, reluctant to say too much in the way of advice to the musicians. One of the other pastors asked, "What credibility do we have as ministers in musical matters? We probably need to educate ourselves a lot more."

Elders on the Three R's

Among the elders, there was one brother who felt strongly that there needs to be more consultation between the pastor and the musicians. "Right now, the organist plays the organ, but the pastor chooses the songs." In his opinion, there is "a lot more to worshipping in music and song" than this present scenario permits. The elder who mentioned that he has served in this capacity in three different congregations in the Fraser Valley also commented that "pitifully little" consultation occurs between the musicians and the office bearers. "How frequently is there a discussion concerning worship and music at council meetings?" he asked. "We're so busy with other things, that music is sadly forgotten."

Another elder did not see things this way. "The whole worship service is under the oversight of the council," he asserted, "and while there is rarely a discussion about music at council meetings, this could simply be a reflection of the dedication of the musicians, and the level of satisfaction with our organists." Yet another elder echoed this same sentiment, and stated that in his congregation "everything is working," and that therefore "there's no need to pay much attention to it." One of his fellow elders quipped, "The big issue that gets attention in our council is: how are we going to pay for the rest of the organ?"

As for oversight, one elder felt that it is important for the consistory to ensure that the church musicians, in particular the organists, do not become "performers," drawing attention to themselves. "Sometimes they need to be told to tone down, and to be reminded why they're there," he said. An elder of another church made the observation, giving no indication of his disapproval, that in his church the main organist "drives the agenda and the consistory never does. Consistory gives him a great degree of free rein. Whatever happens, happens." "We have a lot of confidence in him," added one of his fellow elders.

Church Members on the Three R's

Although less time was spent on this question in the focus group of other church members, one participant did share her opinion that there has to be some mechanism in place to maintain a high standard of church musicianship. "The question is," she stated, "how do you go about setting that standard, who maintains that standard, and who double checks?" Whatever the answer to that question is, she asserted, "the whole process needs to be full of grace."

Training and Proficiency of Musicians

In all the focus groups, the participants were also asked to comment on the training and proficiency of the church musicians. How much training, and what kind, have they received? Are opportunities for further training given and used? What level of proficiency is expected? Participants also wanted to talk about the benefits and perils of musical professionalism.

Organists on Musical Training and Proficiency of Church Musicians

Of the four organists who participated in the focus group, three have received or are receiving lessons on their instrument. One has had only one organ lesson in his life. Another

was actually trained on piano as a youth. On the organ, she has had "informal assistance from the main organist for about three years," because she feels "totally ignorant of the machine," as she had mentioned earlier. The most experienced organist has had musical theory and harmony instruction through the Royal Conservatory of Music, and had five years of private lessons. He also recently invested some money in another costly lesson with a professional organist. Another organist has had seven years of private lessons from the previous organist of his church, who became his mentor and teacher, and ten years of lessons in "church organ registration." This same organist expressed his dismay at the ignorance that so many church musicians have about appropriate repertoire for a Reformed worship service, "especially when they end up playing pieces like *Panis Angelicus* and 'The Holy City.'"

"There is no understanding among church people of the training that is required for organists," one organist complained. "The fact that we treat musicians as hobbyists has affected the quality of the music. What have people had to listen to in church? If they're only exposed to poor or mediocre playing, how do we expect them to value music, and to want to learn this instrument?"

One of the elderly organists who wrote to the researched recalled one organ workshop where the speaker said that "the Free Reformed Churches had lost the Genevan Psalms because of the poor accompaniment by organists. With some of our organists," he added, "I fear this could happen to us as well." He expressed his disappointment, too, that many years ago, when Dirk Jansz. Zwart had suggested that some sort of fellowship of organists be set up in the Canadian Reformed Churches, there was not much interest. One musician also shared a story about a relative, who is a professional musician. He has never

really considered a musical career connected to the church, he exclaimed with dismay, because no value is placed on musical skill or talent.

Regarding the training of future musicians, one of the organists who wrote to the researcher commented that "office bearers generally fail to look ahead to encourage aspiring musicians. Pianists with grade 6 (required of starting organ students), who refuse to further their education and become organists, should be encouraged to take to heart Question and Answer 55 of the Heidelberg Catechism, or even be reprimanded," he said. The catechism states in this Lord's Day about *the communion of saints* "that everyone is duty-bound to use his gifts readily and cheerfully for the benefit and well-being of the other members."

Other Church Musicians on Musical Training and Proficiency of Church Musicians

The church musicians who play other instruments shared their thoughts on training, too. A pianist in one of the churches said that she does not consider herself a skilled pianist. "I don't even have Grade 10 piano—only Grade 8." When one of the other musicians in her church affirmed her ability to play in church, she said, "Yes, I have the ability to accompany the singing in church, but what do you say to someone who has Grade 10 ability, but cannot accompany?" Along these same lines, another musician stated that "there are people who really want to play, and perhaps shouldn't." These musicians agreed that one of the hardest things to do is "involve less skilled players," especially when you have to play together. "Like in a string quartet," one of them said, "if one of the members is playing incorrectly, it's impossible for the quartet to function."

When I asked these musicians whether they would like to continue their training, one musician said that she "would love to have more training, but there aren't enough hours in

the day." One of the trumpeters said that it would be good if children and young people would be encouraged to take up music, "especially in elementary school." But then they should also be encouraged, he stressed, to "stick with it" through high school and beyond. He mentioned that often high school students will "pick up an instrument in Grade 9 for the band program, but put it down at the end of Grade 12. Maybe sponsoring people to purchase their own instruments, and providing them with subsidized training would help," he suggested. "We have a lot of people who are able to teach them."

"Would you be interested in learning more about the history and theory of church music?" the musicians were asked. "Only if there was a course," one of them responded. "I wouldn't just be able to learn such things on my own." Some discussion followed about what institutions or instructors might be qualified to develop and teach such courses.

Pastors, Elders, and Church Members on Musical Training and Proficiency of Church Musicians

What was the perspective of the pastors on the training of musicians? One of the four pastors felt strongly that musical training for the church musicians is essential. He put it this way: "We should really insist on training for the musicians, an essential aspect of the privilege of playing in church." The other pastors did not have anything to say on this subject.

Among the elders and other church members there was a fair bit of discussion about the whole concept of musical professionalism. Before getting to that, though, a few other observations should be noted about their perspective on the training and proficiency of the church musicians.

One elder did not think the work of a church organist requires much effort: "Typically an organist grew up with lessons and became good at it. To become a church organist is some work, but not a lot," he said. Other elders took the opposite view. One was convinced that "many are not aware of how many hours of solid preparation are required" by the church musicians from Sunday to Sunday. Another thought that the church musicians need to be able to dedicate "a considerable amount of their time" to it, and even "should be able to make it a part time job." The idea of providing scholarships for budding musicians was suggested by one of the brothers, too, who felt that we need to be more proactive in ensuring that there are church musicians for the future.

During their discussion, the other church members shared similar thoughts. The most senior member of the group, who has been a member in the Canadian Reformed Churches for almost sixty years, and who often served as an office bearer, commented that "in the past consistories were glad just to have someone who was willing to play. Now it's much different. People need to have time to practice." A related comment from another participant was that "the musicians who 'put the time in' do well, but with the ones who don't you can tell." Another sister, who has been a member of other Presbyterian and Reformed churches, where the level of musicianship was typically higher than in the Canadian Reformed Churches, asked what should be done "if you have a person who has a zeal or desire to be a church musician, but they can't do it." One of the participants, who is a member of the RCCO, was of the opinion that "every organist needs to be there" for the workshops and conferences which they host.

With dismay, another participant shared a story about a church organist who was asked by a mother to give lessons to her young boy. She said that the organist claimed that

he did not have time to give the boy lessons, and then told his disappointed mother that her son "should go learn his theory first." "Why didn't the organist at least take some time to sit down with this young boy to find out what his abilities were and to encourage him?" she wondered. Another assumed that it was part of the mandate of church musicians to do this sort of thing.

Getting back to the concept of the professionalism of the church musician, numerous thoughts were shared, especially by the elders. While some were wary of associating professionalism with the task of the church musicians, others begged to differ. "We shouldn't be afraid of professionalism," one elder asserted. "Musicians, just like ministers, *should* be professional." He added the qualification that the focus should never be on the musician, just as it should never be on the minister. When the criticism was raised against "other evangelical churches," where professionalization is common, another elder made the comment that in one case that he is familiar with "it's because they want to do a good job." These sentiments were similar to the ones expressed by the other churches members, although not in so many words. "There's something to be said for excellence and variety in music," one brother said.

Monetary Compensation and Other Resources

To Pay or Not to Pay—That is the Question

In each of the focus groups the matter of monetary compensation for church musicians also received a fair bit of attention. There were essentially two schools of thought on this. On the one hand, there were those who felt that church musicians should not be paid anything, other than basic costs and expenses, and possibly a small token of appreciation. On the other hand, there were those who felt that musicians should receive

monetary reward, not merely for their out-of-pocket costs, but also for the time and effort they invest in their work.

Don't Pay

In all five groups the point was raised that there are many other members of the church who also commit a great deal of time and energy to church-related tasks, but are not given monetary compensation. "Think of all the hours that elders put in," one young church member commented. To strengthen his opinion along similar lines, one elder mentioned that when he once asked an organist whether he would be willing to serve as an office bearer, the organist responded by saying, "Some are called to be office bearers; others are called to be organists." He was wary of putting one calling above another by means of such monetary compensation. One of the organists mentioned that others, such as building managers, will perform their duties for free in the service of Christ and his church. One elder stated that, for some professional musicians, serving the church is actually only a minor part of their work, since they have their own music students and perhaps teach classes in school. The elder who thought that there is not a lot of work involved in being an organist, did think, however, that a few thousand dollars per year should still be given. One of the sisters who is not a musician suggested that compensation is not necessary since "these musicians have already had all their expensive lessons in the past." "What about the vocal musicians?" she asserted. "Should we all be paid for singing in church? Maybe we should all have vocal lessons." "If you're paying your musicians," one young church member asked, "aren't you encouraging them to give performances?"

Worth a Cup O' Joe?

Moving on to the musicians, an organist mentioned that he had once been told: "You're no different than the janitor, and the janitor doesn't get paid." Another mentioned that for the only funeral where he played music, he "didn't even get a cup of coffee." A pianist was actually surprised to hear that there are church musicians who get paid. Then there was the trumpet player who said that he would not be interested in receiving money for playing. "It's something I want to give to the church," he said. The other trumpet player commented that in his church the council once "offered free organ lessons to members of the congregation." None of the musicians who play an instrument other than organ indicated that they had been offered the same compensation for lessons on their respective instruments. In fact, one of the pianists who felt insulted by the question whether she would take organ lessons if she were paid wondered why she had not been offered the same for piano lessons. "I'd have been all over that," she said.

The organist who has had only one organ lesson stated that if remuneration was offered to him to enhance his skills, "it might be impetus to go down that road." He said it would also help him to start collecting more music, whereas "right now there is no incentive for doing that." The other organist of that same church, where no monetary compensation is provided, commented that his recent organ lesson came at a cost of $44.00 per hour, and that "it would've been nice if I was compensated for it, or still am." At this cost he finds it difficult to continue taking lessons regularly. "How much do people actually value music?" he wondered. "It needs to be considered on the church budget, and taken more seriously. Only one or two churches provide a decent amount of money for their musicians."

The organist of another one of the churches said that according to his calculations the organists receive in his congregation only $16.00 per service. "The going rate in other area churches," he claimed, "is $150.00 per service." For funerals and weddings, the church musicians indicated, they usually receive a fairly generous honorarium. One organist put forward his idea that churches should have a regulation requiring that their own musicians be "given the first crack at being hired for special events at the church" as "one way for us to make some money."

One church member expressed his surprise at the present practice in some churches. "I didn't realize that musicians do their work for free. I don't expect people to do that in my line of work," he said. Another challenged the practice of withholding remuneration by reasoning, "You don't expect the church janitor to take his own supplies or equipment to clean the church. Exactly what is it worth to people?" he wondered.

In correspondence received from one of the organists, the researcher was pointed to the "Table of Recommended Salaries (2011)" from the RCCO, which ranges from $5,665 per annum for a Level 1 organist who puts in six hours per week to $71,645 per annum for a Level 10 organist who spends over 29 hours per week on his skill.

Pay the Piper

Among the pastors it was noted that in one church around $7,000 is given to the church musicians annually. The pastors of the other two churches were not satisfied with the little or no money that was set apart for their musicians. A few elders were of the opinion, too, that the churches should be much more generous toward the church musicians. One mentioned that it is important for them to be able to cover all their costs for music, professional development, and other expenses they might have. Another said that this would

go a long way in changing the attitude in the church, since presently "our musicians suffer from a great lack of appreciation." An elder of the church that is the most generous toward musicians, the man who also believed that the organist should be able to make a part time job out of his task, felt that even $7,000 was too little. "He should be paid more," he insisted. "In comparison with the cost of the new pipe organ at over $350,000, that works out to about 1.5 % interest annually," he said, "hardly justified."

The Church Musician's Library and Repertoire

There was less discussion than the interviewer had hoped about the church musician's music library. The disadvantage of musicians sharing a music library at the church, according to one organist, is that you cannot make personal notes in the music. Yet, "the basic library," he wrote, "can definitely be used to know what organists might wish to purchase for themselves, but so will be a list as once produced by Sander Vanderploeg."

When an organist in the focus group who had been taught by Vanderploeg was asked about this list, he explained that Vanderploeg "has written a lot of music on all the psalms and hymns in our *Book of Praise,*" around ten volumes, put out by Norma Kobald and Brookside Publishing.

Another correspondent organist suggested for the accompaniment of the Genevan Psalms *Mazmur Edisi Harmoni,* with settings of all the Psalms harmonized by Claude Goudimel, which according to Klaas Bolt, a famous Dutch organist and improviser, is foundational for understanding the principles of Renaissance harmonization as groundwork for improvisation. His preference for settings of the Psalms is Dick Sanderman's *Koraalboek 150 Psalmen,* published by Lindenberg Productions BV, Rotterdam in 2008. He said of this edition that it "remains within the mode of the psalm melody"; it is "excellently harmonized,

and also provides stimulating descants to some of the psalm melodies." For the accompaniment of hymns, he recommended for the beginning organist the edition that Dennis Teitsma compiled, with some reservations about the "voice-leading" and composition of the harmonizations.

Music-Making and Emotion

Pastors on Training Musical Appetite

In only a couple of the groups was there much discussion about the more philosophical and aesthetic aspects of the church's music-making. When the pastors were asked what they thought about what Begbie calls the "expressivist philosophy" which exists in the church, "that music is fundamentally an outward expression of, usually one's emotional life, and that the main value of music in worship is to give vent to inner feeling, albeit under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,"[627] an extensive discussion ensued. One colleague suggested that "when most people are talking about music, they're talking about their own individual feelings and disconnecting it from God." Thus, "they want music that reflects their own personal circumstances in one form or another," whereas music in worship is "music in fellowship with God and in fellowship with believers." In this connection he suggested that in many churches today "the function of music is to hype up the audience. It's got to be happy-clappy music," he continued. The poverty of music in many of the churches is such that "the music is all triumphal," so that "if we were stuck in a world war, or in a real depression, that music would prove to be utterly lacking." "It would not sustain God's people," another pastor agreed. Part of our task as church leaders, in the

[627] Begbie, *Resounding Truth*, 38.

face of religious subjectivism and sentimentality, a reflection of our individualistic culture, he later said, is "to help shape musical taste," in the same way mothers train their children to appreciate good food, rather than the McDonald's variety, which more readily appeals to our senses. "The truth is that no one has ever developed an appreciation for broccoli casserole by going to McDonald's," he reasoned.

Others on Musical Impulses

Among the church members, a lively discussion spontaneously broke out about what the role is of emotions and "feeling good" in worship. A senior sister made the comment that much of the music produced by the Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) movement sounds exactly like the music of the surrounding culture. "How can you sing the songs of Zion to the music of Babylon?" she asked. "Some churches are using the music of Babylon to praise God," she said. "It doesn't feel right." A young brother took the opposite view, and argued that "there are some evangelical churches that are doing a fantastic job of contemporary worship." He suggested that, in the end, "what's going on in the heart is what matters to God." Another brother suggested that feelings certainly need to be involved, and that, as a Christian worshipper, "you need to be joyful." That is when he made the comment mentioned earlier, that "there's something to be said for excellence and variety in music."

When the same citation from Begbie was shared with the musicians as had been shared with the pastors, they were asked whether they would describe their task as "mood-setting." The ensuing discussion indicated that the musicians assumed it to be so. One of the trumpet players said that there's more to music than "just the release of emotion." Music also plays a role, he said, in "creating it." In the opinion of one musician, "our churches have

historically looked down on emotion," and "not considered it pious to sing with such great enthusiasm."

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore why the musical instrument of choice in the worship of the Canadian Reformed Churches is typically the organ, while other instruments are generally used only as supplements or alternatives to the organ, and to analyze and critique those choices in light of biblical-theological principles. A review of the literature in chapter two explored the biblical, confessional, theological, historical, philosophical, practical, and pastoral considerations that come into play concerning musical instruments and musicians in worship. Chapter three described the methodology for interviewing five focus groups drawn from three Canadian Reformed Churches in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia. Chapter four shared the findings of the focus group discussions as well as other correspondence and documents that surfaced. The present chapter provides a discussion of the findings in light of the literature review and offers recommendations for further study.

Summary and Findings

Musical Instruments and Musicians in the Bible

Attention was given first to the biblical, confessional, and theological considerations in establishing the role of musicians and the choice of musical instruments for worship. We began by laying out the biblical and confessional framework.

Biblical and Confessional Framework

The Old Testament

We saw that right from the beginning, musical instruments and musicians made an integral contribution to human life and culture by means of the music and song they produced and that even long before David organized the Levitical ministry of music, God's people were using musical instruments to praise and worship him. God specifically commanded them to do so already during their sojourn in the desert. The evidence suggests, we believe, that the playing of musical instruments and singing were typically combined.

King David organized and supervised the ministry of music and song by appointing a handsome tithe of Levites to this ministry, we saw, giving them specific instructions, and providing them with the resources they needed to fulfill their task. These Levite musicians were to serve by leading and to lead by serving. Musical instruments, furthermore, were the tools—the temple implements—that David gave the Levites to carry, lift up, and enhance the holy song of God's people for the worship and praise of God. They were fittingly called, therefore, *the LORD's instruments* and *instruments of sacred song.*

The musicians were expected to make music that was loud, moving, and impressive—even fearful, for they were wielding instruments of power, we discovered. Fearful, for King David the music-king was also the war-king, and the musical instruments he entrusted to the Levites were his most powerful weapons of war. There is something dangerous about the ministry of song inaugurated by King David!

We noted that the splendour and quality of the musical instruments when the kingdom of Solomon was at its pinnacle displayed the splendour of Israel's great King, Yahweh himself. When musical instruments came to life and voices of joy and gladness sang;

when the Levitical musicians had work and their mighty *Selahs* punctuated the people's praise; that was a sure sign of the health, vigour, and strength of God's beloved nation!

The New Testament

With regard to the New Testament on musical instruments and musicians in worship, we saw that Old Covenant worship, including the Davidic ministry of liturgical music and song, reaches its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Jesus sings God's praises with the music composed by his father David—the Psalms. We noted that the Greek word by which Jesus himself designates these songs, ψαλμός, actually means "song of praise, music played with an instrument." Paul calls upon believers to speak such songs to one another with music, ψάλλοντες, that is, to the accompaniment of instruments. He also assumes the believers' acquaintance with a variety of musical instruments like those that had been used in Old Testament worship when he uses the sound of musical instruments as an illustration for edifying speech in the church, and when he offers comfort concerning the resurrection of the dead. Finally, as David's royal Son takes his throne in the Revelation to John, the mighty sound of musical instruments and songs powerfully emanates from God's presence through all creation!

The Reformed Confessions

Turning to the Reformed confessions, we saw that while the Three Forms of Unity do not address the subject of musical instruments and musicians in particular, both the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism offer guidance. The confessions do not permit us to ignore the length to which the Holy Spirit goes in teaching us about Old Covenant worship, particularly of the Davidic liturgical period in which worship with

musical instruments and musicians is described in detail. If we are to worship God only as he has prescribed in his Word, then we cannot afford to ignore what he has taught us in any part of Holy Scripture, neither in the Old Testament nor in the New. While the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law were abolished with the coming of Christ, musical instruments and musicians make the song of the Lamb ring forth in the New Testament *Eschaton* like never before.

Interpretation of Biblical Data by Various Scholars and Focus Groups

We then considered what the interpretation of the biblical record by various scholars. We saw that the centrality of music in worship reflects its centrality in God's created order, in which human beings embraced music as one of their main cultural enterprises, crafting musical instruments from an early period. This centrality is also established by the hinge-position that the genealogy of the music-making Levites occupies in the world-genealogy. Instrument-rich, Davidic-style music and song revives and swells whenever God's people move close to their *eschaton,* as much in the New Covenant as in the Old. Musical instruments and musicians repeatedly bring to life the song of God's people upon the arrival of the King and his Kingdom. Through music God's people win their battles, and musical instruments serve as primary weapons of warfare. Music also functions to make creation resound. With their musical instruments, furthermore, the Levitical musicians were responsible for the verbal and musical exaltation of God's name through music and song, carrying and enhancing, rather than dominating, the singing of God's people. The instruments functioned also to stimulate festive rejoicing, to announce God's presence among and acceptance of his people, and to maintain musical simultaneity. The

worship in Spirit and Truth of which Jesus speaks in the New Testament is an advancement, not replacement, of the Spiritual worship already commanded in the Old Covenant.

While many of the focus group participants saw musical instruments and musicians as a vital feature of Christian worship, scripturally, with the function of accompanying and leading the singing of the church, some considered them fine but not necessary, and only one considered them completely unnecessary—in agreement with a strict application of the *regulative principle of worship*. While there was formal acknowledgement that the Old Testament has something to say about worship, especially in the Psalms, there was a lack of awareness of the broader biblical-theological or redemptive historical ebb and flow with respect to musical instruments and musicians in worship, particularly in Leviticus, Chronicles, and Samuel. There was also an indication both of uncertainty and confusion about how the liturgical music of the Old Covenant is advanced and fulfilled in the New.

Musical Instruments and Musicians in History, Philosophy, and Theology

Next, the historical and philosophical factors related to musicians and musical instruments and worship were considered. The people of God, it was noted, generally made discriminating choices and avoided blindly adopting the wild, unrestrained, and sensuous musical practices and attitudes of her pagan neighbours. This historical context largely explains the extremely cautious approach towards music in general and musical instruments in particular, both in the early church and in the time of the Reformation. Over time, however, musical instruments and musicians have again been increasingly employed. Although the organ was initially viewed largely as a pagan intruder into Christian worship, it eventually gained wide acceptance as the instrument of choice—even a prized fixture—in

Christian worship in general and in Reformed churches in particular. An awareness of this history was generally lacking, with some exceptions, among focus group participants.

The importance of philosophical and theological reflection on music for a proper perspective on musical instruments and musicians in worship was noted. The prevailing attitude today, we found, reflects the shift from the cosmological conception of music in the Great Tradition, centered on God and his creation, to the anthropological conception, centered on people and their experience. The collapse of "the harmony of the spheres into the song of the self" serves as a motivation for developing a Christian ecology of music, which contemplates the doctrine of creation and how it ought to shape our own approach to music, in which Christ stands central, in which there is an awareness of the catholicity of the body of Christ, and in which music does not become an idol but is sworn to the humble service of God. Most of these philosophical and theological musings resonated with the focus group participants.

Musical Instruments and Musicians in Practical and Pastoral Perspective

The practical and pastoral factors that come into play regarding musical instruments and musicians in worship were considered next. The prevailing opinion, both in the literature and among the participants in the study, is that a higher priority should be given to musical training and education, not only for musicians but also for church members, office bearers, and children, and a higher level of proficiency should be expected of church musicians. While the desire for such improvement is evident, the resources, pastoral leadership, and monetary support need bolstering. As for choice of musical instruments, in the three Canadian Reformed Churches studied, while the preference for organ remains quite strong, there is a growing openness and support for the use of additional or alternate

musical instruments. Among the factors contributing to this shift are the shrinking supply of qualified organists and the concomitant increase of musicians who play a variety of other instruments. The strengths and weaknesses of the various instruments and combinations thereof were considered, especially in relation to how they affect and support congregational singing. Another significant factor in choice of musical instruments is evidently their cultural associations. The need for greater attention to acoustics and architecture was also explored. Finally, the dynamics of change received attention, in particular the danger of fast-paced change and the importance of trusted musical leadership.

Discussion

Musical Instruments and Musicians in the Bible

The Centrality of Music, Musical Instruments, and Musicians

This study found that music occupied a central place in the worship of God's people, already in the Old Testament, and that its vitality and continuation was a mark of faithfulness to the LORD. The joyous, musical worship instituted by David, therefore, was restored after the exile and served as a prototype for faithful New Covenant worship. *The centrality of music in worship reflected its centrality in God's created order, in which human beings embraced music as one of their main cultural enterprises, crafting musical instruments from an early period (Gen. 4:20-22).* The Chronicler presents the genealogy of the instrument-playing, song-making Levites as "the hinge on which the world-genealogy turns."[628] Music in worship, as much in the New Covenant as in the Old, combines with that of the angels and all creation to resound the

[628] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 29.

praises of God (Ps. 98). As such, the musical activity of the church does not merely take its place *alongside* mission. *Music is central to the church's mission.*

Musical instruments and musicians, we discovered, play a key role in the song-filled worship of God's people, to such an extent that *musical instruments and the performance of music are imbedded in the very concept of "song" in the Old Covenant.* The description of musical instruments as *instruments of song* in the Old Testament and the biblical use of the word *psallo* to designate both singing and playing a musical instrument are further confirmation of this inclusive definition of song in Scripture.

The silence of musical instruments and the unemployment of musicians is an indication that God's people are in exile or spiritual captivity, and that their worship has lost its power and splendour (2 Chron. 30:21; Ps. 137:1-6; Jer. 33:10-11; Ezek. 26:13). *Instrument-rich, Davidic-style music and song revive and swell whenever God's people move closer to their* eschaton, *namely, the arrival of their exalted King and his Kingdom.* [629] The New Testament descriptions of worship, consequently, can only be properly understood in light of Old Testament worship. In the final *Eschaton,* pictured in the Revelation to John, the musical instruments resound again, signaling the presence of God with his people, the arrival and enthronement of King Jesus, the final end of captivity, and the concomitant consummation of the splendour and power of divine worship.

Among the focus group participants there was a wide range of opinions about the role of musical instruments and musicians in worship. On the one hand, there were those who shared their deep conviction that, on account of the Levitical ministry of music

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[629] Ibid, 129; Jordan, "Worship Music, Part 2: Musical Instruments"; cf. Dalbey, "A Biblical, Historical and Contemporary Look at the Regulative Principle of Worship," 11.

instituted by David, portrayed in the Psalms and fulfilled in the Book of Revelation, musical instruments are a vital feature of Christian worship. On the other hand, there were those who thought that musical instruments are fine, but not necessary—that the decision to use them in worship and to employ musicians is "a purely pragmatic choice," in the words of one elder. Only one person was of the opinion that musical instruments are totally unnecessary in worship.

The centrality of music and song in worship, as in the human cultural enterprise from the time of creation, needs to be recaptured. The employment of musicians and musical instruments, in light of the biblical data, should not be dismissed as pleasing but optional accessories to worship. The imminent return of King Jesus gives every reason for musical instruments to come to life, for musicians to be striking up their instruments, and for the church to be rehearsing her song!

The rob-Peter-to-pay-Paul argument is sometimes advanced that the money that would otherwise be invested in mission should not be spent on organs and other exorbitant expenses related to the church's song. What should not be forgotten, however, as mentioned earlier, is that the musical activity of the church does not merely take its place *alongside* mission, and certainly not *instead of* mission. *Music is central to the church's mission.* The church is called to song, so that the nations will join her, until finally the entire cosmos resounds the praises of God the Creator and his Christ (1 Chron. 16:9-33; Ps. 98)! This makes musical instruments and musicians worthy of generous investment.

The Function of Music, Musical Instruments, and Musicians

In the biblical paradigm, we discovered, music functions to make creation resound. In worship, song is a memorial by which God is called upon to draw near and to descend in

glory (Num. 10:9-10). The Levites were not only responsible for the *physical exaltation of God's throne* in their duties of carrying and caring for the temple and its furnishings; they were also responsible for the *verbal and musical exaltation of God's name.* Musical instruments were an integral means by which they accomplished this task. Similar to the other temple vessels, כֵּלִים *(kelim),* which the Levites used to handle and carry the sacrifices, musical instruments were *vessels of song* (כְּלֵי־שִׁיר, *kele shir,* 1 Chron. 15:16; 16:42, etc.), by which they were to lift up and carry God's name and word in song. *Song* does not merely refer to vocal music in the Old Testament, then, but covers both instrumental and vocal music and includes the aspect of performance. The New Testament word ψάλλω *(psallo),* which refers both to singing and to the playing of an instrument, as we have seen, confirms this rich texture of *song* in the Bible. A greater awareness of this rich and multi-faceted conception of song in Scripture needs to be recovered by the church. There is much more to song than just the words that are sung and the notes to which they are sung. Also integral are the instruments that carry the words and music and the performance of that music by musicians.

The close connection between instruments and singing in the Bible—between word and song—while it does not justify "a merely utilitarian connection between music and worship,"[630] certainly does indicate the supporting role that musical instruments have in the biblical conception. *The liturgical musicians were to serve by leading and to lead by serving.* Their function was to *carry and enhance the singing,* not to take it over or dominate. All the

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[630] Leupold, "Worship Music in Ancient Israel," 178.

instruments used in worship shared the common purpose of combining into "one voice," one sound, קוֹל־אֶחָד, *qol echad* (2 Chron. 5:13), the song of God's people into "a synchronized mass performance, in which the instrumental music combined with the singing to achieve a unified, harmonious effect."[631] As Martin Luther saw it, *music intensifies the Word and musical instruments sharpen the musical endeavour.* This study found that in the Canadian Reformed Churches the musicians typically have a biblical understanding of servant leadership. Yet, while in principle there is an emphasis on the task of musicians to *accompany* the congregational singing, in practice the organ sometimes dominates. We will return to this observation later.

According to the biblical record, musical instruments also had the function of stimulating festive rejoicing among God's people, in contrast to their pagan function to arouse sensuality and revelry, and to mask horrifying cries. Each instrument, furthermore, had specific functions. Trumpets were used to give signals and to announce God's presence. Cymbals indicated the beginning of songs or stanzas, maintained musical simultaneity, and announced God's acceptance of sacrifices. Harps and lyres accompanied the singing.

Musical instruments, as weapons of liturgical warfare, we saw, have an important function in the Christian church's spiritual battle against the principalities and powers of evil. By giving church musicians their musical skills, the Holy Spirit is training their hands for war (Ps. 144:1, 9-10). Instrument-wielding church musicians lead the charge of God's people into

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631 Kleinig, *The LORD's Song*, 87.

enemy territory, where they strike fear with mighty music. Playing musical instruments in worship is not for the faint-hearted—it requires pluck and valour!

Musical instruments and musicians, furthermore, play an important function in Spiritual worship. Worshipping in Spirit and Truth (Jn. 4:21-24) is not merely a matter of worshipping with a proper heart-attitude, but also of giving voice and sound—out-loudness—to the Spirit of God in music and song. *Everything that breathes on account of the Breath of God—the Spirit of God—is called to praise the LORD to the sound-vibration-breaths of musical instruments (Ps. 150); and when we do that with all our hearts, by faith, we are filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18-19).*

The churches, including the musicians, need to be reminded of the wide-ranging, skill-and-bravery-demanding, and Spirit-Breath-filling functions of musical instruments in worship and need to learn to employ them as such. Among the focus group participants, overall, including the musicians, there was little more than a *vague sense* of this broad, demanding, and Spiritual function of musical instruments.

Musical Instruments and Musicians through History

Musical Instruments and Musicians in Antiquity

Among historical and biblical scholars, we found, there is consensus that the knowledge of the nature of musical instruments, and in many cases even their identity, is far from complete. Sendry has made the remarkable observation that "the musical references in the Bible are almost the first records in the history of mankind that afford a comprehensive insight into the musical culture of a people of high antiquity."[632] While Israel was surely

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[632] Ibid, 60.

influenced by the musical culture of the surrounding nations during her history, generally *the people of God made discriminating choices and avoided blindly adopting the musical practices of her neighbours.* The church today needs to continue exercising such discretion, each congregation in its own time and place. Not every instrument that is available to the church should be used by the church.

The historical record indicates that the purpose and function of musical instruments among pagans was different than among the Israelites, namely, the appeasement of the gods, the elimination of disturbances and strange noises, the driving away of demons, and the inducement of religious ecstasy and carousing. The sumptuous and sensuous excess of the pagans was sharply criticized, even among the pagan philosophers; clearly, it does not take long for the world to figure out and expose faulty religious impulses and motivations. Rather than *following,* the church should be *leading the way* in musical culture. Rather than *caving in* to the negative influences of secular music, *the church needs to exercise positive influence on the surrounding musical culture.* This is not an easy challenge for Christians to undertake and will require a great deal of hard work and discipline, training and practice, wisdom and patience on the part of church musicians, leaders, and members alike.

Musical Instruments and Musicians in the Early Church and Reformation

The historical context just described gave us some insight into the negative view that the early church fathers had toward music in general and toward musical instruments and musicians in particular. Most of their remonstrations were directed against pagan excess, we observed. They reconciled their opposition to musical instruments by applying the allegorical method of Scripture interpretation to the Bible passages that speak of musical instruments in a positive light. We considered citations from Eusebius and Origen in which these writers

identified the various musical instruments mentioned in the Psalms with the actions and emotions of the human soul. The Patristic church, in the words of Routley, showed "a keen awareness of the power of music and a desire to guard Christians against music that will damage their faith."[633] We cannot agree with the allegorical interpretation of musical instruments, at least not to argue for their complete exclusion from worship. We do recognize, however, that the church fathers needed some way to reconcile their opposition to the pagan influences of instrumental music at that time, as mentioned in our earlier discussion. An acknowledgement of the damage that bad music can do to Christians and their faith, therefore, should receive our full endorsement, an aspect to which we will return later.

The strict position of the early church, in turn, provides an explanation for the sober perspective on musical instruments among the Reformers. An additional threat perceived by the Reformers was the sumptuous use of music among the papists, what Jordan identifies as their "real reason for eschewing musical instruments."[634] Organs, as a result, were removed from churches all over Europe, and even melted down. One notable exception to this strict approach of the Reformers was Martin Luther. Although he did not favour the organ, he certainly promoted a high view of music and musical instruments for abundant use in worship, believing that "next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise."[635] What must not be forgotten regarding the organ, however, was that it lacked the refinement that it now possesses. By all accounts, pipe organs even in the time of the Reformation were

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[633] Routley, *The Church and Music,* 55.
[634] Jordan, "Puritanism and Music," 120.
[635] Begbie, *Resounding Truth,* 98.

still quite clunky and crude, both in operation and in sound. One should not impose the same criticisms on pipe organs today as were registered then, since they are now superior instruments in many ways. As a qualification concerning the negative view of musical instruments during the Reformation, Jordan's observation that "Reformation music, in its original meters and tempos, is...lively, rhythmic, and forceful"[636] bears repeating. All was not lost during the Reformation, even if musical instruments in worship were frowned upon; in fact, much good was restored to the church's song during that time by God's grace!

Musical Instruments and Musicians after the Reformation

Since "the Davidic liturgical revolution," as Leithart calls it in the subtitle of his book, the greatest revolution in church music has occurred within the last few centuries since the Reformation. The introduction of the organ as the main musical instrument of the church began already as early as the twelfth century. "By the Reformation," according to Faulkner, "the organ's place in worship was so well established that its use continued undisturbed among Lutherans and Anglicans,"[637] with the result that its demise during the time of the Reformation was only temporary. "By the nineteenth century," writes Faulkner, "its sound had come to be regarded as the epitome of churchliness; even those church bodies whose Puritan heritage had hitherto rejected the organ now began to embrace it."[638] Such a development also occurred in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, to which

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[636] James B. Jordan, "Puritanism and Music," *Views and Reviews: Open Book Occasional Papers* Vol. 5 (Niceville, FL: Biblical Horizons), 131.

[637] Faulkner, "The History of the Organ in the Christian Church," 402.

[638] Ibid, 403.

the Canadian Reformed Churches trace their roots. As Deddens has said, "The organ and the organist now have a fixed place in our worship services."[639]

The shrinking supply of organists within the Canadian Reformed Churches, however, is casting doubt on whether this status of the organ and the organist will continue. If it is true, as one of the pastors said, that the organ has lost its cultural resonance, especially among the younger generations, the prospects are not good for the future of the organ in the Canadian Reformed Churches. At the same time, however, the notion that organ has lost its cultural resonance did not go completely unchallenged. In some parts of the world and in certain sectors of our culture the popularity and presence of the organ is growing. In the church, it seems, the profile of the organ is in urgent need of restoration and revival if it is to maintain its coveted distinction in the church's song.

Historical awareness concerning the history of musical instruments and musicians in the Christian church was clearly lacking among the focus group participants, with only a few exceptions, a reflection of the level of historical awareness also among those who were surveyed. Two of the organists who corresponded with me on their own initiative, on the other hand, were evidently well acquainted with music history, at least since the Reformation.

Musical Instruments and Musicians in Philosophy and Theology

The Importance of Philosophical and Theological Reflection on Music

Since church music in every age has been affected by the prevailing worldview or spirit of that age, we noted, it is important to engage in ongoing philosophical and biblical-

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[639] Deddens, *Where Everything Points to Him*, 129.

theological reflection on this subject. As Begbie says, "Music not only reflects and emerges out of our social-cultural world but up to a point it also *constructs* it."[640] We gave attention, therefore, to prevailing philosophies not only in our own day, but also in history.

The Prevailing Thought on Musical Instruments and Musicians

Begbie detects in the church, we observed, an expressivist philosophy "that music is fundamentally an outward expression of one's inner life, usually one's emotional life, and that the main value of music in worship is to give vent to inner feeling, albeit under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."[641] The church musician, then, or the worship leader as he is often called, exercises great power, "as does a DJ in a club or a concert violinist in a recital hall."[642] In fact, among church musicians, Routley claims, "no musician is from the beginning placed in a position of so much potential power over others as is the organist."[643] We return now to the observation made earlier, that while in theory church musicians are expected to accompany the singing, in practice the organ often dominates. A common complaint of church people, voiced both in the focus groups and in the surveys, is that sometimes they cannot even hear their own singing when they are blasted by the loud volume of the organ. The organ is not only an instrument, but also a powerful machine, and needs to be handled and played with discernment and skill, care and restraint. The suggestions that smaller-scale instruments should be used and that the organ should be altogether quiet more often in worship are worth serious consideration.

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[640] Begbie, *Resounding Truth,* 44.
[641] Ibid, 38.
[642] Ibid, 46.
[643] Erik Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith,* 99.

One of the organists mentioned earlier viewed the control of *"one single mind"* as an asset rather than a liability for the church's song, since in his opinion it reduces the possibility of conflict and is most practical. The comment of one of the pastors, however, about the organist who told him that as a musician he has the power to destroy a minister's sermon, reveals the awareness that the control of the organist at the console can be a serious liability rather than an asset to worship. The biblical fact, however, that in Davidic worship *many minds* had to cooperate and work together, places this so-called asset on a weak foundation. One wonders, if the pastoral care and leadership of the church does not rest on one mind, why should the musical leadership and direction of the church do so? The *One Mind* needs to be Christ (1 Cor. 2:16; 2 Cor. 13:1; Philip. 2:2) and Christ is pleased to act through the *many members* of his body (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12). "The body is not made up of one part but of many" (1 Cor. 12:14). The cooperation of musicians to blend their instruments and the voice of the congregation into "one voice" (2 Chron. 5:13) can be a moving and compelling realization of this one-Christ-many-members dynamic. We will return to this matter when we discuss further the pastoral perspective on the choice of musical instruments and musicians in worship.

Overall, the research participants indicated an awareness of the negative influence on church music exerted by the expressivist philosophy that prevails over our musical culture. This awareness was most strongly expressed by the pastors, who lamented the sentimentality, subjectivism, and triumphalism among Christian worshippers; and by one of the senior church members, who warned against "feel-good worship." Some of the musicians, on the other hand, did not seem to view the expressivist philosophy as a threat at all. In the words of one of the participants, a larger concern was that "our churches have

historically looked down on emotion" and have "not considered it pious to sing with such great enthusiasm." In this connection, it is essential that church members in general, and church musicians in particular, have a solid grasp of the proper *source and direction of human emotion and affections in church music,* namely, God and God alone! Begbie challenges the notion that music is little more than the outward expression of one's inner life. His is not an appeal for emotionless music, but for *music that constructs the right emotions.* From the Bible it is clear that the church's music and song has the function of bringing about edification (1 Cor. 14:2-3), imparting feelings of joy (2 Chron. 29:30b; Ps. 98), and even empowering and rousing God's people so that they produce fruit (2 Chron. 30:21b). The designation of the Davidic musical instruments as "powerful" was not only a reference to their *volume,* but also to the *impact* that they made on those who heard them. *The task of musical instruments and musicians in worship, then, is to play a significant role in creating holy affections and emotions; only thus sanctified can these emotions and affections find fitting expression in music and song before God's throne.* This seems to be one of the most important lessons to be learned from the Great Tradition, the best of which Begbie wants to recapture with his Christian ecology of music.

The Great Tradition on Musical Instruments and Musicians

In the "Great Tradition," as Begbie calls it, spearheaded by Pythagoras, "baptized" by Augustine and Boethius, and having great influence well into the fifteenth century, it was believed that musical harmony gives expression to the cosmic order, so that "the whole cosmos, the planetary and stellar spheres with their orderly revolutions, [was] seen as a vast musical instrument with each component attuned according to the same scheme of ratios as

obtains in our mortal music."[644] Music, like all created things, was to be loved "towards God."[645] Composers and performers, however, ranked far below musical thinkers.

The philosophy of music during this period, it was noted, got in the way of the music that was being sung and played by the musicians themselves. A gigantic paradigm shift was in the offing, from the cosmological conception of music to the anthropological.

The Anthropological Shift

We found that the collapse of "the harmony of the spheres...into the song of the self,"[646] as Daniel Chua characterizes it, was not necessarily an improvement. Begbie even holds Calvin and Zwingli complicit, under the influence of Erasmus, in promoting this new view of music as largely a human enterprise. Music eventually slipped into a position of virtual autonomy, under the watch of theologians and philosophers such as Schleiermacher, Schopenhauer, and Croce, and to the dismay of theologians such as Barth. Although Calvin's negative influence on the philosophy of music should not be overstated, it should also not be ignored by Reformed Christians. An honest admission and a humble awareness of Calvin's philosophy of music will place the church in a better position to assess and evaluate clear-headedly his largely negative view of instrumental church music.

A Christian Ecology for Musical Instruments and Musicians

Begbie's proposition of a "Christian ecology" for music then held our attention, a guiding framework which focuses on the doctrine of creation and considers *"how God's shaping of the world might shape our own"* approach, a more biblical one.[647] Such a paradigm

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[644] Begbie, *Resounding Truth,* 80.
[645] Ibid, 86.
[646] Ibid, 94.
[647] Ibid, 187.

challenges the notion put forward by Liesch that "music materials are morally neutral"[648]—a notion that received some sympathy from the young church member who wondered why a "G" on any instrument could be sinful. Plato had already recognized the moral aspect of music when he stated in his *Republic,* "The ways of poetry and music are not changed anywhere without change in the most important laws of the city."[649] *Music holds vast moral significance as an aspect of God's created order.*

Here the words of Leithart, mentioned earlier, bear repeating. Since God alone is the most important audience of church music, *God's musical tastes must be determined and determinative.*[650] That was the burden of the concern of the church fathers and the Reformers, legitimately so, and it should be ours as well. There *is* an ethical aspect to music, and musical materials are most certainly *not* morally neutral.

Christ himself stands central in the Christian ecology that Begbie proposes, for he is the one who *"opens us to the heart and mind of the Creator."*[651] Closely associated with this is the awareness of the catholicity of the *body of Christ,* rendering it necessary for Christian worshippers and musicians to be good listeners as they join the conversation about church music with the rest of Christ's body of all times and places, a conversation that has been going on for a long time and will continue far into the future.

Another integral element is that *"the good world is not God,"*[652] meaning that musicians and Christian worshippers should never allow music to take the place of God, "as the major

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[648] Liesch, *The New Worship,* 204.
[649] Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music,* 457.
[650] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 116.
[651] Begbie, *Resounding Truth,* 189.
[652] Ibid, 194.

up-front device for worship," as Best puts it.[653] Musicians and their instruments, like music and all the arts, "are to be sworn to humble service"[654] of the Creator and his Christ. This must happen, of course, without music and song being treated as merely an optional—even distracting—accessory to worship. On this point, the Canadian Reformed Churches, like many other churches which use the organ, need to be aware that they are open to the charge of being inconsistent at best, if not hypocritical. In theory, every church member would agree that musical instruments should not become up-front devices for worship. This theory, in fact, comprises the primary and most common objection to the use of other instruments in worship besides the organ. In practice, however, the church organ has assumed a place of such up-front prominence in the worship services that it is not even recognized by many.

Most of the church members, musicians, and office bearers recognized and expressed how important it is that Christ is central in worship, and also that musicians and musical instruments have a serving rather than a dominating role. There was an indication among a few, however, that in their opinion musical instruments and musicians—if not music and song altogether—are indeed optional accessories to Christian worship. As one person said it, musical instruments are "fine, but not necessary." As another said, musical instruments are "totally unnecessary." This position, although it finds support in patristic and early Reformed thought, represents a misunderstanding of the purpose of musical instruments and the function of musicians as an integral aspect of the biblical conception of song, discussed earlier.

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[653] Best, *Unceasing Worship*, 166.
[654] Ibid, 179.

Musical Instruments and Musicians from a Practical Perspective

Musical Training and Education

The research showed that musical training and education are necessary to create not only qualified musicians, but also well-equipped worshippers. The academy of music and the guild of musicians founded by David, which provided time, space, and expertise for the training and continual rehearsing of musicians, serve as models for the training and standards of proficiency that should be established for church musicians today. At the very least, church musicians should be required, according to the experts, to receive training in the fundamentals of musical theory, history, and practice. They should seek qualifications that are recognized and certified by reputable music academies, conservatories, and colleges. As suggested earlier, just as pastors are expected to be professional in the way they carry out their ministries, so also musicians should strive, as best they can, to be professional in the way they lead Christ's congregation in song.[655]

Generally speaking, both the expected and actual levels of musical proficiency among the musicians in the Canadian Reformed Churches studied were deficient compared to the standards recommended in the literature. This does not necessarily reflect, it must be added, the desire, willingness, or ability of musicians, church leaders, and church members to raise the bar, especially if time, money, and resources would be more readily available.

The condition of the church's song, the consulted experts say, would also benefit greatly from the education of all worshippers in the basics of church music. A beginning

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[655] By professional I mean the quality of being competent and skillful in one's task without drawing attention to oneself. See Katherine Barber, ed., *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press Canada, 1998).

could be made, they suggest, with the children of the church. Such education would plant seeds of interest in those with an aptitude for music, and would increase the likelihood of these children eventually developing the skills that are detected by attentive instructors. One organist suggests that the church could actively sponsor the musical education of such gifted children as a way of combating the shrinking supply of qualified church musicians. According to the report of one organ enthusiast, this is already beginning to happen in Ontario, where music workshops and educational resources are being developed. The resources and bodies suggested below could serve to assist and bolster such endeavours.

Although most of the musicians were open to the concept of being more active in offering such education in their congregations, little is presently being done in this area. The suggestion was made, furthermore, that the Christian schools operated by Canadian Reformed folk could play a crucial role to that end.

Much can and should be done to motivate and encourage the development and advancement of the musical skills that God has provided by making use of available schools and teachers of music accessible throughout Canada. Where such schools and teachers are not readily accessible, provisions should be made for travel and accommodation, either of students or of teachers, to make this possible. Music academies, workshops, and conferences, scholarships and bursaries, journals and Web sites, established and supported by a combination of churches, individuals, businesses, and other organizations would be beneficial for this purpose. Churches, however, particularly pastors, consistories, and musicians, should take a leadership role.

An indispensable link both in the training of musicians and in the education of church members concerning the church's song, according to numerous sources, is the

pastorate, alluded to above. Luther was convinced, we noted, that men should not be ordained to the ministry without being well-schooled in music, something that also Van Dooren, one of the first teachers at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary, strongly believed.[656] Seminaries have been largely negligent on this front. One Reformed musician is of the opinion that "pastors trust musicians far too much and make disciples of them far too little," and even asserts that pastors are duty bound to act as the theological coaches and instructors of musicians, lest they "run afoul of the preacher's work."[657] According to Van Dooren, in fact, part of the pastor's responsibility is to ensure that the organist does not deliver concerts on Sundays.

The pastors interviewed not only had great reservations about giving such direction to organists, but also felt quite unqualified to do so. One particular pastor, cited earlier, offered this admission: "What credibility do we have as ministers in musical matters? We probably need to educate ourselves a lot more." These pastors agreed, in this connection, that the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary could and should do more in preparing ministers for such a leadership role in the musical aspect of worship.

The neglect of this subject at the Canadian Reformed seminary is related, I believe, to the lack of attention given to the subject of liturgical theology. When I was a student there, there was only a single, short, half-semester course within the entire four-year curriculum dedicated to a course called Liturgics. Since 2008, thankfully, the time allotted to this course has been expanded: it is now a full-semester course of two hours every week for fourteen weeks. This is a movement in the right direction. The seminary would do well to

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[656] Van Dooren, "About Organists and Pulpiteers," 458.
[657] Payton, "Congregational Singing and the Ministry of the Word," 124.

consider establishing a separate theological discipline, called Doxology, which would be dedicated to developing and teaching a solid biblical and Reformed liturgical theology, including the musical aspect of worship. Covenant Theological Seminary, too, is expanding its curriculum on worship in general and music in particular. Such improvements at seminaries, if they are put to good service, are commendable and bode well for the future of Reformed worship and church music.[658]

Mandate and Supervision of Musicians

For the purpose of regulating and supervising the task of church musicians, most churches have prepared some sort of mandate. The mandate is normally drafted with the input of the church musicians and other church members, but is approved and subject to revision by the church council or consistory.

One of the aspects normally covered in such a mandate is what role the church musician has. The perennial dilemma of whether the church musician should accompany or lead congregational singing receives the attention of a few sources, but it seems to be a dilemma that only exists for those in the Continental Reformed tradition, which includes the Canadian Reformed Churches. The consensus appears to be that there are aspects of both accompanying and leading involved, although the favoured terminology for the Canadian Reformed church musician is certainly *musical accompanist* and not *musical director* or *leader*. The emphasis is on the task of the church musician as *serving* rather than *dominating*. The mandates that were made available by two of the churches in the study both used the terms *accompany,*

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[658] Lutheran and Roman Catholic seminaries and schools are known for devoting considerable attention to liturgical theology, church music, and worship; this in itself is commendable. Our disagreement with much of what is taught at such schools in these subjects actually magnifies the urgency of devoting more attention to them in Reformed seminaries and schools.

accompaniment and *accompanist,* and one stipulated that the organists are to "use their skills to enhance the singing of the congregation." As we noted earlier, most of the musicians participating in the study believe that their task is a combination of *accompanying* and *leading* the congregational singing. From our biblical research, it appears necessary for the church musicians and councils to broaden the mandate of the musicians to take account of the biblical data concerning the centrality of music and the wide-ranging function of musical instruments mentioned earlier. While the recognition of church musician's *serving* role is commendable and must never be forgotten, the awareness of of the church musician's *leading* role is equally important.

We have already noted the apprehension of the pastors, who feel reluctant and unequipped to provide musical leadership. It should be noted, furthermore, that the mandates and regulations for church musicians are typically approved by office bearers who are then responsible to ensure that they are followed by the church musicians. Generally, it was noted, office bearers are responsible but not qualified for this task. These observations were further confirmed in the discussions with the pastors and elders, who indicated that they engage in minimal supervision over the church musicians, and are satisfied to let these musicians do their jobs without their interference, especially if they seem to be doing a good job. In this light, the advice offered to office bearers by some of the sources is to seek the advice and expertise of those who are musically qualified, so that they can be more engaged in providing the leadership that is required of them with respect to the church musicians. Conferences, academies, journals, and other scholarly institutions, such as those mentioned earlier, could provide such assistance, advice, and support.

Authors whose works were considered in this study agree that committees supervising and facilitating the work of the musicians should consist of not only musicians themselves, but also office bearers and church members. Some of the authors feel strongly that the pastor should be at the forefront of the leadership offered to the musicians, and that he should even serve as chairman on such committees. In the mandate of one of the churches researched, only two of the church musicians are on the music committee. One of the musicians of that church indicated her preference to have *all* the musicians serve as permanent members of the music committee, which is the case in the other church that has a mandate. One of the mandates stipulated that the church members who are appointed to the music committee should be "acquainted with the field of song and music in Reformed worship," whereas the other said nothing of the sort. Also, only one of the mandates stipulated that "the minister shall serve on the committee *ex-officio,*" but not necessarily as chairman. In the other mandate, while the council is to appoint the chairman of the committee, the committee is not required to seat a member of council among its members. A fresh look at such mandates is warranted, in which there is a review of the leadership of the council, especially of the pastor, as well as the involvement of the musicians, and the criteria for the selection of church members to serve on the music committee.

Choice of Musical Instruments from a Practical Perspective

Among the three churches in the study, the traditional, default position that the organ is the musical instrument of choice for worship was fairly strong. In one church, this position has apparently never been challenged, even though one of the organists is a trained pianist and is still quite uncomfortable playing the organ. In another church, the shrinking availability of organists has essentially forced the council to recruit pianists and to make use

of the piano. Organ and piano are used with roughly equal frequency, sometimes in combination, with the addition of trumpet on special days. In the other church, when the preferred choice for the organ was challenged a number of years ago, the council decided with input from the congregation that the organ would remain the principal musical instrument for worship. In this church, the organist has—and utilizes—the freedom to use the piano occasionally and to invite the participation of other musicians on a variety of instruments, such as trumpet, violin, flute, and trombone.

All three of the churches have favoured pipe organs over digital. While one is presently installing a low-cost pipe organ that was lovingly assembled by an organ hobbyist, the other two both house high-quality Casavant pipe organs. One of these is a brand new pipe organ that cost the church close to $400,000.00. The sources consulted also were not much in favour of the digital choice for organs, although one author suggested that smaller scale pipe organs are probably sufficient for the task. There is little doubt that the money invested in a modest-sized, quality pipe organ is money well spent. A quality pipe organ, like a well-built church, will last through many generations if it receives the proper maintenance and care.

In the past this author has been of the opinion, too, that the pipe organ is far superior to its digital and electronic counterparts. Significant advances have been made, however, in the production of high quality digital organs, such as the one that now occupies the chapel at Covenant Seminary. For many churches, a quality digital organ may be preferred over a poor-quality pipe organ. No matter how lovingly such organs are assembled by pipe organ hobbyists and willing volunteers, while cheap in the short-term, such organs are likely to bring endless frustration and head-aches; they are also likely to incur large and

unforeseen expense in the long-term. Such frustrating scenarios were mentioned a number of times in the survey which was conducted. There is no question that digital organs will never fully match the sound of pipe organs; they are different instruments after all. For churches, however, that find the requirements for building and maintaining a good pipe organ prohibitive in terms of cost and space, the digital organ may well be an alternative worth exploring.

Schalk's disapproval concerning "the sometimes oppressive and continuous presence of the organ," along with his suggestion that the organ should not be accorded such a prominent place in the worship services, was reflected by several comments among the research participants about the fairly common complaint that the organ is too much at the forefront in worship. I believe that this criticism has some validity and should be seriously considered. De Visser, while warning against the idolization of the organ, rightly maintains that the church organ is an excellent instrument for the accompaniment of congregational singing, providing a "sustained sound" and a "strong foundation for congregational singing."[659]

As for the piano, its main weakness according to the experts and also the focus group participants who were critical towards it is that it is not ideal for carrying the singing of a congregation, especially one of a considerable size. Finding suitable repertoire for the piano was also identified as a challenge. In one of the congregations, however, where piano and organ are both used regularly, there was a strong indication that there is a preference for piano. Identified as one of the main advantages of the piano, which according to Magee

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[659] de Visser, "Church Music in Calvin's Tradition (III)," 623.

many congregations are discovering to be quite functional,[660] is its "rhythmical, sensitive, and flexible" nature.[661]

While most of the participants in the study seemed favourably disposed to a modest addition of other musical instruments for use in worship, some indicated that certain instruments, such as electric guitars and drums, should not be included. Others, who were less favourably disposed to additional instruments, were concerned about the worship service becoming a venue for musical performance and also wondered about the logistics of getting musicians together regularly for rehearsals. We will give our attention to these concerns later. None argued in favour of eliminating the organ, although there were those who correctly pointed out that the shrinking supply of trained organists is a reality that the churches need to face.

In the literature consulted, there was a wide range of opinion about additional or alternate instruments. While one author regarded the addition of other instruments as an unhealthy and unwarranted encroachment on the organ, many others were in favour of the discriminate use of other instruments in addition to the organ. Jones indicated a clear preference for acoustic instruments over electronic, and suggested that "instruments that have a historical connection with the church are...more fitting than those that do not; and instruments that have overly negative associations with secularism are probably best avoided."[662] Routley spoke out very strongly against the guitar as "a lamentable substitute for several reasons,"[663] the most obvious being that "the associations of this instrument are all

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[660] Magee, "The Piano in Worship," 409.
[661] Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith,* 106.
[662] Jones, *Sing and Making Music,* 24.
[663] Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith,* 107.

wrong."[664] He was also not much in favour of the orchestra, except occasionally, or in the form of a small reinforcing group, since "a large orchestra suggests...triumphalism"[665] and also has the disadvantage of "invariability of sound."[666] Whatever the criteria, says Jones, "one should not engage instrumentalists simply because they are at hand or because they are willing to play."[667] This is noteworthy, especially in light of the comment of a church member in the study who said that "in the past consistories were glad just to have someone who was willing to play."

The biblical data consulted indicates that Israel made discriminating choices that differed from the surrounding nations. Instruments were favoured that blended well with the human voice, and the combination of instruments was such that the instruments and their musicians did not draw attention to themselves or demonstrate "brute force."[668] The church should still apply such criteria today. If percussion instruments are used in Christian worship today, for example, they should have a similar function to percussion instruments in Davidic worship, namely in conducting, announcing, and ensuring musical simultaneity. They should not function as they do in much secular music, in raucous, uncontrolled, and frenzied fashion—much as the well-respected organ should not, though sometimes does.

Returning to the earlier comment of Jones that instruments that have a historical connection with the church are more fitting than those that do not and that instruments that have overly negative associations with secularism are probably best avoided, a qualification is in order. As we have noted several times already, the organ had all the wrong associations

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[664] Ibid.
[665] Ibid, 108.
[666] Ibid, 107.
[667] Jones, *Singing and Making Music,* 24.
[668] Haïk-Vantoura, *The Music of the Bible Revealed,* 416.

with pagan culture for a long time. It was once considered a "purely heathen" instrument,[669] and was even forbidden by Reformed synods in the sixteenth century. Over time, however, this instrument was refined and repertoire was created which rendered the organ suitable for use in Christian worship. It was the organ, not Christian worship, that experienced nothing short of a revolution. For this reason, the church should also be careful about the judgments it makes against instruments that have a negative association today, such as the guitar. There may be a time—perhaps that time has already arrived in some contexts—when the guitar, much like the lyre of old, occupies an honourable place in the church's musical ensemble. The onus lies upon guitarists to make a convincing case for its inclusion by way of a mature and responsible development of technique, style, and repertoire that are apt for Christian worship.

Resources for Musicians

From the literature reviewed, it is apparent that a wide variety of resources is available for church organists, including practical guidelines, advice, and direction with respect to repertoire, playing technique, harmonization, improvisation, organ registration and maintenance, organ design and purchase, and much more; there is even a book providing a one-year course for a beginning organ student. For the Canadian Reformed church organist in particular there are many resources that have been made available in the past, not only repertoire for the psalms and hymns in the *Book of Praise,* but also articles that have been written for the assistance and further instruction of organists, especially in *Reformed Music Journal.* The folding of this journal and the declining number of organists, however, makes

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[669] Van Rongen, *Zijn Schone Dienst,* 133.

the continuing availability of such resources a concern. There is a desperate need for the revival of this journal, or the establishment of a similar one.

This study found that fewer resources are available for those church musicians who play instruments other than the organ, especially in the Canadian Reformed Churches. One of the pianists in the study, as has been mentioned, indicated that she is unable to carry out her mandate to "nurture and promote a love and appreciation for the psalms and hymns in the *Book of Praise*" by her "choice of music for the worship services," simply because there is such a shortage of piano repertoire for the *Book of Praise.* Those with the gifts of composition and musical arrangement should be encouraged to prepare repertoire for piano and other instruments. Tim Nijenhuis, a Canadian Reformed church musician in Hamilton, for example, has done a lot of work writing such arrangements for the psalms and hymns of the *Book of Praise.*

Monetary Compensation for Musicians

Among the authors who addressed the matter of the monetary support of church musicians, there was a consensus that such support should be provided, even for a labour of love. The RCCO publishes a Table of Recommended Salaries for church organists annually, but it is not followed by most Canadian Reformed Churches. Only one of the churches in the study meets the lowest level of compensation—the compensation recommended by the RCCO for the least qualified organist who spends the least number of hours on his task. Another church pays a paltry sum, and the other pays nothing at all. The musicians in the study generally indicated that they would be able to put any monetary compensation to good use for further training, music, instruments, and other resources, and that lack of compensation was making it difficult or impossible for them to develop their musical skills.

Only one musician, who plays only occasionally, said that he would prefer to offer his musical talent without receiving any monetary reward.

Among the church members and office bearers it became apparent that some had given no thought to the monetary support of church musicians and that others believe that there is no need to offer more. Among quite a few, however, there was a strong indication that it is incumbent on the church to provide much more financial support to church musicians, even making it possible for musicians "to make it a part time job," in the words of one elder.

The author of this study has long been of the opinion that church musicians should be provided for generously. Most church musicians in the Canadian Reformed Churches, in my experience, will not ask for monetary compensation, even if they need it. It would be best if the churches, recognizing that there are high costs and expenses incurred by the purchase of music, training, rehearsal time, and so on, would simply budget and disburse generous amounts of money to the musicians. As a consequence of offering generous support, combined with timely encouragement and prayer, the churches could surely look forward to enjoying the musical services of skilled and proficient musicians who are able to lead in God-glorifying praise.

While some ask whether church musicians should be provided with monetary support while other volunteers do not receive such support, we would argue that the money offered to committed church musicians to obtain specialized and costly training, to build up a music library, to purchase the necessary equipment and resources, to create space and time for playing, and to maintain a high level of musical proficiency and skill would be money well-spent. Such provision for church musicians flows naturally from the Old Testament

Davidic model in which liturgical musicians were generously supported. If others who labour in the church require funds for their tasks, of course, then they too should be provided with the means they need—as already happens, for example, with janitors, secretaries, and other specialized personnel whose services the churches use; services that always come at a cost. If people wish to donate such services, they still may do so, as long as the quality thereof does not suffer. Not everyone, however, is in a position to offer such services, with all their associated costs, gratis.

Acoustics and Architecture

Although there was not much discussion during the focus groups about acoustics, one of the organists who corresponded lamented the lack of attention that is given to acoustical detail when designing and building churches. From the experts consulted in the literature it is clear that acoustical and architectural considerations are anything but straightforward, and that there is a host of competing factors. Among the experts, however, there is consensus that churches need to give much more attention and forethought to this aspect of church design—in the interests of a music-friendly and lively acoustic—and should be less obsessed with coziness. Cost-cutting measures in the short term, furthermore, do not necessarily translate into wise decisions for the long term. The church is in great need of skillful and spiritually mature architects, acousticians, and builders.

Musical Instruments and Musicians from a Pastoral Perspective

Attentiveness of Church Leadership

Among the church musicians in this study there was a strong desire for more interaction and contact with the church leadership, especially with the pastors. This desire was clearly expressed by the longest-serving organist in the study who said, as was noted

earlier, "I can remember only one minister who would talk with me about the liturgy in the week leading up to the Lord's Day. The majority of ministers don't talk to you about it. They don't even get the liturgy to you in time." In only one of the churches studied is there regular and intentional pastor-musician contact—contact that was described as beneficial and fruitful. There was a recognition among the elders, in the words of one in particular, that "pitifully little" consultation occurs between the musicians and the office bearers and that "music is sadly forgotten" at council meetings. As has already been mentioned, there is a resounding appeal in the literature for church leaders, especially pastors, to show more interest and take greater leadership in the musical aspect of worship. The suggestion has also been made that the broader church assemblies, such as classis and synod, should devote more attention to it.

Church leaders, too, need to be educated about what the Bible says concerning the centrality of music in worship and the function and role of musical instruments and musicians. That will provide them with the foundation and motivation to give greater attention and leadership with respect to the church's song. The resources mentioned earlier, such as church music conferences, academies, and publications could greatly assist the church leaders in fulfilling this vital pastoral role.

Character Formation of Musicians Essential

An essential aspect that has far-reaching spiritual and pastoral implications for the church's worship is the *character formation* of the church musicians. The men and women who are appointed as church musicians, a number of authors insisted, need to exhibit holiness, faith, and a good knowledge of the Scriptures, especially since "the musician...functions exegetically to proclaim and, in the process, to interpret the text" of the Bible, in the words

of Ferguson.[670] Holiness, faith, and knowledge must form a musician to be self-disciplined, humble, cooperative, mature, inquisitive, and dependable in character. All these qualities are at least as important as technical skill. The pastors and elders do not need any musical training to make sure that this integral criterion is met in the church musicians. One wonders how often this criterion is considered when church musicians are recruited and appointed.

Choice of Musical Instruments from a Pastoral Perspective

We have already devoted our attention to the choice of musical instruments from a *practical* perspective. The *pastoral* perspective, however, also needs to be addressed. As was just mentioned, some church members expressed their opinion that instruments such as electric guitars and drums should not be employed in worship. Others expressed concerns about the worship service becoming a venue for musical performance. One of the authors, furthermore, suggested that pastoral wisdom should guide the people of God to choose "instruments that have a historical connection with the church" and to avoid "instruments that have overly negative associations with secularism."[671] This concurs with the biblical data previously mentioned, that the people of God were discerning in their choice and use of instruments. Overall, none of the focus group participants exhibited either a stubborn attitude about excluding any instruments other than organ or a pushy temperament determined to implement radical change at all costs.

Let us return to some of the concerns mentioned earlier about musical ensembles. One was the logistics involved in getting a group of musicians together, if more than one instrument is employed in worship. The additional effort required for musicians to come

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[670] Ferguson, "Instrumental Music in Service to the Text," 394.
[671] Jones, *Sing and Making Music,* 24.

together, rehearse together, and play together is not an impediment at all, in this author's view. Rather, it is a healthy exercise that is sure to strengthen and edify the body of Christ in self-discipline and mutual love, cooperation and spiritual maturity. It is an exercise in allowing the *One Mind of Christ* to direct and bring together *the many members* into the *one voice* of the gathered body (1 Cor. 2:16; 12:14; 2 Chron. 5:13). Haïk-Vantoura highlights this aspect when she points to 1 Chronicles 25:7 and points out that in the Old Covenant worship the young and old, the teachers and the students, rehearsed and trained together. Persons of lesser training were brought within earshot and under the tutelage of the musicians who were well versed in their art.[672]

The dangers associated with having a group of people at the front, as mentioned by de Visser[673] and others earlier, are posed as much by the pastors, elders, deacons, and solo musicians who typically take their place at the front of the church as they are by any group of musicians. This author has been in churches where the organ console is placed on the same riser as the pulpit and office bearers' seats! There are ways of addressing the ever-present danger of person-focused performance, without ruling out a musical ensemble. Perhaps churches could be designed or redesigned in such a way that there is room for musical ensembles in locations of the worship space where they do not draw undue attention to the persons playing them. For that matter, churches would do well to consider the same with respect to the location of organ consoles at which solo organists presently play, commonly in full view of the congregation.

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[672] Haïk-Vantoura, *The Music of the Bible Revealed,* 114. See again our earlier discussion on the leading task of the Levitical musicians, which included the aspect of teaching (cf. 2 Chron. 23:13, where the Hiphil active participle of יָדַע is used, meaning "to make known; to teach").

[673] de Visser, "Church Music in Calvin's Tradition (III)," 623.

There is still another pastoral consideration concerning the organ that deserves our attention. While this author has already indicated his distaste for organ music that is earsplitting and undisciplined, the reference to musical instruments as "instruments of power" in 2 Chronicles 30:21 does much to commend the organ—for there is not a more powerful instrument known to humanity. There *is* a sense in which the worship of God's people is appropriately loud. We are reminded of what Leithart says, that the musical instruments which accompanied the song of God's people in the Old Testament "were not merely lyrical, meditative instruments like the harp and lyre, but also cymbals and trumpets," with the result that "the music was loud, vigorous, and powerful,"[674]—and of what Jordan alludes, that church music is the "out-loudness" of God's mighty Spirit.[675] As long as organists exercise restraint and discretion, it is appropriate for them to invite and challenge congregations to sing loudly without blasting them; and without becoming dominant, hectic, or frivolous, in de Visser's words.[676] Church musicians should not be afraid to *strike it up* with powerful instrumental *Selahs,* as long as they do so with skill and discipline.

Dealing with Change

Various authors have offered suggestions about the best way to implement change when churches deem such change necessary or expedient. Patience, wisdom, pastoral sensitivity, communication, and the timely provision of education and information to the congregation are all commended. Leithart warns church leaders, who like the Levites are placed on guard duty, against "attempting to keep pace with every fad of entertainment

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[674] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 121.
[675] Jordan, "Worship Music, Part 1: Worship in Spirit."
[676] de Visser, "Church Music in Calvin's Tradition (II)," 591.

music."[677] The elders of one congregation mentioned that unless the congregation trusts the church musician change in musical matters is bound to backfire. Once this trust has been established, however, the church musician has a great deal of freedom and capital when introducing and implementing change. The same can be said, surely, about the pastors and elders who function as the New Testament guardians of worship. They must build trust with the congregation before suggesting or implementing any changes. It is also incumbent upon pastors, elders, and church musicians, in the opinion of this author, to invite the members of the church to be partners in the discussion about any changes being considered. Church members should not be given the feeling that something is being foisted on them.

Whatever issues are faced in relation to musical instruments and musicians in worship, a healthy tone and atmosphere for ongoing discussion will be established when every musician, church leader, and worshipper remembers, in Routley's words, that the church's worship is *a conversation which began long before I was born and will continue long after I am dead.* [678]

Pastors and elders should also bear in mind, however, that they are called by Christ to provide direction and instruction to God's people. As leaders, then, they must not merely be concerned with keeping the peace and not ruffling any feathers. As stewards of the mysteries of Christ they also need to train the church members "in the knowledge of the Son of God" so that they "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" and "in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ" (Eph. 4:13, 15).

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[677] Leithart, *Silence to Song,* 125.
[678] Routley, *Church Music and the Christian Faith,* 89.

Liturgical change is healthy, then, to the extent that it is ostensibly a sign of the church's spiritual maturation in Christ.

Recommendations for Further Research and Practice

A Reformed Academy of Church Music

A great priority for Canadian Reformed Churches ought to be formal training and certification for church musicians. The Royal Conservatory of Music and the RCCO provide many excellent opportunities and resources. The dream of this author is to see a Reformed Academy of Church Music established to meet this goal. Such a music academy could also function as a resource center for church musicians, housing a library and resource center, publishing a revitalized *Reformed Music Journal,* hosting a Web site, and developing curriculum and training materials for churches, schools, and music teachers, perhaps even seminaries.

Developing the Musical Skill of Improvisation and the Collective Musical Experience

Earlier we took note of what Begbie designates the relatively recent phenomenon of differentiation, by which "music has become a fairly specific, specialized, and clearly bounded activity,"[679] including the advent of the individual musician, with his particular work, written in a score with a particular musical notation. Research of and experimentation with the art of musical improvisation as a means of creating a more collective, one-body-many-parts musical experience may be worthwhile.

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[679] Begbie, *Resounding Truth,* 31.

A Christian Aesthetic of Church Music

We agree with Haïk-Vantoura that the desire for musical excellence during the Davidic period is obvious;[680] we concur with Leithart that since God is the audience of liturgical music, "his musical tastes must be determined and determinative";[681] Begbie's question, *"to what extent is music grounded in or obliged to be faithful to a world we did not make, a world that we did not fashion but that is in some sense given to us?"*[682] resonates with us as a most critical question; we happily endorse Scruton's assertion that music has "vast moral significance"[683] and Smelik's that there certainly is an ethical aspect to music;[684] we are perplexed by Fitzer's notion that music is autonomous[685] and befuddled by Liesch's contradictory assertion that "musical materials are morally neutral; any style is *theoretically permissible but not necessarily appropriate*";[686] and finally, we are as determined as Augustine not to sin criminally with church music.[687] The development of a thoroughly biblical, Christian aesthetic of church music, however, is lacking—and is therefore long overdue.

Musical Training of Pastors

Another matter that deserves close attention, in this connection, is the training of ministers at the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary. Pastors need to be trained in the musical aspect of Lord's Day worship, so that they can provide spiritual and pastoral leadership to church musicians, church councils, and church members.

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[680] Haïk-Vantoura, *The Music of the Bible Revealed,* 114.
[681] Leithart, *From Silence to Song,* 116.
[682] Begbie, *Resounding Truth,* 187.
[683] Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music,* 118.
[684] Smelik, "Theology and Music," 48.
[685] Fitzer, "Instrumental Music in Liturgy," 543.
[686] Liesch, *The New Worship,* 204.
[687] Augustine, *Confessions,* 10:33.

Enlarged Repertoire for the Psalms and Hymns of the *Book of Praise*

Ways of developing a larger repertoire of music based on the psalms and hymns in the *Book of Praise* should also be explored. While there is a fair bit of music available to organists,[688] quality music should be composed, arranged, and made available for other instruments as well. The work of Tim Nijenhuis, Canadian Reformed church musician and music teacher, who has produced a series of volumes of *Genevan Melodies for Piano* and also *Hymns from the Book of Praise Arranged for Piano and Guitar,* is one example of a musician who has energetically embraced this challenge.

Promotion of Quality and Invigorating Church Music

Church musicians who excel should be encouraged and sponsored to hold concerts and produce recordings of their music, as the Reformed Strings Camp under the direction of Canadian Reformed church musician and teacher Kent Dykstra has done with the 2009 production of an audio recording entitled *Praise Him with Stringed Instruments: Psalms of Geneva with String Orchestra,* so that good church music can be promoted and enjoyed among many. Other means should be explored, too, for fostering and popularizing high quality and invigorating church music and attracting young musicians to church music.

Church and Instrument Design

Acoustics, architecture, church design, and instrumental design also deserve more attention and research in the Canadian Reformed Churches. If padded pews produce poor acoustics, as noted earlier, churches need to be more attentive to how they design and

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[688] Including the arrangements of church organist Frank Ezinga, which have been made accessible on the BookofPraise.ca Web site maintained by the Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

furnish their worship spaces. Those who have training in these fields already should be encouraged to develop expertise in church and instrument design and to offer their services to the churches.

FINIS CORONAT OPUS

May this study serve the Canadian Reformed Churches, and many other churches and Christians, as they seek to faithfully worship God and his Christ in song. May the song of the church breathe the life-giving Spirit of Yahweh. May her musicians wield their instruments with valour and skill, and cause the church to sound the roars of the Lion of Judah, striking fear in the enemy and welcoming Jesus Christ, the King of kings as he returns in victory.

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb

be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!"

(Rev. 5:13b)

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