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MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A Thesis

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of the Requirements for the Degree

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by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. A WORD OF INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE POWER OF MUSIC	3
III. THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHURCH MUSIC	8
IV. ADAPTING MUSIC TO DIFFERENT AGE LEVELS	15
V. MUSIC IN THE WORSHIP SERVICE	26
VI. THE CHOIR: ITS PROGRAM AND ORGANIZATION.	36
VII. INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC	52
VIII. CONCLUSIONS	57
BIBLIOGRAPHY	60

CHAPTER I

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

Music is a vital part of the educational program of the Christian Church. Almost every activity of the Church makes use of music in one form or another. Long and careful study has been given to the uses of music in Christian worship. As a result, there have been devised procedures and methods that seek to guarantee the best results to the end that the work of the Kingdom prosper and advance.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It is the purpose of this study (1) to emphasize the power of music in the life of man, (2) to suggest a working philosophy of Church music, and (3) to seek to adapt this philosophy to the needs of the Church.

Importance of the study. We live in a music-conscious age. The common man of our time has easy access to the best in music. In these days of high fidelity phonograph records, television, and radio, almost anyone of even meager means can enjoy good music. If there is any agency through which the finest in music should reach the people, that agency is the Christian Church. Any effort extended to enhance the music of the Church surely needs no justification. It is

the writer's hope that his calling attention to the potentialities inherent in music and in congregations will result in improved worship services.

CHAPTER II

THE POWER OF MUSIC

Music has been called the universal language. It is a known fact that with the use of music many of the barriers ordinarily hindering the work of Christian teaching are broken down. Through good sacred music the Church can weave a strand of belief into the hearts of the most cynical. By this means the great truths of the Christian faith can become almost irresistible. Truth presented in beautiful melody can teach the otherwise unteachable.

Both the secular and religious world recognize the power that music possesses. Everywhere attempts are being made to stir people to some type of action with the use of music. A classic example is found in a commercial tune used by the General Electric Company, in which one stanza of a beautiful melody is used to compliment the people of Kentucky on their state; another tells of the company's Appliance Park in Louisville, Kentucky where excellent products are made by Kentuckians. Here music is a major force in salesmanship. The Kentuckian, loving his state, is likely to be predisposed toward the General Electric Company and its products.

The power of music is obvious from two radically different kinds of music. It is an incontrovertible fact that much modern popular music has a demoralizing

effect upon our youth.¹ At the same time it is axiomatic that the traditional music of the Christian Church has had great influence for good. Music can pull down or it can lift up. It can demoralize the life or it can inspire to lofty heights of heroism and sacrifice.²

Music can be a direct outlet for the emotions. In this regard, both religion and medicine have made use of it.³ Since it often happens that a given piece of music may bring back to us a past experience, the value of music in helping one express himself freely is incalculable. Music can be a potential factor in helping "to satisfy the hunger of every human being for self expression."⁴

Mental institutions have learned that music offers patients the opportunity to "abreact". Such opportunity is a significant step toward emotional emancipation and the building up of the ego. Under the impact of music the patient forgets that he is in restraint; by listening to, and participating in singing his mind feels freer.⁵ Under its power the violently insane have been soothed, the epileptic has been spared from attack, and patients without number have the better withstood pain.⁶ One autho-

¹Phil Kerr, Music in Evangelism (Glendale, California: Gospel Music Publishers, 1950), p. 22.

²Ibid. . p. 21.

³William Van De Wall, Music in Institutions (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1936), p. 25.

⁴Cecil E. Lape, "A Local Church Organizes Its Music Program," Religious Education (Sept.-Oct., 1949), p. 274.

⁵Ira M. Altshuler, "The Organism-As-A-Whole and Music Therapy," Music Therapy, ed., Edward Podelsky, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), p. 59.

⁶Kerr, op. cit., p. 21.

rity in this field of mental sickness writes that the possibilities to foster health are as manifold as are human needs.⁷ Its constructive role in lifting a person out of a depressed mood has been demonstrated time and again.⁸ This effect is particularly desirable in a worship or teaching setting where the individual may find relief from the burdens of life in the inspiration of the prelude or the hymn. Undesirable emotions and attitudes have been known to vanish in such a setting.⁹

Beauty of melody and harmony coupled with the teachings of Christian theology is a storehouse of power. Saint Augustine remarked that words that were sung moved him more than the same words spoken. In the service of the Holy Spirit music has been powerful to change lives. Martin Luther believed that next to theology music was the greatest of the arts. The Reformation was sung as well as preached! But this writer does not wish to imply that music is more powerful than the Word of God. However exquisite the tune of a hymn, the words, if they be truth, and especially Bible truths, must ever be more potent than the music. Wrote Saint Augustine, "When it befalls me to be more moved with the voice than with the words sung, I confess to have sinned."¹⁰

⁷Van De Wall, op. cit., p. 87.

⁸E. P. Herman, "Music Therapy in Depression," Music Therapy, op. cit., p. 115.

⁹Bernard Hilliard, "Music Therapy for Emotional Disturbances," Music Therapy, op. cit., 1. 122.

¹⁰Joseph N. Ashton, Music in Worship (Boston, Chicago: The Pilgrim Press, 1943), p. 31.

What lesson in doctrine could make men feel more keenly their need of an atoning Savior than the singing of, "What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus!" Actually, that which determines whether music is distinctly Christian or not is this sentiment of words. The process of association plays such a significant part in learning that it is almost inconceivable that one hum a familiar hymn tune without being somewhat impressed by the accompanying words. When a hymn is once learned the mere recall of the melody will automatically bring to mind some of the content value of the hymn. In this manner a wealth of Christian teaching may be stored in the heart and mind. In Christian teaching music is of value but its value is not intrinsic for without the words definite and consistent impressions cannot be made.¹¹

Music knows no social class. It is used by the rich and the poor. In war and peace, in industry and science, in school and church, it has its influence. It is present from the cradle to the grave. In infancy the lullaby soothes. In childhood the world of fantasy includes the music of the nursery rhyme. In youth the popular music of the day shares place with the more wholesome music of the home. When entertainment is sought, music is sure to play a vital part. In church, music will occupy approximately half of the service. At death the comfort of music consoles the mourner.¹² Music truly is a potent factor in the life of the individual.

¹¹Wade Crawford Barclay, The Church and a Christian Society (New York, Cincinnati, Chicago: The Abington Press, 1939), p. 119.

¹²Phil Kerr, op. cit., p. 26.

One authority says in this regard:

And here is a factor that must not be overlooked... When used in the cause of Christ, music carries not only its own natural power, but it also carries the endowed power of the Holy Spirit! If music itself is powerful, and if that natural power can be added to by the endowment of the Holy Spirit, then it behooves the Church to make the best possible use of this great potential power.¹⁸

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 26-27.

CHAPTER III

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHURCH MUSIC

Education in the church is conditioned by the goals or goal that is sought.¹ Music in the church is also to be regulated by over-all aim. It is only as the music offerings conform to this aim that the purpose of church music becomes really meaningful.

Church music is not to be appraised in terms of artistic perfection. In secular schools one is constantly given opportunity to develop artistic ability in music. Elementary schools, high schools, colleges and universities provide an opportunity for musical training that far exceeds that which the average church offers. Of course the church is concerned that in all its musical endeavor the highest artistic perfection and musical correctness be attained. Poor musicianship can but weaken the worship service. But too often those in authority are more interested in a polished type of music than in that which ministers to the devotional needs of men. Policies and practices in church music should always reflect a high regard for the spirit of sacred music. Sensationalism or sentimentalism are no substitutes for depth of feeling and understanding.

¹Harold C. Mason, Abiding Values in Christian Education, (Westwood, N. J., Los Angeles, London, Glasgow: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1955), p. 19.

The technical aspects of the music of the Church must always remain secondary to the true mission of church music, that of accomplishing something for the Kingdom of God.² The church musician is not a professional critic, not an idealist, not primarily a musical scholar; he is a servant. He must utilize to the utmost whatever musical talent is present, to develop a musical program that will enrich the lives of the worshipers.

Church music is not merely an embellishment of worship. It has a place to fill that cannot be filled by any other medium. It is of course ever a means to an end, never an end in itself. Ashton's view of church music is here in point:

The ideal of church music is to be found in its function. This function is religious: to bring to stronger and clearer consciousness and to greater vitality our inherent religious nature. At the heart of church music must be the consciousness of this religious nature: the sense of the divine, of goodness and righteousness, of the Almighty, the Eternal; the sense of exaltation of human life to the divine, and accompanying this the feeling of humility into which such a sense must lead us. There is in all true church music a spirit of adoration, aspiration, and reverence, and a sense of assurance. To aid the soul to become more keenly and deeply conscious of itself, its supreme personal quality, its high and enduring worth, is the ideal of church music. This is its mission. It is for this purpose that music has been admitted to the sanctuary. In seeking to attain its function in the service of religion, music is an agent both for expression and for impression.³

Church music then is not to be viewed in terms of artistic perfection, nor is it to be regarded as a mere adornment of worship. It is a ministry of edifi-

²Edmund S. Lorenz, Church Music, (Boston, Chicago: The Pilgrim Press, 1943), p. 6.

³Joseph N. Ashton, Music in Worship, (Boston, Chicago: The Pilgrim Press, 1943), p. 6.

ction and devotion for the believer; and it seeks to woo the erring to the fold of the Gospel.

"The distinction between 'church music' and 'music in the church' is one of function and not one of label."⁴ Many churches use music as an attraction to stimulate attendance. Whatever the ethics of this practice this is not the basic motivation for the use of music in the Church. Good music may draw; but merely to seek numbers surely puts the music of the church on a low level. All churches make some use of music as a background for worship and as a means of relating certain parts of the service. Such music should never be a "filler-in" but should form an integral part of the worship. When music is used merely to satisfy the musically erudite, the spiritual message of such music is likely to be in eclipse; impressionism, correctness of tone and rhythm are the things sought for.

Genuine church music is an integral part of the worship of the Church, stimulating through the power of expression and impression, exalting and clarifying the religious consciousness. The strength or weakness of music in the church is conditioned by its spiritual quality. There can be no question of music's power to aid in spiritual revelation. If, however, music functions only to attract attention to itself, its spiritual contribution to the life of the church is nil.⁵

A proper philosophy of Christian sacred music should furnish a set of values to aid in musical selection and usage. Of course, one's theological position will

⁴Ibid., p. 28. ⁵Ibid., pp. 29-30.

undoubtedly play a part in this regard. For instance, one who does not believe in the need for an atoning Saviour can hardly be expected to use hymns that suggest by word and music the great gulf spanned to bring about the Divine-human encounter. Music affords one of the most direct and most effective avenues into the human heart, an avenue which God is pleased to use and encourage. By it the human heart is lifted to a sincere and healthy adoration of God and His works. By it, Christian worship can be spiritually strengthened.⁶ The function of church music might be summed up in one word, ministry.

Church music an applied art. "Art for art's sake," say the purists in art. But surely art has no ulterior purpose of its own beyond the expression of the beautiful. It is the Christian point of view to see art not as an end in itself but as a means to an end. In church music, as in other kinds of applied arts, the fixed principles and abstract rules of pure art are not abrogated but are subordinated. This is so because the concept of Christian worship must govern and regulate the music of the Church. In this connection Lorenz says:

If the religious purpose is the dominant element in church music, it follows that in all its consideration there must be not only musical knowledge and skill and taste, but also a full comprehension and appreciation of the final end, full sympathy with it, and clear insight into the artistic limitations thus introduced.⁷

⁶Carl Halter, The Practice of Sacred Music, (Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), p. 10.

⁷Lorenz, op. cit., p. 149.

Thus it is conceivable that the best in church music may not be the best music from the standpoint of pure art. The music of worship is to glorify God and affect human lives. The judge of the best in this area is not the art critic, but the consecrated music specialist. Spiritual accomplishment more than professional accomplishment is the desire end.

Congregational participation. The philosophy of true church music has no place within its framework for programs that are "put on". The idea of "putting on" a program suggests something fictional rather than real. The writer once attended a cantata that was "put on". Not one in the cast gave the impression that what was being sung about was real or possible in experience. A performance such as this, rendered in the name of the Church, can hardly be called Christian.

Churches sometimes miss golden opportunities to minister to the needs of their congregations by their bringing in professional musicians to provide music for the congregation. It is always well to remember the wisdom of exploiting local talent in the program of the church. Real value comes through the participation of the local church people. The feeling of being a part and being needed, that comes to the participant is invaluable in the Christian nurture of the individual. The professional musician, however capable, cannot compensate for that which is lost by lack of congregational participation. As a rule it is better to have an inferior musical program using local church people than a superior program "put on" by outsiders. Of course it is of value occasionally to import talent

into the church service, but this practice should be the exception rather than the rule. The spiritual values resulting from the harnessing of local talent can be very considerable.

Motivated by love. True church music is motivated by love. Its theme is the divine-human relationship -- fundamentally a love relationship. The Church may not surpass the secular world in its musical artistry but its music, for nobility of spirit and sentiment should certainly transcend all secular music offering. The Church in its music is not seeking the adoration of man; it is rather providing for the needs of man. As McCutchan puts it:

We all have -- or have we? -- attended religious services where something happened which was not indicated in the printed order, where holiness pervaded the house, where hearts were 'strangely warmed' as was John Wesley's heart at Aldersgate Street.⁸

Church music can provide inspiration for such an experience. It must ever seek to minister to the spiritual needs of men. In so doing, the matter of talent and ability will always be secondary. As love dominates, there will be a harmony of spirit closer than the harmony of musical notation.

The task of Christian Education. Music is one of God's richest gifts to man. It is a divinely appointed medium of praise. It is a commonplace to observe that

⁸Robert Guy McCutchan, Hymns in the Lives of Men, (New York, Nashville: Abington Cokesbury Press, 1943), p. 15.

the music "instinct" must be cultivated. It is equally true that this talent has been quite generally either misdirected or ignored. It is the task of Christian Education to train and direct musical aptitude to worthy ends, ends which will bless men and glorify God.⁹

⁹Education Committee of the National Union of Christian Schools, Course of Study for Christian Schools, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing House, 1953, p. 323.

CHAPTER IV

ADAPTING MUSIC TO DIFFERENT AGE-LEVELS

GRADING OF MUSIC TO MEET THE NEED

The learning and producing of music is as much a discipline as is any other work of Christian Education. It is because of this fact that music was one of the first parts of the church school curriculum to be graded. The grading of music in some cases calls for the actual composition of music to meet specific needs of various age groups; in other cases it means adaptation of music already in print. In both situations methods of teaching must be based on the psychological, physiological, and mental growth of the child. In teaching church music the interests as well as the needs of the children must ever be kept in mind.

In a subsequent chapter the "Multiple Choir Plan" will be discussed and problems and methods in dealing with various age groups made clear. The present chapter discusses the characteristics of the various age groups commonly found in the church school.

The child on the cradle roll. From birth until age three the child is in the cradle roll department of the church school. During this period religious teaching

and ministering is done almost entirely through the parents.¹ Sacred music is not too meaningful to the two-to-three year old, for their knowledge and use of words is very limited. The music is often limited to the action-type of song with pleasing rhythm. It is used to delight the child as well as to hold his attention. In this period, as the child acquires basic attitudes toward music, care is to be taken in the selection of the pieces submitted to him. Ingram writes that "Songs for nursery and kindergarden age must be short and simple, and subject matter should have to do with things they know about. Rhythm must be easy."² Songs for pre-school-age children should generally be songs of from three to five tones. Because of the vocal limitations of this age it is best to limit selection to songs that range from middle D to the next D above. Song tunes, or their accompaniment, that leap and hop about only serve to confuse the small child.³

The Primary. Children of ages six to nine are usually considered as Primaries. At this age they evidence a unique combination of imitation and imagination.⁴ These youngsters show a marked growth socially and spiritually as well as physically. To them a new world is opening up as the confinement of the home

¹Harold C. Mason, Abiding Values in Christian Education (Westwood, N. J., Los Angeles, London, Glasgow: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1955), p. 107.

²Madeline D. Ingram, "Children Like Good Music", International Journal of Religious Education, April 1953, p. 14.

³Ibid., p. 14.

⁴Wade Crawford Barclay, and others, Life in the Making (Nashville: Smith and Lamar, 1911), p. 63.

gives way to the accessibility of the neighborhood. New social responsibilities give the child a beginning awareness of the fact of social interdependence. The home and the child's parents remain the most potent influence during these years. With the continuance of growth comes the ability to carry on activities involving muscular co-ordination. Endless energy permits participation in vigorous games. Companionship is sought in play, with increasing desire to play with members of the same sex.⁵

Accompanying mental growth is a sharpening of the inquisitive instinct. The primary youngster wants to know the "whys" and "wherefores" of everything. This, of course, affords the teacher an excellent opportunity to impart Christian knowledge. The utmost care is to be used in these years that the child shall acquire a correct mental attitude toward spiritual things. The basic concept's belonging to Christianity will reach the child slowly, gradually. Attaining proper perspective is likely to be the result of patient presentation rather than the matter of a moment.

Simple hymns afford an excellent medium of teaching the child some of the elementary facts of Christianity. Benson speaking of hymns for pupils of this age, says:

Primary children can learn longer songs, though those with many verses are best avoided. This age learns quickly, and by rote, since they cannot yet read rapidly. These children like hymns and should be introduced to many of them.⁶

⁵Clarence H. Benson, An Introduction to Child Study, (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1927), p. 125.

⁶Ingram, op. cit., p. 14.

Songs used with Primaries should be within the compass of SOUL. F above middle C to F below middle C. Primary songs should cover wider range than the three-to-five note span of the pre-school age songs, and should be kept free from too many jumps and skips.⁷ Music will be effective with the Primary child only as the characteristics of his age are kept in mind. Participation for him will then be a joy and not a drudgery.

The Junior. The Junior, age nine to eleven, is energetic and unpredictable. One writer is of the opinion that the main problem with Juniors is that of directing their great energy into an adventure with God.⁸ This is an age of sturdy physical health. The Junior is impulsive and impatient. He must first be interested before he can be instructed. He seeks friends of his own age and sex. At this period the child is showing less dependence on adults, but he is fast becoming a hero-worshipper. The adult who provides leadership in the area of his interests is likely to be frequently considered a hero.⁹ Competition and rivalry are strong now; the urge to win is powerful. Competitive games are to be used, but always with discrimination and for constructive ends. Cooperative exercises are sound pedagogical techniques. Junior boys and girls can often read simple music as well

⁷Ibid., p. 14.

⁸Lois E. LaBar, Children in the Bible School (Westwood, N. J., Los Angeles, London, Glasgow: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1952), p. 126.

⁹Antoinette A. Lamoreaux, The Unfolding of Life (London: H. R. Allenson, Limited), 1951), p. 119.

as words. They can use Junior hymnals which contain a good quality of church music. The instructor must beware of using inferior music as an accommodation to the Junior, who may be easily satisfied. The best is none too good, even at this age level. The range of the Junior voice is extended a little beyond the limits of the Primary voice. Junior music should not range frequently above high F or below middle C.¹⁰

The Intermediate. Adolescence is commonly divided into three periods: early adolescence, years twelve, thirteen, and fourteen; middle adolescence, years fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen; and later adolescence, years eighteen to maturity.¹¹ The Intermediate, in the church school, belongs to the period of early adolescence. For him this is a period of accelerated physical growth. At this time disturbing physical changes occur which sometimes issue in those idiosyncracies and instabilities that are often symptomatic of the period.¹² In these years the child must cross the "great social divide" that separates childhood from adulthood. Mental development is apparent in the larger range of interests and activities. In this period when a youngster is as it were standing between two worlds there is great need for the security which vital Christian experience alone can provide. Differentiation between the two age-groups involved (viz. middle and later adolescence) are often more apparent than real. The Intermediate is

¹⁰Ingram, op. cit., p. 14.

¹¹Frank M. McKibben, Intermediate Method in the Church School (New York, Cincinnati: The Abington Press, 1926), p. 39.

¹²McKibben, op. cit., p. 41.

particularly receptive to fundamental religious truth; he is entirely capable of religious aspiration and experience. McKibben states: "There is no fair test for piety that an adult can meet that an adolescent cannot meet as well -- and we might say, better."¹³

Music for the Intermediate needs to be chosen carefully. It is important that it be of the highest character. Through proper selection, skillful rendition, and helpful interpretation music can contribute to the educational as well as the spiritual life of the Intermediate.¹⁴

Apart from the fact that the male voice undergoes a change during this age, there are few limitations of vocal ability. The Intermediate is likely to be able to sing music in the adult range. It should be remembered that one of the greatest fears of this age group is the fear of failure, and of consequent ridicule. It is this fear that makes it difficult for the leader to secure participation in musical programs. It is of course wise in these years to encourage group singing rather than individual performance. To inspire confidence and overcome the fear of failure the leader of the group in question needs much tact. It is imperative that he win the confidence and respect of the Intermediates. No other group is more sensitive to sham and pretense in human nature.

¹³Edward S. Lewis, The Intermediate Worker and His Work (Chicago: The Methodist Book Concern, 1911), p. 168.

¹⁴McKibben, op. cit., p. 165.

Young People. In the purpose of the present study the writer will use the designation "Young People", or a synonym for it, for those adolescent ages from fifteen through eighteen and on to maturity.

The young person is frequently at a disadvantage in society. He has reached the physical status of adulthood and is expected to act socially, mentally, and spiritually like an adult. Actually it will be several years yet before he can be expected to evidence a general maturation of personality. Within the group itself there are likely to be wide individual differences in any given personality trait.¹⁵ Because of this situation, set rules cannot be used for dealing with all. Each case must be treated independent of the rest.

In view of the fact that adolescents show a strong affinity for their own age group, group singing is particularly effective as a means of socialization. The warm fellowship, so vital to youth, can be achieved as voices and spirits blend in harmony. Some feel that music for youth must have "pop", that young people are least attracted to the slow ponderous hymns of the Church. "As a result", says Thompson, "there has crept into our churches a number of so-called Sunday school and worship hymnals whose chief virtue seems to be that of appealing to the heels rather than the heart."¹⁶ While it is true that young folks enjoy music in which the rhythm is more or less marked, nevertheless, experience has shown that they feel much

¹⁵Mason, op. cit., p. 120.

¹⁶James V. Thompson, Handbook for Workers With Young People (New York, Cincinnati: The Abington Press, 1932), p. 104.

at home with the more dignified slow-moving hymns of the yesterdays.

The adolescent likes the words of a hymn to hold some intellectual challenge. He wants the hymns to stand for something. "As far as possible the theology expressed in the hymnals should be in harmony with the best thinking of the group."¹⁷ Great value is to be attached to the hymn-singing of the adolescent group; by this means the teachings of Christianity are re-inforced in heart and mind at a time when youth peculiarly needs the support of them.

Adults. Little has been done to educate adults in the use of music in the church. This is evidenced by the lack of reading material available on the subject. There can be no question of the need of this type of training. Some have felt that adult education in church music is ineffective because of slowness of learning among adults. As a result, emphasis in church music education has rested largely with children and youth.¹⁸ In recent years, however, it has been established that adult capacity to learn is much what it was during the late teens. The differences in the rate of learning between young and old are small when compared to differences within either age group.¹⁹ A perceptible decrease in learning ability seems to set in about the age of fifty; and even so, the difference

¹⁷Percy R. Hayward and Roy A. Burkhart, Young People's Method in the Church, (New York, Nashville: Abington-Cokesbury Press, 1933), p. 106.

¹⁸Edward P. Westphal, The Churches Opportunity in Adult Education (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1941), p. 64.

¹⁹Edward L. Thorndike, Elsie O. Bregman, J. Warren Tilton, and Ella Woodyard, Adult Learning (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1928), p. 1.

for years to come is not too consequential.

Adult education in music is of course highly desirable if the younger age groups are to be musically strengthened. It frequently happens that it is the adult who sets the pattern and standard. Apart from the advantages youth may accrue from a more enlightened adult participation in music, it needs to be remembered that adults themselves stand to prosper greatly from music education. For the adult, music can be a strength in the time of weakness, a comfort in the time of sorrow, and a joy in the time of gladness. It is part of the Church's mission to enrich the adult's understanding and appreciation of good music.

MUSIC GENERALLY IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Many Sunday-school teachers for varying reasons feel incapable of teaching their children new songs. The result is, the same few songs are sung over and over again. Sometimes a teacher is heard to remark, "The children love these familiar songs. They insist on singing them every Sunday."²⁰ This may be a case of "reductio ad absurdum." Although children are to an extent creatures of habit, they do like variety. They sing without protest the same songs for fifty-two Sundays because they love to sing. Limited musical fare may be tiresome, but it is better than starvation!

²⁰Ingram, op. cit., p. 13.

It is the responsibility of the instructor to see to it that a good quality of music is used. He himself may not know how to evaluate a piece, yet he should feel no embarrassment in soliciting advice of someone in a position to help him. Many churches have a director of music who can help in the selection of materials, and who can make suggestions about ways of presenting them. In the small rural church, which does not boast a music director, one can usually turn to someone in the community who is qualified to give assistance.

Hymns used in the Sunday School are likely to find greater acceptance if they possess a great vivacity, and freedom of style than those generally found in the regular worship hymnals of the church. The rhythms should be varied and lively. Word phrasing should be both simple and felicitous in expression.²¹

The teacher of average musical talent can be successful in song leading. Literature for the novice is available. Zanzig, for instance, in his helpful little book entitled Community and Assembly Singing, suggests procedures and methods to be used in group song-leading. Of particular help is his chapter on "The Leader and His Method," in which he diagrams the beat pattern for various rhythms.²² All music is based upon a few different rhythm schemes of pulsation. When one

²¹Edmund S. Lorenz, Practical Church Music, (New York, Chicago, Toronto, London, Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909), p. 364.

²²Augustus D. Zanzig, Community and Assembly Singing, (New York: M. Witmark and Sons, 1933), p. 9.

masters the various beat patterns for these rhythm schemes he may lead singing with confidence. Almost anyone who can count and who has some sense of rhythm can lead group singing once these patterns are adopted.

The piano is usually the most convenient and best adapted instrument to use for Sunday-school singing. One can easily emphasize rhythm with the piano. Smaller children in particular "catch on" more readily when the piano accompanies him with pronounced rhythms.

The Sunday-school teacher will remember of course that moral and spiritual values are to be found in listening to beautiful music. As Ingram says, "The loveliness and perfection of well-recorded music and well-executed instrumental music can say what words cannot."²³ The teacher will remember also that his pupils will derive a maximum of profit from listening if he has prepared them beforehand for the music experience. Preparation, without a doubt, is one of the secrets of success in effective Sunday-school music.

²³Ingram, op. cit., p. 15.

CHAPTER V

MUSIC IN THE WORSHIP SERVICE

No matter what else the church may do, one of its highest functions is to provide a place for quiet, helpful worship. People go to church to worship, to be instructed, and to be inspired to social service. Yet the church fails in the end if it does not provide its people with the atmosphere of worship. Worship is the adoration of God. It involves consecration to God and fellowship with God.¹ Music can and should play a large part in producing an environment in which men may worship readily and freely.

The organ prelude. The prelude can help create a desirable mood for worship. A slow, massive prelude, for instance, has power to calm and prepare the spirit of man for thoughts of God. It is to be remembered, however, that a solemn feeling is not necessarily worship. One may enter a cathedral and be awed by the grandeur of the place; he yields to an irresistible feeling of solemnity; he goes away feeling worshipful and devout. But religious sentiment is not worship. Architecture can produce awe. It is important that minister, musician, and congregation realize that although a musical prelude can generate

¹John Mann Walker, Better Music in Our Churches (New York, Cincinnati: The Methodist Book Concern, 1923), p. 22.

sublime feeling, such feeling does not become a part of true worship unless the will of the worshiper continually offers itself in subjection to the will of God.²

Concerning the prelude Pratt writes:

Its style should rarely be so ornate or florid as to attract special attention to the player's dexterity or the composer's ingenuity. It should be more emotional than learned, more sweet and solemn than boisterous and loud, more noble than amazing.³

The prelude as it were is a soft curtain veiling the hour of worship from the activity of the outside world.

Congregational singing. Protestants have always been strong for congregational singing. One of the theses nailed by Martin Luther on the door of the Wittenburg church constituted a plea for congregational singing, the demand that laymen be given the right to sing hymns as part of worship.⁴ Indeed the restoration of hymn singing has proved to be one of the great gains of the Reformation. Luther himself led the way by writing many hymns, the great reformer was among the first to see the necessity for grading of hymns; for many of his own were written especially for children.

²Edmund S. Lorenz, Church Music (New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1923), p. 167.

³Waldo Selden Pratt, Musical Ministries in the Church (New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1923), p. 167.

⁴George Walter Fiske, The Recovery of Worship (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1931), p. 128.

The Reformation in England and Scotland was greatly inspired by triumphant hymn singing. It has been said that every great religious revival since the Reformation has been accompanied by great singing. So significant is congregational singing to Protestant church worship that it is spoken of as the basic form of Protestant church music. Devan has a word of guidance in connection with church singing:

The function of the congregation is to sing. If the hymn is so unwisely selected by the minister, or the vocal leadership and inspiration furnished by the choir and organ are so poor, or the prevailing habit of the people so lax, that the congregation does not actually sing, then the entire music of the service is a dismal failure, no matter how finely rendered anthem or prelude may be.⁵

The high place of congregational singing is also attested to by Ashton, who writes, "In the Protestant church, hymns have a place and influence second only to the Bible. This is particularly so with the laity."⁶ The fact that the metre and rhyme of hymns aid in the retention of the ideas embodied in the words, may in part account for the popularity of congregational hymn singing.

If for no other reason than that it gives the congregation active participation in the service of worship, the singing of hymns is justified in the service. But the practice is rich in emotional value to the participants. Says Pratt in regard to this, "Hymn singing in which the worshiper himself takes part has a much greater

⁵g. Arthur Devan, Ascent to Zion (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), p. 192.

⁶Joseph N. Ashton, Music in Worship (Boston, Chicago: The Pilgrim Press, 1943), p. 107.

emotional effect upon him than music to which he merely listens."⁷ Such singing helps to unite the people spiritually and tends to erase the petty interests and personal differences of a congregation. The confessional and testimonial value of group singing must not be overlooked. In the words of a good hymn the individual may express himself openly without fear of embarrassment.

"To praise God is the supreme duty of all persons,"⁸ says Lorenz. This being true, it is the duty of the individual to enhance God's praise by cooperation with others in worship through song.⁹ Of course, this cooperative praise may be spoken as well as sung. But valuable as is responsively-spoken praise, it is not usually as impressive as praise that is sung.

Nothing can take the place of congregational singing. The minister or choir, however effective, is no substitute for the self-expression and satisfaction that is afforded the congregation in the singing of the hymn.

It is to be regretted that hymn singing in the worship of many churches does not occupy a place commensurate with its true function. It frequently, too, is undertaken as a perfunctory, conventional exercise. It is not unusual to find that not a few of the worshipers neither sing themselves nor show particular interest

⁷James Bissett Pratt, The Religious Consciousness (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920), p. 302.

⁸Edmund S. Lorenz, Music in Work and Worship (New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1925), p. 116.

⁹Loc. Cit.

in what is being sung. In those churches in which singing is but half-heartedly done, the Christian Education Director may tactfully seek to improve the situation. Says Ashton, "All too commonly congregational music is highly extolled and greatly neglected."¹⁰

Problems with congregational singing are not of recent development. John Wesley in his day faced problems in this area which were not unlike those encountered in our generation. It should prove interesting and informative to examine Wesley's precepts for congregational singing. His "Directions for Singing" appeared first in the preface to Wesley's Sacred Melody, 1761. The first two rules applied especially to the early Methodists, who liked to import strange melodies into their worship services and also to embellish the authorized tunes.

1. Learn these tunes before you learn any others; afterwards learn as many as you please.

2. Sing them exactly as they are printed here, without altering or mending them at all; and if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can.

3. Sing all. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up, and you will find it a blessing.

4. Sing lustily, and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you are half-dead or half-asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sing the songs of Satan.

5. Sing modestly. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation - that you may not destroy the harmony - but strive to unite your voices together so as to make one clear melodious sound.

¹⁰Ashton, op. cit., p. 93.

6. Sing in time. Whatever time is sung be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it; but attend close to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can; and take care not to sing too slow. This drawing way naturally steals on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from among us, and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.

7. Above all, sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve of here, and reward you when He cometh in the clouds of heaven.¹¹

The selection of hymns. The selection of hymns for the worship service is to be a matter of thought and prayer. If the singing of hymns is to contribute to the worship experience of the worshiper, the hymns must be familiar to the people. New hymns, of course, need to be learned but it is better that they be introduced at some other time than during the worship service. Numbers selected may be in keeping with the general theme of the sermon. To be reasonably sure of selecting a good hymn, one ought to possess a good hymnal. The writer recalls a pastor decrying the type of hymn his church used, yet it had nothing but poor material to work with. For the most part the major denominational hymnals offer the best in hymnody. However, the use of a good hymnal is no guarantee that the selected hymn will suit the time and the place.

To select hymns intelligently it is necessary to know some of the basic criteria for judging a hymn. The hymn proper is addressed to the Deity; to a mem-

¹¹John Wesley, The Works of John Wesley (London: Published by John Mason, V.xiv, 1831), pp. 358-359.

ber of the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost. (Exceptions to this rule are sometimes found in some pieces that are actually combinations of hymns and gospel songs with one stanza addressing God and another expressing the testimony of the singer). Tunes of hymns must be written within the vocal range of the congregation. The words must be understandable; they must command the respect of the group. The words and music must fit each other.

Blackwood gives three tests of a hymn and four tests of a hymn tune:

Three tests of a hymn:

1. Is the content Christian?
2. Is the spirit of the hymn worshipful?
3. Is the style lyrical?

Four tests of a hymn tune:

1. Is it worshipful?
2. Is the tune adapted to the words?
3. Is the tune adapted to congregational singing?
4. Is the tune acceptable to the musicians?¹²

The minister and musician should learn to use the indexes of the hymnal in use. For example, in The Methodist Hymnal there are indexes for the following: first lines of hymns, first lines of stanzas, topics, and composers, as well as other indexes for tunes, responses, and of ancient hymns. By learning to use these tools one may find the task of hymn selection greatly facilitated.

¹²Andrew W. Blackwood, The Fine Art of Public Worship (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1939), pp. 109-116.

Whether or not a hymnal contains elaborate indexes, it does contain a table of contents. In The Methodist Hymnal listings in this category follow this order: worship, God, Jesus Christ, The Holy Spirit, the gospel, the Christian life, the living Church, the Christian home and family, hymns for children, the Kingdom of God, the eternal life, special seasons and services, music for the Holy Communion, responses, ancient hymns and canticles. As obvious as an index and a table of contents may be in helping one to select hymns it is surprising how little some ministers use these helps.

The order of worship will aid in determining the proper hymn to use for the worship service. Most authorities agree that two or three hymns are preferred in the morning worship service; and possibly four. The processional, the hymn of praise, the hymn of preparation, and the hymn of dedication may all have their part in the worship service. Where the interior architecture admits it, a processional can greatly enhance worship. The hymn of praise will unite the congregation for the central act of worship. A hymn of preparation is usually sung just before the sermon. This hymn takes up the theme of the morning message. The hymn of dedication at the conclusion of the service invites the congregation to take some action regarding the challenge presented in the message. For example, the singing of such a hymn as "O Jesus, I Have Promised" may lead the individual to feel anew his dedication to God.

For the child attendance at the worship service can be a learning experience.

Morsch says in this regard:

The church worship service itself can teach much about worship. A child responds to orderly arrangement and beauty more than to preaching or direct teaching. A worship service that is little more than a collection of detached miscellaneous parts preceding the minister's sermon can do little to bestir a sense of worship in a child or an adult. Music selected to glorify an organist's technique or a singer's voice, or just because a choir likes it, will only encourage the worshiper to stay away, when he does not like the singer or the music.¹³

Improving congregational singing. As Ashton reminds us, "The congregation is the only musical group of serious purpose regularly attempting performance without rehearsing."¹⁴ The choir, though composed of the more musically capable, usually rehearses weekly. To be sure, choir music is likely to be more elaborate than the music of the congregation, but even so congregational singing should receive more attention.¹⁵ Ashton suggests ways of improving the singing of the congregation:

The most direct way of improving congregational singing is through congregational rehearsals; but these can seldom be secured. Generally the matter is not regarded as sufficiently important. One of the most commonly available ways of otherwise improving congregational music is to have a short series of sermons or talks on hymns interesting the congregation in congregational music from the hymn side. Another is to institute from time to time a series of song services carried on in such a way as to improve the hymn singing at the regular services.

¹³Vivian Sharp Morsch, The Use of Music in Christian Education (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), p. 24.

¹⁴Ashton, op. cit., p. 94. ¹⁵Ibid., p. 95.

But best of all are rehearsals carefully planned by minister and choir-master. Generally these are most conveniently held in connection with services, preferably an evening service, before the service rather than after it. They may be conducted for a few weeks each year or somewhat regularly, say, one Sunday evening a month. Now and then a well-planned and efficiently conducted rehearsal, something more than a "big sing", might be feasible at a church supper in place of a speaker.

At these rehearsals both text and music should be considered, minister and choir-master working in conjunction. Rehearsals should be conducted with energy and enthusiasm -- no superfluous words or lengthy explanations, but much well-directed, intelligent musical practice. The spirit and manner should be that of a vigorous choir rehearsal. Not long, they should begin with something fairly familiar and include things both old and new, the old being reanimated and the new becoming thoroughly learned. Such a rehearsal should be in the nature of a practice, and the service in association with which it is held should in turn have its own religious character, each fulfilling its distinctive purpose.¹⁶

In conclusion it may be said that for the best results in public worship music is practically essential. Its prevalence in public worship generally suggests that it has a peculiar offering to make. Hunter's words on the genius of music in the church are apt:

A church without music is like a bird without wings. Let the organ send its uplifting waves of sound through the arches. Let the full-voiced choir enrich the air with stately anthem and sweet voluntary. Let the whole congregation worship heartily in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Let the joy of Christian faith utter itself in noble music; for an increase of joy in religion is the thing that the church most needs today to draw men to her.¹⁷

¹⁶Ashton, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

¹⁷Stanley Armstrong Hunter, Music and Religion (New York, Chicago: The Abington Press, 1930), pp. 27-28.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHOIR: ITS PROGRAM AND ORGANIZATION

BACKGROUND

Some basic considerations. The choir program should be designed to fit the local church situation. The local church may have more than one choir, provided it has adequate talent. The number and kinds of choirs and their schedules must be determined by the needs and potential resources of the local church:

Here is a church that has successfully projected a five-choir organization; and another church, becoming zealous in these matters, artificially and without proper survey, attempts a like system with perhaps tragic results. Such a failure can be averted by careful analysis of parish situations; for the program must be the normal outgrowth of inner choral potentialities. It is quite possible that even with five choirs one Church is not wholly realizing its choral possibilities, and in like manner it is possible that a local church should confine its efforts to three choral groups, or less.¹

It is frequently found that music is one form of interest that does not require extended promotion to make it an effective part of the church's program. Most people possess a normal sense of pitch and more or less pleasing voices. It often happens that these people, possessing acceptable singing voices, must be "discovered" and guided into their respective singing parts. To make the most of the

¹Donald D. Ketting, Steps Toward A Singing Church (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1948), p. 24.

music potentialities of the church people, a creative plan geared to the local parish must be created.

The matter of a church's geographical location is of tremendous importance in shaping the music program.² Many churches have found that through a shift of population over the course of many years they are no longer at the geographical center of their membership. Problems arise in transportation of members of children's and youth choirs. Obviously, good music cannot be cultivated without frequent rehearsal time. Again, rehearsals cannot be as frequent when transportation of choir members becomes a major problem. Because of this situation the movement in "down-town" city churches has been toward adult choirs.

The proximity of the public schools may also be a factor in its choir system. A church within a few blocks of an elementary and junior-high school might set up joint school and choir procedure. The closeness of the church to the school and homes will determine whether or not such an arrangement is practical.³

Even the structure of the church will determine to some extent the potentialities of its choir program. The presence of adequate facilities for education not only reflects educational concern, but paves the way for adherence to a worthy educational program. Then there is a correlation between good architecture and good music; as the setting for corporate worship invites reverent quietness and an attitude of listening, music is better able to perform its ministry. The relationship, however, is more than one of atmosphere. The acoustical properties of

²Ibid., p. 25. ³Ketting, op. cit., pp. 25-27.

the church and its furnishings add or detract from the music rendered. Many churches with carpeting and with ceilings acoustically treated are tonally depressing, the music rendered lacking the resonance necessary for good tone.⁴

There seems to be no arrangement of choir placement in the sanctuary that is completely satisfactory. The divided chancel has the advantage of appearance --leaving the altar and communion table centered. The divided chancel arrangement, however, will never give the best results musically; the singers sing at each other rather than to the congregation. The placement of the choir in a rear gallery obscures the singers, making their presence seem less real. The vested choir in the choir loft in the front of the sanctuary, if artistically and well disciplined, can, in the opinion of some, produce better visual and tonal influence than is the case with other placements.

The musical organization of the local church will necessarily be affected by the potential leadership, the number of people available at the different age-levels, and the official attitude toward the formation of choirs.

Advantages resulting from the church choir. There are many advantages which the choir brings to the church. It enriches the service of the sanctuary. When it is remembered that congregational singing has its limitations, one readily sees the value of a choir in the worship service. There is a variety in form and effect in an anthem that is not likely to be found in a hymn. The expression and range of

⁴Ibid., p. 31.

feeling in choir music usually surpasses that of hymns. The strong support to congregational singing furnished by the choir is a chief advantage. The church boasting a multiple choir plan has the support in its congregational singing of those choirs not officially leading in the service. Regardless the number of choirs, it is usual for only one choir to lead officially during a service. Moreover, the fact that a choir generates added congregational interest in the total program of the church is an advantage not to be overlooked.

From the standpoint of the choir member himself it should be remarked that the choir offers an opportunity for him to become increasingly a part of the church and its program. Many who were barely attached to the church have been known to develop a large interest in its activities after being invited to join the choir. In this relationship there is likely to develop a sense of added responsibility and loyalty.

The social contacts that go with choir membership can furnish rich opportunity for evangelization and spiritual maturation within the group. Indeed the church choir can do much to spiritualize the lives of a congregation. It can help establish the pattern of Christian living.⁵

Administration of the choir. The choir must be wisely administered and well conducted. Organization must be sound if a choir is to render its best service.

⁵Edmund S. Lorenz, Music in Work and Worship (New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1925), pp. 216-221.

In the administration of any choir program the director of music and the pastor must work in close harmony. Each must know his area of responsibility. The pastor is the man of ultimate responsibility in the work of the church. Every department of the church must be amenable to him. The director of music will see to it that the program of music is coordinated with the over-all objectives of the church.⁶

The director is responsible for the entire music program of the church. He should have a clear conception of the place of music in various phases of church work. He supervises the organization and the personnel of the choir. This does not necessarily mean that he personally direct each choir or musical organization.⁷

In choir administration, much confusion could be avoided if some working policy could be established in the beginning. The music department of a church has at times been called the "war department." Many of the unfortunate circumstances that develop in church choir situations could be avoided if at the outset policies and practices were set up and administered with consistency. Of primary concern in the matter of policy is the fact that the director must be recognized as the man in authority. While suggestions are to be welcomed by him, he must decide in the end. Policies concerning rehearsals and attendance requirements need

⁶Harold C. Mason, Abiding Values in Christian Education (Westwood, N. J., Los Angeles, London, Glasgow: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1955), p. 51.

⁷John Mann Walker, Better Music in Our Churches (New York, Cincinnati: The Methodist Book Concern, 1923), pp. 115-122.

to be worked out. Much can also be gained by clear policies concerning special music and solo work. The wise director knows of course that he can more effectively lead than drive his choir members.

Qualifications of director of church music. Hjortsvang lists requirements

for a director as follows:

1. Belief in the mission of church music
2. Natural leadership
3. Innate musical ability
4. Personal magnetism
5. Willingness to co-operate
6. Intuitive interpretation
7. A sense of humor
8. Musical scholarship⁸

The music committee. The director of music cannot be expected to perform the whole task of promotion alone. He needs not only the counsel of a music committee, but their united efforts as well. The personnel of the music committee is frequently difficult to select. Kettring suggests that the music committee consist of the following personnel:

1. Chairman. A person of good musical taste and particular interest in Church music, who has good administrative ability and recognized good judgement in Church matters. The chairman should not be the music committee, but should represent the committee, and have the ability to coordinate the interests represented.
2. A representative from the governing board of the Church. A committee that does not have such a representative is at a tremendous disadvantage, for an official board might be called upon to make a decision without knowing the relevant facts.

⁸Carl Hjortsvang, The Amateur Choir Director (New York, Nashville: Abington Cokesbury Press, 1941), p. 12.

3. A representative from the trustees. Frequently questions of financial policy will arise in meetings of the committee, and it is well to have someone at hand who can speak with authority in this phase of the program.

4. Representation from the adult choir. Someone on the committee should have the choir members' point of view in committee discussion. Perhaps it would be wise automatically to include in the committee the president of the adult choir.

5. Key persons for recruiting new singers. This is one of the most important functions of committee members. Such people should have enthusiasm for the possibilities of the program, a vision of its worth in the lives of people, a wide acquaintanceship in musical circles, and an understanding of the requirements of choir membership.

6. Members at large, who are recognized in the community for their good musical interest and judgement.

7. One member in charge of vestments. The designing or selection, purchase, financing, and care of vestments are quite an assignment in multiple-choir ventures, and often the work of the music committee will be facilitated if the vestment chairman is a member.

8. Representation from the various choirs. In some situations it will seem wise to include a choir mother or sponsor of the various younger choirs on the committee.

One of the above should serve as committee secretary.⁹

The pastor and director should of course be members ex-officio of the music committee. A smoothly functioning committee is a major step toward a well-developed, well-rounded musical program.

ORGANIZING THE CHOIR

The multiple choir system. The multiple choir system is a plan for the organization of various choirs within a church. It provides for the progression of membership from junior to senior choir. It aims at supplying rich variety of music for the services of the church as well as to furnish choir opportunities for all ages and groups.

⁹Ketting, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

Of course, the number and classification of choirs will vary according to the size of the church and its age groups. Experience has taught for all it is wise to categorize the younger groups according to age. Musical ability is much the same within a given age-group of children.

The multiple choir system may serve from the third grade through adults. It is of course possible for children below the third grade to have a choir of their own, but its purpose will be different from that of the other choirs. It will, of necessity, be more closely connected with the department of Christian Education. Music during this period is confined almost exclusively to activities of the church school.¹⁰

The normal set-up, wherever practicable, should be the multiple choir. The church school is said to be a school with pupils from the cradle to the grave; if this be so, let the multiple choir system provide the best in sacred music from childhood to adulthood. Each age group has its own musical color, its own peculiar charm. One group need not be regarded as uniquely superior in music to another; it merely requires different choral technique to develop the best at any given age-level. Success depends largely on general understanding of each age-group and its problems, graded material, adapted methods, and on procedures.

¹⁰Vivian Sharp Morsch, The Use of Music in Christian Education (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), pp. 144-45.

There are three plans commonly used in classifying individuals for choral work: The Departmental Plan, the Voice Classification Plan, and the Modified Voice Classification Plan. Morsch defines these plans as follows:

The Departmental Plan:

- Choir One - Grades 4, 5, and 6 (Junior)
- Choir Two - Grades 7, 8, and 9 (Junior High)
- Choir Three - Grades 10, 11, and 12 (Senior High)
- Choir Four - All above high school (Adult)

This plan permits a close relationship between choirs and the church school and youth fellowship. This has the advantage of facilitating the Sunday program and the making of contacts through the school organization.

The Voice Classification Plan:

- Choir One - Grades 4-8, unchanged voices
- Choir Two - Grades 9-12, youth choir, mixed voices
- Choir Three - adult, mixed voices

This plan clearly classifies the choir division and facilitates repertoire selection. It is especially adapted to smaller churches, where close graduation makes choirs too small.

The Modified Voice Classification Plan:

- Choir One - Grades 3-6, unchanged voices
- Choir Two - Grades 7-8, unchanged voices
- Choir Three - Grades 9-12, mixed voices
- Choir Four - Adults (all above high school)¹¹

Whatever method is used for classifying the church choirs, the age-grouping will remain approximately the same, with age eight through twelve comprising the Junior Choir, age thirteen through fifteen the Junior High Choir, age sixteen through eighteen the Senior High Choir, and age nineteen and up comprising the Adult Choir.

¹¹Morsch, op. cit., pp. 145-146.

Most churches are not large enough or do not possess enough musical potential to employ the use of all of the various choirs. Because of this, a choir plan has been devised to utilize all available voices. It provides for a One, Two, or Three Choir Plan.

One Choir Plan. Usually such a choir would be composed mostly of young adults with a few older folks and a few high school students. This type of choir, known commonly as one of "mixed voices" is by far the most common in American Protestantism. Among the problems of the One-Choir Plan is that of scheduling rehearsals at a mutually convenient time. Activities of adults and teen-agers frequently are so varied that a period of common "free time" is difficult to find. In spite of a few disadvantages, the combining of the youth with the adults usually works out in enrichment of experience for both age groups. The youth appreciate becoming a part of the church and of society through the choir function, and the adult appreciates the freshness, vigor, and new life brought by the contact with the teen-ager.¹²

The fellowship of young and old in this choir can help both age groups to grow spiritually. An adult's consistent Christian life, observed by the teen-ager, can create a definite learning situation for him. Here is Christian Education in operation. The adult may also benefit by the opportunity to be an example. Through

¹²Kittring, op. cit., pp. 127-128.

each age group in a choir, the Holy Spirit can so work as to blend both personalities and voices to the mutual gain of all.

Two-Choir Plan. The basis for the two-choir program is generally provided for, not only by available talent, but by the desirability of contrast in choral arrangements. Since the adult-high choir is already in organization, the second choir to be organized will be from a younger age group. The second choir is usually a treble choir likely to be centered in junior high age level. Girls at this age are particularly responsive, and their voices are mature enough for good choral results. Since the intermediate age is a median point for the younger ages, it means that the program can be opened to both worthy juniors as well as high school pupils. The choir might use boys' voices up to the voice change, and after the change is settled, a boy could be invited into the adult mixed choir.

In spite of all that may be said in favor of the two-choir plan, it has its limitations. It does provide a place for the senior high boy and girl, but youth of this age are extremely clannish, and the inclination to join the adult choir would hardly come naturally. The treble choir, designed for both intermediates and juniors, will attract some, but the chances are that those most musically capable of choral work would be more attracted could age levels in point be separated.¹³

¹³ Ketting, op. cit., pp. 129-130.

Three-Choir Plan.

Kettring says of this arrangement: The three-choir plan, unless the third group is a men's choir, will usually involve some duplication in choral arrangement; that is, it will consist of either two mixed choirs and a treble group or two treble choirs and a mixed choir. If there are two mixed choirs, the division will normally come between adult and high school voices.¹⁴

In the three-choir plan two mixed choirs, adult and high school, are usually considered to be best. For psychological reasons, high school choirs should be somewhat larger than adult choirs. The high school age choir which consists of only a few voices gives the singers a feeling of insecurity.

Regardless of the plan adopted, some definite benefits will be gained if a multiple-plan is used. Reverence and respect in the church will be taught. Children will become accustomed to the church atmosphere. Hunger for worthy church music will be stimulated. Future choirs and future congregations are already being built. Parents and friends of choir members find added incentive to attend church.

AIDS TO THE CHOIR

A filing system. The church should possess a classified card-file of all persons having voices suitable for choral work; some for regular membership in choirs, some to be enlisted for special occasions, and some for supervision

¹⁴Kettring, op. cit., p. 130.

of group work. An index of instrumentalists within the congregation is likewise a necessity. Within the filing system should be a place for preserving and classifying music according to topic and special occasion. Careful record should also be kept of dates when music numbers are performed. Such a record will guard against too frequent repetition of choral numbers.¹⁵

Choir mothers. It has been found that a choir mother can perform effective service in administering a choir program. The choir mother is a laywoman, who shares the responsibility of administration with the director. Ketting lists the duties of the choir mother as follows:

1. Be present at all appearances of the choir. At least one choir mother is present at each rehearsal. The choir mothers arrange their own schedule in this regard.
2. Accept fees and write receipts for them. At the beginning of the season, however, when most of the fees come in, the church bookkeeper accepts the fees before and after the rehearsals.
3. See that the attendance record is kept. At the beginning of the season the choir mother or director will call the roll, but as the names of the children are learned, the roll is taken silently. The choir mother always sits at a table near the entrance, and the children report to her as they arrive.
4. Take charge of discipline when the director is not present. If the director is called from the room, the choir mother assumes charge.
5. Take charge of vestments, assigning them and seeing that they are kept clean. The vestment chairman assists and supervises this work.
6. Assist in preventing interruptions in rehearsal. The choir mothers answer the phone during rehearsal. If there are any visitors, they are received by the choir mother.
7. Assist in the distribution of music.
8. Take care of any children becoming ill during rehearsal. It is a great comfort to have a choir mother present at these times, and such matters can be quietly handled.
9. Watch for children becoming ill in the service.

¹⁵Lorenz, op. cit., pp. 26-28.

10. Make suggestions to the director. The choir will frequently be in position to know or recognize personality problems more quickly than the director.

11. Assist in processional rehearsal. A processional rehearsal, because of the long and strung-out formation, is very difficult to supervise, and usually more than one person has to be in charge.

12. Perform any needed service for the well-being of the choir and choral routine.

13. Prepare and serve any food served to the choir.¹⁶

The big problem is not in finding choir mothers, but in finding choir mothers of the right kind. Qualifying characteristics are suggested as follows:

1. An interest in music.
2. Quality in character.
3. Attractive personality.
4. An air of authority.
5. A good appearance.
6. An imagination.¹⁷

Accompanist for rehearsals. Frequently it is impossible for the regular church organist to be present at all rehearsals. A substitute is a necessity. This can provide an occasion for someone adept in music to render a real service. Of course it should be made clear that the regular organist is to play for the service. Sometimes, of course, as in the case of children's choirs, a group will have its own accompanist who will also play at the time of singing in service.

Director's assistant. In some cases the director cannot meet with all choirs at their rehearsals. This is particularly true if the director is not employed full-time by the church. In any case, either another director or an assistant should be arranged for. The person selected should as much as possible conform to the

¹⁶Kittring, op. cit., pp. 67-68. ¹⁷Kittring, op. cit., p. 66.

tradition and method of directing of the director. In the case of an assistant it will usually be of advantage for him to direct from a marked copy prepared by the director. Only under such arrangements can the director feel secure as he assembles the several choirs to sing on special occasions.

The Audition. The audition is not a "cure all." Many problems, however, can be eliminated before they materialize if they are detected in the audition. Because of the barrier of terminology many directors prefer to speak of the audition as an "interview." The audition will help to eliminate those with poor pitch and with otherwise apparent musical inaptitude. Personality problems can also be dealt with here. Authorities suggest various methods of conducting the audition. In general the individual is asked to sing tones up and down the scale and to sing a hymn stanza. In this way the director is able to classify the range and quality of the voice. The audition is a good time to talk over the rehearsal time and to emphasize the importance of punctuality and dependability. Most directors do not tell the applicant at the time of the interview whether or not he is acceptable. A list of those who pass is sometimes publicized later.

CHOIR REPERTORY

In multiple-program procedure of a repertory of distinction and high quality is not easily achieved. In the background of every anthem selected there are apt to be dozens and even hundreds of titles that were examined. Most churchmen

do not realize the hours of searching for suitable materials that are involved in the direction of a multiple-choir program. The finding of the right anthem usually comes only as the result of much seeking. The choir director, too, if he takes his job seriously, will spend time in prayer over his selections.

Matters to be considered in selecting choir music are these: ability of the choir, age-group adaptability, artistic and worship value, the text of the anthem, the theology of the anthem, and the educational value of the anthem in leading the choir into new learning experiences.¹⁸

Many music companies will upon request furnish a director with sample copies of music that will aid in his selection. Such companies are: The Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis; Carl Fisher Company, New York; E. C. Schirmer Company, New York; G. Schirmer Company, New York; H. W. Gray Company, New York; Harold Flammer, Inc., New York; Gamble Hinged Music Company, Chicago; Theodore Presser Company, Bryan Mawr, Pennsylvania; and Oliver Ditson Company, Boston.

¹⁸Joseph W. Clokey, In Every Corner Sing (New York: Morehouse-Gorham Co., 1948), p. 77.

CHAPTER VII

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Instruments used. Instrumental music is said to be intellectually indefinite in that it does not present clear images or definable concepts to the mind. However true this may be, it has, in common with music generally, power of suggestion. It can produce certain emotional and moral values. Much depends upon the listener's musical experience and the prevailing circumstances during the act of hearing. The critics, who listen with mature understanding, tell us that music without words exerts a decided influence on their mood, thought, emotional susceptibility; that it affects even their moral impulses. A congregation, gathered for a religious service, under the influence of manifold memories and traditions, might be pointed toward spiritual sentiments and aspirations, through the act of listening to sacred instrumental music.¹

Instrumental music in the church is usually confined to piano and organ. Other musical instruments are generally only used for special selections or on special occasions. Exceptions to this are found in some groups such as the Salvation Army, who use a multiplicity of musical instruments in their regular services.

¹Waldo Selden Pratt, Musical Ministries in the Church (New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1902), pp. 125-126.

The organ. The Church has always recognized the organ as the sacred instrument "par excellence." Small organs for personal and private use seem to have existed even from the pre-Christian era. They became quite common in the thirteenth century when they were called "Portative" organs because they could easily be carried about by the player.²

A larger but still movable organ called a "Positive" was used in the Middle Ages. It was sometimes placed in different parts of a large church or cathedral, usually raised on little platforms high up on the side walls or even on pillars. These organs were sometimes called "swallows' nests" because of their loud screaming tone. Their purpose was to guide the singing of the congregation.³

From a crude simple instrument the organ has so developed until today it is the most intricate and elaborate of all musical instruments. Were this a technical treatise, it would prove interesting to dwell upon the structure of the modern organ as a consummate product of genius, skill, and loving work. Suffice it to say that churches with pipe organs are confronted with many practical questions in regard to their proper use and maintenance.⁴ Nevertheless, the church that has experienced the pipe organ is never satisfied with anything less. As Hunter says, "An adequate organ painstakingly built is, to begin with, the one remaining voice

²Edmund S. Lorenz, Church Music (New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1923), p. 406.

³Lorenz, op. cit., p. 407. ⁴Pratt, op. cit., pp. 122-124.

in any church. Ministers and singers come and go, but the organ remains."⁵

The functions of the organ in the Christian Church are for the most part threefold. First, the organ is used for the support and accompaniment of congregational singing. This undoubtedly is its most essential use. While choirs and other groups may sing unaccompanied, the congregation generally needs the organ to lead. Secondly, the organ is used for the accompaniment of choir music. Most directors and singers prefer to sing with an organ accompaniment, although some of the best choirs sing a cappella. Thirdly, the organ is used as a sole instrument. This use is found in the prelude, the offertory, interlude music, and in the postlude.⁶

The organist. Because organ music occupies so large a portion of the average church service it is important that the organ be used and played correctly. There are many functions in the church that lay people with average ability can do well and to the glory of God. The playing of the organ, however, requires a person of training, talent, and good sound judgement.

The selection of an organist is a serious matter, for he affects and may even unduly control the work of the pastor as well as the congregation. An incompetent organist can spoil the whole effect of the church service. Lorenz lists the

⁵Stanley Armstrong Hunter, Music and Religion (New York, Cincinnati, Chicago: The Abington Press, 1930), p. 95.

⁶G. W. Stubbings, A Dictionary of Church Music (New York: The Philosophical Library Incorporated, 1950), p. 95.

qualifications of the organist as follows:

1. He Should Be An All-round Competent Player. He must be a competent player, accurate, expressive, adaptable. He must not only be able to play a brilliant postlude, but emotional music in an effective way. His hymn tune playing, his accompaniments to soloists and choir, and his smooth adaptability to the varied spirit and needs of the service, must all be beyond question. Better an organist who can meet all of the requirements reasonably well than the genius who meets but one of them supremely well.

2. He Should Have A Knowledge of Musical Theory. He should have a fair knowledge of the theory of music, including harmony. It will give an intelligent basis for his judgements as to the merits of various compositions.

3. He Should Have Ability to Interpret Texts. He need not be a literary man, but ought at least to have general culture enough to understand and interpret the hymn, solo, and anthem texts of the compositions he expects to play.

4. He Should Be a Gentleman. The organist ought to be a gentleman. He has relations with so many people from the pastor down, that he cannot do proper team work with them unless he is considerate and thoughtful of others, gracious, tactful, obliging, patient, ready to help.

5. He Should Be in Sympathy With the Work of the Church. He must be able to respond to the plans of the pastor, and enter into the feelings of the congregation.

6. He Should Be A Christian. He must, to do the fore-going, be not only a man of good moral character, but a Christian, a man of devoutness and of earnest religious conviction and understanding. Nothing else will do if the service is to be devotionally successful.⁷

The organist can have much influence upon the lives of the congregation.

Actually he is a personality plus a great instrument as he fills his place in the church. How important that he possess a sound Christian experience and that he understand the principles of Christian Education.

⁷Edmund S. Lorenz, Music in Work and Worship (New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1925), pp. 93-96.

The piano. The piano has frequent use in the church. Its sharp attack controls singing and marks the tempo well. It is excellent for choir rehearsal, as it indicates time well and does not cover up mistakes of singers. It offers another advantage: competent players can easily be secured.³

The piano is particularly useful in the Sunday-school, in large conventions, and in evangelistic meetings. Children can follow the piano with much greater ease than any other musical instrument. Large crowds will respond more readily to the rhythm of the piano than to the smooth movement of the organ.

The piano, however, is not without disadvantages. To many listeners it is associated with frivolous music. The piano lends itself more easily to producing a kind of nervous irritation--the opposite of the calm stately music of the organ. Although the piano can be quite expressive emotionally, it can easily be used to destroy worshipful emotion. The fact that good sacred piano music is not too plentiful is not the least disadvantage to using the piano in worship services.

³Ibid., pp. 83-84.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

Since music plays a significant part in practically every area of church life music education in the Church is a matter of major concern. Both congregation and specialized groups need to be informed concerning the purposes of music in the church's program.

The greatest contribution of music to the life of the Church is its impact upon the congregation. It makes people more worshipful. But music has other "specialized" values. Through it many have been known to take active parts in the church program by joining choirs and assuming responsibility in other directions.

Regardless of its size or location, the local church should seek to lift the musical tastes of its people to worthy levels of religious expression. Creative planning on the part of persons trained in music and in Christian Education is highly valuable in the working out of an acceptable philosophy of church music. This among other things calls for the grading of music to meet the needs of the various age-levels.

The place of music in Christian Education functions of the Church has not always been too clear. The church musician must possess some understanding of the relationship between his program and the business of Christian nurture.

The director of Christian Education needs to realize the fact that music can make substantial contribution to the church school curriculum.

Lack of thoughtful planning and administration of a church's music program has all too often greatly handicapped the life of a church.

Basic to the success of music in worship is recognition of the fact that church music is not primarily a thing of artistic perfection but of spiritual power.

A fairly recent development in the music administration of the church is the multiple-choir program. Such a program is designed to making a place for the many in the church's musical activity. The spiritual and social gains deriving from this program have done much for the life of the participating member and for the church as a whole.

The Church is not seeking to compete musically with the world. Music in the Church is not a performance but a ministry.

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