

proceed? A great statement of the way forward for apologetics has been given by Berkouwer (*Christianity Today*): here is room for a humble and courageous defence of Christianity. The combination of humility and courage is the combination that Christianity in our day sorely needs.' We could expand on this statement by specifying four key elements in Christian apologetics:

- The irreducible content of the gospel – The gospel must not be watered down for the sake of apologetic relevance. The end result of this procedure will be not relevance but irrelevance. Be faithful to the gospel.
- The essential reasonableness of the gospel – The gospel does not call us to make an irrational leap in the dark by which we have to commit intellectual suicide. 'In understanding be men' (1Cor. 14:20).
- The apologetic significance of the gospel does not have to be made relevant. The gospel is relevant. Our apologetic activity should arise from the gospel rather than being determined by modern man's questions.
- The spiritual character of the gospel – It is only through the working of the Holy Spirit that a person comes to Christ. Never forget this for it is fundamental to all Christian work.

As we think about the relationship between proclamation and persuasion let us keep both a firm commitment to the gospel and a listening ear to the questions people are asking.

Spiritual Christianity and Social Concern

Howard Butt, in his book *At the Edge of Hope* makes some helpful remarks regarding Christian hope:

Turn to God because the human prospect is so bleak

... The human prospect can be changed because of God. ... Everything is hopeless but God. Everything is hopeful because of God. ... we and our societies are nothing compared with God. ... We and our world are beloved of God ... Conservative 'other worldly' hope and liberal 'this worldly' hope are dangled like competing pearls of great price before us today. What tragedy when they really form a single unified reality.

God's people can truly give all their attention to him without being lured away from their neighbours. We are to have faith alone but faith that leads us to a life of good works. We are to live according to the word of God. We are to live within the world of men. When we consider the kind of theology known as 'Liberation theology' we must be committed to the practice of liberation which is grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ – the Liberator who said 'I am the truth' (Jn. 14:6), and 'the truth will set you free' (Jn. 8:32) When liberation theology is grounded in faith in Christ the Liberator (not just a model for man's political and social activism) there will be a true unity of spiritual Christianity and social concern. Stephen Travis reminded us that 'We do not have to choose between this world and the world to come because the purpose of God embraces both' (*I Believe in the Second Coming of Jesus*).

This is a good point at which to draw things to a conclusion. We so often make a choice 'either-or' when we should be affirming 'both – and'. Let us ask God to deliver us from a one-sidedness which does not reflect the width and the breadth of the gospel. The tensions in modern theology will grow greater if we do not allow the broad outlook of the gospel to lead us beyond the narrowness of our own limited understanding of the gospel. May it not be said of us 'Your God is too small.'

Music and the Spirit

David Williams

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It is not surprising that the Reformation, which centred its thought on the work of Jesus as the incarnation of the *logos*, the Word of God, then centred its form of worship on the spoken word, the sermon. It is then significant that the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, which are centred upon the activity of the Holy Spirit, centre their worship on music; these are in large part musical services, in which people sing not only with voices but with their whole bodies. Songs and choruses comprise (in practice although not in theory) Pen-

tecostal liturgy. Certainly manifestations of the Spirit in the modern church have diminished aspects of worship such as the sermon. The movement has naturally produced both new styles of music and a plethora of new compositions. Indeed charismatic services seem sometimes barely distinguishable from musical events. This stress on music has certainly contributed to the growth of these groups; just as in advertising, music makes something attractive.

Worship is naturally expressed in music

It is said '... that this spiritual energy and verve, newly released by the Pentecostal Spirit, should give expression in songs of praise is again a natural consequence'.¹ But is there an inherent reason why this is the case?

Christianity is essentially a relation with Christ, present through the Spirit, especially in worship. It is hardly surprising that this involves sound. Theophany in the Old

Testament was not just visual, but had a distinctive sound; then Jesus' baptism came with a voice, Pentecost came with the sound of a mighty wind, and the parousia will be accompanied by trumpets; thus also the Spirit would be likely to manifest audibly. In fact many manifestations of the Spirit would seem to involve music. 'Methodism was born in song', according to the introduction to the Methodist Hymn book, and this would seem to have been the case for most, if not all, cases of religious awakening. The nineteenth century revivalist movement, for example, made much use of singing and was accompanied by a burst of hymn production.

Even at the very beginning of the church, music was a natural part of worship. The church inherited many of its forms of worship, including song, from Judaism, where it formed part of worship both in the Temple and in groups such as the Essenes. It is almost certain that the psalms were sung, as they seem to contain musical and liturgical notations.

The two foci of Christian worship may well be Word and Eucharist, but the third component is music, 'the wheel upon which the word and eucharist ride'.² It is hardly correct, as has been done, to deride what precedes the sermon as 'the preliminaries'. Few parts of what we do in Christian worship can claim such a long ancestry as singing. Paul wrote, 'Do not get drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart' (Eph. 5:18-9). Martin³ believes that the Spirit specifically inspired hymns and songs, citing Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19. Some early hymns, such as Philippians 2:5-11, indeed found their way into the New Testament, indicating a belief in their inspiration. Although Ambrose is sometimes called the father of hymnody, it came into being much earlier. Erickson even sees some modern hymns as inspired.⁴

If, as for the sociologist David Martin, the hymn is 'the central feature of English religion',⁵ it naturally follows that the quality of church life probably parallels the quality of its music. The effect can be in either direction. Martin comments that Graeco-Roman hymns reached their peak with a consciousness of a need of salvation,⁶ and so of transcendence. Paquier comments on the poor quality of nineteenth century music, at a time when church life itself was poor.⁷ Because of the use of the Gregorian chant, and Latin, ordinary Christians were unable to express their faith in song during the Middle Ages. One result of the Reformation was its enhancing of church life; Luther enabled the congregation to participate. A little later, congregational praise developed in small chapels, with suitable acoustics.

The testimony of the author is that his conversion to Christianity went along with a developing interest in music, especially classical music. He now tries to play clarinet and saxophone, preferring to play Christian music. Part of the reason for this is that music, whether singing or playing, can most definitely be an act of worship, just as at the same time worship is most naturally expressed in music.

The word 'sing' in the Bible is often coupled with praise (32 out of 146 of the former). Words set to poetry enhance praise, set to music this is even more so. Hymns raise the powers of prayer to a higher degree. Music permits a greater intensity of feeling than just the spoken word. Putting music to words may well aid the understanding and communica-

tion of those words, such as by expressing emotional content; this is similar to communication by means of 'body language'.

'Adoration is a state of soul that only singing can express'⁸ 'When recalled to mind, [hymns] prompt an occasion of prayer'.⁹ Augustine said that the one who sings prays twice,¹⁰ so enhancing worship.

A word of caution

It must not be overlooked that even if music usually helps worship, it may, at the same time, detract from it. Modern malls are filled with 'muzak', which is not only to make them attractive, but also to deaden the judgement of the consumers; it can dull the senses. At the other extreme, Augustine cautioned that music can be over-attractive.¹¹ Although Calvin felt that music may enhance praise and prayer, 'care must be taken always lest the ear pays more attention to the harmony of the singing than the spirit for the real meaning of the words'.¹² Reed then cautions that music should not be present for its own sake, but to help the church; not music *in*, but *of* the church;¹³ a similar sentiment is appropriate for the *charismata*.

At the same time, music may even counteract worship. Some forms of music have been condemned by Christian leaders, such as John Blanchard in his rejection of rock (which however has been found expression by Christian performers). Likewise Reed questions the use of strong rhythm, which is a feature of much modern secular music; he also dislikes the use of electronic organs instead of pipe ones!¹⁴ If, as has been suggested, jazz and swing are symptoms of unresolved unhappiness, they too would be inappropriate, counterproductive to worship, but again such a condemnation probably arises more from a cultural predisposition. In music, as in matters of faith, there is a natural conservatism, in effect denying that the Spirit can do anything new!

Music can become a threat, reducing worship to sentimentality: Rayburn comments that people are very happy to sing about what is not true, and feel good about it; he cites, as an example, 'every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before'; a nice sentiment, but blatantly not true.¹⁵ It is perhaps partly for this reason, as well as a desire to concentrate on the Scriptures, that Calvin rejected all musical texts except versed paraphrases of the Psalms; such biblicism proved to be untenable. Nevertheless both Watts and Wesley believed that scripture is the only cradle of hymns, dreading the infiltration of 'non-scriptural trifles' into worship.

More subtly, music may become important in itself, not as an aid. Sometimes in the past, such as in eighteenth century German Lutheranism, worship became almost a concert. Concentration on it may result in a loss of the words and so much of its purpose; it is possible to sing with the mind in neutral! Because of this, traditional hymn singing has been described as 'low level glossolalia with instrumental accompaniment'.¹⁶ Just as with *glossolalia*, which can seem to be pointless because it has no semantic content, this need not be entirely negative; C. S. Lewis once remarked that the value of the liturgy is that worship is done irrespective of how the participants feel. It can be a valuable response to salvation by grace, diminishing the importance of feeling.

The Effects of Music and the Spirit are Complementary

It would seem that each encourages the other, as in the case of Elisha, who sought the power of God by music (2 Ki. 3:15). Each produces great depths of emotion; it is hardly surprising that just as music aids religion, it has reached what is often felt to be its greatest heights in the service of worship.

Of course one thing that the Spirit commonly does is to enhance feeling. Any emotion is naturally expressed in music, which means that worship is not only enhanced by music, but is naturally expressed in it. 'Poetry and song are the natural language of strong feeling; it falls as easily into rhythmical and musical forms, as logic shapes itself into closely articulated prose.'¹⁷ 'The hymn enchants as well as informs.'¹⁸ It provides a powerful stimulus to the religious feeling of the participants. Rayburn¹⁹ even comments on the importance of a preacher having a pleasant voice! Whereas many find corporate reading and responses boring, even if they do participate, most do enjoy singing and are blessed by it.

'... there is a deeper philosophy in it. God is pleased to accompany it [music] with the energy of the Holy Spirit. He made us to be moved by singing.'²⁰ Perhaps, ultimately, Christians sing because heaven sings.²¹

Erickson²² would not be alone when he connects music and the Spirit. He suggests that although the world is full of music, there is not much singing; its expression in Christian behaviour is distinctive. He believes that it is more frequent among Christians than those of other or no faith, and of better quality. He points out that Christians seem to have an irrepressible urge to sing, as evidenced by the story of Paul and Silas in prison (Acts 16:19f). Christian music is really appreciated only in the context of worship. It tends to have a distinct cultural form, even if related to what is popular at the time in secular music. Probably one reason for this is that the Spirit really works only within the church (Jn. 14:17), and not within the world as a whole.

Despite the common use of music in evangelism, it is then probably fair to agree with Dawn²³ that music is not what attracts people to church. Even if people are attracted by the aesthetic element in religion, if a person's aim is simply music, it would certainly be met elsewhere. Nevertheless, the wise use of music will certainly aid the communication of the gospel. The same would be true of the work of the Spirit, who does not primarily act in the world (Jn. 14:17). Again, what the Spirit does is to empower and authenticate what Christians do in their evangelism. An example of this is seen in 1 Corinthians 14:21f., where the use of tongues is a sign to unbelievers.

Aid to communication

Commonly, Christian music is accompanied by words; it is not just instrumental or wordless song. It is intended to communicate to the mind as well as the emotions. Reed²⁴ believes that there is no religious quality in music as such, but it depends on the texts used, affecting their reception. This necessarily means that the words of a piece should reflect the particular theology of the participants; it makes no sense, as regards worship, for a Protestant church to sing a piece that centres on specifically Catholic teaching! Christian

music should then be largely vocal, or if just instrumental, would be a piece of which the words are well-known. The parallel to this is that the work of the Spirit is to glorify Christ (Jn. 16:14), empowering his message. An ancient picture was that just as words require breath for their utterance, so the work of the second Person is enabled by that of the third; Jesus started his ministry after his baptism by the Spirit.

Thus not only is music valuable in preparing the mind for worship, and particularly for hearing a spoken message, but a message in musical form can well help the understanding and remembering of it. A good tune is easily impressed upon the mind; Rayburn²⁵ says that songs become popular because of their music, rarely their words. Augustine said that it was the music that made the biggest impression upon him at his baptism,²⁶ but then it will carry the words with it. The author learnt a great deal of Zulu and Xhosa from the hymns and choruses which were sung. Early heretics Bardesanes and Areios had success in propagating their teachings by music, such that in the third century, there was a move to suppress all 'modern compositions', limiting singing to the biblical words and approved pieces.²⁷ Arius communicated his doctrines effectively by setting them to music, so that they were sung and became well-known even in the docks of Alexandria. As he knew, people naturally come to believe what they repeatedly sing. And, of course, people like to hear, and then to sing, what they like.

Unity in music

As a means of communication, music then unites the body of Christ, and so aids one of the key activities of the Spirit. In particular, the use of music aids the participation of the whole congregation in worship. It therefore enhances the unity of the group. 'Music is indispensable to participation. It provides more than an ambience. It throws wide the gates of prayer, ushering the worshipper into the presence of the Holy One.'²⁸ Likewise the Spirit moves even the most reserved to act and speak, just as music prompts even the most unmusical to hum or even sing along.

Christians sing as a means of praying together; it gives unity. It is for this reason that Paquier²⁹ feels that congregational singing should be in unison; musical harmony, the playing together of notes to give a richer and deeper effect, however demonstrates that diversity need not preclude unity, as Paul argues in 1 Corinthians 12, significantly in the context of his discussion of the Spirit. Dobson comments that it is significant that it was Christian music that developed harmony.³⁰

Even if music is a means of the participation of the entire group, the normal practice is that it is commonly led by just a talented few instrumentalists or singers. These take the lead, and the rest join in. In the same way, even if it is possible for all to participate in worship through the enabling of the Spirit, it is normally led by a few. Some are given the gift, or talent for leading worship. Dawn,³¹ however, cautions that modern culture discourages singing together. She bemoans a 'spectator' culture, which is of course found also in the church.

The same is true even within the individual, where music calls the whole person, body and soul, to act. Athanasius

wrote that the soul in music is like a stringed instrument devoted to the Spirit, so that all members and emotions respond to God.³² Music releases the non-rational part of being, uniting the whole person.³³ It then unites mental and physical activity, so, for example, feet tap, dancing may take place, or in Wainwright's example,³⁴ a hymn is sung in procession. The Spirit likewise affects the body, prompting physical position, such as kneeling, or the closing of eyes in prayer. Charismatic circles are well-known for the physical expression of worship, which is seen as prompted by the Spirit. Clapping and raising hands is almost universal; many groups also practise such things as dance, waving of flags and banners. Of course *glossolalia* may also be seen as a physical effect generated by the activity of the Spirit. The extreme of this is 'singing in the Spirit', where *glossolalia* employs a tune. Interestingly, this may also manifest at a corporate level, many singing together, which may well be expected to result in total discordant chaos. In practice, however, the result is often beautiful harmony, a result really explicable only by telepathy or by complementary inspiration by the Spirit.

The Nature of Music Parallels that of the Spirit

The ready way in which the effects of music and the Spirit complement each other suggests making a further step, that of drawing a parallel between the natures of the two. Just as wind and fire at Pentecost, and the dove at Jesus' baptism, illustrated the nature of the Spirit, so music also provides a picture of what he is like. Certainly there would seem to be a considerable amount of evidence to parallel music and the activity of the Spirit. Ignatius employed many musical metaphors.³⁵

Spiritual communication

Is it extravagant to refer to music as 'heavenly language'?³⁶ Could this be a meaning of 1 Corinthians 13:1? Montague³⁷ notes the comparisons between the voice of God and music that Philo makes in his account of the giving of the law at Sinai. The negro spiritual sings, '[O]ver my head I hear music in the air, there must be a God somewhere.'³⁸

Music can communicate without any words being spoken. Tillich once just played a piece of music in response to the questions of a student.³⁹ It can generate or change moods. Likewise the activity of the Spirit is essentially non-verbal, contrasting with propositional communication, such as by Jesus' preaching. The Spirit may prompt activity, convict of sin (Jn. 16:8), but often not by words. In general ritual, the tune counts for more than the words.⁴⁰ The prayer that the Spirit gives is the most vital, and at the extreme, such as in 'sighing' (Rom. 8:26) or in *glossolalia*, the actual words do not matter.

The 'nature' of music

What a thing does depends on what it is; classically in theology, the work of Christ depends on his nature as fully human and divine, as Athanasius insisted in the context of the Arian controversy. This does not in any sense mean that

music is divine, even if some musicians seem predisposed to that idea! Rayburn⁴¹ reminds us that music is far more than what can be written down on paper, and who can express the depths of the Spirit? 'Music is God's second greatest gift to humanity.'⁴² Nevertheless, just as much of what is done by Jesus, or even by his Father, does not require actual divinity, so some aspects of the Spirit and of music can well be compared, because they do not demand divinity.

Even if the Spirit is recognized as fully divine, what he does is to glorify Christ (Jn. 16:14). He has therefore sometimes been called the 'self-effacing' Person of the Trinity. There is a parallel here with Christian music; Augustine's definition of a hymn has won widespread acceptance; it is 'sung praise of God',⁴³ which implies that it not primarily done just for its own sake.

It is hard to define what music essentially consists of. It is obviously more than a random collection of noises! At its most basic, '... music is the organisation of sound'.⁴⁴ Immediately there is a parallel with God, for he is the God of order. Thus Paul urged that the manifestation of the Spirit be done in an orderly way (1 Cor. 14:33). This was in response to a very common tendency for manifestation of the Spirit to be disorderly, whether in ancient Corinth or today, and so needing careful control. Any instrumentalist appreciates this point, as the natural tendency is to produce disorder by squeaks, wrong notes and other unpleasant results. To stop these needs very careful control of the instrument.

There are two basic components to music. On the one hand, music can be a meaningful succession of notes, such that the sequence, timing and direction are significant; here the Spirit likewise gives direction, purpose and meaning to life. The very word 'spirit' applied to people implies their motivation. A piece of music exhibits unity in itself, and one effect of the Spirit is to generate a unity in the believer. On the other hand, music can be expressed in the harmony between notes played together, or in sequence. This includes the tone quality inherent in different voices or instruments. Here it is the relationship that is the key idea. Again, this is a key function of the Spirit, who generates relationship. Augustine's description of the Spirit as the *vinculum amoris*, the 'bond of love' or relationship between Father and Son is well-known. It is only a short step to see the function of the Spirit in generating a relationship between a person and Christ, so enabling their salvation, both forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life.

Orchestral music, such as a symphony, goes still further, as it employs several instruments playing together. There may or may not be a recognizable tune or theme being played at any particular time, and certainly most of the instruments do not appear to play something that makes sense by itself. Moreover, it is quite likely that the listener, unless expert in music, does not hear all the aspects, probably being fairly oblivious to particular instruments until they are concentrated on or are pointed out. The work that the Spirit does is similar. On the one hand it may not seem always to clearly make sense; how often does a person feel like complaining to God! On the other hand, the work of the Spirit must always be far richer than a single perspective can appreciate. A wider view will, however, give more understanding of what God is doing, and will give more appreciation of his work in a particular life.

In essence, of course, neither music or the Spirit has any tangible existence; both are emphatically immaterial. Music exists only as a concept, and even when performed it is no more than movement in the air. In contrast, the Spirit is not just a concept, but is affirmed by Christianity as the third Person of the Trinity; nevertheless, he is totally immaterial, as the very word 'spirit' implies. This aspect of their nature means that both music and the Spirit can be eternal. A piece of music survives as long as it is remembered, and God's memory is eternal, even if human ones are not. Likewise, as long as God is, which is always, he has his Spirit as an integral part of his nature. As immaterial, both are boundless. The picture of a person being filled with the Spirit is a common one in the Bible; music likewise can fill a room, and even more so, a person.

Nevertheless, what music does is to utilise a very definitely material medium, the air. Exactly the same is true of the Spirit, who acts mainly through human agents, only very rarely in a direct way. The same would also be true in a related sense, in that Christian music can, and does, use secular styles and even Christianises its material; 'why should the devil have all the best tunes?'⁴⁵ The Spirit likewise commonly acts through 'ordinary' means, such as by the use of medicine in healing, although his help means the healing process is then often more effective.

Audible music goes from the very deep to the high-pitched, each note having a basic frequency on which is superimposed harmonics of higher frequencies, the combination giving the distinctive tone. Each instrument or each singer adds to the basic note in a characteristic way. Thus a soprano saxophone and a clarinet sound very different, because although they are much the same size and shape, and so produce essentially the same notes, the detailed form and material of the instrument differs. Even two instruments of the same type will sound a little different, and one instrument will sound differently depending on the particular person who is playing. The key chosen for a piece also affects its nature. Thus although the essential music will be the same, the expression of it differs. The same is true of the work of the Holy Spirit who will do essentially the same work irrespective of a human agent, but the details will be different in different situations and in different people.

Even within a piece of music, the various notes are not all of the same importance,⁴⁶ even if all are essential. Likewise the work of the Spirit himself, whether in the different contributions of various human agents, or, with Dawn, in the observation that the different parts of the scriptures are of different value.

The audible range of notes is between about 30 and 30 000 Hertz (cycles per second). Sound is possible outside of those frequencies, but just cannot be heard by people. High-pitched notes, beyond what can be detected by a human ear, can be produced and heard by many animals, such as dogs or bats, and low ones likewise by whales. It can easily be overlooked that the work of God embraces far more than people appreciate. At the very least, we do not perceive his action in the Godhead, and certainly anything outside the cosmic speck that we call home. More pertinently, nobody can perceive how the Spirit works in the lives of other people.

In fact the frequency of sound does not really have an upper limit, although the constraints of the medium, air, puts

a practical ceiling on it. Likewise, the Spirit must be understood as infinite, even if his work is perceived only to a very limited extent by people. The same is of course true of the medium of light, which is also a picture of the Spirit; visible light is just a small part of a much wider spectrum, also theoretically infinite. On the other hand, negative sound, like negative light, is not possible. The frequency can be reduced to zero, but no further, even if it is possible for two signals to be out of phase and cancel each other out completely. The Holy Spirit cannot be negative, in the sense that he can never produce evil.

A further feature of music is its rhythmic quality. This is perhaps the aspect of it that has the most effect on people. Everybody is affected by a beat, and most probably start to move, if only to tap feet, in accordance with the rhythm. What has such a pronounced effect is the steady repetition, and it is probably the case that the Holy Spirit works most effectively when what is done is regularly repeated, such as in regular times of worship, prayer and Bible study. Here Dawn⁴⁷ notes that the effect of much technology and consumerism is to make all days the same, and to destroy one aspect of life, whereas the observance of special days does have spiritual value.

Human instruments

Both music and the Spirit manifest through human activity. Even though the Spirit can act in his own right, he chooses human agency, and of course even if music can exist only in the mind, it really needs to be performed. This means that the effect of a single piece of music depends on the actual instrument that it is being played on, and upon the individual performer; some can play it better than others. Likewise, one work of the Spirit will manifest in a different way depending on who the human agent is, even if the essential work is the same. It is for this reason that God calls specific people to do specific jobs; in Acts 13, the Spirit instructed the church to set apart Saul and Barnabas, Jeremiah was set apart from birth (Jer. 1:5). In the context of his discussion of the Spirit, Paul points out that people are given different *charismata*, so that each is fitted to do particular jobs, and not others (1 Cor. 12:4f).

The work of the Spirit is then subject to human obedience. A person can opt to disobey. Similarly, a person can choose to listen to music, or opt to exclude it. It may be difficult to ignore it, but it is usually possible to leave the room or place where it is being played. The music is still there, but ignored. Likewise, even if everybody has some appreciation of music, this still needs to be developed; the same is true of the Spirit. There is a better appreciation of any art when more is known of it. One's reaction to the Spirit is contingent upon individual desire and response. At the other extreme, it is sadly possible to produce a faultless performance, but devoid of actual music; it is even more sad when a person goes through all the motions of worship, but the Spirit is not there.

The working through human activity also means that the manifestation of both music and the Spirit is affected by human circumstances. Music manifests in very many forms such as jazz, or the classical sonata; the range of possibility is almost infinite. Likewise the Spirit also manifests in a variety of ways, as dove, fire and many others. Each is

appropriate to the context of the time; the appearance of the dove would not have been so appropriate at Pentecost.

The manifestation of the Spirit must then be in the individual. He can work in a person with no reference to anybody else at all. Likewise the production and enjoyment of music can be entirely individual, not requiring anything else; no buildings, liturgy, ministers, or even a congregation. The singer can worship through them completely alone, with nothing to complement the music. There is no need for external accompaniment. Hymns do not even need to be sung aloud! Nevertheless, of course, most music is expressed corporately, and is intended for the enjoyment of others. Rayburn⁴⁸ suggests that we get more blessing corporately than in an individual setting. The Psalms were for community worship; even if they expressed individual situations, these could be shared by others. It is significant that although Brahms wrote much for solo performance, all his sacred music was for choruses.⁴⁹ Paul has to insist that the gifts of the Spirit were primarily for the edification of the church, even if they were expressed individually. Durham⁵⁰ even points out that there is no such thing as solitary worship; it is always with the angels!

This may well explain the probability that despite some references to musical instruments (eg. 1 Cor. 13:1), these were not used in early church worship.⁵¹ This is perhaps due to the belief that people, in the image of God, are the most fitting instruments for praise. Indeed the Eastern Church, and Calvin and Zwingli, felt that only the human voice, as expressing conscious personality, can praise God properly.⁵² Even today, Paquier⁵³ rejects the practice of playing quiet music during prayer.

Freedom in the Spirit

There cannot be anybody who plays music perfectly. There is always room for improvement. Likewise walking in the Spirit does not in the least guarantee perfection. It would of course be better, both in music and in life, if there were no slips, but perfection just cannot be achieved. But as any player knows, making a few mistakes does not detract greatly from the enjoyment of playing; it is the overall effect that really matters. In fact, a musical piece cannot be played exactly, but there is always individual variation in timing, loudness, and even in the actual notes, all of which can even add to the richness of the performance; indeed it is this variation that makes the music. If it were played exactly, as it were by a machine, the 'soul' would be lost.

The way that the Spirit leads is likewise not exact, but permits a measure of variation within limits. He does not make us slavishly obey a set of rules, but, within limits, gives freedom. It must however be noted that if music is played with others, it is necessary to be much more exact, and likewise the Spirit will lead us to be much more scrupulous in a Christian walk for the sake of others. Paul therefore urges that tongues, which can be practised freely in private, be restricted in public (1 Cor. 14:27). Likewise care should be taken not to offend other people in other matters; Paul cites the examples of consumption of food offered to idols and freedom in Sabbath observance, which should be restricted for the sake of others (Rom. 14:5f).

In some form or other, music is appreciated everywhere in

the world. 'Music has a strong thrust towards universality as an art form.'⁵⁴ But as everybody knows, its specific expression depends on the culture of the people. English and Chinese music may be essentially the same insofar as both are a succession of notes, but they are vitally different. Likewise the working of the Holy Spirit manifests in very different ways, depending on the background and circumstances of the particular people. Perhaps one of the problems associated with the charismatic movement is a failure to see that the Spirit may validly work in a very different way, in particular without supernatural manifestations. People outside the movement can be just as led and filled with the Spirit as those within, but it is quite possible that their culture does not predispose them to exuberance. Certainly, despite the common belief that the use of *glossolalia* is a proof of the filling with the Spirit, there is no definite biblical indication of this, indeed the contrary, as 1 Corinthians 12:30 would indicate. It must be noted, however, that this seemingly basic gift has an audible nature!

A 'second blessing'?

A piece of music has two stages of production. First it is conceived in the mind of the composer, some would say by inspiration, and then is concretised in writing. At this stage it affects nobody else at all, but is already appreciated and enjoyed. Then secondly, it is performed in the hearing of others; this could even be the first time that it is played. The composer naturally benefits from the wider expression of the work. Pentecostals also see a two-stage work of the Spirit in the individual. Firstly, the work of the Spirit is essential for the 'new birth', for salvation, for this is possible only through the Spirit (Rom. 8:9). Then secondly, the Spirit works again in the individual to benefit others, the church and the community. This is perhaps like the so-called 'second blessing', where individual Christians again benefit by the Spirit working through them.

Life in the present

One thing that is striking about music, like any other piece of creativity, such as writing, is the tremendous waste attached to it. Charles Wesley wrote 6 500 hymns,⁵⁵ but of course very few caught on, and most are lost. When the effort is considered, this at first seems to be dreadful until it is realized what tremendous 'waste' there is in God's activity, in the loss of plants, animals and much else, so much of which never reaches maturity, and often is lost forever. Nevertheless, as any composer knows, there is great joy just in production, even if the result never succeeds, and quite possibly that inspiration may help even one other in a different work. Likewise, life, as given by the Spirit, is never totally wasted, but at a minimum feeds another or fertilises the ground.

Similarly, the very nature of music, unlike the plastic arts, is impermanent. This is not of course to imply that the Spirit himself is transient, but is to acknowledge that the experience of the Spirit, just as that of music, needs constant renewal, even by repetition. Even church worship is essentially a repetitive thing; this is a recognition that faith, as any relationship, needs constant renewal if it is not to decay.

The music of silence

Bagehot observes that the inability to be quiet is one of the most conspicuous failings of humanity; indeed life gets increasingly noisier.⁵⁶ In contrast, it must not be overlooked that silence can be a valid part of musical expression. The pause also communicates! As Ignatius said, it is more than just a gap.⁵⁷ There was even silence for a half-hour in heaven (Rev. 8:1). Likewise, as the Quakers have long emphasized, the Spirit can well use silence to speak. The mystics also spoke of the 'dark night of the soul' when God seems absent, as a valid part of the spiritual journey. In fact, a deep experience of God can produce only the silence of awe, as Ezekiel discovered of old (Ezk. 3:15). In any case, worship, study, and prayer all need at least some quiet. In particular, as Kierkegaard said, silence is necessary in order to listen to God:⁵⁸ after all, in worship we intend that God listens to us! Nevertheless, the musical pause is valid only if it precedes a new note. Shakespeare wrote that silence is the 'perfectest herald of joy',⁵⁹ where of course the point of a herald is what comes next. It is for that reason that the rabbis at the time of Jesus encouraged an hour of silence before worship, to centre the mind.

The importance of circumstance

The Holy Spirit is more likely to be heard clearly, and is more likely to aid worship more effectively if the setting is right. The Spirit is likely to do his work better in a suitable environment, such as in a church building. Again, this is similar to music, which is heard better in a situation which has good acoustics; a good setting helps the effect of the music. Again the two are linked; '... and few things affect worship more profoundly than the way sound behaves in space'.⁶⁰ It may also be added that music is probably best appreciated when the piece in question is already known; the manifestation of the Spirit, such as in *glossolalia*, or in healing, is more likely in groups which concentrate on knowing and relating to him.

Indeed, some requirements have to be met if music is to be heard at all. There has to be some instrument, or a voice, to produce it. Even then, many instruments are made with a means of amplifying the sound; a guitar would be almost inaudible without the voicing chamber. A clarinet reed vibrates, but it causes the air and the body of the instrument to vibrate in sympathy, which is what is heard. In turn, the setting of the instrument, as to what holes are open or closed, affects the vibration of the reed. This feature is known as 'resonance', two things vibrating together, each amplifying the other. It may be suggested here that what the Spirit does is to work in the spirits of those with whom he relates, so in general he enhances what would otherwise be a natural attribute. Then again, his work is also a response to the situation in the individual or the church. An example of this would be that he responds to desire in prayer; this can mean that healing may well occur only in churches that expect the Spirit to act in that way and desire it.

Therapy

It is not surprising that an effect of the Spirit has sometimes been physical healing. Not only is this one of the gifts of the Spirit, featuring prominently in the early church and in modern Charismatic circles, but the fact that the Spirit generates

and enhances relationship must mean that life processes are improved through the presence of the Spirit. Likewise there is some indication that playing music has therapeutic benefit, if only by its calming effect. Classical music has even been played to cattle to increase milk production! Music can be a source of great comfort, which is significantly a popular understanding of the word from which *paraclete* is derived. Indeed, the effects are similar; 'if music be the food of love . . .', said the Bard, and everybody knows the connection. Likewise Paul lists love as the first of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

Conclusion

'Like a musician who has tuned his lyre and, by an artistic blending of low, high and medium tones, produces a single melody, so the wisdom of God, holding the universe, adapting things heavenly to things earthly, and earthly things to heavenly, harmonizes them all and leads them by his will to make one world order in beauty and harmony' (Athanasius, *Contra Gentes* 42).

Athanasius no doubt had a conception of God's immanence, that he is everywhere by his Spirit. Such, with qualification, is true, but what is also very true is that modern life is full of music. Indeed some people seem unable to function without 'muzak' in the background. Without it there is a void which demands filling. But is it not true that naturally there must be a space in people which shouts to be filled, and that there is only one real way of doing it? There is a reminder here of the oft-quoted words of Augustine in his *Confessions*, 'our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee'. We thank him for the gift of music, and all that it does, much more for the gift of himself, who really meets our need, and then fills our lives with music as well!

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Notes

- 1 Martin, R. P., *Worship in the early church* (rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 40.
- 2 Webber, R. E., *Worship old and new: a Biblical, historical and practical introduction* (rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 195.
- 3 op. cit., 43.
- 4 Erickson, C. D., *Participating in worship: history, theory, and practice* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989), 90.
- 5 Wainwright, G., *Doxology: the praise of God in worship, doctrine and life: a systematic theology* (London: Epworth, 1980), 200.
- 6 Martin, R. P., *The worship of God: some theological, pastoral, and practical reflections* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 48.
- 7 Paquier, R., *Dynamics of worship: foundations and uses of liturgy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 140.
- 8 Alexander Vinet, in Paquier, *ibid.*, 154.
- 9 Erickson, op. cit., 95.
- 10 White, J. F., *Introduction to Christian worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), 98.
- 11 White, op. cit., 98.
- 12 Paquier, op. cit., 154.
- 13 Reed, L. D., *Worship: a study of corporate devotion* (Philadel-