

***“Progressivism” Among Churches of Christ:
Worship or Entertainment? – 2018 ECIC Outline***

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“This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;
in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”
Matthew 15:8-9, ESV

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. – Romans 12:1-2, ESV

Introduction: This is by no means a new topic

- A. The nineteenth-century British preacher Charles Spurgeon said, “The devil has seldom done a cleverer thing than hinting to the church that part of their mission is to provide entertainment for the people, with a view to winning them.” (I have not been able to “source” this quotation, and would be indebted to anyone who can; as historians sometimes say, “If he didn’t say it, he should have!”)
 - B. To facilitate discussion in this session, I will provide some background information documenting the contrast and shift from God-centered worship to self-centered entertainment in two areas: (I) Preaching, and (II) songs offered ostensibly as worship; and then (III) explore whether principles observed, and what is done in “corporate” worship, are identical to those governing what is done individually or privately.
- I. Shifting emphases from the worship of God to the entertainment of the audience can be seen in at least two separate spheres of our worship: preaching, and singing.
- A. These issues predate even Spurgeon. Describing changes in preaching “styles” over time, in the context of describing sermonic “jeremiads” which bewail the declension of religious fervor and intent over several generation, I wrote: “A key ‘take-away’ from this study should be that changes in both the substance and style of preaching from age to age is inseparably connected to changes in the composition of churches and, too often, the broader cultures which influence them – and thus, the sort of preaching each demands or expects.”¹

- B. One of the most significant practitioners who introduced entertaining props and strategies into her preaching was Aimee Semple McPherson of the Angelus Temple in Los Angeles: “Designed for theatrical preaching, Angelus Temple had 3500 red-velvet seats and space for an orchestra and mass choir... ‘illustrated sermons’ ... a short play with narration, had been pioneered by Evangeline Booth of the Salvation Army. But McPherson perfected the art. Props and actors filled the church hallways. Worship services featured backdrops of a Garden of Eden, Vesuvius erupting, Sodom and Gomorrah, and a snowy Valley Forge. McPherson rented costumes, special-effects and stage managers, and brought in a camel to show that it could not get through the eye of a needle. A few times Charlie Chaplin sneaked in to watch. ‘Half your success is due to your magnetic appeal, half due to the props and lights,’ he told her. Mostly, McPherson narrated the story, but she also acted, once riding on stage as a motorcycle cop to say that the audience was speeding to hell.”²
- C. It would take avant-garde “Church-of-Christians” a mere half-century to implement this “new mode of preaching,” contrasting severely with the description of evangelistic approaches prevalent in Churches of Christ earlier in the 20th century: “There was a time when Churches of Christ were widely known as a people of the Book. All who knew us knew that we hungered above all for the word of God. They knew that we immersed ourselves in its truths and sacrificed dearly to share the gospel with those who had never heard. These were our most fundamental commitments. We knew it, and others knew it.”³
- D. By the 1960’s, pressure to imitate the marketplace success of popular and entertaining evangelistic programs prompted some “Church-of-Christ preachers” to establish “a parachurch organization called Campus Evangelism, modeled after Bill Bright’s Campus Crusade, which had similar goals... Bright even spoke at the first national Campus Evangelism Seminar in 1967. Along with the new evangelical theological emphases, ...other sympathetic younger preachers began to model preaching resembling that of evangelicals – more emotional and dramatic than typical preaching in Churches of Christ.”⁴
- E. By the 1980’s even many who considered themselves the “mainstream” Churches of Christ were sufficiently alarmed by these trends to issue an “Expression of Concern” highlighting the shifts toward a “softer,” more palatable and entertaining approach to religion (note especially the last point):

“We are deeply disturbed over the liberalism that is so evident in the brotherhood today. By “liberalism” we mean especially the following items, though not excluding other specifics that could be mentioned:

- (A) There is a drifting from the Bible-centered, definitive, distinctive doctrine that once characterized our preaching. Presently, uncertain sounds and weak messages emanate from many pulpits among us. Brethren are becoming accustomed to diluted and polluted preaching. We are rapidly approaching the point where many of our people, including preachers and elders, no longer know the difference between true Christianity and the corrupted forms of it so prevalent about us.
- (B) There is a concerted effort on the part of some of our brethren to restructure the organization, worship and work of the church along sectarian lines, thus tending to denominationalize the New Testament body of Christ.
- (C) A spirit of doctrinal compromise and fellowshiping of those in blatant religious error has permeated our ranks.
- (D) The world has made alarming inroads into the church. Instead of the church influencing the world for righteousness, as it should, the world has adversely affected many brethren in matters of morality and conduct of life.
- (E) The typical emphasis of the denominational world on recreation, entertainment, and solving the social ills of society has been incorporated into the thinking and programs of many congregations, supplanting the God-given work of meeting the desperate spiritual needs of those both within and without the body of Christ.⁵
- F. Using Max Lucado (described as “one of the best-known preachers and Christian authors in America”) as an exemplar, Mike Casey’s survey of preaching in Churches of Christ observes that Lucado “adapted the narrative capabilities of his mentor, Lynn Anderson” (one of the main Herald of Truth speakers). Noting that “narrative or storytelling is the primary technique in Lucado’s preaching,” Casey reports that “occasionally he has simply told a story for the entire sermon. Once he moved the pulpit out of the way and sat in a big chair and narrated a fable that he had written,” and concludes that “the post-modern style of preaching is increasingly prevalent in both Church of Christ and in the wider evangelical world.”⁶
- G. One example of the sort of “preaching entertainment” mimicked by some CoC preachers is Ed Young of Fellowship Church in Grapevine, Texas – a church that draws over 15,000 to its weekend services. Young has done everything from driving a Ferrari on stage, to showing a video clip of him ordering a hamburger at McDonald’s during his “sermon,” or bringing out an espresso machine to tell the “parable of the coffee” while making a cup of espresso, to using a tank as a vivid example of spiritual warfare and preaching from a bed to discuss the sexual revolution.⁷

- H. Still, as with earlier efforts a decade earlier by some of these same preachers to correct and reclaim the Herald of Truth, which was seen as careering off the doctrinal rails under the guidance of a generation of younger preachers,⁸ the “old guard” of the “mainstream” again found themselves outflanked and increasingly irrelevant in the eyes of a new generation of “seekers” who were shopping the market for “some new thing.” The trends emerging among the “cutting edge” of the Churches of Christ (at least, among those who had not already departed for greener pastures in the wider evangelical/denominational world).
- I. Surveying the situation in 2004, shortly before his death, Mike Casey observed in his history of preaching among 20th-century Churches of Christ: “Increasingly, leading preachers turn to the language, props and forms of television shows in narrating sermons. Popular television game show formats provide the form for the sermon content. Preachers become characters from popular television sitcoms, along with featured replica props, again to narrate ideas or create a dialogue with the congregation to convey the ideas of the sermons” – concluding that the preaching in “grace-oriented Churches of Christ, and in some large suburban congregations, has transformed its focus from what Alexander Campbell called the “gospel fact” to a “user-friendly” gospel.”⁹
- J. The unabashed, even welcome, acceptance of newfound denominational preaching styles among a younger generation of “Church of Christ preachers” is too evident to be denied by anyone with eyes to see or ears to hear. In particular, the attraction of evangelical “mega-churches” for the younger preachers among the “institutional” Churches of Christ is especially strong, as acknowledged by a recent lectureship director at Abilene Christian University: “Given the impressive results of seeker churches like Willow Creek and Saddleback, the pull to mimic their direction is nearly irresistible. ... One need only read the classified ads of churches looking for ministers in the *Christian Chronicle* to see the influence of seeker models on our thinking about evangelism.”¹⁰
- K. A leading spokesman among such brethren describes the evolution to denominationalism this way: “Just when churches up and down the street are re-evaluating their denominational status and seeking to be more nondenominational, many among us are abandoning the goal of nondenominational Christianity and seeking to be more like other denominational churches. . . . *That we have become what we once despised is undeniable*” (emphasis mine – JSW).¹¹
- L. The concerns of the rapidly-vanishing older generation of leaders among “institutional” brethren at the dawn of the 21st century is nowhere more cogently expressed than in a 2002 *Christian Chronicle* interview with the late Abraham Malherbe (1930-2012), then Buckingham Professor Emeritus of New Testament Criticism and Interpretation at Yale University. Malherbe, a native South African converted under the preaching of Eldred Echols, came to Abilene Christian College in the 1950’s, and thence to Harvard University for graduate study. He returned to teach at Abilene from 1963-1969 before

moving to Yale University in 1970. When Yale recently sought to hire a senior scholar in religion, three of the six finalists, and the person ultimately selected, were ACU graduates and Malherbe's former Yale students. His credentials to address these issues are impeccable, and his comments arresting:

Q: What are some of your concerns for our fellowship?

A: My major concern is our cozying up to those evangelicals who put a premium on feeling at the expense of reason. This is not an indictment of all evangelicals, for there are differences among them. ... Evangelical priorities and language have come to suffuse much of the preaching in our fellowship. That, combined with *the style of preaching, common in all churches these days, that is narrativial and anecdotal rather than expository*, results in sermons that are as theologically thin gruel as are many of the so-called praise songs we sing. It seems that the goal of many services is to achieve an emotional response without imparting biblical knowledge. When the same, non-expository approach is followed in a church's Bible classes, any Restorationist nuance easily disappears.¹²

- II. Without question, the most obvious such alteration among "institutional" Churches of Christ is the tremendously divisive controversy still rampant among such churches over "worship styles" and the increasing demand for professional-quality music, including the instrumental variety. But, as many have observed, this issue is only the proverbial tip of the iceberg. In the words of a widely-respected older preacher among such churches, "instrumental music only lets the cat out of the bag... After they bring in the instrument, baptism is no longer essential, and the church is just another denomination among denominations."¹³
 - A. Well-publicized "worship wars" have been raging among evangelical churches for decades. "James Dobson once admitted on his 'Focus on the Family' program that 'Of all the subjects we've ever covered in this radio program, from abortion to pornography to whatever, the most controversial subject we've ever dealt with is music. You can make people mad about music more quickly than anything else.'"¹⁴
 - B. In part, the shift from worship as God-focused to audience-focused is rooted in 19th-century revivalist traditions which viewed "worship" as a conversion tool. "Though Willow Creek eschews the sawdust trail of the camp meetings as its concern for immaculate grounds symbolizes, it nonetheless fits the same tradition where worship is regarded fundamentally as an agent to convert people."¹⁵
 - C. Rick Warren himself acknowledges the popular entertainment appeal of Saddleback, as revealed in "seeker surveys" which are often the ultimate guide for what happens in many megachurch (and many "wannabe") contexts: "After surveying who we were reaching, we made the strategic decision to stop singing hymns in our seeker services. Within a year of deciding what would be "our sound," Saddleback exploded with growth. I will admit that

we have lost hundreds of potential members because of the style of music Saddleback uses. On the other hand, we have attracted thousands more because of our music” noting that

“With today’s technology any church can have the same quality and sound of music that is heard on professionally produced albums. All you need is a MIDI keyboard and some MIDI discs.... If you have a keyboard player, trumpet player, and a guitarist, but lack a bass player and a drummer, you can simply add the MIDI track for bass and drums to your ‘live’ musicians.”¹⁶

- D. Max Lucado reflects a similar entertainment-based philosophy: “No longer can we afford the luxury of thinking that the people who are sitting in our pews are going to be there every Sunday. We have to arrest their attention. We have to use every device possible to reach them and to teach them and *we need not be so apologetic about entertaining them*. I mean, they’ve been entertained all week long, every time they turn around. *I have no apology for putting a good singer in front of them to entertain them* if they’re not Christians; you’ve got to do something to reach them...”¹⁷
- E. The cultural captivity of modern “contemporary” worship is summarized well by music historian Paul Westermeyer: “Church leaders took their cue from the culture, assumed the bottom line should be the control, and sought to sell their product to the most people with music as the ‘tool.’ Many discussions of church groups sounded like the boardrooms or advertising agencies of corporate America. Instead of carpets, cars, and lipstick, however, the intention was to sell robed choirs, organs, praise choruses, musical styles [and] worship styles...”¹⁸
- F. Among evangelical churches, similar trends have caused thoughtful observers of the deafening worship-band, theatre-style seating arrangements, widescreen TV monitors, “more-coffee-cups-than-Bibles” milieu to question whether the “sit back and enjoy the show” atmosphere has moved from anything truly worshipful to something much more secular than sacred. Reporting the results of sabbatical visits to more than 35 Denver-area churches caused Gordon-Conwell Seminary professor John Jefferson Davis to ask, “When, indeed, does the church’s attempt to be culturally relevant cross the line and become entertainment, or, so to speak, ‘worshedutainment?’”¹⁹
- G. Sometimes, those most experienced in secularizing attempts to make worship “relevant” can see most clearly the limitations and pitfalls of such efforts. Dan Kimball, a youth minister trained at Willow Creek and Saddleback, began noticing that more and more students, once impressed with the music-and-special-effects aspects of “contemporary” worship (specifically, the fast-paced programming, dramas, media clips, etc.) were no longer impressed or positively impacted by such things, and were showing less and less interest in “worship FX” which could not compete with the “flash-bang” of secular media. “The special effects in the video games they were used to went far beyond what we could offer.”²⁰

- H. Some among “churches of Christ” have tried a “half-way house” approach using vocal sounds (what has been described as “spit into the microphone”) which imitate instruments. But if the intent is to worship God by obeying His instructions to “sing,” it should be obvious that singing requires words or lyrics. Humming is not singing; whistling is not singing; clapping is not singing. Often such activities simply become way-stations on the road to introducing actual instruments into the worship of God.
- I. Blogger and attorney Jay Guin, who seemed to delight in being a sort of ‘gadfly’ regarding practices among “Churches of Christ,” complaining about “Stamps-Baxter” hymns, makes a point which I have said for years applies equally to modern “Contemporary Christian Music” (CCM): “Stamps-Baxter has to go! ...Stamps-Baxter music was in fact written to be entertainment pieces for radio and traveling gospel quartets. This is why there are so many leads for each part — to give each singer a chance to show off his vocals! There is huge irony in those who argue for Stamps-Baxter music while damning those who engage in entertainment during the worship!” A mirror-imaged indictment can be made of CCM; both styles became popular with different generations for many of the same reasons (ubiquity of radio airtime play, the technology of the microphone, degree of music difficulty suited to semi-professional singers in radio quartets or modern praise teams, etc.)²¹
- III. Discussion of Various Issues, and Discussion Questions
- A. In the opening chapter of the collaborative work, *Worship By the Book*, Donald A. Carson quotes what he describes as “one of the most succinct summaries of such evidence as the New Testament provides” from an essay by Edmund Clowney, who observes that “The New Testament indicates, by precept and example, what the elements of [corporate] worship are.” Carson then continues: “[In the pages of the New Testament] “there is no mention of a lot of other things: drama, “special” (performance) music, choirs, artistic dance, organ solos. Many churches are so steeped in these or other traditions that it would be unthinkable to have a Sunday morning service without, say ‘special music’ – though there is not so much as a hint of this practice in the New Testament.”²²
- B. Carson also addresses the frequently-heard assertion that “all of life is worship,” often propounded by defenders of instrumental music: “I am not sure that we would be wise to apply the expression ‘corporate worship’ to any and all activities in which groups of Christians faithfully engage – going to a football match, say, or shopping for groceries. Such activities doubtless fall under the ‘do all to the glory of God’ rubric and therefore properly belong to the ways in which we honor God; therefore they do belong to worship in a broad sense. Yet the activities the New Testament describes when Christians gather together in assembly...are more restricted and more focused. Doubtless there can be some mutual edification going on when a group of Christians take a sewing class together, but in the light of what the New Testament pictures Christians doing when they assemble together, there is something slightly skewed about calling a sewing class an

activity of corporate worship. So there is a narrower sense of worship, it appears; and this narrower sense is bound up with corporate worship, with what the assembled church does in the pages of the New Testament.”²³

- C. Scripture differentiates between what is done corporately, in the ekklesia, and what is done individually or privately (see Acts 5, 1 Timothy 5, 1 Corinthians. This has actually been a matter of some dispute in the past among churches of Christ, with some arguing that “whatever the individual can do, the church can do.”
- D. Others have argued regarding worship that “all of life is worship.” Are these hermeneutically (or otherwise) sound concepts?
- E. From another perspective, do the same principles which govern corporate behavior and worship always govern what is done individually? Brethren have long disagreed about such matters.
- F. For example, can a wife or daughter offer prayer in a family setting while her husband/father is present? Can she teach a private Bible study with him present? Is it Biblically permissible to sing hymns accompanied by instrumental music in the privacy of one’s home or car? And, to the point of this session, can one sing hymns privately, or in venues other than collective worship “in the church” for pleasure or entertainment?
- G. See Appendix 1 for a list of suggested Discussion Questions appended at the end of this outline.
- H. See Appendix 2 for a further discussion on praise teams.

Appendix 1

Questions for Discussion: PLEASE suggest your own questions, and discuss. Use as much Scripture as you deem appropriate.

Outside the assembly (in your car, at home, etc.), do you believe it is wrong (unauthorized, sinful), to:

Listen to an instrumentally accompanied recording/broadcast of religious music (Hillsong, John Rutter, LaCrae, Chuck Wagon Gang, whatever)?

Sing along with an instrumentally accompanied recording/broadcast of religious music – for entertainment value (like the harmony, “feel the beat,” etc.)?

“Hum along” (or use nonsense syllables like “dum-de-dum”) with an instrumentally accompanied recording/broadcast of religious music – for entertainment value (like harmony, “feel the beat,” etc.)?

Sing along with an instrumentally accompanied recording/broadcast of religious music – intentionally, explicitly, as worship to God?

Sing along with an instrumentally accompanied recording/broadcast of religious music – for “practice,” in order to learn the music to be sung in the assembly as worship? Is this “worship?”

Does playing a recording of acapella hymns make it “instrumental” by the electronic conversion of human voices to electronic “bits” and “signals? (i.e., does the radio, CD/mp3 player, become an “instrument”)?

Outside the assembly (in your car, at home, etc.), do you think it is wrong (unauthorized, sinful), to:

Sing along with an un-accompanied (acappella) recording/broadcast of religious music – for entertainment value (like the harmony, “feel the beat,” etc.)?

Sing along with an un-accompanied (acappella) recording/broadcast of religious music – intentionally, explicitly, as worship to God?

Does singing along automatically make it “worship” because of the religious lyrics?

Is it “vain worship” if you sing religious lyrics but don’t intend it as worship (or don’t understand it)?

Do you believe it is wrong (unauthorized, sinful), to:

Perform (sing) religious music (acappella) for “entertainment” value? (FC/FHU etc. chorus)

Perform (sing) religious music accompanied by instruments, for “entertainment” value? (Messiah?)

Perform (play an instrument) to accompany religious music, for “entertainment” value?

Perform (play an instrument) to accompany religious music, for remuneration? (Professional musician)

Attend a such a performance ([a] acappella or [b] instrumentally accompanied)? (Admission or free? Secular venue/denominational sanctuary/assembly of the saints?)

If it is not specifically a hymn but uses “religious” words, ideology, and imagery from “secular” lyrics (Kate Campbell, Rutter’s Mass for Children,” bluegrass, Brumley’s “Prettiest Bed of Flowers,” etc.)?

Is it worship if sung in a language (Latin, Russian, etc.) understood by neither singer nor audience?

Does the singing of hymn lyrics “automatically (by the nature of it) make it worship?

Is everything we do “worship” to God – in or out of the assembly?

Should “worship” be used (primarily, or secondarily), as a tool for evangelism/conversion?

Appendix 2

Praise Teams – Discussion Questions for ECIC

Definitions: What is a “praise team?” In what configuration and/or placement?

--Small group of singers, usually separated from the congregation, put in front of the assembly with separate microphones, singing songs with electronic amplification, sometimes with instruments

--Singing totally separate from the congregation, i.e., they perform while the congregation observes

--Or, singing while mic'd with the congregation singing along; “leading” the singing as a group

--Or, singing while mic'd, scattered among the audience, ostensibly to “help” the singing

--Usually the “praise team” only has access to the music; everyone else “learns by doing”/by ear

In essence, a “praise team is a small “choir.” Anyone who understands choirs to be unscriptural should have no problem seeing the same about a “praise team.”

Watching some “praise teams” on their own YouTube channel (or some, in person, at various lectureships) it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the purpose is much more about self-glorification and the demonstration of personal musical ability than any sense of “worship”

Proposition 1: As with so much of what takes place in worship and service, intentions come into play – to what extent is the purpose of a praise team self-glorification and/or to demonstrate one’s personal musical abilities, as opposed to the worship of God and/or the edification of fellow Christians?

NB: These same considerations apply to traditional “song leaders” – and, referencing the first portion of the outline – preachers.

Proposition 2: the Scriptures do not command “worship music;” they command congregational praise. (Do the Scriptures merely require some musical act of any sort, or do they require a particular musical act? If U2 showed up and sang several songs for the congregation, would this fulfill what the Scriptures require the congregation to do? If the entire congregation stood and hummed “Amazing Grace,” would this satisfy what the Scriptures teach?)

Proposition 3: Having surrogate praisers is not in harmony with the teaching of Scripture, which calls the entire assembly to present vigorous praise to God.

Proposition 4: congregational praise is a commanded duty that can be audibly discerned; we should hear congregational praise when it is sung, and nothing else (praise team, choir, organ, bagpipe, etc.) should be permitted to obscure the thing that is commanded. Even with specified instruments in the Old Testament, “the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and glorify the Lord” (2 Chronicles 5:13).

Proposition 5: Scriptures teach several things about the singing of praise in the Lord’s church: that the singing be congregational, that it be together (not necessarily unison, but together), and that it be vigorous and robust – to be heard.

Scriptures for consideration

(A) Ephesians 5:17-21

- (1) The activity: sing and make melody “in your heart”
- (2) Discussing worship addressed to God, the Father
- (3) Who is to be commanded? “yourselves” – “to one another”

(B) Colossians 3:12-17

- (1) The activity: Worship “to the Lord” (v 16)
- (2) What is commanded: Singing “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs”
- (3) The whole congregation is addressed: “in one body” (v15)

Can these texts be obeyed by only a select few acting?

¹ Steve Wolfgang, “Changes in Evangelism from the 19th to the 21st Centuries, in Refocusing on Evangelism: Truth Lectures, 2016

² Witham, *A City on a Hill: How Sermons Changed the Course of American History* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), pp. 233-234. Other analyses of McPherson include Mathew Avery Sutton, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); and, perhaps most insightful, Edith Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson: Everybody’s Sister* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993). Edith is the long-time Director of the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicalism at Wheaton College.

³ Quotations in this paragraph are from pp. 1-2, 6-7 of C. Leonard Allen, Richard T. Hughes, and Michael R. Weed, *The Worldly Church: A Call For Biblical. Renewal* (Abilene, TX:ACU Press, 1988).

⁴ Michael W. Casey, “Preaching: Churches of Christ,” *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), p. 608. Several of the themes excerpted in the paragraphs which follow are expounded in greater detail in Casey’s *Saddlebags, City Streets, and Cyberspace: A History of Preaching in the 3 Churches of Christ* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 1995).

⁵ *An Expression of Concern* (Ft. Worth, TX: Gospel Preachers, 1986). See also Roy Deaver, “Two False Extremes: Anti-ism and Liberalism,” *Spiritual Sword* 16:2 (January 1985), p. 6; Garland Elkins, “The New Anti-ism,” *Spiritual Sword* 17:1 (October 1985), p. 17; Thomas B. Warren, “Anti-ism Shackles the Church; Liberalism Opens the ‘Floodgates’ of Apostasy,” *Spiritual Sword* 17:3 (April, 1986), p. 1.

⁶ Casey, “Preaching...” in *ESCM*, p. 608. For an analysis of the relationship of “restorationists” to evangelicalism, see the collection of essays edited by William R. Baker, *Evangelicalism and the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002).

⁷ Ken Walker, “Out of the Baptist Box” posted 11/30/2007 at <https://www.charismamag.com/site-archives/515-features/the-changing-church-in-america/2440-out-of-the-baptist-box>

⁸ Xeroxed booklet, *Memphis Meeting With Representatives of Herald of Truth, September 10, 1973* (n.p., n.d); for context, see Wolfgang, “History and Background of the Institutional Controversy,” in *The Simple Pattern*, pp. 29-31.

⁹ Casey, “Preaching...” in *ESCM*, p. 608. Some sense of the alarmed reactions to this post-modern style of preaching can be discerned in Dan Chambers, *Showtime! Worship in the Age of Show Business* (Nashville: 21st Century Christian, 1997).

¹⁰ Mark Love, “The Church that Connects at Calvary,” in Allen and Anderson, eds., *The Transforming of a Tradition: Churches of Christ in the New Millennium* p. 144. Some of the generational conflicts between older and younger preachers in “institutional” churches are documented in Douglas A. Foster, Mel E. Hailey, and Thomas L. Winter, *Ministers at the Millennium: A Survey of Preachers in Churches of Christ* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 2000).

¹¹ Rob McRay, “The Last Will and Testament of the Churches of Christ,” in Allen and Anderson, eds., *The Transforming of a Tradition: Churches of Christ in the New Millennium*, p. 44. The irony of the title will be evident to any student of “Restorationist” history.

¹² “A Conversation with Abraham Malherbe,” *Christian Chronicle* 59 (February 2002), p. 20. Admittedly, hearing voices of concern and observing the hand-wringing of an older generation over how far a younger generation has taken the logical conclusions of the seeds of their own liberalism is astounding, if not bizarre.

¹³ Charles Hodge, “Facing the Instrumental Music Question Again,” *Gospel Advocate* 140 (February 1998), p. 24. See also LaGard Smith, *Who Is My Brother?_Facing a Crisis of Identity and Fellowship* (Malibu, CA: Cotswold, 1997), and the reaction in Wayne Jackson, *A Friendly Review of LaGard Smith’s Who Is My Brother?* (Stockton, CA: Courier Publications, 1998). Note pp. 20-21.

¹⁴ James Dobson, quoted in Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), p. 284. A thoughtful analysis of “worship styles” is found in Constance M. Cherry, *The Worship Architect: A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), especially pp. 221-242 and 274f.

¹⁵ See Willow Creek Community Church Leaders, “Seekers Service/Believers Worship,” in Robert E. Webber, ed., *The Complete Library of Christian Worship, Volume 3: The Renewal of Sunday Worship* (Nashville: Star Song Publishing Group, 1993), p. 124.

¹⁶ Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Church*, pp. 285, 290.

¹⁷ Online archive of preaching.com; originally published in March-April 1993; excerpted in 20th Anniversary issue, July-August 2005 at <https://www.preaching.com/articles/talking-preaching-the-nations-premier-preachers/>

¹⁸ Paul Westermeyer, *Te Deum: The Church and Music* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), pp. 317-318. Westermeyer also reminds readers of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright William Inge’s famous quip that “the church that marries the spirit of an age becomes a widow in the next generation” (p. 319).

¹⁹ John Jefferson Davis, *Worship and the Reality of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), p.8. For reflections on similar phenomena from a British context, see John Blanchard, *Pop Goes the Gospel: Rock in the Church* (Evangelical Press, 1992), who observes that the emphasis on much “contemporary worship” sets up Christians to act like “stars instead of servants,” arguing that the entertainment model inevitably leads to a groping for celebrity status and is why entertainment evangelism “so easily encourages worldliness.”

²⁰ Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), pp. 14-15. For a fascinating explication of the seriously detrimental effects of much “contemporary Christian music” (CCM), read T. David Gordon’s *Why Johnny Can’t Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Re-Wrote the Hymnal* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010), as well as his specific analysis of “praise teams” in “The Problem with Praise Teams” at <https://secondnaturejournal.com/the-problem-with-praise-teams/> posted May 23, 2013.

²¹ Jay F. Guin, “Upgrading a Church of Christ Worship Service Without Buying a Guitar,” posted on January 6, 2008 at <http://oneinjesus.info/2008/01/upgrading-a-church-of-christ-worship-service-without-buying-a-guitar/>

²² D.A. Carson, ed. (with Mark Ashton, R. Kent Hughes, and Timothy J. Keller) *Worship By the Book* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), pp. 48-49, 52-53 (Kindle Edition, @Location 689). (In the footnotes accompanying this paragraph, Carson clarifies: “By ‘special music’ I am including not only the solos and small groups that a slightly earlier generation of evangelical churches customarily presented but also the very substantial number of ‘performance’ items that current ‘worship teams’ normally include in worship. These are often not seen by the teams themselves as ‘special music’ or ‘performance music,’ but that is of course what they are”).

²² Carson, *Worship by the Book*, op. cit., 48-49. He also observes: “There are many entailments to these cultural differences beyond the differences in the corporate services themselves. For example, Britain, without much place for “special music” in corporate worship, does not have to feed a market driven by the search for more “special music.” Therefore, a great deal of intellectual and spiritual energy is devoted to writing songs that will be sung congregationally. This has resulted in a fairly wide production of new hymnody in more or less contemporary guise, some of it junk, some of it acceptable but scarcely enduring, and some of it frankly superb. By contrast, our addiction to ‘special music’ means that a great deal of creative energy goes into supplying products for that market. Whether it is good or bad, it is almost never usable by a congregation. The result is that far more of our congregational pieces are dated than in Britain, or are no more than repetitious choruses.”