

attempt to reconstruct antiquated musical forms.

As music relates to culture, there are major differences between our music, which originated in Europe, and Jesus' music, which originated in the Middle-East.

Another aspect of the cultural issue is how our philosophy of music equips our missionaries for dealing with the issues of music that they will face when they move to their adopted culture?

Current missionary strategies utilize as much of the national culture as possible, without compromising Scriptural truths. Should missionaries impose their standard of music upon those to whom they minister, or is it possible for them to adapt the national music vocabulary to serve in the edification of the body of Christ?

One more thing is considered when evaluating music for Christian service—the testimony of the person who wrote the music. Some contend that music that is written for Christian service must be written by Christians—more specifically, by Christians whose lives honor Jesus Christ. Certain music is considered appropriate because it was produced by a person who has a sterling Christian testimony, while other music is rejected because it was produced by someone whose testimony is questionable. Is it appropriate to reject a particular genre of music because it is the preferred mode of expression of those who are not living for God or reject Him completely?

Take time to reflect...

Do you believe that music is innately moral or amoral?

Do you enjoy a particular style of music that is not appreciated in the ministry of your church?

How do you think church leadership should decide which music to use in the church?

What would you like to share in class?

Jim VanDyke

Box 2 Elbing, KS 67041

DISCUSSION STARTER #8



LET US SING

In recent years one of the most significant issues within Christianity has been the nature of the music that it utilizes in its ministry. It has become so important an issue that it has become the characteristics which often distinguishes one group of Believers from another. In some cases it has caused discord among Believers, a condition that Proverbs 6:16-19 tells us that God hates.

When we consider music, we must address two issues, the words and the notes.

presented through this analogy: melody appeals to man's soul, harmony appeals to many's spirit or intellect, and rhythm appeals to man's body.

One of the basic problems with this approach to music is that it does not readily apply to all cultures in all periods of history. If music is innately moral, then one should be able to predict its effect upon people of all ages, in all cultures, and at any time in history. Obviously, musicology is not that exacting a science.

Music is an art rather than an exact science. When two chemical elements are combined, one can predict what will happen time after time. The year, culture, or the audience have nothing to do with the outcome. But there is no way to predict what will occur when musical notes are combined. The outcome depends a great deal upon the year, the culture, and the audience.

For some, certain types of music seem too frivolous or vulgar to be associated with

“...TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER IN PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS...” (COLOSSIANS 3:16)

The Bible is very clear about the words we use (See Matthew 12:34-37 and Ephesians 4:29), whether or not they are in music; so for the purposes of this discussion, we will focus on the notes, not the words.

There are two general schools of thought regarding music. One group claims that music is moral, that is, in and of itself it conveys moral meaning. They contend that some music is morally good and other music is morally bad—music which by its very nature does not please God. Those who hold this view often express it as “the medium is the message.”

From this position they contend that certain types of music are bad. That is it appeals to man's sinful nature rather than his spiritual nature. This view has been

The other school of thought regarding music is that music, in and of itself, is morally neutral or amoral. They believe that music can convey morality but that in doing so it must rely on an outside influence. Any morality in music is by association—meaning that the listener brings his or her morality to the music. Musical notes and phrases are much like we would view letters of the alphabet and words.

One issue that some Christians have with this approach to music is that sometimes the music seems to contradict the meaning or feeling that is being conveyed by the words. The amoralists would agree that not all music is appropriate to accompanying all words, but they would suggest that the appropriateness is dependent upon the listener.

serious spiritual subjects. In that case it is only natural for them to reject such music because in their minds it contradicts the sense of the words. But, does that mean that such music should be rejected by everyone?

There may be those who view the same music differently. They may not see it as frivolous and vulgar but consider it to be appropriate for the spiritual subjects. Is it, then, alright for them to use such music?

Music, like language is not static. It is always changing. The English we speak did not even exist a thousand years ago and the music we hear today is not like that of Jesus' time, in fact, the instruments that produced the music of His time are not even used today, except by those who