

A Beautiful Noise: A History of Contemporary Worship Music in Modern America

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Graduate Program in Religion in the Graduate School  
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2015

ABSTRACT

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## Abstract

How did rock and roll, the best music for worshipping the devil, become the finest music for worshipping God? This study narrates the import of rock music into church sanctuaries across America via the rise of contemporary worship music (CWM). While white evangelicals derided rock n' roll as the "devil's music" in the 1950s, it slowly made its way into their churches and beyond over the next fifty years, emerging as a multi-million dollar industry by the twenty-first century.

This study is a cultural history of CWM, chronicling the rise of rock music in the worship life of American Christians. Pulling from several different primary and secondary sources, I argue that three main motivations fueled the rise of CWM in America: the desire to reach the *lost*, to commune in emotional *intimacy* with God, and to *grow* the flock. These three motivations evolved among different actors and movements at different times. In the 1970s, the Jesus People movement anchored in Southern California, adopted the music of the counterculture to attract hippies to church. In the early 1980s, the Vineyard Fellowship combined rock forms with lyrics that spoke of God in the second person in order to facilitate intimate worship with the divine. In the late 1980s, the church growth movement embraced CWM as a tool to attract disaffected baby boomers back to church. By the 1990s, these three motivations had begun to energize an entire industry built around the merger between rock and worship.

To Casey  
For your enduring patience and unflagging support  
I am thankful that you walk beside me

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# 1. Introduction

While typing away on this dissertation one Fall day in 2012 at a local coffee shop in Durham, I caught wind of the conversation at the table next to me. There were two young pastors, one Methodist and the other Baptist (of the Southern variety, I presumed), meeting for coffee and discussing their respective church services, and it was not long until worship music came up. They talked about their struggles to find talented worship leaders and the budgets required to buy all of the sound system pieces to power the guitars and microphones on stage. Though they argued about logistics and sermon techniques, they strongly agreed on the power of contemporary worship music: "I know the Word is important, but I think worship is where it's at," proclaimed the Methodist pastor. His Baptist friend nodded vigorously in agreement, "If the worship is good, it helps prepare me to hear the Word. That's why the worship leader is so important!"

There is a treasure trove in those two proclamations alone, and together they serve as a microcosm of how American Christians have changed in their conception of worship over the last fifty years. The assertion of the first pastor rings true with the rising role of contemporary worship music in church services. While preaching has traditionally been the centerpiece of the Protestant service in America, the import of contemporary musical forms into the church has challenged the sermon's preeminence in the liturgy as congregants are drawn to the affective power of rock music

(contemporary worship music),<sup>1</sup> its ability to create a powerful, emotional experience of quiet intimacy or loud, celebratory joy with God.

Of course, church music has always provided an affective experience. Yet now the gravitational pull of rock music in the church has become so great that it is swallowing the rest of what had previously been considered "worship." The scripture readings, the prayer of confession, the creeds. Even the sermon itself. As both pastors testified, "worship" had come to mean worship music, and worship music alone. The congregational act of worship no longer marked the entire service, but simply the time in the service when the congregation was swaying and singing rock ballads to Jesus. That was the gravitational pull of contemporary worship music, and it has deeply altered the way Christians worship in their churches.

Though both pastors acknowledged the traditional Protestant emphasis on the Word (and thus the sermon), they also asserted the rising power of contemporary worship music in creating successful church services. While the first pastor proclaimed

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term "rock music" throughout this dissertation as a broad term that encompasses the whole of what historian Lawrence Grossberg calls the "rock formation," a historically-contingent cultural world that made up the definitional landscape of rock music and included not only music and lyrics, but also "images of performers and fans, structures of social and economic relations, aesthetic conventions, styles of language, movement, appearance and dance, ideological commitments, and sometimes media representations." As such, "rock music" in this dissertation includes not only the rock n' roll of the 1950s and early 1960s, but later, diverging genres as well, including rock, hard rock, southern rock, folk rock, arena rock, adult contemporary, pop, and country, as well as the cultural apparatus that undergirds these genres. Of course, genres like folk and country existed in some form before the "rock formation" that began in the 1950s, yet the folk music of 1960s counterculture and contemporary country music both have been deeply shaped by the rock formation. For more on the rock formation, see chapters 5-8 of Grossberg's *We Gotta Get Out of This Place*. For more on my use of the rock formation, see chapter 3.

that worship (music) was "where it's at," the second one, in asserting that good worship *prepared* him to hear the Word (and by worship he meant the music), revealed the power that worship music had *over* the sermon and the rest of the service. His conditional statement implied the opposite as well—if the worship (music) is bad, then the congregation is not prepared to hear the Word. Good worship music here implied *affective efficacy*, the music's emotional potency, or ability to create an affective disposition for the congregants emotionally to commune with God. This affective power created a worship experience that "softened" congregants' heart, emotionally preparing them to hear the Word. "Hearing the Word," then, was not simply a cerebral act, but an emotional one as well, where the congregant could respond with their heart as much as their head. Bad worship music—whether it was misplaced songs or poor talent on stage—meant that the proper affective atmosphere for communing with God was absent and the congregant was not emotionally prepared to hear the Word. As I show throughout this dissertation, contemporary worship music's focus on creating affective dispositions for communing with God was rooted in its charismatic origin and revealed its Pentecostal sensibilities. Yet, as our two pastors have shown, those Pentecostal sensibilities did not stop contemporary worship music from spreading well beyond its charismatic origins. In fact, they became part of the engine that drove the rapid adoption of rock music in American sanctuaries, from Methodists to Presbyterians.

Finally, as the Baptist pastor understood, the work that rock music came to do in American churches made the worship leader all the more important. If contemporary worship music could shape the affective dispositions of believers for the service and was required to prepare them to hear the Word, then the contemporary worship leader could make or break a church service. Church growth leaders in the 1980s and 1990s picked up on this quickly, and churches like Bill Hybels's Willow Creek Community Church in suburban Chicago and Joel Osteen's Lakewood Church in Houston hand picked talented worship leaders that they knew could attract the crowds and keep them coming back each week. Our Baptist pastor's final proclamation, then, reveals the rise of the worship leader in American church culture, and at the top, the rise of the worship music superstar, a requirement for any ambitious church that sought to become a national—or even international—powerhouse.

## **1.1 Argument**

Long hair, short hair  
Some coats and ties  
People finally comin' around  
Lookin' past the hair and straight into the eyes  
People finally comin' around  
And it's very plain to see  
It's not the way it used to be<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Love Song, "Little Country Church," *Love Song*, Maranatha! Music, 1971. Listen to this song here: <http://youtu.be/Uv3R7wGH0Gc>.



This verse is from Love Song's ballad "Little Country Church," released on Maranatha! Music's *The Everlastin' Living Jesus Concert* (1971), the first album of the small record label founded by pastor Chuck Smith at Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California. The song marked the beginning of a musical revolution, one that would see the adoption of rock music—and its cultural attachments—into church sanctuaries around the country. Yet, as the song noted, this was not the way it used to be. For most American Christians, rock music first sounded like noxious noise. In the 1950s and 1960s, white evangelical leaders condemned rock and roll<sup>3</sup> for its "jungle rhythm," rebellious lyrics, and implicit sensuality.<sup>4</sup> In 1958, the Youth for Christ leader Marlin "Butch" Hardman declared that rock music exerted physical, emotional and spiritual effects on listeners that were not in line with the Word of God.<sup>5</sup> Hardman was just one of many pastors and evangelical leaders who saw rock music as a gateway for licentious activities, whether it was dancing, drinking, or sexual license. Evangelicals also feared that rock music exerted a physical effect on the listener. Critic of evangelical rock David Noebel declared that "the muscles are weakened, the heartbeat is affected, and the adrenal glands and sex hormones are upset by continued listening." Noebel further asserted, "rock music destroys house plants," and then asked, "if it destroys God's plants,

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<sup>3</sup> For the sake of brevity, I use "rock" and "rock and roll" interchangeably to signify not only what is classically considered rock music (electric guitar, drums, electric bass, etc.), but also all associated and derivative genres that have emerged since the 1960s, like contemporary folk, pop, rap, heavy metal, and techno.

<sup>4</sup> See William Ward Ayer, "Jungle Madness in American Music" (*Youth for Christ*, November 1956): 19-21.

<sup>5</sup> Marlin "Butch" Hardman, "The Real Scoop on Rock n' Roll" (*Youth For Christ*, October 1959): 10.

what's it doing to young people?"<sup>6</sup> Even Billy Graham, when asked how teenagers should approach rock music, said, "if I were 17 today I'd stay as far away from it as I could."<sup>7</sup>

By the turn of the 21st century, however, the noxious noise had become beautiful and the devil's music had moved from anathema to big business. In 2001, the contemporary Christian music (CCM) industry—the producers and peddlers of rock music written for Christian audiences—reported sales more than \$920 million dollars, which accounted for 6.7 percent of total albums sold in the United States, after moving nearly 50 million units.<sup>8</sup> And not only had the devil's music become popular in evangelicals' cars and on their iPods, but in their churches as well, giving birth to the focus of this study, what I call contemporary worship music (cwm), and which we will unpack in the next section. According to the National Congregations Study, by 2012, 59 percent of white conservative, evangelical, or fundamentalists in America attended services that used drums in their worship, while 62.8 percent used guitars. The embrace of rock music in Christian sanctuaries even extended beyond white evangelicals—45.5 percent of Roman Catholics, 51.2 percent of black Protestants, and 32 percent of white

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<sup>6</sup> Steve Rabey, "A Noebel Cause: The Constant Crusader Shares His Rhetoric on Rock," *CCM*, May 1986, 25.

<sup>7</sup> Billy Graham, *Billy Graham Talks to Teenagers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960): 16.

<sup>8</sup> *Contemporary Christian /Gospel Music Industry Overview - 2001/2002* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Music Association, October 2002).

liberal or moderate mainliners also attended services that used guitars.<sup>9</sup> How did rock and roll, the best music for worshipping the devil, become the finest music for worshipping God?

The answer to this question is complicated and involves tracing the various shifts (historical, demographic, theological, economic, and technological) that allowed white evangelicals—even American Christians at large—to embrace the instrumentation, timbre, and accoutrement of rock music in their churches as contemporary worship music. But before rock music even existed for white evangelicals to fight over, black Christians were wrestling with the incorporation of popular music in their own churches. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, black churches fought over musical propriety for worship as Afro-Pentecostalism brought forth new fusions of European hymnody, black spirituals, jazz, and blues. Afro-Pentecostal artists like Arizona Dranes and Sallie Martin and black Baptist artists like Thomas Dorsey and Mahalia Jackson pioneered what became black gospel music, fighting for its inclusion in established black denominations and its adoption beyond the upstart Afro-Pentecostal and Holiness churches. As black churches came to embrace gospel music, an industry emerged, complete with its own

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<sup>9</sup> Chaves, Mark, Shawna L. Anderson, and Alison Eagle. 2014. *National Congregations Study*. Cumulative data file and codebook. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University, Department of Sociology. For black protestants, these numbers were similar: 86 percent of black protestants attended services that utilized drums, while 51.2 percent attended services that used guitars. Higher drum use and lower guitar use reflected the difference in musical arrangements between contemporary black gospel music, usually led from the piano, and contemporary worship music, often led from the guitar. While the study of contemporary black gospel music intersects with contemporary worship music and deserves its own study, I do not focus on it.

artists, songwriters, record labels, and publishers. Black gospel's contested birth and development served as a "forerunner" for CWM, foreshadowing many of the tensions and joys that CWM would bring for white Christians in America, whether evangelical or mainline.

Perhaps surprising to many, even when rock music had arrived, evangelicals were not the first to bring it into their sanctuaries. That feat belonged to Roman Catholics, who were writing liturgical music that highlighted the folk guitar while evangelicals were still condemning rock as the devil's music. Roman Catholic parishes opened their doors to "folk masses" or "guitar masses" in the mid 1960s as a result of Vatican II's proclamation of *Sacrosanctum*. The latter called for *aggiornamento*, an update to the musical forms of the church, allowing for new instruments and musical styles to grace the sanctuary, while singing in the vernacular instead of Latin. American Catholics, particularly young Catholic seminarians like Ray Repp and Joe Wise, responded enthusiastically by unleashing an avalanche of new liturgical music that highlighted the folk guitar style of the 1960s folk movement and counterculture. From the end of Vatican II in 1965 to the mid-1970s, the Catholic folk mass movement served as a prophetic microcosm of what was to come from Protestants in the ensuing decades. Above all, Catholics embraced folk music because it fulfilled Vatican II's democratic call for deeper lay participation in the Mass. Picking up the folk guitar was easy for any aspiring musician—one just needed three chords and a little rhythm. But Catholics also

embraced folk music in their worship services because it attracted disaffected Catholic youth, and provided an authentically vernacular form of music to accompany the new English liturgy. This dual emphasis on evangelism and authenticity would later appear as justifications for embracing rock music in Protestant churches.

After the folk Mass movement rolled through American Catholic parishes, the liturgical adoption of rock music next emerged as a "translation tool" in the burgeoning charismatic churches associated with the Jesus People movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Church leaders—like pastor Chuck Smith at Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California—utilized rock music in their worship services as a way to speak to and draw in the young hippies that roamed the Californian counterculture. As they spent time in Christian coffee shops and evening bible studies, the street youth of the counterculture became Christians, joined churches like Calvary Chapel, and brought their guitars with them. Like the Catholic folk mass movement, the first songs were often commercial ditties or secular rock tunes infused with new, Jesus-centered lyrics. But soon an aesthetic of authenticity emerged that privileged songs written by the young Christians themselves.<sup>10</sup> The emphasis lay on the exciting freshness of new songs and the belief that God was providing a new message through the music. The simple folk songs that

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<sup>10</sup> Charles E Fromm, *New Song: The Sound of Spiritual Awakening: A Study of Music in Revival* (Maranatha! Music, 1983): 176.

emerged became the musical equivalent of *glossolalia*, a revelatory medium for God to provide a new word to his people.

While Calvary Chapel embraced the music of the 1960s counterculture primarily as a translation tool for attracting hippie youth in Southern California, by the 1980s, denominations like the Vineyard Fellowship incorporated rock music into their worship because of its affective power to connect and commune with the Holy Spirit. CWM served as an *evangelistic* tool or as an *affective* tool, depending on the context. Led by the magnetic John Wimber, the Vineyard Fellowship split off from the Calvary Chapel network over irreconcilable differences on the charismatic gifts of speaking in tongues and prophecy. Unlike Calvary Chapel, Wimber's Vineyard Fellowship embraced these charismatic gifts, which in turn shaped their worship music. The spontaneity and improvisation that accompanied the unscripted performance of the charismatic service colored the music. Songs had no set ending and could be adapted to respond to the energy of the congregation and the cadence of the pastor. Fueled by this charismatic context, the Vineyard Fellowship pioneered contemporary musical forms geared towards the experiential nature of the service. Vineyard music highlighted simplicity in melodies and instrumentation, under the rationale that the simpler a song, the more accessible it was to congregants, and thus the fewer barriers appeared in creating a proper worship experience. For many Vineyard churches, "worship" not only became synonymous with music, but with a certain emotional resonance that the songs ushered

in. Here the music became an tool to awaken the heart and a vehicle to move worshippers into emotional intimacy with God. Moving beyond Calvary Chapel, the Vineyard fellowship developed a soft rock repertoire that tapped into the affective power of rock music and its ability to guide and dictate the emotional setting of a gathering.

By the late 1980s and 1990s, CWM had moved beyond Calvary Chapel and Vineyard networks. The church growth movement, exported out of Donald McGavran and Peter Wagner's work at Fuller Theological Seminary's School of World Mission, came to embrace CWM as a pillar of the seeker-sensitive strategy to attract baby boomers and their children. Churches like Willow Creek Community Church in suburban Chicago or Saddleback Church in Orange County led the way in the early 1980s, but hundreds of other churches eventually embraced their seeker-sensitive strategy of using rock music to bring people to the sanctuary. For McGavran and Wagner, pragmatism shaped their church growth axioms—church growth strategies should be evaluated by their results, specifically the quantitative results of church attendance. And rock music provided results in droves as nominal baby boomers were lured by the call of soft rock. McGavran and Wagner also argued for the "homogenizing principle," the assertion that church growth occurred when congregants were not forced to cross linguistic, racial, or class barriers to experience church. The church growth movement targeted specific demographics via "culturally relevant" sanctuaries,

messages, marketing, and music. As church pastor-turned-consultant William Easum argued in his 1993 book *Dancing with Dinosaurs*, "culturally relevant" music was required for growing churches, and as "every survey will show," culturally relevant music was synonymous with rock.<sup>11</sup>

Whether the motivation came from a desire to reach the *lost*, commune in emotional *intimacy* with God, or *grow* the flock, rock and roll became the most popular answer for American evangelical churches. By the 1990s, these three motivations had begun to energize an entire industry built around the merger between rock and worship. Worship music publishers and record labels like Maranatha! Music, Vineyard Music, and Integrity Music saw growth in record sales while major labels formed or bought smaller imprints focused on cultivating and distributing contemporary worship music. Christian Copyright Licensing Incorporated (CCLI) catalyzed an entirely new market for songwriters of contemporary worship music by building a licensing structure that turned every church sanctuary into a cover band venue on Sunday mornings. For an annual fee, CCLI allowed churches to use popular contemporary worship songs in their services, print the words in their bulletins, and put the songs up on their projection screens.

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<sup>11</sup> William Easum, *Dancing with Dinosaurs: Ministry in a Hostile & Hurting World* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993): 84.



As for the music, what had begun as simple folk ditties written for acoustic guitar developed into fully orchestrated rock anthems, replete with synced stage lighting, industrial fog machines, and thousands of rock-fans-turned-worshippers with hands lifted to God and stage. The transformation of church sanctuary to rock arena approached its zenith in the early 2000s with the worship music of Hillsong Church in Sydney, Australia and the rock concert setting featured at Passion conferences in the United States. The worship musical equivalent of the "British Invasion" of the 1960s, Hillsong captured American evangelicals' voices with "Shout to the Lord," an anthem that remained on CCLI's Top 25 chart from 1998 to 2012.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, the Passion Conferences provided a stage for talented worship artists to lead thousands of young Americans in worship via CDs, regional concerts, and an annual worship conference that drew 40,000 college students in 2000<sup>13</sup> and more than 60,000 in 2013.<sup>14</sup>

Fifty years after Butch Hardman declared that rock and roll was not in line with the word of God, rock music had become a permanent fixture in American church life. While the ethic of evangelism, rooted in the larger world of American evangelicalism, drove the adoption of rock music, it was equally fueled by a desire for a more experiential and emotional connection with God in worship. And as musicologists and cultural studies scholars like Simon Firth, Lawrence Grossberg, and George Lipsitz have

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<sup>12</sup> For the current CCLI chart, see <https://us.ccli.com/worship-resources/top-songs/>.

<sup>13</sup> "About/History," Passion Website, <http://www.268generation.com>.

<sup>14</sup> Shelia M. Poole, "Passion 2013 Draws More Than 60,000" (*The Atlanta Journal - Constitution*. January 3, 2013); sec. METRO.

long shown, rock music was inherently affective, an emotionally charged form that communicated feeling as much as lyrical meaning and musical sound. In the 1970s, it was charismatics—who had adopted the emotional focus of Pentecostal worship and placed a high priority on the affective quality of the worship service—that discovered that rock music was a wonderful tool to bring worshipers into emotional intimacy with God. And it was charismatics who mastered the integration of the rock form into the sacred space of the Christian worship service within the Calvary Chapel and Vineyard movements. As evangelicals and eventually mainliners adopted CWM, they came to integrate Pentecostal and charismatic forms, values, and theologies into their worship services. The result was the "pentecostalization" of American Christianity. The bodily liturgies (the swaying, the raising of hands, the open palms); the intimate, informal lyrics that directly connected the worshipper with God; and the dynamic nature of rock music that was accessible to worshippers, yet commanded and drove the emotional tenor of the sanctuary, all emerged from a Pentecostal sensibility that emphasized the affective nature of worship. As American Christians embraced songs like "Shout to the Lord," "Lord I lift your name on high," and more recently "Mighty to Save," they also assumed a charismatic theology of worship that prioritized experience and emotion over doctrinal dissemination and intellectual assent.

In this dissertation, I spend my time narrating this history of CWM, teasing out the shifting tides in American Christianity that led to the embrace of rock and pop

liturgies. My approach is primarily historical. There are other ways to approach this story, such as from a theological perspective, but for the most part I focus on the historical narrative. Why? First, there is already a decent body of literature that addresses the theological nature of CWM as a practice.<sup>15</sup> Most of this literature asserts a normative view of CWM as it attempts to discern what is fitting for Christian worship. That is well and good, and has its place and purpose. But we also need to look at the history of CWM in order to understand what moments and movements led to its rise and evolution. The history of CWM helps us better understand its impact on American churches and map out the wider exchange between modern mass media practices, popular culture, and American Christianity.

This dissertation is not the first to consider the historical rise of CWM. There are a few other studies that have begun to explore its history, yet for the most part they take either a narrowed ethnographic approach, focusing on one musical site, or a

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<sup>15</sup> See Paul A. Basden, ed. *Exploring the Worship Spectrum: Six Views* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004); Mike Cosper, *Rhythms of Grace: How the Church's Worship Tells the Story of the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013); Marva J. Dawn, *How Shall We Worship? Biblical Guidelines for the Worship Wars* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2003); Marva J. Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for This Urgent Time*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); John M. Frame, *Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1997); David T. Gordon, *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Rewrote the Hymnal* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2010); Thomas G. Long, *Beyond the Worship Wars: Building Vital and Faithful Worship* (Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute, 2001); Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. and Sue A. Rozeboom, *Discerning the Spirits: A Guide to Thinking about Christian Worship Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); Robb Redman, *The Great Worship Awakening: Singing a New Song in the Postmodern Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002); Bryan D. Spinks, *The Worship Mall: Contemporary Responses to Contemporary Culture* (New York: Church Publishing, 2010); Robert Woods and Brian Walrath, eds, *Message in the Music: Studying Contemporary Praise & Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007); Terry W. York, *America's Worship Wars* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003).

musicological approach, focusing on the lyrics and musical structures of CWM.<sup>16</sup> In contrast, my contribution to the study of CWM provides a broader approach focused on the cultural history of CWM. I sketch the religious culture of CWM through the chronological vignettes described above, highlighting historical movements, institutions, and people that shaped the culture of CWM over the last fifty years. This dissertation, then, does not offer any groundbreaking new data. Instead, my goal is more modest—to consider the historical narratives presented in primary and secondary source material and bring my interpretation to bear on the whole, contributing to a clearer picture of the forest among the trees.

In addressing how rock music made its way into the worship life of American churches, I also try to consider why. What logic and theologies persuaded American Christians to bring the music of the devil into the sanctuary? What practices made the noise of rock n' roll beautiful? I trace several thematic strands that I feel sit at the heart of

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<sup>16</sup> See Gordon Alban Adnams, "The Experience of Congregational Singing: An Ethno-Phenomenological Approach" (PhD diss., University of Alberta, 2008); Charles E. Fromm, "Textual Communities and New Song in the Multimedia Age: The Routinization of Charisma in the Jesus Movement," (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2006); Monique Marie Ingalls, "Awesome in This Place: Sound, Space, and Identity in Contemporary North American Evangelical Worship" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2008); Deborah R. Justice, "Sonic Change, Social Change, Sacred Change: Music and the Reconfiguration of American Christianity" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2012); Deborah J. Kapp, "Agency and Authority in the Performance and Practice of Christian Worship: A Study of Worship in Three Presbyterian Congregations" (PhD diss., Loyola University of Chicago, 2002); Anna E. Nekola, "Between this World and the Next: The Musical "Worship Wars" and Evangelical Ideology in the United States, 1960-2005," (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin - Madison, 2009).

For an excellent monograph on the early history of CWM among the Jesus People movement, see Larry Eskridge, *God's Forever Family: The Jesus People Movement in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). For an excellent history of CWM in the U.K., see Pete Ward, *Selling Worship: How What We Sing Has Changed the Church* (Bletchley, UK: Paternoster, 2005).

the history of CWM: the contest over musical authenticity, the exportation and translation of Pentecostal sensibilities beyond Pentecostalism proper, the evangelical impulse to justify media forms by their efficacy in evangelism, and the powerful affective dispositions inherent to CWM that enable worshippers to commune in intimacy with God.

My main question—how did rock music move from the realm of the devil to the realm of the divine—implies that most American Christians have now embraced rock music in their worship services. Of course, while many American Christians do consider CWM "the finest music for worshipping God," not all agree. For many, rock music does not belong in the church and never will. By the 21st century, CWM was no longer the exclusive property of evangelicals. Beginning in the 1990s, mainline congregations—growing in age and shrinking in number—looked to CWM to refresh and invigorate their declining rosters. Mainliners had flirted with rock music before—in the 1960s and 1970s some Lutheran and Methodist congregations had adopted the music of Catholic Ray Repp or Lutheran John Ylvisaker, among a few others. But on the whole, mainline congregations had remained loyal to organs and congregational hymns until the 1990s. Like many evangelicals, mainliners looked to rock music to help reach the lost, retain the disaffected, and to offer intimacy with God in worship. But like many of the evangelical congregations that had adopted CWM before them, mainline congregations were quickly confronted with the "worship wars." These intergenerational and cultural

conflicts arose as churches tried to find ways to satisfy younger members who wanted contemporary worship services and older members who desired traditional services of congregational hymn singing. Many churches attempted to offer separate services for their two constituencies, while other congregations simply split over the issue.

Regardless, numerous churches saw congregants leave for greener—or in this case, what those leaving deemed more "harmonious"—pastures.

Today, in churches around the country—evangelical or mainline—believers still argue over what type of music is most fitting for Christian worship. Though they have died down since their heyday in the 1990s, these "worship wars" continue in churches small and large as Americans weigh the merits of "traditional" and "contemporary" styles of worship. So my primary question needs to be qualified—the embrace of rock music in American churches has always been an ongoing negotiation between congregants and ideas. The story is not a simple, linear progression from rejection to embrace. CWM remains a beautiful noise—now beautiful to many, but still noisy to others. Regardless of whether Americans love or hate CWM, however, none can deny that a fundamental shift has occurred over the last fifty years as to how Americans understand the role and nature of rock music in worship, and the exchange between the practices of popular music production and consumption and the doxological life of the church.

## **1.2 Defining Contemporary Worship Music**

I use the term contemporary worship music (CWM) to identify the musical genre that emerged from the incorporation of rock music and its affiliated popular music genres (folk, pop, R&B, country, etc.) into American church services. In this dissertation, however, I focus on the musical culture of white evangelicals, though I touch on African American worship in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in chapter one, Roman Catholic worship in chapter 2, and white mainline worship here and there in several chapters. There is, of course, much more work to be done on the CWM that developed outside the white, evangelical fold. But that is not my task here. My focus is the *core development* of CWM as it grew in popularity in late 20<sup>th</sup> century America, and that happened primarily through white evangelicals, and specifically through predominantly white charismatic congregations. Today, many black churches and mainline congregations utilize CWM (in addition to their own musical traditions), but this has been an adoption of a music that white evangelicals and charismatics forged in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The relationship between CWM and black gospel music, which I explore in chapter one, provides an important historical picture. Yet black gospel, as a musical genre and culture, remains distinct from what most consider CWM. At the same time, there are black artists and songwriters, like Israel Houghton, who work in both. The boundary between CWM and black gospel, though distinct, is also porous and changing.

As for names, there are other titles for CWM that have waxed and waned over the last few decades, including "praise and worship music" (or simply "praise and worship"), praise choruses (or simply "choruses"), "modern worship music" (or simply "modern worship"), and, quite simply, "worship music." The last term shows the ubiquity of this phenomenon in American congregations, where traditional hymns are no longer understood as the basis for worship music, but only as an additional, antique option, while CWM has simply become the baseline, the assumed whole of "worship music." The optional inclusion of the word "music" after each of the other titles is also telling. It reveals the ongoing shift, now decades old, in how Americans conceptualize their worship in their services. What used to be understood as a broad set of liturgies practiced in specific spatial settings has narrowed to a single liturgy focused on experience, affect, and above all, music. For many Americans, worship in their church services has become the rock concert reimagined as a devotional experience. The concept of "worship" has become synonymous with the music that creates the affective environment in which worship can be rightly experienced.

Why use CWM instead of these other terms? None of the terms above is perfect. "Praise and worship music," which I explore as a term in chapter five, would probably be the first choice for many, as it is the most recognizable term. Yet while many use "praise and worship music" in a generic sense, it emerged from a specific charismatic theology of worship in the late 1970s and early 1980s—modeled off of the temple



worship of the Old Testament—that emphasized the movement from praise, which was celebratory, to worship, which was intimate. As such, many associate the term with that specific charismatic theology of worship. Yet the incorporation of rock music into church services appeared before, and has moved well beyond, this specific theology of worship.

The “praise chorus,” on the other hand, was an early title adopted in the 1970s when most of the songs were simply that: repetitive choruses with no verses. But the songwriting evolved from the start, and what had begun as simple camp songs with one or two choruses took on pop music structures, incorporating verses, bridges, and even instrumental solos. So while “praise choruses” was an accurate title in the 1970s, it had less application in the 1990s and was completely inadequate by the 2000s.

“Modern worship music” shared a similar chronological problem as “praise choruses,” but in the opposite direction. As a newer term that emerged around the turn of the century, “modern worship” became the banner under which arena rock music and its accompanying culture made its way into American sanctuaries. Modern worship was louder and edgier—it put the electric guitar front and center, often drenched in delay and reverb effects modeled off of bands like Coldplay or U2. It upgraded the stage setting to compete with arena rock concerts, offering the immersive spectacle that came with complex stage lighting, stage fog, and giant video projections that made both the worship leaders and the responding congregation larger than life. In many ways,

modern worship music emerged in juxtaposition to "contemporary worship music"—it served as the next best thing.

As a term, "contemporary worship music" has its own chronological limits, as has become more telling with the rising popularity of the term "modern worship music" as the "new thing" that has emerged in contrast to what many consider "contemporary worship music." For many, then, CWM represents an actual genre, marked by the adult contemporary sound that emerged in the 1980s (what superseded the folk songs of the Jesus movement from the 1970s) and was succeeded by harder, edgier "modern worship music" that began appearing in the late 1990s. In this dissertation, I do not use the term CWM in this way, but in a more literal sense—the contemporary forms that worship music has taken, broadly speaking, with the adoption of rock music in American sanctuaries over the last fifty years. For our purposes, then, CWM encompasses the nuances and genres of all of the above titles—praise and worship music, modern worship music, praise choruses—under one banner, as I use it to describe the broad incorporation of rock music into American church services.

### ***1.3 Positionality***

I came to faith in a thriving, suburban United Methodist congregation. There my youth pastor encouraged me to use my hack guitar playing for the good of the church by joining the youth worship band. Our repertoire was thick with songs from the Jesus People movement of the 1970s, those wonderfully kitschy camp songs that only required

three chords and that made sense at Vacation Bible School but seemed out of place next to the austere majesty of hymns like "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." But that was fine, because we were the *youth* worship band, which meant that we led worship for the youth ministry. Camp songs fit perfectly with what amounted to a weekly carnival. The adults upstairs, who were more committed to liturgical propriety, had already figured out that they could not put these two musical styles together in one service, so they started a new "contemporary service" that thrived alongside the "traditional service." I learned later that we were lucky. Plenty of American congregations did not have the resources—or simply the numbers—to start a second service of a different variety. As a result, churches often split as members left for other congregations that offered the music they were looking for.

I continued my musical journey in college, leading worship for a parachurch campus ministry of about 150 students. Each week we would transform a large classroom into our musical stage, helping caffeine-pumped and sleep-deprived college kids commune with God via loud rock anthems and ballads, which were mostly written by worship music superstar Chris Tomlin. There I became bewildered by the affective power that the music carried. Every week, friends would explain how *moved* they were by the music, how it helped transport them to a sacred place where they could, with eyes closed and hands up, spend time with God. I understood, as I was moved too. Yet I was also the one leading them, and often what many of them interpreted as a

spontaneous, inspired moment of emotional energy in a song had been premeditated and rehearsed by the band hours earlier. I found that disconnect intriguing, and wanted to learn more.

After college, I stumbled into a small Presbyterian congregation that was “planting” a new church in Chapel Hill. In small church start-ups like this, everyone had to contribute to keep the doors open and the lights on. So once again I volunteered my hack guitar playing and—because I was their only option—I got the job. I began reading more and more “how-to” books on leading contemporary worship, but quickly noticed that while lots of interesting and helpful theological advice and analysis was available, no one seemed concerned about the history of CWM, where it came from, and how it became such a force in the worship lives of Americans. I found this puzzling, and I found the lack of historical insight in the literature problematic, as its ahistorical nature hid important questions from view. Why did so many Americans have a love/hate relationship with CWM? How did worship music become such big business? And the one that really kept me up at night: when did we all become so... Pentecostal? I had to know.

So I come to this study with more than a decade of experience as a contemporary worship leader and worship songwriter, and my interest here, obviously, is more than academic. And though my experience certainly colors my analysis, I think that can be both good and bad. I try to give my subjects a fair hearing, even in the midst of my own

social location and biases. And while evenhandedness is a noble goal, transparency is critical for the historian, and so it is important to confess that my vantage point guides the questions I ask and the answers I find. My interest in the affective dimension of CWM, for instance, stemmed as much from my experience as a worship leader as from my experience as a worshipper. And my focus on the rise of the CWM industry, particularly as it was fueled by CCLI, has been inspired by my time as a worship songwriter who works with CCLI to license his songs. While I ask questions of special interest to Christians (especially white evangelical Christians attentive to CWM), I try to answer them with the public tools of the critical academic historian.

My own relationship with CWM is mixed, and so I too understand it as a beautiful noise. The beauty is most clear to me in those transcendent musical moments—when the drum and bass are driving an anthem and everyone is in sync, clapping and singing their hearts out; or when the song reaches its crescendo in the bridge and then the instruments drop out and all you hear is hundreds of voices belting their song to God. Yet the noise is always there in the background—the incorporation of commercial logic and practices in the sanctuary, the cult of celebrity that fuels CWM song selection, and the theological ramifications that come with an uncritical embrace of these two.

## ***1.4 Conclusion***

I conclude by returning to our two pastors. As the two friends finished their coffee, the Baptist mustered the courage to make a confession to the Methodist: "So I've

decided to shorten my weekly sermon by ten minutes so that we can lengthen the time of worship. Though it's less time to preach the Word, I think it will make the message more powerful." To his relief, his friend brought no condemnation: "That's a good idea. I think worship moves people in ways that the sermon never could. Anyways, they'll be singing in heaven! The more practice now, the better!"

For our two pastors, not only was the sermon now considered outside of "worship," but it also was losing ground. Such was the power that contemporary worship music now held in American churches. The two friends testified that the noise of rock n' roll, once shunned from the sanctuary, had become beautiful. And with that beauty came power. The power to shape the emotional tenor of the liturgy, the power to grow churches, and the power fundamentally to change Christian worship in America.

## 2. The Afro-Pentecostal Roots of Black Gospel: A Historical Parallel to Contemporary Worship Music

Why begin a study on contemporary worship music (CWM) in white evangelical churches with a consideration of a different musical genre developed in a different religious tradition? Black gospel music is not a direct or major historical tributary leading to CWM. CWM emerged in the rock era, but black gospel music developed and blossomed before rock music, in its formal sense, even existed. Certainly, if we dug deep enough, we could find a musical lineage connecting black gospel to CWM, whether we looked at the Pentecostal influence on early rock n' roll pioneers (who then influenced the rock music that made its way into evangelical churches) or towards the emergence of artists who straddled the line between CWM and black gospel, like Andre Crouch or Israel Houghton. Yet that historical digging is not the purpose of this chapter. Nor is this chapter a thorough historical treatment of black gospel music or even music in the Afro-Pentecostal tradition.<sup>1</sup> Plenty of fine studies on both subjects already exist,<sup>2</sup> and their

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<sup>1</sup> In the *Encyclopedia of African American Music*, Shana Mashego and Emmett G. Price argue that black gospel “grew out of its two most substantial predecessors, the Negro spiritual and the made-over hymn or gospel hymn.” As gospel music developed from 1900 to 1930, three sub-styles marked it: “the gospel hymn style brought to popularity by Charles Tindley in Philadelphia, the rural gospel style, and the Holiness-Pentecostal style of the Church of God in Christ.” In this chapter I primarily focus on the third style that emerged from the Holiness-Pentecostal tradition and through the music of Pentecostal artists like Arizona Dranes and eventually Baptist songwriters like Thomas Dorsey. See Shana Mashego and Emmett G. Price III, *Encyclopedia of African American Music*, edited by Emmett G. Price, Tammy L. Kernodie, and Horace Joseph Maxile, s.v. “Black Church Music—History,” (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2011).

While Pentecostalism originated in a multiethnic context, I focus solely on the black experience of Pentecostalism in this chapter, often referred to as Afro-Pentecostalism or Black Holiness-Pentecostalism. Black Pentecostalism was not a single denomination or tradition, but rather a conglomeration of denominations, discourses, and traditions. Scholar Amos Yong identified at least four types of Afro-

complete histories lie outside the scope of this study. Instead, this consideration of the Afro-Pentecostal roots of black gospel provides us with an example of the “American evangelical logic” (American evangelical in the broadest sense) that guided the incorporation of external, secular musical forms into the church sanctuary. The emergence of black gospel music provides us with an earlier historical example of how American Christians transformed a noxious noise into something beautiful, an example that has several parallels with the development of CWM some fifty years later. Many of the themes, issues, and concerns that dominated black gospel’s growth into an American cultural institution were revisited in the latter half of the twentieth century in CWM. The historical progression of black gospel in the early twentieth century—from marginalized, folk culture beginnings, to widespread adoption (through discourses of appropriateness and authenticity), to industrial development—replayed themselves in the late twentieth century among white evangelicals with the rise of CWM. By considering the rise of black gospel music, then, we are able to better ground the logic

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Pentecostal groups: “classical Wesleyan-Holiness Trinitarian Pentecostals, classic Apostolic (“Oneness” Pentecostals), charismatic independent congregations or networks, and recent neo-Pentecostal currents within the wider black church tradition.” In this chapter, most of my black subjects emerged from the Wesleyan-Holiness Trinitarian Pentecostal tradition. For more on Afro-Pentecostalism, see Amos Yong and Estrela Alexander, *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture*, (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> See references for studies on Pentecostal music and black gospel music.



later used in the adoption of CWM within the wider historical world of American evangelicalism.

## ***2.1 A Short History of Black Gospel Music Origins***

As early Afro-Pentecostalism, steeped in the musical accents and rhythms of earlier slave songs, developed its own "sanctified music," it gave birth to black gospel music. Though this musical culture was first maligned by established black denominations, it made inroads into black churches in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly through the work of Thomas Dorsey and the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses. By the late 1930s black gospel had become a major musical expression of black churches and even began to look beyond the sanctuary walls as it grew into a commercial enterprise and eventually a secular musical genre. With this evolution of gospel music, Afro-Pentecostals and black Baptists focused much attention over what music belonged in and out of the church—which sounds, lyrics, and gestures were holy and which were of "the world." Yet in spite of this cultural war over the music that inhabited black churches, in just a few decades black gospel transformed from a marginalized musical curiosity into a thriving cultural industry.

While black gospel music is now a distinct musical genre with recognizable boundaries, and is popular both inside and outside of the black church, this was not always the case. At the turn of the twentieth century, several cultural streams were converging into a unique musical blend in the small storefront churches of the Afro-

Pentecostal tradition (also known as the Holiness-Pentecostal tradition<sup>3</sup>) and had yet to converge on the larger world of established black churches.

At this point, the music did not even hold a firm name yet. The term "gospel music" was already in use, but not to describe the genre that would become black gospel. Scholar Melva Wilson Costen followed the phrase "gospel music" back to an 1873 advertisement for an upcoming revival in Sunderland, England, which proclaimed that the famous American evangelist Dwight Moody would preach the gospel while his musical counterpart, Ira Sankey, would sing the gospel. A year later, the term "gospel songs" appeared in print, used as a title by Philip P. Bliss for a collection of new hymns and tunes sung at revivals.<sup>4</sup> These "gospel songs" grew in popularity among urban revivalists and evangelists, and eventually made their way into the repertoire of white and black Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian congregations. But the music emerging from the Afro-Pentecostal churches was of a different sort, within these congregations often called "sanctified music," spirituals, jubilees, or simply "church songs," or outside

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<sup>3</sup> The Holiness movement emerged in the nineteenth-century and focused on a return to personal piety as the means of sanctification. African Americans, like evangelist Jarena Lee and pastor Charles Price Jones, played a significant role in developing the Holiness movement, helping to establish several black denominations, like the Church of Christ Holiness. Amos Yong explained, "members of this movement laid the foundations for twentieth-century Pentecostalism by reincorporating John Wesley's concept of entire sanctification into a personal spirituality and piety, which [Holiness members] sensed was missing in their churches" (2). For more on the Holiness movement, see Amos Yong and Estrela Alexander, *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Costen, *In Spirit and in Truth*, 80. Originally in Sankey, *My life and the story of the Gospel hymns*, 50.

of the church "holy roller" songs, and eventually "Dorseys" after the ubiquity of Thomas Dorsey's music in the 1930s.<sup>5</sup>

This new music not only marched under several names, but grew from several influences as well. In her seminal article on black gospel music, Pearl Williams-Jones, scholar and gospel musician, argued that black gospel was a "synthesis of West African and African American music, dance, poetry, and drama." In her book *Saints in Exile*, scholar Cheryl Sanders proposed that black gospel was inherently a "synthetic art form," a musical fusion of several traditions, including European Protestant hymnody, Negro spirituals, blues, jazz, and eventually rhythm and blues, rap, and classical music.<sup>6</sup> Historian Lawrence Levine explained that blues masters like Charley Patton and Blind Lemon Jefferson "recorded religious songs alongside blues tunes," contending that "the styles were indistinguishable." "Conversely," he argued, "the recordings of such sacred singers as Arizona Dranes and Blind Willie Johnson and such groups as the Cotton Top Mountain Sanctified Singers... were commonly marked by the rocking, driving beat that characterized the blues and jazz of the period."<sup>7</sup> Black gospel music, then, emerged as an amalgamation of several concurrent musical worlds.

Black gospel also reflected the trials and tribulations of African American urban life. For Williams-Jones, black gospel represented a "body of urban contemporary black

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<sup>5</sup> Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 457.

<sup>6</sup> Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 74.

<sup>7</sup> Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 179.

religious music of rural folk origins which [was] a celebration of the Christian experience of salvation and hope."<sup>8</sup> Anthropologist Joyce Marie Jackson agreed with black gospel's urban nature, arguing that it reflected "the concerns of urban life, replaced the rural traditions, such as the folk spiritual, and gave a sense of pride and hope to those who had recently uprooted themselves in pursuit of a dream that seemed increasingly difficult to attain."<sup>9</sup> In a similar vein, Harvey Cox argued that both Jazz and early Afro-Pentecostal music, the black gospel prototype, were two sides of the same coin, both emerging from the "distinctly African American experience of resisting oppression through exuberant worship,"<sup>10</sup> oppression that African Americans not only experienced in the antebellum slavery of the South, but also in the social and economic injustice of the post-bellum migration north.<sup>11</sup>

These "amalgamated sounds"<sup>12</sup>—the fusion of slave spirituals and white Protestant hymnody, combined with the emotional angst of the blues and the

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<sup>8</sup> Williams-Jones, "Afro-American Gospel Music," 376.

<sup>9</sup> Jackson, "The Changing Nature of Gospel Music," 189.

<sup>10</sup> Cox, *Fire from heaven*, 145.

<sup>11</sup> Black gospel music and its musical origins resisted oppression via both lyrics and musical structures. Black spiritual and gospel lyrics often focused on the pursuit of freedom from slavery, called on the future justice that God would provide to make right all the wrongs of black slavery and white oppression, and even declared, against the dehumanizing force of American slavery, that God had made African Americans in the image of God. Further, black musical structures, from complex rhythms to musical scales outside of the European tradition, testified to the rich African musical heritage that African Americans preserved, even in the face of the cultural genocide that the American slave trade fueled. For more on black music's resistance to oppression, see James H Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992); Mary Ellison, *Lyrical Protest: Black Music's Struggle Against Discrimination* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1989); or Frank Kofsky, *Black Nationalism & the Revolution in Music* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970).

<sup>12</sup> Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 179.

syncopated rhythms of jazz — first emerged in the storefront Afro-Pentecostal churches that dotted the urban landscape of early twentieth-century America. Historian Eileen Southern called these "folk churches,"<sup>13</sup> congregations that inherited "the musical practices of the slave invisible church" and embraced "the hand clapping, foot stomping, call-and-response performance, rhythmic complexities, persistent beat, melodic improvisation, heterophonic textures, percussive accompaniments, and ring shouts" that marked such music.<sup>14</sup> Jackson agreed, arguing that this physical behavior — "hand-clapping, foot-stomping, and other body movements that had been integral performance practices of the folk spiritual" — became the foundation for the black gospel performance style, and found itself at home in Afro-Pentecostal churches.<sup>15</sup>

Folk churches were mostly attended by lower and lower-middle-class folk who were primarily interested in transcendent encounters with the Holy Spirit, experiences of movement, volume, and emotional expression that pulled them out of the difficulties of daily life and into the communion of the saints, allowing them to worship a God of power. For many poor blacks, surviving in post-bellum segregated America was as hard as surviving in the slavery of the antebellum south. The mass migration to the urban north created a disorienting new world for blacks, one that required a new religion and

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<sup>13</sup> For Southern, folk churches included Primitive Baptists (Old Baptist or "Hard Shell" Baptist), Free Will Baptists, individual congregations of the Missionary Baptist Church, Pentecostal, Holiness and Sanctified Churches (what became Church of the Living God, the Church of God in Christ, and the Church of Christ, Holiness), and a few AME and CME congregations.

<sup>14</sup> Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 453.

<sup>15</sup> Jackson, "The Changing Nature of Gospel Music," 189.

a new kind of church. And it was in these new churches, scholar Bob Darden argued, that "refugees [who worked] twelve-hour days, six days a week in the jobs that white America refused to do" could find dignity among the fellow poor or exercise authority in the Spirit.<sup>16</sup> As poor black migrants confronted suffering together in these new storefront churches, they reached back to the survival mechanisms they had employed in the antebellum south. "African Americans," Joyce Jackson argued, "confronted their difficulties through the process of consciously recreating rituals, continuing certain performance practices, and maintaining those values and aesthetics which were at the focal point of their mental and physical survival in the rural south."<sup>17</sup> It was no surprise, then, that they "reached back to the traditions of the slave past and out to the rhythms of the secular black musical world around them."<sup>18</sup> So much so that at times this early gospel music was indistinguishable from the secular sound of the blues or jazz: "the call-and-response, rhythmic vitality, musical density, predilection for duple meters, syncopation, improvisation, and 'bent note' scale were all present." The only distinguishing element was the use of sacred lyrics.<sup>19</sup>

As Afro-Pentecostals brought the sounds of ragtime, blues and jazz into the church, they also often brought the accompanying instruments: drums, tambourine, triangle, guitar, upright bass, saxophone, trumpet, trombones, and anything else that felt

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<sup>16</sup> Darden, *People Get Ready!*, 138.

<sup>17</sup> Jackson, "The Changing Nature of Gospel Music," 189.

<sup>18</sup> Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 180.

<sup>19</sup> Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 457.

right in the Spirit.<sup>20</sup> Organs and pianos—though they were used in the "dignified," wealthier churches—were not shunned in the folk churches, though they were often expensive instruments that lay beyond the budget of many small storefront congregations. When money was an issue and instruments could not be purchased, folk churches simply sang *a cappella*, channeling the dynamic power of the congregational voice for worship. Famous gospel singer Mahalia Jackson recounted the power of the combined instrumentation and voices in the Afro-Pentecostal church:

These people had no choir and no organ. They used the drum, the cymbal, the tambourine, and the steel triangle. Everybody in there sang and they clapped and stamped their feet and sang with their whole bodies. They had a beat, a powerful beat which we held onto from slavery days, and their music was so strong and expressive it used to bring tears to my eyes.<sup>21</sup>

For black Pentecostal and Holiness churches, the Holy Spirit did not discriminate against these musical mediums, as long as their use was directed to the worship of the Lord. They looked to Psalm 150, which called for praise with the trumpet, the harp, the timbrel and dance, stringed instruments and organs, and loud cymbals.<sup>22</sup> As far as they were concerned, any instrument and sound could be captured for the purpose of worship. This guiding ethos, Levine argued, was articulated later by a church patriarch

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<sup>20</sup> After the Spanish American war, a surplus of army band instruments provided affordable instrumentation in cities like New Orleans. Organs and pianos—though they were used in the "dignified," wealthier churches—were not shunned in the folk churches, but they were often too expensive for the budget of many small storefront congregations. Many folk churches simply sang *a cappella*, channeling the dynamic power of the congregational voice.

<sup>21</sup> Jackson, *Movin' on Up*, 32. Quoted in Jackson, "The Changing Nature of Gospel Music," 189.

<sup>22</sup> Darden, *People Get Ready!*, 140.

who riffed on Martin Luther: "The devil should not be allowed to keep all this good rhythm."<sup>23</sup>

But most middle-class, established black denominations<sup>24</sup> were happy to let the devil keep all of it. They scorned early gospel music because it reeked of the blue notes and jazz beats of the late-night saloon, which had no place in the church.<sup>25</sup> But it was also rejected because its expressiveness hailed to slavery times and its folk instrumentation signaled the "primitive" behavior of uneducated, poor blacks.<sup>26</sup> These middle-class denominations and churches "sought respectability by turning their backs on the past," Levine argued, "banning the shout, discouraging enthusiastic religion, and adopting more sedate hymns and refined, concertized versions of the spirituals."<sup>27</sup> Middle-class blacks were fighting for upward mobility in a social and economic world controlled by whites, so for many, the best course of action was to gain respectability in the dominant culture by dressing, acting, and worshipping more like whites. In her research, Johari Jabir found the same situation, contending that in Chicago the black church was nothing short of an institution of respectability. "In this role," Jabir argued, "the church functioned as a black Protestant project, one that witnessed black church

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<sup>23</sup> Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 180.

<sup>24</sup> The African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the National Baptist Convention, and black Presbyterian, Congregational, and Episcopal churches all held similar middle-class dispositions and values, particularly when it came to a church culture of respectability.

<sup>25</sup> Burnim, "The Black Gospel Music Tradition," 150.

<sup>26</sup> Boyer, "A Comparative Analysis of Traditional and Contemporary Gospel Music," 144.

<sup>27</sup> Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 179-180.



choirs, under the direction of classically trained musicians, performing a mastery of European classical choral music and arranged spirituals,"<sup>28</sup> music that would register as "white" and thus provide a good name for the black community and its aspirations for upward mobility.

This aversion to "undesirable practices," as Irene Jackson termed it, had a long history in black churches. Before the organ even became a standard instrument for accompanying congregational singing in the mid-nineteenth century, black clergy were urging their congregants to avoid a "highly embellished vocal line." Singing schools emerged that promoted the "regular" or "correct" singing style, "singing by note." And while there was little opposition to "singing by note" among black Episcopalians in the Northeast, pastor Daniel Alexander Payne had to warn his A.M.E. Congregation against "clapping and stamping feet in a ridiculous and heathenish way," a religious expression that he deemed "unenlightened."<sup>29</sup> As a result, by the post-bellum period, music in the black Episcopal churches had become a "cultivated" or "genteel" tradition,<sup>30</sup> one that many middle-class blacks felt was important to cultivate for the improvement of their social and economic standing.

While the class tension was apparent, the two musical cultures of the established denominations and the folk churches were also competing strategies for survival in a

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<sup>28</sup> Jabir, "On Conjuring Mahalia," 652.

<sup>29</sup> Payne, *Recollections of Seventy Years*, 255–56, 285–86. Quoted in Harvey, *Through the Storm*, 85.

<sup>30</sup> Jackson, "Music Among Blacks in the Episcopal Church," 111, 115-116.

country steeped in racial discrimination and exploitation. Cheryl Sanders labeled these two competing impulses as "quietistic" and "lively." The quietistic outlook for worship insisted that everything was "scripted, read, and timed by restricting rhythm and repetition, especially in singing, or by direct intervention or verbal rebuke by authorized figures such as ushers or preachers," while the lively outlook for worship proclaimed, "we are not here for form or fashion, we are here to praise the Lord!"<sup>31</sup> Though they offered competing perspectives, both outlooks had their integrity. Theologian Harold Dean Trulear defended the quietistic worship that was so common in black middle-class churches as a "legitimate ritual verification of a particular concept of humanity." "If being human means to be dignified and intellectual, under control and logical, all patterns of behavior that this society has said Blacks are incapable of," Trulear insisted, "then these [quietistic] congregations will model these ideas of human virtue in the context of worship." To reject this aspect of humanity as legitimate, Trulear contended, would "eliminate people such as Du Bois and Daniel Payne from the Black religious world."<sup>32</sup> At the same time, Mellonee Burnim argued, black gospel music was not, "as many in the past have contended, the mere feeble attempt by the 'untrained' and 'unlearned' to express themselves by whatever haphazard means possible." Instead, the concept of humanity at the core of black gospel music formed "the cornerstone of all

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<sup>31</sup> Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 61-62.

<sup>32</sup> Trulear, "The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow," 96-97. Quoted in Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 62.

aspects of black culture." Black gospel music, then, was a "conglomerate of black modes of speech, music, and dance, all under the influential veil of religion."<sup>33</sup>

If to reject the "quietistic" style of worship was to reject a legitimate expression of humanity, then to do the opposite and reject "lively" worship was to do the same, and as gospel music developed in Afro-Pentecostal churches, it became harder for "mainstream" established black churches to do just that. While "sanctified music" was originally confined to Afro-Pentecostal worship services, regular attendees were not only Pentecostals. "Although Pentecostal churches rarely had middle-class congregations in the early years," Southern explained, "their worship services attracted black folk from all socio-economic ranks in the same way that concerts did; people often went simply to 'listen to the music' and to enjoy the glorious sounds of the instrumental ensembles."<sup>34</sup> And it had a deep impact on future black cultural leaders as well.

Langston Hughes recalled his first experience with Afro-Pentecostal music as a teenager:

I was entranced by their stepped-up rhythms, tambourines, hand clapping, and uninhibited dynamics, rivaled only by Ma Rainey singing the blues at the old Monogram Theater... The music of these less formal Negro churches early took hold of me, moved me and thrilled me.<sup>35</sup>

Jazz bassist Pops Foster remembered the strong connection between sanctified music and jazz:

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<sup>33</sup> Burnim, "The Black Gospel Music Tradition," 165.

<sup>34</sup> Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*, 459.

<sup>35</sup> Langston Hughes, "Gospel Singing," newspaper clipping dated Oct. 27, 1963, in Music Division, Library of Congress. Quoted in Jackson, "The Changing Nature of Gospel Music," 189.

Their music was something. They'd clap their hands and bang a tambourine and sing. Sometimes they had a piano player, and he'd really played a whole lot of jazz... They really played some great jazz on those hymns they played.<sup>36</sup>

Legendary blues guitarist T-Bone Walker recalled a similar experience:

The first time I ever heard a boogie-woogie piano was the first time I went to church. That was the Holy Ghost Church in Dallas, Texas. That boogie-woogie was a kind of blues, I guess. Then the preacher used to preach in a bluesy tone sometimes. You even got the congregation yelling 'Amen' all the time when his preaching would stir them up-his preaching and his bluesy tone.<sup>37</sup>

Though many beyond the Holiness-Pentecostal fold enjoyed the music, the weekly worship experience was too far beyond the cultural norm for many spectators. "At first," Harold Boyer explained, "because Holiness congregations waved their arms in exaggerated fashion at moments of ecstasy, shouted (executed a holy dance), and on occasion fainted or went into trances, few people sought membership in their congregations."<sup>38</sup> But those same people still liked the music. And by the 1920s, they did not have to attend a Pentecostal church to hear their gospel. Black Pentecostal recording artists—like Sallie Sanders, Ford McGee, and Arizona Dranes—expanded the reach of early black gospel on the radio and in concert, introducing to the "broader religious community their musical culture, which incorporated the New Orleans jazz style and

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<sup>36</sup> Foster et al., *Pops Foster*, 20-21. Quoted in Jackson, "The Changing Nature of Gospel Music," 189.

<sup>37</sup> Shapiro and Hentoff, *Hear Me Talkin' to Ya*, 247. Quoted in Jackson, "The Changing Nature of Gospel Music," 189.

<sup>38</sup> Boyer, *How Sweet the Sound*, 41.

ragtime-style piano accompaniment and was impervious to distinctions between sacred and secular music."<sup>39</sup>

Early black gospel music made its first inroads into the mainstream black denominations with the publication of *Gospel Pearls*, the first collection of songs to use the term "gospel." Published by the National Baptist Convention in 1921, *Gospel Pearls* revealed that Baptists were softening their stance against Pentecostal music. Yet softening did not mean wholesale embrace. The music committee that had selected the songs for inclusion in *Gospel Pearls* did not endorse the raucous rhythm and wailing styles of Arizona Dranes and Sallie Sanders, but instead promoted "a new and different style of singing that thought to capture the ecstasy of the Holiness church singers but without the excess." "Excess" here meant pushing voices to the extremes of the register (vocal distortion) with "a volume usually reserved for outdoor song" (wailing), interjecting phrases into the text ("yes, Lord!," "Hallelujah!," "Thank you, Jesus!"), hand clapping, and spurts of shouting. Instead, the *Gospel Pearls* style "leaned heavily on the nineteenth-century Baptist lining hymn tradition of singing songs in a slow tempo,"

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<sup>39</sup> Daniels, "Navigating the Territory," 49. The shape and boundaries of gospel music as a genre were particularly fluid in its early development. Scholar Karen Kossie-Chernyshev argued that black gospel's development reflected "the impact of migration, urbanization, commercialization, and secularization" on black communities and their songwriters. Black gospel combined the musical and lyrical structures of 19<sup>th</sup> century gospel songs (sung at revival camp meetings), blues, and jazz with the traditions of the slave spirituals, the "exuberant worship style of plantation praise houses, where body percussion, the shout, and personal testimony were common." This musical fusion emerged in black Holiness-Pentecostal churches, who were not afraid to "use upbeat rhythms and creative instrumentation, including vocals, guitar, drums, and piano, and a preference for the Hammond organ." See Karen Kossie-Chernyshev, *Encyclopedia of African American Music*, s.v. "Gospel Music," 357-361.

foregoing the up-tempo Pentecostal style. With the publication of *Gospel Pearls*, the National Baptist Convention brought some respectability to the newly termed "gospel music," helping it cross denominational music boundaries and land in the pews of Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal churches by the 1930s. But the adoption of *Gospel Pearls* in mainstream churches also meant that black Baptists no longer had to attend Pentecostal churches in order to hear the sanctified sound, unless they wanted the "shouting kind of gospel," in which case "they still had to go to the source." But for those who wanted just a little sway and swing, they could now find it in their own churches.<sup>40</sup>

Still, before the 1930s the influence of the sanctified sound only went so far. The quartet movement of the 1920s, which served as the established "mainstream" form of black religious entertainment, did its best to avoid the sanctified sound and to distinguish itself from Afro-Pentecostal music. The black quartets, primarily composed of Baptists, had developed their own singing style by the late 1910s, one that was "less frenzied and considered more reined" than the gritty sanctified music. While Afro-Pentecostal music embraced a varied instrumentation, the black quartets remained faithful to the *a cappella* tradition. In addition, they avoided the "most exaggerated vocal techniques" of early black gospel music in order not to "expose themselves to the ridicule that was heaped on and associated with Pentecostal/Holiness singers, who were often described as wild and savage." Encouraged by their denominational leaders, the

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<sup>40</sup> Boyer, *How Sweet the Sound*, 42-43.

quartet singers endeavored to "elevate the musical standards of the denomination." The result was a performance style that towed the melody line, sparsely used stock interpolations like "yes, Lord," or "thank you, Jesus," highlighted trained vocals, leaned towards slow songs, and featured a "dignified" demeanor—"standing straight and tall in one location with little use of the arms in gesturing."<sup>41</sup>

By the 1930s, the Spirit had carried the sanctified sound beyond the walls of the storefront chapel. For the quartet singers, it came from their own fans, who responded with emotional enthusiasm, pushing the quartets to a more emotionally demonstrative style. This style included rhythmic accentuation, swaying, slapping the thigh, and no transition to falsetto, or to a head voice.<sup>42</sup> But the quartet audiences responded this way only because Afro-Pentecostal music—gospel music—had moved into the mainstream. This was in part the result of the widespread adoption of *Gospel Pearls* and the radio exposure of several Pentecostal musicians, like Sallie Sanders and Arizona Dranes. But their influence paled in comparison to that of the "father of gospel," Thomas Dorsey.

A native Georgian and son of a Baptist minister, Thomas Dorsey started his musical career in Chicago as "Georgia Tom" after World War I, where he served as the blues pianist for famed blues singer Ma Rainey. Yet after a series of nervous breakdowns in the mid-1920s, Dorsey decided to dedicate his songwriting to the Lord and set out to

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 36, 30.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 30, 32-33.

introduce "gospel blues" to black church audiences. Of course, the going was slow. As Jabir explained, Dorsey was "initially penalized for [his] bluesy sensibilities and [his] determination to bring a sense of swing to black church music," because it was "considered a threat to the black Protestant project of citizenship and respectability."<sup>43</sup>

Though they later teamed up to promote gospel music in the late 1930s, Dorsey's fellow Southern transplant Mahalia Jackson shared his struggles in the windy city. Jackson was subjected to rejection and attempts to change her singing style in order to accommodate a more "respectable" approach. At one singing lesson, the teacher stopped her mid-singing and told her to stop hollering: "the way you sing is not a credit to the Negro race. You've got to learn to sing songs so that white people can understand them." At one church event, a minister denounced her for her undignified swaying, shouting, use of hands, feet, and hips.<sup>44</sup> But her response was just as heated:

How can you sing of Amazing Grace? How can you sing prayerfully of heaven and earth and all God's wonders without using your hands? I want my hands... my feet... my whole body to say all that is in me. I say, "Don't let the devil steal the beat from the Lord! The Lord doesn't like us to act dead. If you feel it, tap your feet a little—dance to the glory of the Lord."<sup>45</sup>

So Jackson encountered resistance from established congregations, but she did not give up. Instead, she cut her teeth in the small Afro-Pentecostal churches that had no qualms with her soulful style:

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<sup>43</sup> Jabir, "On Conjuring Mahalia," 652.

<sup>44</sup> Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 184.

<sup>45</sup> Jackson, *Movin' on Up*, 66. Quoted in Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 184.



In those days the big colored churches didn't want me and they didn't let me in. I had to make it my business to pack the little basement-hall congregations and storefront churches and get their respect that way. When they began to see the crowds I drew, the big churches began to sit up and take notice.<sup>46</sup>

The gospel crowds really started building for Jackson and Dorsey after Dorsey's 1932 gospel breakthrough hit, "Precious Lord, Take My Hand." Written after the tragic loss of his wife and infant son, Dorsey explained how the inspired song came to him:

There in my solitude, I began to browse over the keys like a gentle herd pasturing on tender turf. Something happened to me there. I had a strange feeling inside. A sudden calm—a quiet stillness. As my fingers began to manipulate over keys, words began to fall in place on the melody like drops of water falling from the crevices of a rock.<sup>47</sup>

Levine noted that Dorsey's account of inspiration paralleled earlier accounts from slaves, who had insisted that the Holy Spirit had revealed their spirituals. And building off the inspiration and momentum of "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," Dorsey joined forces with Pentecostal singer Sallie Martin in founding the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses in 1933, giving their gospel music a wider audience and an institutional advocate that promoted gospel choirs in black churches. Dorsey's gospel songs were then carried further afield by several Pentecostal radio hosts, including Bishop Eva Lambert in New York City and Elder Lucy Smith and Bishop William Roberts in Chicago, who brought Dorsey's gospel music into thousands of homes.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Jackson, *Movin' on Up*, 66. Quoted in Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 183.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 182. Also see Berryman, "The Precious Lord Story," for a fuller account.

<sup>48</sup> Daniels, "Navigating the Territory," 49.

By the late 1930s, gospel music, in some form, had seeped into most black churches, while Afro-Pentecostalism "had become entrenched" in the black community.<sup>49</sup> The sanctified music of the Afro-Pentecostal tradition had evolved into black gospel, and from there "crossed over" into the established black denominations.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, black Pentecostal recording artists like Arizona Dranes spread the sanctified sound over the radio waves, helping prepare the wider black religious community for Dorsey's later compositions that fused blues and jazz musical structures with religious lyrics.<sup>51</sup> *Gospel Pearls* then introduced early gospel music to mainstream black congregations by downplaying the "excesses" of the Pentecostal style of singing while the jubilee quartets slowly started adopting aspects of the Pentecostal performance style. But finally pioneers like Dorsey, Martin, and Jackson moved black gospel music and the Pentecostal musical sensibilities and dispositions that accompanied it beyond the class barrier and into an eventual respected position within the established black denominations. Lawrence Levine explained:

They helped bring back into black church music the sounds and the structure of the folk spirituals, work songs, and nineteenth-century cries and hollers; they borrowed freely from the ragtime, blues, and jazz of the secular black world; they helped to keep alive the stylistic continuum that has characterized Afro-American music in the United States.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Boyer, *How Sweet the Sound*, 18.

<sup>50</sup> Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 181.

<sup>51</sup> Daniels, "Navigating the Territory," 49.

<sup>52</sup> Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 185.

Dorsey and Jackson were not Pentecostals, but Baptists. *Gospel Pearls* had been published by the National Baptist Convention and embraced by black Baptists and Methodists alike. The jubilee quartets had developed their sound within Baptist circles. In short, while black gospel music had emerged from the Afro-Pentecostal church, by the 1920s and 1930s, it was popularized by non-Pentecostals, particularly Baptists. Moving beyond its source, gospel music evolved and took on the cultural trappings of its new environs. But even though it often lost its rough edges, black gospel still maintained a deep connection to a Pentecostal sensibility that championed the union between rhythm and the body, the utilitarian embrace of instrumentation that could aid worship, and the singer's ability to leverage the affective power of song to move an audience to emotional participation.

## ***2.2 Parallels Between Black Gospel and Contemporary Worship Music***

### **2.2.1 Parallels in Genre Development**

Black gospel music emerged and developed in the early twentieth century in two ways that paralleled the later emergence and development of contemporary worship music (CWM) in the late twentieth century: through genre development and tensions over the sacred/secular divide.

Black gospel and CWM shared a similar "genre trajectory," moving from marginalized, local music scenes towards industrialization and eventual commercialization. Sociologists Richard Peterson and Jennifer Lena's work on the types

and trajectories of music genres is helpful here, as it provides us with a typology to compare the development of black gospel and CWM as music genres. Peterson and Lena found that most popular music genres can be classified into four different types: avant-garde, scene-based, industry-based, and traditionalist. If they survived and thrived, most music genres developed over time from the avant-garde type to the industrial type or even beyond, to the traditionalist type. Avant-garde genres began small with a dozen participants, were leaderless, often fractious, and usually coalesced around a shared effort to create music that was different from what was currently offered.

According to Peterson and Lena, avant-gardists claimed that "prevailing genres [were] predictable and emotionless and, flaunting the fact that they [could not] play instruments in conventional ways, [made] what others [considered] loud and harsh sounds." Further, avant-garde genres often melded different genres in order to create something new.<sup>53</sup>

Like most popular music genres, both black gospel and CWM began as avant-garde genres. As we have seen, black gospel music emerged as a fusion of blues, jazz, ragtime, Protestant hymnody, and the slave spirituals among a small cadre of storefront Afro-Pentecostal churches. Black Pentecostals embraced the music because it offered something that other church music could not. Anna Wilson of Rosedale, Mississippi was convicted that only worship with the shout had the power to reach God: "If you don't

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<sup>53</sup> Lena and Peterson, "Classification as Culture," 701-03.

stomp in the religion, it won't get no further than the ceiling."<sup>54</sup> Gospel singer Willie Mae Ford Smith explained that sanctified music included the use of sanctified bodies: "I'll sing with my hands, with my feet... when I got saved, my feet got saved too—I believe we should use everything we got."<sup>55</sup> And even Thomas Dorsey warned against gospel music losing its distinctive movement and emotion: "Don't let the movement go out of the music... Black music calls for movement! It calls for feeling. Don't let it get away."<sup>56</sup> All of these testimonies defined and established black gospel as an answer to the problem of lifeless, "quietistic" church music. Finally, early gospel music was both "loud and harsh sounds" to many ears, particularly middle-class African Americans invested in cultivating respectability via quietistic worship and whites that had racial or socioeconomic disdain for black Pentecostals.

CWM shared a similar beginning as an avant-garde genre, though at first glance this was not obvious. In fact, Lena and Peterson contended that contemporary Christian music (CCM) (of which CWM is often considered a sub-genre) skipped the avant-garde type and began as a scene-based type. This was because Lena and Peterson approached their study with a bias towards musical sounds. When approached from a secular musical perspective, CWM was not avant-garde, as it provided no new fusion of sounds into a unique musical form. But it was an avant-garde genre in terms of its lyrical

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<sup>54</sup> Puckett, "Religious Beliefs of Whites and Negroes," 26. Quoted in Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 184.

<sup>55</sup> Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound*, 224-25.

<sup>56</sup> Dorsey, "Gospel Music," 190-91. Quoted in Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 184.

content, providing new themes and phrasings for rock and folk music that focused on praising God. More important, from a liturgical music perspective (as opposed to a secular music perspective), it was certainly an avant-garde genre, one that introduced a host of new sounds and instrumentation into the sanctuary and that even fused previous "genres" (in this case liturgical genres of hymn texts, psalms, biblical doxologies) into new hybrids. It began among a small cadre of individuals who saw the church music around them as "predictable and emotionless," who could not play instruments in conventional ways (think "rock piano" versus "hymnal piano"), and who produced music that, again, many considered a loud and harsh noise, whether it was fellow believers in the sanctuary or believers in other liturgical traditions.

Both black gospel and CWM moved from avant-garde to scene-based genres. Lena and Peterson described scene-based genres as predominantly local in their orientation, but large enough to support independent record labels, scene-based fanzines, and local radio stations. Scene-based genres also often had "nested rings of varying commitment to the genre ideal," where the artists and producers of the distinctive characteristics of the genre were at the center, a ring of activists around them, then the ring of dedicated fans, and finally the outer ring of "tourists" who were

spectators of the scene.<sup>57</sup> Finally, scene-based genres often took advantage of nascent technologies that allowed for further distribution and popularizing of the genre.

Black gospel developed from an avant-garde genre into a scene-based genre in Chicago in the late 1920s and 1930s with the rising popularity of Arizona Dranes, Thomas Dorsey, Mahalia Jackson, and Sallie Martin. During this scene-based era, gospel music was recorded and distributed on "race records" marketed to African Americans by Victor, Decca, Okeh, Vocalion and others. In 1926, Arizona Dranes recorded Pentecostal music for Okeh Records, becoming the first gospel recording artist. In 1932, Dorsey completed his first gospel recording with Vocalion Records, while in 1937, Mahalia Jackson cut her first record for Decca. Gospel during this era also made its way into several local radio stations and programs. In 1929, Jack Cooper, the first black DJ, began broadcasting early gospel recordings during his "All Negro Hour" on Chicago's WSBC, while in 1934, Chicago's First Church of Deliverance began its weekly church broadcast, which regularly featured gospel tunes, over WIND. Advocate organizations like the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses, though it had "national" in its name, served as a local activist group in Chicago for the promotion of gospel music, while a dedicated fan base grew among black Baptists, Methodists and Pentecostals. Finally, the technological combination of phonographs, electrical recording equipment,

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<sup>57</sup> Lena and Peterson, "Classification as Culture," 703-04.

and broadcast radio provided various avenues of distribution and promotion for early gospel music.

Like black gospel, CWM moved from an avant-garde genre to a scene-based one with the rise of records and a fan base in the 1970s and 1980s, all located in California. In the early 1970s, Chuck Smith, the pastor at Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California, launched Maranatha! Music as an outreach program to promote Calvary Chapel's in-house bands, record their music, and distribute their records and song sheets. Smith explained that the bands, mostly populated by young musicians that attended Calvary Chapel, would travel hundreds of miles just to play for a handful of people and a fistful of dollars, which was unsustainable. Smith figured that Calvary Chapel could help them record albums to take with them on tour, so that "at least they would get enough money to get gas and food to support the ministry because the churches were really taking advantage of them, not really compensating them."<sup>58</sup> Maranatha! Music eventually grew into a major record label and music publisher for the CWM industry. Like black gospel, early CWM had its artists, like the Maranatha! Singers at Calvary Chapel or John Wimber and Brian Doerksen in the Vineyard fellowship. Individuals like Chuck Smith and Chuck Fromm and institutions like Maranatha! Music and Mercy Records (which eventually became Vineyard Music) served as advocates for the scene, while dedicated fan bases developed in Calvary Chapel and Vineyard churches. Finally, "tourists"

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<sup>58</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 218.



emerged in the non-Charismatic churches that would dabble in early CWM in their youth groups or evangelistic outreach events. Also like black gospel, early CWM took advantage of cutting edge cassette tape duplicators, which "provided a new form of mass media communication for an audience that developed around the enthusiasms of the movement."<sup>59</sup>

Finally, both black gospel and CWM developed into industrial-based genres. Lena and Peterson explained that industrial-based genres formed around the industrial corporation. Industrial firms—multinational record companies and media conglomerates—now shaped the genre, contracting singers and musicians for their services, marketing them to genre-targeted audiences, and distributing their records via national retail outlets. Record companies utilized charting metrics to advertise and promote the genre, while also pressuring artists to conform to the established conventions of the genre in order to appeal to a mass audience.

Black gospel industrialized in the 1950s and 1960s with the rise of gospel stars like Aretha Franklin and James Cleveland. Franklin signed with Columbia Records in the 1960s and found himself regularly featured at the top of the charts. Artists such as Aretha Franklin and Sam Cooke, who signed with RCA records, also helped record labels design a more secular, smoothed-over version of gospel music that was marketed as "Soul." Soul music lacked the religiosity of gospel lyrics, but maintained a similar

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 247.

musical style, and thus had a wider appeal for mass audiences than gospel music did. As major labels like Columbia Records and RCA Records got involved in the genre, gospel music made its way into retail stores and spawned several sub genres that could be further marketed to more targeted audiences, like soul, contemporary gospel, and other forms of R&B.

CWM industrialized in the 1990s and 2000s as part of a larger industrialization of CCM. Major media companies, like EMI, bought out Christian record labels, like Sparrow Records. In 1995, marketing research firm Nielsen began using its Soundscan service to track CCM sales, which *Billboard* utilized in order to chart Christian music. A similar development came for CWM in churches with Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI), a charting firm that developed a royalties infrastructure for CWM songwriters. CCLI industrialized Sunday morning contemporary worship services by providing new revenue streams for worship songwriters, collected from churches that used CWM songs in their services. During this same period, CWM labels, like Maranatha! Music and Integrity Media, began distributing their music with major labels, like Warner Music Group and Sony BMG respectively. Like black gospel, CWM spawned its own world of sub genres in the 2000s, including "modern worship," "folk worship," and "emerging worship."

Lena and Peterson argued that as genres became industrial-based, the music, the musicians, and even the signs of group affiliation often became battlegrounds for

authenticity. Black gospel and CWM were no different. Fans and artists alike defended the "purity" of black gospel or CWM's sound or social outlook against the homogenizing hand of the corporate record label, which attempted to "smooth over" the genre's music for wider appeal in the pop market.<sup>60</sup>

For black gospel, this discourse focused on lost authenticity, the nostalgia for a previous era when gospel singers lived by the words they sang and performed their craft for ministry, not for money. This critique attracted enough followers to create a traditionalist genre out of industrialized black gospel, where the energy of the genre focused on maintaining the musical, performative, and social conventions that had marked gospel earlier in the twentieth century, as a ministry-based music scene that preached the good news. Lena tracked the inception of black gospel's traditionalist period to 1968, when fans and artists began focusing on "conferences, reunion tours, and fund-raisers for ailing artists." Gospel superstars like James Cleveland hosted conventions that focused on educating singers and choir directors in the traditions of black gospel, while older artists, like Rosetta Tharpe and Mahalia Jackson, were "rediscovered" and venerated as founders.<sup>61</sup>

Because CWM did not begin until the 1970s, the tensions over authenticity have not seen enough of a past to give birth to a new traditionalist genre. But plenty of heated

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<sup>60</sup> Lena and Peterson, "Classification as Culture," 705-06.

<sup>61</sup> Lena, *Banding Together*, 73.

commentary developed alongside the industrialization of CWM in the late 1990s and 2000s. Both worshippers and worship leaders became concerned with the focus of the music they were singing in their churches. Matt Redman's famous "The Heart of Worship" voiced the concern that the music—and all of the emotional energy and cultural conventions that went with it—was overshadowing the original intention, which was to focus on God: "When the music fades, all is stripped away, and I simply come / Longing just to bring something that's of worth that will bless your heart / I'm coming back to the heart of worship, and it's all about You, Jesus."<sup>62</sup> In a similar vein, worship artist Israel Houghton, in his book *A Deeper Level*, worried about the authentic intentions of a growing worship music industry:

The Christian music industry is now experiencing a tremendous influx of musicians flocking to worship. Why? Because it sells. Worship CDs used to be relegated to a little shelf in the back of the music display. But today, they are big business... Because of that, I'm afraid it is attracting some musicians who are primarily into their music and simply see worship as "the next hot thing."<sup>63</sup>

Finally, the late Michael Spencer, an influential Christian blogger in the 2000s, decried the commercial nature of CCM and its sub genre, CWM:

CCM is a commercial enterprise, owned largely by secular corporate interests, and certainly driven by the values of the entertainment industry more than those of the church. It is part of the entertainment culture, and only partially related to the culture of classic, orthodox Christian tradition... As an industry, it has no accountability to the larger church and only rarely any accountability to the local church (with some refreshing exceptions.) It has no standards of doctrinal orthodoxy, and resists any notion that its lyrics may at times promote error and

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<sup>62</sup> "The Heart of Worship." Words and music by Matt Redman. CCLI #2296522. © 1999 Thankyou Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing).

<sup>63</sup> Houghton, *A Deeper Level*, 103.

even heresy. Its only accountabilities are to itself, and to its own commercial interests.<sup>64</sup>

Both black gospel and CWM shared similarities in their development because they were both genres that attempted to connect the world of secular music to the liturgical space of the church. For black gospel, it baptized the secular sounds and rhythms of blues and jazz into the worship life of the Afro-Pentecostal church and eventually the black church at large. But while the music and instrumentation had been borrowed from the secular world, the intention of the music remained focused on praising the Lord. When industrialization threatened that purpose in the 1960s, gospel purists called for a return to the authentic origins of gospel that were intentionally steeped in praise. Likewise, CWM began by fusing rock and folk instruments and musical conventions with lyrics focused on worshipping God and loving Jesus. When industrialization in the 1990s and 2000s threatened that focus by shifting it to an industrial concern for profitable homogeneity or emotional spectacle, critics responded with a call to return to "the heart of worship," which was a focus on Jesus.

### **2.2.2 Suitability: The Sacred/Secular Divide**

As established music genres, black gospel and CWM shared a contestation of authenticity, "border skirmishes" that defined the purity of the genres. And while most discourses on authenticity in popular music genres focused on musical or social

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<sup>64</sup> Spencer, "Worship, CCM and the Worship Music Revolution (part One)."

conventions (styles of dress, cultural postures), the wars of authenticity in both black gospel and CWM primarily focused on intentionality: the intentions of song lyrics in focusing on worshipping God and the intentions of an industry that should primarily serve as a support ministry for the worship of the church, not a money-making scheme for record labels.

But black gospel and CWM also shared a deeper contentious discourse, one over the suitability of incorporating secular music and all of its conventions and trappings into the worship life of the church. Before the "sanctified sound" developed in Afro-Pentecostal churches, African Americans had already drawn rigid lines between what music was of the world and what was of the church. Lawrence Levine told the story of young William Handy, who in the 1880s had saved his money and bought a guitar. But his father, on hearing of his son's new purchase, was incensed: "A guitar! One of the devil's playthings. Take it away. Take it away, I tell you. Get it out of your hands. Whatever possessed you to bring a sinful thing like that into our Christian home? Take it back where it came from." At school, Handy told his teacher that he wanted to be a musician. But the teacher informed him that musicians "were idlers, dissipated characters, whisky drinkers, rounders, social pariahs." When his father got wind of young William's vocational preference, he did not mince words: "I'd rather see you in a hearse. I'd rather follow you to the graveyard than to hear that you had become a

musician." Jazz pianist William Henry Joseph Bonaparte Bertholoff Smith, known as Willie "the Lion" Smith, recounted a similar tale from the turn of the twentieth century:

Back in those early days churchgoing Negro people would not stand for ragtime playing; they considered it to be sinful. Part of that feeling was due to the fact that the popular songs you heard played around in the saloons had bawdy lyrics and when you played in a raggy style, folks would right away think of the bad words and all the hell-raising they heard, or had heard about, in the red-light district... Yeah, in the front parlor, where the neighbors could hear your playing, you had to sing the proper religious words and keep that lilting tempo down!

And this animosity towards secular music lived on well into the twentieth century among African Americans. Levine described how, in 1933, pioneering ethnographer John Lomax had to utilize the persuasive powers of the white chaplain and eventually the warden in order to convince a black prisoner to sing the ballad of the boll weevil, for to sing such a godless song was to play with damnation. And in 1937, the Reverend Zema Hill of Nashville's Primitive Baptist Church was accused of heresy when she added a "rhythmic piano" to the choir.<sup>65</sup> Even while black Pentecostals celebrated creative ways to incorporate blues and jazz music into their worship life, black culture often held secular music at arm's length, suspicious of its negative moral associations and influence.

As the "secularization" of black church music reached new heights with gospel music's surge in popularity in the 1930s, reactions surfaced. Several ministers in the city of Chicago denounced Dorsey's "rocking" kind of music and said that it did not belong

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<sup>65</sup> Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 177-179.

in their churches. Sister Rosetta Tharpe moved her shows from churches to ballparks because of objections to her "jazz licks and riffs."<sup>66</sup> But even Dorsey had his own limits. In a 1941 letter published in the *Chicago Defender*, Dorsey defended the necessity of using gospel music in its proper context:

Spirituals should be used only in the church. It not only cheapens the songs for the bands to jazz them, but desecrates and invalidates a thing that is true to our heritage and authentic of our Race... I have written more than three hundred gospel songs and spirituals. I do not object to them being used on the air, but they must not be desecrated or used for dance purposes.<sup>67</sup>

Like Dorsey, gospel singers Sallie Martin and Willie Mae Ford Smith adopted "secular" styles into their vocal craft, but also had no desire to see gospel music performed "apart from the context of worship." For sanctified performers like Martin and Smith, Cheryl Sanders explained, "the selective synthesis of sacred and secular elements in the music [proceeded] according to the principle 'in the world, but not of it.'"<sup>68</sup>

As Sanders saw it, at issue was not the "sacred or secular origin of the particular style or technique being used," but the intentionality of the performers and their results—would the music "encourage emotional release, spirit possession, shouting, conversion experiences?" If the answer was yes, then play on. But if the answer was no,

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<sup>66</sup> Boyer, "A Comparative Analysis of Traditional and Contemporary Gospel Music," 127.

<sup>67</sup> Dorsey, "Gospel Songwriter Attacks All Hot Bands' Swinging Spirituals," Quoted in Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 72.

<sup>68</sup> Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 89.



then the performers were not putting the music to its proper use, not using it in its God-given role of "spiritual formation."<sup>69</sup>

By the late 1950s, black gospel began moving "beyond the walls of the African American church... [walls] that had forbidden performance in non sacred venues." Black gospel's increasing popularity came via radio, recordings, television and theater, and black Christians reconceptualized gospel as an evangelistic tool. The problem, as Clarence Boyer put it, was "how to get the word to the unsaved [when] the unsaved would not come where the word [was] preached and sung." The answer was by taking gospel music to the once-off-limits secular venues, and gospel singers responded in kind, as Mahalia Jackson did when she sang at Carnegie Hall in 1950.<sup>70</sup>

If Cheryl Sanders argued that intentionality and results were what separated the sacred from the secular, gospel from the blues, then Clarence Boyer extended her argument to mood: "it is not the medium in itself that carries the message but how that medium is used and the response it receives... the mood of the performer and the listener determines the effect that the music produces." By highlighting "mood," Boyer acknowledged the affective dimension of gospel music, showing that the communication of meaning and the discourse of suitability extended well beyond lyrical topics or spiritual results. In between the holy intentions of the performer and the

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Boyer, *How Sweet the Sound*, 187-88.

spiritual fruit of the audience lay a broadband of two-way communication that utilized instrumentation, venue, lyrics, body language, vocal timbre, dynamics, and performative conventions to narrate meaning. In other words, black gospel, like any other musical genre, was its own cultural world with a host of channels available to communicate meaning. For gospel and blues, they shared the same musical forms. But the lyrics, the presentation, the delivery and reception were the communication channels that presented different meanings. In their complete package, gospel and the blues presented two different outlooks that were grounded in unique affective dispositions, even though they shared twelve bar progressions and flattened notes.

A similar phenomenon happened with CWM. The musical forms of CWM were indistinguishable from rock, pop, folk and adult contemporary, but the other channels of meaning—lyrics, presentation, delivery and reception—were all critically different. Though the same guitar riffs, drum beats, and vocal timbres could be heard at the club down the street, it only took a few minutes to recognize that for the worship leaders and the enthralled congregants, the rock music in the church communicated something wholly different.

But as in the arguments over suitability in black gospel, there were also congregants in the CWM services who were not enthralled but appalled. As noted earlier, in the 1950s and 1960s, evangelical leaders condemned rock and roll for its

"jungle rhythm," rebellious lyrics, and implicit sensuality.<sup>71</sup> Youth for Christ leader Marlin "Butch" Hardman declared that rock music exerted a physical effect on listeners that was not "in line with the Word of God."<sup>72</sup> And Hardman was just one of many pastors and evangelical leaders who saw rock music as a gateway for licentious activities, whether it was dancing, drinking, or sexual impurity. As CWM grew in popularity in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, critics spilled plenty of ink denouncing it as, at best, a terrible art form and at worst, the work of the devil.<sup>73</sup>

But, just as in black gospel, CWM artists and worship leaders had their own standards of suitability that focused on intentionality. Worship artist Paul Baloche, in a training video on how to execute successful guitar solos in worship music, noted that a good soloist should serve the situation, the song, and the congregation, not focus the attention on his own playing or "making it his moment."<sup>74</sup> In another video, Baloche pondered the fine line between performance and leading worship. "We don't want to make it sound like performing is all bad," Baloche explained, "[because] I think so much of it goes back to the posture of your heart, the condition of your heart."<sup>75</sup> Imagery of the heart was central in the discourse of suitability in CWM, from Baloche's comments to

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<sup>71</sup> See Ayer, "Jungle Madness," 19-21.

<sup>72</sup> Hardman, "The Real Scoop on Rock n' Roll," 10.

<sup>73</sup> Critics arose from all different sides. Pentecostal televangelist and gospel singer Jimmy Swaggart condemned Christian rock in his 1987 book, *Religious Rock 'N' Roll: A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing*. In 1990, Catholic musicologist Thomas Day disparaged the folk music of the Catholic folk mass movement in *Why Catholics Can't Sing*. And former worship leader Dan Lucarini chronicled his exodus from the tainted world of contemporary Christian music in his 2002 book, *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement*.

<sup>74</sup> "Worship Guitar - What NOT to Do When It Comes to Soloing - Paul Baloche and Ben Gowell."

<sup>75</sup> "Paul Baloche - Performance Vs Worship Leading."

Matt Redman's famous worship anthem, "The Heart of the Worship." The defining borders of suitable or "good" worship music often fell on the landscape of the heart—what did the hearts of the worshippers look like? Or the heart of the worship leader? The true heart of worship focused the music on God—loving him, worshipping him, praising him—and not just with lyrics but also with emotional states. For many worshippers, the lyrics and music of a song were made authentic and suitable by the emotional environment they created. That emotional environment, however, was created by far more than lyrics and musical conventions. These were two key components, but just as important was the affective disposition that worship leaders communicated in their performance style, body language and movement, vocal timbre, and facial expressions. Or the context, scenery, or atmosphere of a venue—manipulated by lighting, fog machines, stage props and acoustics. Still, even with an embrace of emotional states in its discourses of suitability, CWM had limits on the emotional experience of worship music. In a short film, prominent progressive evangelical and occasional songwriter Brian McLaren warned against reducing worship to an emotional experience:

It's just a rat race because I meet so many worship leaders who are paid to help people in this, but the people come like with their check list, "I didn't feel... you know, on a scale of zero to ten I only got the feeling to a six today... the Holy Spirit's not here." And they put all this pressure on the worship leader to deliver a certain experience and a certain high and it's just maddening because if the

people start playing that game then they have to whip everybody into a frenzy... It becomes manipulation. It becomes propaganda.<sup>76</sup>

So suitability for CWM, like for black gospel, meant intentionality. But for both, intentionality involved more than lyrics or results. It involved creating affective dispositions that fused textual meaning with emotional states. Singing for the Lord was not enough. One had to present the right heart for worship, to provide an emotional response to God. And that emotional response had to remain the means, not the end.

Black gospel singer Sallie Martin fused all of these concerns over industrial authenticity, intentional lyrics, and suitable emotions nicely:

I think the old songs were written out of some kind of burden. The old songs wasn't some song some person sat down and said, I'm gonna get me some kind of song together to make me some money... A song that carry a message got to have some kind of absolutely common sense, and a whole lot of songs sing about my mother's gone and my father's gone, well we don't need all of that. They're playing on emotions, that don't mean nothin'. They're not tellin' them you got to live right, and if you're not right, you need to get right, see.<sup>77</sup>

### **2.3 Pentecostal Influence on Contemporary Worship Music**

While the emergence of black gospel from Afro-Pentecostalism paralleled CWM in its development as a genre and in its discourses over authenticity and suitability, it also influenced CWM in several important ways. In the broadest sense, Pentecostal dispositions had a major influence on rock and roll, which in turn made its way into white churches via CWM. While the multiracial nature of early Pentecostalism is outside the focus of this chapter, it is important to note that it played a key role in disseminating

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<sup>76</sup> "The Worship Industry."

<sup>77</sup> Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound*, 17-18. Quoted in Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 87.

Pentecostal musical forms among black and white Pentecostal denominations,<sup>78</sup> and eventually in influencing both black and white pioneers of rock and roll.<sup>79</sup> Craig Mosher, in an article on the Pentecostal roots of rock and roll, explained how the Pentecostal upbringings of Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Cash, Little Richard, B.B. King, and James Brown influenced their musical and performative styles. Even rock and roll artists who did not possess Pentecostal roots—like Chuck Berry, the Isley Brothers, Tina Turner, and Mick Jagger—were heavily influenced by the rhythms, melisma,<sup>80</sup> music, or dance moves of the sanctified church. Though they morphed and evolved over the late twentieth century, all of these Pentecostal-influenced conventions of rock and roll became part of the unconscious bedrock of rock music, and when evangelicals and charismatics incorporated the genre and its offshoots into their worship services starting in the 1970s, they also adopted vestiges of these Pentecostal sensibilities into their liturgies.

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<sup>78</sup> According to Cecil Robeck, the Azusa Street Revival was a great example of the multiracial dimensions of early Pentecostal music and sensibilities. While predominantly African American in its congregational makeup and musical culture, the Azusa Street Revival also incorporated the hymns and choruses of the nineteenth-century revivalist camp meeting tradition, as well as Ira Sankey's urban revivalist gospel songs. These two streams of musical influence fused with slave song traditions, the "exuberant a cappella singing that was frequently accompanied by hand clapping, foot tapping, or some other form of rhythm making such as drums, spoons, washboards, and occasional tambourine." For more on the music of the Azusa Street Revival, see chapter four of Cecil Robeck's *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival*.

<sup>79</sup> According to Craig Mosher, black and white Pentecostals shared a musical heritage, "based in part on the early interracial days of Pentecostalism (roughly 1900 to 1915), and also on a substantial body of spirituals and gospel songs performed in a variety of Pentecostal settings" (Mosher, "Ecstatic Sounds," 98). Regardless of how much black and white Pentecostals actually shared a musical heritage, Mosher was correct in asserting that the Pentecostal upbringings of early rock 'n' roll pioneers influenced their music.

<sup>80</sup> A vocal technique where several or an elaborate series of notes improvised on a word or syllable in a song lyric.

In a broad sense, Afro-Pentecostal music influenced CWM via its influence on rock and roll. But Afro-Pentecostal music also paralleled CWM in three direct ways: through its emphasis on participation, its penchant for "planned spontaneity," and most important, the affective dispositions that it created and sustained.

### **2.3.1 Participation**

The liturgy of the Christian service has always meant "the work of the people." This was at the heart of early Afro-Pentecostal worship, where the congregants, particularly in their musical participation, performed hard work, bodily work. The hand clapping, foot stomping, wailing, "shouting" in the Spirit, tambourine playing, and even at times the song leading itself were all aspects of the work that the congregation performed during the service. And this work was often highly democratized. Walter Hollenweger noted that at the Azusa Street Mission, everyone was a "potential contributor to the liturgy." The seats of the mission were all placed at the same level; there was no elevated front-platform or altar from which everyone would focus their attention on a pastor or preacher.<sup>81</sup> In this sense, Pentecostalism allowed for a "democratization of language through a dismantling of the privileges of abstract, rational and propositional systems," a democratization that celebrated the oral and

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<sup>81</sup> Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 23.

bodily means of communication and participation that were so often deemphasized in other churches.<sup>82</sup>

This robust liturgical participation was evident in Charles Mason's Church of God in Christ, where he orchestrated a liturgy in which every member of the congregation was encouraged to lead the larger assembly in song and follow that with their testimony. After one testimony ended, another member was expected to start a song, followed by another testimony. The result, Clarence Boyer argued, was "the development of strong singers throughout the congregation," which led to congregational celebrities and eventually Pentecostal artists like Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Andrae Crouch, the O'Neal Twins, and Vanessa Bell Armstrong.<sup>83</sup>

Democratic participation also contributed to democratized authority. Cheryl Sanders used the term "song-testimonies" to describe the fusion of speech and song that was common in Afro-Pentecostal liturgies and in gospel music. Sanders argued that the music often focused on the testimony of salvation, "an indication of the permanent relationship with the deity underlying the role of the preacher-singer." What separated testimony from preaching, however, was its subjectivity: "testimony conveys one's story of divine encounter in strictly personal terms, with or without a biblical or cultural text." Further, because the testimony emphasized subjectivity, it destabilized hierarchical

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 35. Also see Daniel E. Albrecht, "Worshiping and the Spirit," in *The Spirit in Worship, Worship in the Spirit*, edited by Teresa Berger and Bryan D. Spinks (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009): 233.

<sup>83</sup> Boyer, *How Sweet the Sound*, 24.



authority and cultivated egalitarianism through its emphasis on the personal. "One does not need special credentials or sanction to testify," Sanders contended, "so that even in churches where women are not ordained as preachers, they are authorized, even required, to give spoken testimony of conversion and sanctification."<sup>84</sup> That lower-class women and men received authoritative roles in the liturgy made Pentecostal services participatory in a profound way.

While CWM did not develop in the same liturgical space, it shared many of the same participatory qualities that made early Afro-Pentecostal music attractive to so many. The early CWM that emerged from Calvary Chapel and the Anaheim Vineyard Christian Fellowship in southern California rarely included foot stomping, wailing, or "Holy Ghost Singing," but it did occasionally include hand clapping and congregants leading songs. Chuck Fromm explained that at Calvary Chapel in the early 1970s, weeknight and Sunday evening services—catered for the teenagers and young adults of the Californian counterculture—gave singers the authority to minister to the congregation through song.<sup>85</sup> The youth attending these services would often come to Chuck Smith and ask if they could share with the congregation a new song, often so fresh that it had been written hours or days before in response to a sermon. The youth often saw their music as "given by the Lord," implying the prophetic and ministerial role

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<sup>84</sup> Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 84.

<sup>85</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 167.

of their songwriting craft, and that their music was meant to be a word for the congregation to hear.<sup>86</sup>

As CWM industrialized into a commercial culture that focused on recorded albums and "worship concerts," many of these original participatory qualities faded. In fact, a consistent critique of CWM has been that it was the opposite of participatory—a spectator's sport, another act of consumption in a consumer-oriented society. Theologian John Stackhouse Jr. contended that inherent to CWM was the "modern-day insistence that a few people at the front be the center of attention," which was accomplished "by making six band members louder than a room full of people" via amplification.<sup>87</sup> This was a far cry from Azusa Street's communal singing or even Calvary Chapel's Sunday evening service. In an interview with *Christianity Today*, scholar David T. Gordon argued that "the commercial forces that shape pop culture should not be the arbiters of how we worship God," explaining that consumer sensibilities and the "muzak" aesthetic of pop should not guide the church's worship.<sup>88</sup> "Worship is not a private practice," John Koessler tried to remind his audience in *Christianity Today's* March 2011 cover article.<sup>89</sup> Of course, much to Koessler's chagrin, it *was* a private practice for many.

But for all of the participatory elements that disappeared as CWM moved from a folk music culture to a commercial one in the late twentieth century, the personalized

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>87</sup> Stackhouse Jr., "Memo to Worship Bands," 50.

<sup>88</sup> Moring, "POP Goes the Worship," 25.

<sup>89</sup> Koessler, "Worship of The Trajectory," 21.

nature of the song lyrics and the affective dispositions they cultivated allowed individuals to "participate" in the music in a different way, one that many fans of CWM considered deeply meaningful. Worship songs often utilized first-person language to emphasize the personal nature of the love and intimacy between God and the believer. This characteristic of CWM has been documented and analyzed by several scholars,<sup>90</sup> but the point here is that these lyrics that emphasized the personal relationship with Jesus also provided a participatory element as they created a liturgical space for the worshipper to engage with God in a personal way. The lyrical focus was not on stating rational theological doctrines, or rarely ever on the communal reality of worship, but on the personal, intimate connection with God, which was often couched in erotic language:

Jesus take me as I am,  
I can come no other way.  
Take me deeper into you,  
Make my flesh life melt away...<sup>91</sup>

Participation, then, became the individual worshipper's ability to "lose themselves in worship," to abandon a reserved approach to singing and to open themselves up in an emotional response to God's love, person, or presence. The resulting abandonment to God in worship paralleled the emotional fervor of a rock concert, but moved beyond its

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<sup>90</sup> See Percy, "Sweet Rapture," chapters 2 and 3 in Woods and Walrath, *The Message in the Music*, and Baker-Wright, "Intimacy and Orthodoxy."

<sup>91</sup> "Jesus Take Me as I Am." Words and music by Dave Bryant. CCLI #37814. © 1978 Thankyou Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing).

communal, liminal space. Instead of simply creating *communitas*,<sup>92</sup> CWM also fostered an *individualized* liminal space between God and the individual believer, resulting in a setting that paralleled philosopher Charles Taylor's "social atomism."<sup>93</sup> Even though CWM took on the habits of consumption and spectatorship that were inherent in a rock concert, the music was still participatory in that it helped each individual believer commune with God in a time of individualized worship—yet all together, all at the same time.<sup>94</sup> It was, then, *atomized participation*.

### 2.3.2 Planned Spontaneity

In his study on the development of American Pentecostalism, historian Grant Wacker argued that Pentecostal worship "oscillated between anti structural and structural impulses," what he called "planned spontaneity." "Though few saw it at the

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<sup>92</sup> *Communitas* is a term popularized by anthropologist Victor Turner in the 1960s. *Communitas* is a liminal social space that allows for intense feelings of social togetherness, equity, and belonging, often in connection with rituals or conceptions of the sacred. As many scholars have noted, *communitas* is often constructed at popular music concerts as audience members lose social distinctions that they normally carry in everyday life and enter a leveled social space of mutual equality. See Eurich, "Sociological Aspects and Ritual Similarities" or Ingersoll, "The Thin Line."

<sup>93</sup> Taylor, in his book *The Ethics of Authenticity*, noted that the modern culture of authenticity was wracked by "self-centered forms," which "tend to center fulfillment on the individual, making his or her affiliations purely instrumental; they push, in other words, to a social *atomism*," or foster a "radical anthropocentrism" (58). Taylor also explained it in first-person language: "There is a certain way of being human that is *my* way. I am called upon to live my life in this way and not in imitation of anyone else's. But this gives me a new importance to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of my life, I miss what being human is for *me*" (28-29).

<sup>94</sup> In his article on music and emotion in Christian worship, theologian Jeremy Begbie noted that most theorists of emotion understood emotion as "intrinsically social." This social nature of emotion undergirds the idea of atomized participation in CWM. Though each worshipper could commune individually with God, they took their emotional cues from those around them, and as such, participated in a communal affective space. See Begbie, Jeremy. "Faithful Feelings: Emotion and Music in Worship." In *Resonant Witness: Conversations between Music and Theology*, edited by Jeremy Begbie and Steven R. Guthrie. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011, p. 326.

time," Wacker argued, "from this distance it is evident that the spontaneity part served primitivist aims, the planned part pragmatic ones." Primitivist aims here were synonymous with the pursuit of authenticity—if the early church was spontaneous in its worship, then that was an authentic liturgical form. Any service marked by planning betrayed its nominal Christianity.<sup>95</sup> But Wacker explained that the creed of improvisation in Pentecostal worship eventually allowed room for structure:

To call it a prescribed order of worship would be an exaggeration. But singing, testimonies, prayer, sermon, and the call to come forward for salvation, healing, and baptism took a predictable sequence... Yet the kind of explicit regularization represented only the tip of the berg. A little probing shows an array of devices, more instinctive than self-conscious, that imposed real order on apparent disorder.<sup>96</sup>

These instinctive devices or "implicit forms of regularization" came through the "disciplined use of ecstasy." Glossolalia and slaying in the spirit became ritual sacraments, "holy [emblems] of the Spirit's presence manifested in material reality."<sup>97</sup>

The result was, literally, a routinized form of charisma, or charismata, to be exact.

Wacker described it in a Church of God association meeting:

At the founding meeting of a Church of God association in Alabama in 1911 (a precursor of the Assemblies of God), controversy erupted over the practice of praying with hands upturned while standing. Was it optional or required? Soon an interpreted tongues message settled the matter once and for all: it was required. Any reasonably impartial outsider surely saw what saints did not: that

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<sup>95</sup> Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 99.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

the Holy Spirit Himself had just turned a seemingly spontaneous act of praise into a prescribed ritual.<sup>98</sup>

While these prescribed rituals maintained an air of spontaneity, they were also powerful tools to bring about order and regulate emotion. And no tool was more powerful than music. With music, "[leaders] could ratchet up the tempo until worshipers broke into ecstatic praise," Wacker explained, "or tone it down when things seemed to be getting out of hand." In other words, music gave Pentecostal leaders a "ready means for managing the intensity of the service" and for "regularizing the expression of emotion." While outsiders only saw emotional manipulation, for insiders, Pentecostal music was more than it seemed: a vehicle that carried the saints through the emotional landscape of worship.

Other scholars agreed with Wacker's assessment. Walter Hollenweger noted the "flexible oral tradition" of Pentecostalism, one that allowed for "variations within the framework of the whole liturgical structure, similar to the possibilities in a jam session of jazz musicians."<sup>99</sup> Cheryl Sanders asserted that Pentecostal worship had "fixed and fluid forms," and that some worship forms reflected both at the same time. Sanders pointed to the "quintessential ecstatic expression" of Pentecostal worship, the shout or holy dance, as an example of a liturgical element that combined fixed and fluid forms. Though it appeared as "a spontaneous eruption into coordinated, choreographed

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>99</sup> Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 271.

movement," the shout had "characteristic steps, motions, rhythms, and syncopations" that structured it; it was "not a wild and random expression of kinetic energy." Instead, Sanders argued, "a culturally and aesthetically determined static structure [sustained] the expression of ecstasy in a definite, recognizable form, the existence of which may not be apparent to the casual or uninformed observer."<sup>100</sup>

Pentecostalism's emphasis on spontaneity seeped into black gospel as well. Lawrence Levine highlighted the inherent improvisatory nature of gospel music, revealed in the fact that "gospel singers rarely sang a song precisely the same way twice and never sang it according to its exact musical notation." Instead, gospel singers developed "head arrangements," custom approaches to a song molded by the singers' emotions, "from the way in which 'the spirit' moved them at the time."<sup>101</sup> Even in publishing, this improvisatory nature was apparent, as composer Kenneth Morris explained:

We don't write it too difficult by including all of the harmony. The people who play it are not interested in harmony. There is no attempt to include perfect cadences and the like. It's not written for trained musicians... A musician is a slave to notes. It's not written for that kind of person. It's written for a person who can get the melody and words and interpret the song for himself.<sup>102</sup>

Morris' publishing strategy rang true to any twenty-first century worship leader, who got a hold of most of their music via "chord sheets" instead of scored music. Even

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<sup>100</sup> Sanders, *Saints in Exile*, 61.

<sup>101</sup> Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 186.

<sup>102</sup> Kenneth Morris, interview with George Robinson Ricks, 1956, in Ricks, *Some Aspects of the Religious Music of the United States Negro*, 143. Quoted in Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, 186.

professional online worship music distribution and aggregation services, like CCLI's Song Select, *Worship Leader's Song Discovery*, and Praisecharts.com all focused on chord charts instead of scored music, mirroring Morris' assertion that black gospel musicians primarily used the music as a base for improvisation, not as binding instructions.

Mellone Burnim argued that improvisation—"the expectation of individual interpretation or personalization of the performance"—lay at the heart of the black musical aesthetic. But the mechanics of delivering this improvisation were anything but spontaneous. Burnim explained that soloists and gospel conductors "[used] their knowledge of potential expandable units to lengthen a given gospel selection at will." If "in the spirit," a singer could emphasize a certain word or line by repeating it several times, drawing the audience into an emotional response. Gospel singers and leaders also managed musical time for emotional effect by "extending the length of notes at climactic points... signaling instruments to 'drop out' temporarily or adding a reprise at the end of a song that [had] been especially well received." Though the leader or conductor would make these decisions on the fly, they were then communicated to the other musicians "by using a core of specialized signs and symbols that [were] familiar to the group." Even though the improvisations were then staged from the conductor to the other musicians, from the audience's perspective, the result was a projected spontaneity that marked the difference between a well-executed performance and one that was



"inspired."<sup>103</sup> This was Wacker's "planned spontaneity" in good form: a pre-rehearsed sign language employed to communicate an expected improvisatory change that appeared as a spontaneous movement of the Spirit to the audience. Was there spontaneity in the Spirit? Sure. The conductor registered the emotional tenor of the moment and made the necessary changes on the fly. But the sign language required then to communicate that change to the band, all in a fashion that was hidden from the audience, was pre-meditated.

Burnim's observations still rang true for CWM in the twenty-first century. Worship music superstar Israel Houghton often gave "specialized signs" to signal a change to his band, either by quickly raising his strumming hand, kicking back his left foot, or giving a quick stomp in rhythm. The result was a synchronized cut, crescendo, or repeated chorus that was tailored to the emotional state of the audience, and that seemingly came out of nowhere.<sup>104</sup>

As in black gospel, an improvisatory culture anchored the conception of authenticity within CWM. Carl Tuttle, one of the founding members of the Vineyard Fellowship<sup>105</sup> and the first worship leader at the Anaheim Vineyard mother church,

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<sup>103</sup> Burnim, "The Black Gospel Music Tradition," 162-163.

<sup>104</sup> I observed most of these while watching Israel Houghton live at the 2012 National Worship Leaders Conference in Kansas City. But if looking for them, Houghton's signals are evident in several YouTube videos of his performances. See "Lakewood Church Worship - Israel Houghton - Your Presence Is Heaven to Me 7.3.11" for an example of his hand signal.

<sup>105</sup> The Vineyard Fellowship, as I explain in chapter four, emerged from the Calvary Chapel network in Southern California in the late 1970s, led by Calvary Chapel pastors Kenn Gulliksen and John Wimber. The

explained that in the early days of Vineyard worship, when they met as a small evening group, improvisation was key:

I knew a handful of the choruses that came out of the Jesus Movement and in particular Maranatha Music, so we sang those. I didn't have a list; we didn't have lyrics. I just sang what came to mind and they all joined in. At first it was a few minutes, but over a few months, and as the group exploded, it would go on for at least 45 minutes. Again we had... no plan but to try to be sensitive to God and not get in the way.<sup>106</sup>

The core idea here was to "not get in the way" of what God was doing. In other words, like Wacker noted about early Pentecostal worship, to avoid anything that looked like planning, anything that would "put God in a box." It was the equivalent of "tarrying in the Spirit," patiently waiting on God to show up and move the congregation to worship. In 1977, when the small evening group finally grew large enough for a Sunday morning service, Carl Tuttle, John Wimber and others started Calvary Chapel Yorba Linda, and formed their first "worship team." But even with the added complexity of a worship team, Tuttle explained that the emphasis remained heavily on spontaneity and improvisation:

Our approach didn't vary during this time; we would get together and tune our instruments, pray and then I would simply start a song and the guys would follow. In all that time we never rehearsed, never had a set list, never had any monitors and never provided lyrics for the congregation. The songs were all so

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Vineyard movement shared Calvary Chapel's informal distinctives (which I explore in chapter three), but emphasized the gifts of the Spirit and intimacy with God in worship.

<sup>106</sup> Tuttle, "Vineyard Worship – The Early Years – Part 1."

simple back then and our repertoire was only about 30 songs, so if you stuck around you learned them pretty quickly.<sup>107</sup>

This was the Pentecostal legacy of "planned spontaneity." The spontaneity came from the lack of rehearsal, lyrics, or set list. This pattern created an atmosphere where the Spirit could move as the Spirit saw fit. But the planning was also there, and it came in the form of the repertoire, which was small enough to memorize. In other words, there was a scripted "book of common song," a generous and flexible structure—but structure nonetheless—that was a rehearsed (in that it was repeated every Sunday) and premeditated (in that it was a bounded set list) body of musical common knowledge that ordered the service. This repertoire provided room for improvisation within a planned structure.

Like Afro-Pentecostalism (and black gospel), CWM was more than it seemed to the casual observer. Critics saw bad music, sacrilegious entertainment, and emotional gimmicks. But for insiders, authenticity emerged within the cacophony of guitars and drums and the crescendos in volume and emotion. Here Pentecostal musical sensibilities ran deep. CWM supporters desired an authentic experience that—like in Pentecostalism—demanded a spontaneity that elicited an emotional response. But they also, knowingly or not, sought these musical experiences as normative of proper worship. Prescribed experiences led to planned rituals and liturgies.

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<sup>107</sup> Tuttle, "Vineyard Worship – The Early Years – Part 1."

The age-old tension between ritual and improvisation that marked Pentecostal worship also marked CWM. Torn between prescribing an emotionally moving experience in worship and knowing that an emotional state could not be forced, CWM developed rituals and performative strategies that elicited an emotional reaction from the congregation. Body motions and postures (like the raising of hands or the opening of palms), spoken word interludes with a musical background, chorus repetitions with a slow crescendo towards a climax (often energized by the drums), a lighting strategy that put the front stage in the spotlight and the congregation in the dark, and instrumental cuts that allowed the congregation to hear itself as an *a cappella* instrument were all rituals and strategies that developed to regulate the emotional tenor of the service. And they were rituals and strategies that came from Pentecostalism (and as such were shared with black gospel) via indirect channels, whether it was the Pentecostal legacy within the liturgical culture of the charismatic movement or the influence of Pentecostal worship forms in the performative culture in rock music.

### **2.3.3 Baptized Affective Dispositions**

The pursuit of spontaneity in Afro-Pentecostal music, black gospel and CWM was a quest for authenticity. The assumption was that when spontaneous, the music was raw and fresh, prodded along by the trans-rational and uncontrolled movement of the Spirit. Thomas Dorsey, the father of black gospel music, understood this well:

Every singer who performs, speaker also, preacher, anybody, you don't stick exactly to your script. You got to have something that comes from inside of you

that Providence or something give to you while you are performing. Well now, we call that, religiously, you call that the voice of God speaking through you. See you got to always be—everybody who performs or does anything, even talk—susceptible, openly susceptible for whatever comes in the heart or the mind or your ear.<sup>108</sup>

To be "openly susceptible" to the Spirit was also to be emotionally accessible. It was through the emotional tenor of a worship service that the Spirit often moved. If the quest for authenticity was also a quest for an authentic encounter with God, then it often led to the emotions. The successful communication of emotion—both the proclamation of emotion from the gospel conductor, singer, or worship leader and the emotional response of the congregation that the music elicited—remained an integral part of what participants considered authentic music.

Mellonee Burnim explained that for black gospel, this communication of emotion often came from the visible personal involvement of the gospel singer: "the voice must transmit intensity, fullness, and the sense that tremendous energy is being expelled. The singer must convey complete and unequivocal absorption in the presentation, thereby compelling the audience to respond." When the gospel singer met the expectations of the congregation, the performer and congregation or audience united in "a sense of ethnic collectivity and spiritual unity." But Burnim also noted that the emotional communication was only "eloquently achieved through the manipulation of the principles of subtle shading and contrast." In other words, the gospel singer must

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<sup>108</sup> Interview with Michael Harris, Jan. 19, 1977, p. 10. Quoted in Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues*, 100.

"prepare the audience properly for musical and emotional climaxes by alternating peak phrases with periods of relaxation." This, Burnim argued, explained why gospel music often displayed sudden dynamic vocal contrasts and the juxtaposition of different vocal textures. It was through "a myriad of vocal sounds... yells, screams, shouts, moans, grunts" that gospel singers showed their total involvement in the performance and moved the audience from one emotional state to the next.<sup>109</sup>

No one knew this better than Thomas Dorsey. Johari Jabir noted that Dorsey was first attracted to Mahalia Jackson's vocal craft because "she possessed a way of eliciting physical responses" from her audience, an ability to move her audience emotionally into further participation with the music.<sup>110</sup> Both Jackson and Dorsey clearly understood the power of gospel music to draw an emotional response from a crowd. This focus on the emotional power of music also explained why Dorsey rejected the divide between music labeled as "sacred" and "secular." For Dorsey, any musical genre could be used in worship because, at their core, each was simply a "vehicle for your feeling." Dorsey explained:

If a woman has lost a man, a man has lost a woman, his feeling reacts to the blues; he feels like expressing it. The same thing acts for a gospel song. Now you're not singing blues; you're singing gospel, good news song, singing about the Creator; but it's the same feeling, a grasping of the heart.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Burnim, "The Black Gospel Music Tradition," 156-58.

<sup>110</sup> Jabir, "On Conjuring Mahalia," 651.

<sup>111</sup> Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues*, 97.

Dorsey's conception of music as a "vehicle for your feeling" was a wonderful description of the affective power of music. As the founder of "gospel blues," Dorsey was particularly attuned to the emotional character of the blues, and understood it as more than a musical structure: "blues is more than just *blues*. It's got to be that old low-down moan and the low-down feeling; you got to have feeling."<sup>112</sup> In the same interview, Dorsey explained why he could baptize the blues and transform it into gospel music:

The only thing about all the music is the words are different, see. You use different words and then you take that blue moan and what they call the low-down feeling tunes and you shape them up and put them up here and make them serve the other purpose, the religious purpose. And then too, the [blues] lilt, tempo, expression, the feeling all go together to make gospel songs what they are and to make blues what they are.<sup>113</sup>

As Michael Harris explained, Dorsey understood that the blues was not just "a set of harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic configurations," but configurations "associated with a set of emotions and their attendant responses."<sup>114</sup> Each musical genre was associated with a set of emotions and the ways those emotions were communicated and received. This developed as a common language or currency within the cultural world of a genre. For the blues, it combined musical structures (melody, rhythm, vocal timbre, scales) to create an emotional disposition, that "blue moan" or "low-down feeling." But as Dorsey explained, the music could be transplanted into a new setting, a new musical culture, where the emotional disposition of the "blue moan" could be transformed to serve a

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<sup>112</sup> Interview with Michael Harris, Jan. 19, 1977, pp. 1 and 13. Quoted in Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues*, 98.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Michael Harris, Jan. 19, 1977, pp. 2-3. Quoted in Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues*, 100.

<sup>114</sup> Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues*, 97.

religious purpose. In other words, the affective resonance of the music was harnessed, hijacked even, to create a baptized affective disposition for gospel music. The affective meaning that was culturally constructed, communicated and understood within the blues world was then used to fuel and funnel religious affection in gospel music. This hijacking was cultural translation, utilizing an affective language "in the world" in order to express a religious communion "not of the world." Why should the devil have all this good rhythm? But more importantly, why should the devil have all this affective power?

In their unique combinations of lyrical themes, musical structures, performative liturgies, and bodily responses, music genres created cultural worlds that communicated meaning via a host of affective channels. Meaning was not simply communicated from musician to audience, or via lyrics or beat alone. Instead, music was a two-way "broadband" connection that combined several channels to communicate affective meaning. The lyrics, the beat, the vocal timbre, the surging solo, the fog machine, the lights, and the thumping bass were all parts of a common language that registered emotional cues and elicited emotional reactions, creating a shared affective disposition. Pentecostal music inherently understood this, and black gospel, emerging from Pentecostalism, leveraged the affective language of blues, jazz, and the spirituals to baptize powerful affective dispositions for worship, dispositions that helped congregants celebrate the joy they found in the Lord.



Likewise, CWM appropriated the affective power of rock music and baptized similar affective dispositions for contemporary worship. Religious studies scholar Julie Ingersoll noted that one of CWM's major roles in a congregation was "to bind the members of the religious community together emotionally." "Church members [were] connected to each other," Ingersoll explained, "because they [shared] a musical language."<sup>115</sup> And that musical language connected congregants through affective dispositions that brought a theological interpretation and weight to a set of shared emotions. The early CWM that emerged from Calvary Chapel baptized the emotional resonances of the folk movement, leveraging the culture of activism and authenticity that was marked by acoustic guitars, long hair, and intricate vocal harmonies to move the congregation emotionally towards praising God and spreading the gospel. For Vineyard Music, worship leaders and songwriters turned to the emotional energy of the soft rock or adult contemporary love ballad and leveraged it to create an atmosphere of meditative intimacy, where simple musical structures and lyrical repetition allowed congregants to memorize songs, close their eyes, and focus on God within a structure of atomized participation. Finally, in chapter six, we will see that with the rise of "modern worship" and the embrace of the sound, venues, and performative culture of arena rock, CWM adopted the transcendent spectacle of the large rock concert and leveraged the affective states induced by massive venues, a massive sound (that often vibrated the

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<sup>115</sup> Ingersoll, "Contemporary Christian Worship Music," 123.

interior of the body), the collective singing and rhythmic clapping of thousands of congregants, and the "emotional feedback loop" created by giant stadium screens filming audience members in emotional ecstasy.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

Because of its Afro-Pentecostal roots, black gospel music often met resistance in the black church. Yet those same Afro-Pentecostal roots also led to its eventual widespread adoption among black congregations and its popularity beyond. The mesmerizing sound, the alluring work of musical participation, and the exhilarating affective power of early Afro-Pentecostal music not only rooted black gospel but also echoed through the development of CWM sixty years later. Even though it was more indirect and obscure in CWM, black gospel and CWM shared a common Pentecostal heritage, one that gave voice to alternative instruments and musical styles and celebrated the emotional work performed in congregational singing. Looking back at the development of black gospel, we saw themes that would play out again in CWM. Black gospel and CWM shared a similar trajectory of genre development and the host of issues and opportunities that emerged with each transformation towards more commercialized and industrialized genres. Black gospel and CWM also shared similar tensions over suitability as parties fought over the roles and aesthetics that defined liturgical music. And then we saw that some of the key characteristics of early Afro-Pentecostal music and black gospel also marked CWM: a culture of participation (though conceived in a

different ways), a penchant for "planned spontaneity," and baptized affective dispositions that both emerged from and empowered the musical experience of worship.

### 3. The Music of the Catholic Folk Mass

Latin's gone, peace is too;  
Singin' and shoutin' from every pew.  
Altar's turned around, priest is too;  
Commentator's yellin': "Page 22."  
Communion rail's gone, stand up straight!  
Kneelin' suddenly went outta date...  
Rosary's out, psalms are in;  
Hardly ever heard a word against sin;  
Listen to the lector, hear how he reads;  
Please stop rattlin' them rosary beads...  
I hope all changes are just about done;  
That they don't drop Bingo before I've won.<sup>1</sup>

In 1959, Pope John XXIII called for a revolution. It would come in the form of a church council, the first since 1870, when Pope Pius IX and his fellow bishops attempted to shore up the Catholic defenses against modernism and officially recognize papal infallibility. While the First Vatican Council had shuttered the doors to the oncoming tides of liberalism and rationalism that were surging through America and Europe, John XXIII wanted to open the windows of the church to let in some fresh air.<sup>2</sup> The result was the Second Vatican Council, or Vatican II, where John XXIII charged the bishops with the task of *aggiornamento*, an updating of the church to accommodate the modern world. Though John XXIII died in 1963, two years before the council finished, his legacy lived on in the sixteen documents promulgated by the council.

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<sup>1</sup> A jingle printed in a parish bulletin in Darlington, WI. See Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience*, 429.

<sup>2</sup> Hoge, "Interpreting Change in American Catholicism," 291.

One of the documents produced at Vatican II was *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. While *Sacrosanctum* privileged Gregorian chant "as specially suited to the Roman liturgy" and asserted that "the pipe organ [was] to be held in high esteem," the Constitution revolutionized liturgical music on several fronts. Though *Sacrosanctum* promoted choirs, it urged priests to be "at pains to ensure" that whatever music accompanied the Mass, "the whole body of the faithful" was "to contribute that active participation which is rightly theirs."<sup>3</sup> Scholar and journalist Mark Oppenheimer noted that while some places in the world (Germany, Poland, Italy at a time) had seen rigorous use of singing out loud in the Mass, in the United States, "where the tone had been set by Irish priests, the quiet, controlled, ascetic Mass had become the norm."<sup>4</sup> For many American Catholics, moving from the quiet posture of reception to the active posture of response in the liturgy proved jolting. But active singing by the laity was just one adjustment among many. *Sacrosanctum*, in the same breath that it paid homage to the long tradition of Gregorian chant, also declared that "other kinds of sacred music" were "by no means excluded from liturgical celebrations, so long as they [accorded] with the spirit of the liturgical action." Further, the constitution proclaimed that, beyond the celebrated pipe organ, "other instruments also may be admitted for use

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<sup>3</sup> "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy."

<sup>4</sup> Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven's Door*, 73.

in divine worship." In America, the result of these broadenings of musical scope was the much-celebrated, much-hated "folk Mass."<sup>5</sup>

Like the development of black gospel music from Afro-Pentecostal roots, the Catholic folk Mass serves as a historical example of the importation of secular musical forms for religious purposes, rather than as a direct tributary to what would become CWM (though there was a closer lineage between CWM and the Catholic folk Mass as compared to black gospel). While a majority of American Catholics in the 1960s would not have considered themselves "evangelical," the logic they employed in their adoption of rock music carried deep resonances with the American evangelical logic employed in the earlier development of black gospel and the later development of CWM. As we will see, Catholics embraced the folk Mass as a tool for two main purposes: to increase the lay participation in church services and to create a church environment that Catholic youth saw as relevant and authentic to their lives. Both of these impulses—participation and evangelism—would emerge as important engines fueling the rise and development of CWM a decade later.

### ***3.1 The Rise of the Catholic Folk Mass***

Folk Masses came in all shapes and sizes, but often expanded the musical palette beyond the traditional organ and choir combo to include folk music played from the guitar, fiddle, or flute. They also often incorporated casually clothed priests and

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<sup>5</sup> "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy."

informal spaces and seating, even swaying in a circle, interpretive dance, or drumming. Though folk Masses still included plenty of traditional elements—creeds, prayers, scripture readings, and the consumption of the host—guitar music came to dominate, "bringing the feel of the protest rally to the church nave."<sup>6</sup> The music of the folk Mass occasionally included more spiritually minded secular hits,<sup>7</sup> or even secular tunes redone with sacred words.<sup>8</sup> But by and large, folk Mass music was original, in words and tune.

Folk Masses emerged at the same time as American Catholics were "assimilating, moving out of Catholic neighborhoods and abandoning the old parish. They had pulled even with the rest of the population in college attendance, and they were receiving pluralists, not Catholic, educations." Matching the rest of the population in college attendance, and with only one-third in Catholic schools in 1961, American Catholics

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<sup>6</sup> Oppenheimer, "Folk Music in the Catholic Mass," 104.

<sup>7</sup> Ken Canedo explains that many parish folk choirs "had no choice but to rely on secular sources to keep their weekly repertoire fresh" and that "for young people it [seemed] quite natural to sing their favorite secular music at a Folk Mass, especially songs with a spiritual bent." Some parishes sang Bob Dylan's "Blowing in the Wind" or Pete Seeger's "If I Had a Hammer" (Canedo, *Keep the Fire Burning*, 75).

<sup>8</sup> Donald Boccardi notes that songs like "Michael, Row Your Boat," "If I Had a Hammer," and "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" were emptied of their secular lyrics and replaced with religious ones for use in the Mass (Boccardi, *The History of American Catholic Hymnals*, 34). Ken Canedo explained that "thoughtful priests and music leaders knew that the music for Mass had to at least be meaningful. 'Puff, the Magic Dragon' had no place in the liturgy, no matter how much a homilist might try to impose a Christian message behind the actions of Little Jacki Paper. So, in the grand tradition of secular folk music, Folk Mass singers simply changed the words of popular songs to fit the circumstances of the liturgy (Canedo, *Keep the fire burning*, 75).

"were full participants in the American countercultural experiment."<sup>9</sup> Oppenheimer explained how difficult it had become to distinguish Catholics from other Americans:

Having at last reached educational and socioeconomic parity with the rest of America—having fully emerged from psychic and geographic ghettos—Catholics were fully attuned to American popular culture. They were hippies, yippies, Jesus People, and commune dwellers, just like other Americans; or they were soldiers who fought in Vietnam and Republicans who voted for Nixon. They were Americans.<sup>10</sup>

As American Catholics came to resemble other Americans in education, socioeconomic status and culture, they finally had an opportunity to look more American in their worship too. So when Rome opened up the windows to let new approaches in to its sacred song, it was not long before Catholic liturgists were experimenting with guitars and folk melodies inspired from the counterculture. With *Sancrosanctum's* charge that "composers, filled with the Christian spirit, should feel that their vocation [was] to develop sacred music and to increase its store of treasures,"<sup>11</sup> American Catholic composers took up the challenge by writing new sacred songs in the spirit of their culture, "grounded in the folksong revival style of Pete Seeger and Joan Baez."<sup>12</sup> It all began with a young man from St. Louis.

As a teenage seminarian at St. Louis's Cardinal Glennon College Seminary, Ray Repp had sought to leave the world and immerse himself in his preparation for the priesthood. But, as liturgical historian Ken Canedo explained, "like other young people

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<sup>9</sup> Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven's Door*, 69-70.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>11</sup> "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy."

<sup>12</sup> Marini, *Sacred Song in America*, 251.



of the era, he found the new folk music irresistible." When not studying, Repp listened to folk music—like that of the Kingston Trio—and eventually bought a Gibson guitar to try his hand at playing it. He also discovered the lyrical power of the psalms and by 1962, Repp had "made a connection between the ancient psalms and modern folk music." Even As he began writing these new folk songs grounded in the psalms, Vatican II was just beginning.<sup>13</sup>

Three years later, in 1965, Repp was a volunteer attending orientation for the Catholic Church Extension Society's Lay Volunteer Program in Chicago when his music got its first large audience. Repp was asked to lead Mass for the four hundred college-age volunteers with his guitar.<sup>14</sup> He began with his song "Here We Are":

Here we are, all together as we sing our song joyfully  
Here we are, joined together as we pray we'll always be  
Join we now as friends and celebrate the brotherhood we share all as one  
Keep the fire burning, kindle it with care, and we'll join in and sing!<sup>15</sup>

The volunteers had never heard anything like it. Pete Seeger leading Mass! Their energy and excitement bubbled out as they joined Repp in the singing. Repp was surprised by the enthusiastic embrace of his songs, but he did not have long to soak it in. The summer program for the volunteers held daily Mass, and to keep the music engaging, Repp

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<sup>13</sup> Canedo, *Keep the Fire Burning*, 20-21.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>15</sup> "Here We Are." Ray Repp. 1966, Otter Creek Music. Published by OCP. All Rights Reserved.

constantly had to write new songs. It was from these "ad hoc sessions" that his *Mass for Young Americans* began.<sup>16</sup>

At the end of the orientation program, Repp gifted his fellow volunteers with copies of his folk tunes as a keepsake. But this keepsake became a seed carried out by four hundred winds in forty-eight continental states. Like the folk revival itself, Repp's songs were transmitted person-to-person via paper and mouth around the country. They eventually made their way to the desk of Dennis Fitzpatrick in Chicago, who asked Repp if he would make a record for the Friends of the English Liturgy.<sup>17</sup>

Fitzpatrick took a risk. No other publisher had touched the new folk music because they feared losing the bishops' approval—which could make or break sales. But Fitzpatrick was fed up with the Catholic hierarchy and ready for the gamble: "I didn't care if it sold or not. I didn't care if it had financial consequences at all. That didn't bother me one bit. So I published it. To hell with the imprimatur." In February 1966, Friends of the English Liturgy released Repp's album *Mass for Young Americans*. While "simple and deliberately unpretentious," it became "lightning in a bottle, embodying the proletarian spirit of secular folk music at its best."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Canedo, *Keep the Fire Burning*, 41-42.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-47.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 51, 54.

As the first documented composer to set the Mass to folk guitar music,<sup>19</sup> Repp's *Mass for Young Americans* marked a watershed moment for a slew of other writers, records and songbooks that followed. With *Mass for Young Americans*, the Friends of the English Liturgy became synonymous with the folk Mass movement,<sup>20</sup> and as Mark Powell notes, Repp's music "was easily the most significant within America's mainline denominations, especially those churches that had their historical origins in Europe... It is unlikely that any single artist has ever had the monopoly of influence that he either enjoyed or endured for the four years spanning 1966-1969."<sup>21</sup>

That Repp first experimented with liturgical folk music while at seminary was a harbinger as well. While folk and rock music would enter Protestant churches through the laity, in the Catholic Church it was the seminaries that served as gateways. "Far from being bastions of tradition," they were the "important incubators of Catholic folk music."<sup>22</sup> Folk Mass composer Jack Miffleton, a seminarian at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore from 1960 to 1968, explained:

There was a folk music revival on college campuses. Soon, many of us were strumming guitars and learning both old folk songs and songs by Joan Baez, Bob

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<sup>19</sup> This is a qualified claim. Both Clarence Rivers and Paul Quinlan published their music before Repp, but both provided something other than folk guitar music. Rivers's work "leaned towards traditional classical composing with the addition of chant-like productions that featured cantors and choirs singing a cappella in the style of an African American spiritual," while Quinlan's music was "not part of the original repertoire of Folk Mass songs that appeared in the 1967 Hymnal for Young Christians," a hymnal that became the standard bearer for the folk Mass movement in the 1960s (Canedo, *Keep the Fire Burning*, 54).

<sup>20</sup> Canedo, *Keep the Fire Burning*, 54-55.

<sup>21</sup> Powell, *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music*, 751.

<sup>22</sup> Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven's Door*, 76.

Dylan, Gordon Lightfoot, and Judy Collins. In 1963, we joined our voices with Baez and others in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s march in Washington.<sup>23</sup>

The list of composer seminarians was long. Between 1965 and 1970, leading Catholic folk artists Dan Onley, Pat Mudd, and Charlie Dittmeier emerged from St. Thomas Seminary in Louisville, KY. Robert Blue wrote music while at Eden Seminary in St. Louis. Joe Wise, who released the landmark album *Gonna Sing My Lord* in 1966, trained at Saint Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, MD. And John Foley, Bob Dufford, Dan Schutte, Tim Manion, and Robert "Roc" O'Connor—collectively known as the "St. Louis Jesuits"—began their musical collaboration at St. Louis University as Jesuit seminarians.

The St. Louis Jesuits stumbled into fame. Tired of making endless copies via carbon paper and a ditto machine,<sup>24</sup> and faced with their musical breakup as the brothers prepared to move to new locations for their apostolic assignments, the Jesuits decided it was time to publish their work. The task was monumental: to record fifty-seven songs written by six composers and performed by several singers and musicians over the course of a few months. The dorm rooms, chapel, and basement of the seminary became impromptu studios for the first half of the collection. The rest of the songs received special treatment in a professional recording studio—but at five minutes each.

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<sup>23</sup> Canedo, *Keep the Fire Burning*, 45.

<sup>24</sup> John McDermott explained the tedious process of carbon paper copying in the days before Xerox, where one master copy could only produce thirty-five to fifty copies: "For a congregation of two hundred to three hundred, each piece had to be rewritten four to eight times to make enough masters. The more people liked a song, the more copies taken, the more times it had to be written out again for the next rehearsal and the next Mass. The recopying was endless and the ink stains seemingly permanent" (McDermott, "Sing a New Song," 9).

In six days, the Jesuits recorded thirty-five songs in a "marathon session." Though they originally assumed that the Society of Jesus itself would distribute their music, the liturgical publisher North American Liturgy Resources offered to help. In 1974, the project finally saw the light of day—*Neither Silver Nor Gold* was released as a four-album set at eighteen dollars. With the average record price thirteen dollars below that, asking for eighteen seemed optimistic. But the high price met with enthusiastic demand, and international demand at that. St. Louis University hosted the Institute for Religious Formation, an international training ground for spiritual leaders. When the priests, church and music directors—who came from all over the world—were not studying, they were worshipping through the liturgies established by the Jesuit seminarians at the university, and were singing the St. Louis Jesuits' songs. When these ministers and directors returned home, they carried their diplomas in one hand and a collection of the St. Louis Jesuits' ditto copies in the other.<sup>25</sup>

As these seminarians brought the sound of the counterculture into the liturgy, and as Vatican II called for more lay participation in the Mass, Catholics soon discovered that women could play a leading role. As Oppenheimer explained, folk music was gender-blind. Joan Baez held her own with Bob Dylan. And Catholics found that women could lead and play as well as men.<sup>26</sup> Catholic women began writing folk Mass music

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<sup>25</sup> McDermott, "Sing a New Song," 9-10.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

that made its way around the country as quickly as Repp's or the St. Louis Jesuits. Though still barred from ordination, Catholic women discovered that the new experimental liturgies that emerged from the mandate of Vatican II allowed them to exercise ceremonial duties, opening up a new world for many.<sup>27</sup>

Sister Miram Therese Winter presented a case in point. After leaving her family and a "coveted four-year scholarship to the college of [her] father's dreams" for the religious life among the Medical Mission Sisters, Winter was asked to exchange her future as a medical missionary for the vocation of a singing nun.<sup>28</sup> She explained it in her autobiography, *The Singer and the Song*:

I was told it had been decided that I would study sacred music and not anatomy. Talk of a Vatican Council and rumors of significant change had convinced my major superiors that someone would have to be prepared to help the sisters navigate the turbulent waters that lay ahead.<sup>29</sup>

But only months after finishing her studies in Latin-based sacred music, Winter had to retool her calling as Vatican II handed down the imperative to move to the vernacular in all Catholic services. With no organ available to the Medical Mission sisters, and a move away from Latin-based Gregorian chant, she gravitated towards the guitar. "It was, after all, the sixties," Winter explained, "[and] folk music was everywhere." The guitar-based folk songs served a ritual function. Winter, like many others, saw that the move to the vernacular had left a hole in the liturgy where Gregorian chant used to provide a direct

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<sup>27</sup> Oppenheimer, "Folk Music in the Catholic Mass," 105.

<sup>28</sup> Winter, *The Singer & the Song*, 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

response to the proclamation of Scripture. She tried to pull from the Protestant hymn tradition, but found that "imported hymns hung onto [biblical] texts like ill-fitting clothes out of season."<sup>30</sup> Unable to find songs that fit the liturgy well, she began to write her own.

Success came quickly. The Medical Mission sister's first album, *Joy Is Like the Rain*, went gold in 1966. A year later, Winter was performing her new *Mass of a Pilgrim People* in Carnegie Hall, leading the first ecumenical, contemporary religious music concert to grace the stage of New York's premier venue. Her music had quickly spread to Catholic radio stations and folk Mass services. In 1968, she made the ASCAP's Popular Awards List and from there went on to record twelve more albums over the next forty years.<sup>31</sup>

*Sacrosanctum* also opened the door to the rich gospel stylings of African American church culture, and Father Clarence Rivers led the way. Ordained in 1956, Rivers became the first African American priest of the Cincinnati archdiocese.<sup>32</sup> Passionate about both his cultural heritage and his Catholic calling, Rivers stood at a challenging crossroads. "Doctrinally the Church is not supposed to be black or white, Greek or Jew, slave or free," Rivers explained to an audience of fellow black Catholic

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 5, 7.

<sup>31</sup> See "Miriam Therese Winter | Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame"; Director of the St. Bernadette Institute of Sacred Art in Albuquerque, NM, Dan Paulos' short biography of Winter (Paulos, "Sister Miriam Winter - by Dan Paulos"); Winter's own website (Winter, "MT Winter | Music"); and Winter, *The Singer & the Song*, 170.

<sup>32</sup> "Fr. Clarence Rivers, Liturgy Pioneer, Dead at 73."

leaders in 1978, "but as a matter of fact, the Roman Catholic Church in the United States has been and is radically white, and frequently seems determined to remain so, to the detriment of its Catholicity."<sup>33</sup> To fight against this racialization in the Catholic Church, Rivers sought to fuse black and white cultures in liturgical music. He developed a liturgy that incorporated the rhythms and melodies of the black gospel idiom, but fused it with the *a cappella* singing of the Gregorian chant found in traditional European Catholic liturgies. Finished in 1963—before Vatican II had even pronounced *Sacrosanctum*—Rivers' *American Mass Program* made its debut as part of the first Catholic Mass celebrated in English at the 1964 Liturgical Conference in St. Louis, MO.<sup>34</sup> The reaction to the introduction of black gospel music into the liturgy was immediately mixed. The archbishop of Cincinnati forbade "negro spirituals" to be sung at Mass "on the specious rubrical grounds that they were secular music," while a "music overseer" of the diocese of Peoria, IL distributed a letter explaining that music of a "particular ethnic origin" was not suitable for the liturgy.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, Rivers received correspondence from around the country on the positive impact of his musical fusion. In Washington, DC, one man wrote, congregants had to bite their lips to keep from singing the catchy tunes during other parts of the service, while a fellow church member noted

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<sup>33</sup> Rivers, "Thank God We Ain't What We Was," 66.

<sup>34</sup> McGann and Lumas, "Emergence of African American Catholic Worship," 31. Specifically, Rivers' composition "God is Love," which was part of his American Mass Program, was featured as part of that first Mass in English.

<sup>35</sup> Rivers, "Thank God We Ain't What We Was," 68.



that people were nicer to each other in the parking lot after Mass.<sup>36</sup> In the end, the positive reactions won out. The *American Mass Program* garnered critical acclaim and in 1966 received a gold medal from the Catholic Arts Association.<sup>37</sup> Rivers himself went on to become a pillar in the world of African American Catholicism.<sup>38</sup>

Rivers parented other folk Mass talent. After leading his song "God is Love" before twenty-thousand attendees of the Annual Convention of the Liturgical Conference, Rivers was overrun by a recurring question: Did he think that "white people could do the same kind of thing with their folk traditions?" According to Rivers, his response—"Of course... why not!"—helped spur the folk Mass movement. Though he was happy to help any development, he was discouraged that his "efforts to bring black music into the Church had not at first stimulated a black renaissance in the Church." White Catholics, Rivers reasoned, saw his songs as music for blacks, and they wanted a "folk" music of their own, while "black Catholic flocks or their clerical shepherds, it seems, were not ready for a black folk music."<sup>39</sup> Yet Rivers did not shy away from

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>37</sup> "Fr. Clarence Rivers, Liturgy Pioneer, Dead at 73."

<sup>38</sup> Clarence Rivers's career was long and storied. In 1968, he founded Stimuli, Inc., an institution that sought to synthesize African American culture with European American worship traditions. In 1974, he published his first book, *Soulfull Worship*, to wide acclaim. He followed up with *The Spirit in Worship* in 1978. Rivers received a robust education as well. After entering the priesthood, he completed graduate work in English literature at Xavier and Yale Universities, in Speech and Drama at Catholic University of America, and in liturgy at the Institut Catholique in Paris. He also earned a PhD in Black Culture and Religion from Union Graduate School in Cincinnati, OH.

<sup>39</sup> Rivers, "Thank God We Ain't What We Was," 69.

helping white folk musicians. He encouraged Ray Repp<sup>40</sup> and discovered Joe Wise at a liturgical gathering in Memphis, Tennessee. Impressed by his music, Rivers gave Wise three thousand dollars to record an album. Rivers told Wise, "If you don't sell enough to pay me back, fine. If you do earn the money, pay me back without interest."<sup>41</sup> In 1966, Wise recorded and released his hit album, *Gonna Sing My Lord*, distributed by Rivers' publisher, World Library of Sacred Music.<sup>42</sup>

### **3.2 Music**

As the liturgy shifted overnight from Latin to English, church choirs struggled to sing translations of Latin chants and unfamiliar Protestant hymns. So as the experimental music of the folk Mass made its way into parishes, Catholics eagerly embraced what they saw as a solution to the hole in the musical repertoire of the new English liturgy. Grounded in the folk revival of the 1960s, the musical compositions for the new folk Mass were simple. "That was the moment we were in," explained Sister Judith Kubicki, "everyone was picking up a guitar and teaching themselves to play. And so the music was simple, because the people doing it were amateurs. Some pieces of music were almost like camp songs."<sup>43</sup> Canedo explained that because there was no training or tradition available for the folk Mass musicians, the entry door was wide. "If you could play four chords on a guitar," Canedo noted, "you automatically qualified as a

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>41</sup> Canedo, *Keep the Fire Burning*, 85.

<sup>42</sup> Boccardi, *The History of American Catholic Hymnals*, 34.

<sup>43</sup> McDermott, "Sing a New Song," 8.

liturgical musician." The result was a host of eager volunteers with little musical or pastoral training, usually youth, and that created "some unique dynamics." The differences between the folk Mass records and the actual parish experience could be stark. While folk Mass records tried to capture the full breadth of the folk guitar style—"finger-picking, colorful lead lines, and a variety of different strums, emulating the folk music sound heard on secular records"—parish guitarists often knew one strum pattern, in 4/4, and used it with "uniform abandon" on every song, "and it drove some people nuts."<sup>44</sup>

Yet simplicity of folk Mass music was accompanied by spontaneity, enthusiasm, and participation, all characteristics that *Sacrosanctum* sought to encourage in Catholic liturgical music. In an interview with Ken Canedo, liturgist and composer Bob Hurd recounted why folk Mass music had been successful in *Sancrosanctum's* terms of involvement:

The folk Mass succeeded insofar as its whole purpose was to provide music that the assembly could sing. And it did that better than the traditional music at the time. Currently, the assembly will sing the traditional hymns, which might now be judged as better music. ...Whereas in the old days, the choir would do the singing and the people would just stand there. From the point of view of implementing the Council's desire for the people to sing, the folk Mass was a really tremendous thing.<sup>45</sup>

As congregations began to find their own voices in the folk Mass, they found themselves singing not only about God, but also about the issues of the day, particularly

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<sup>44</sup> Canedo, *Keep the Fire Burning*, 106-107. See also Schoenbachler, *Folk Music in Transition*, 17.

<sup>45</sup> Canedo, *Keep the Fire Burning*, 108.

the issues that the counterculture cared about. Folk Mass songwriters stressed "the formation of a Christian conscience and the resulting actions," like the focus on love and unity in James Thiem's "Sons of God" or Father Peter Scholtes's "They'll Know We are Christians,"<sup>46</sup> themes that resonated with the peace movement of the 1960s. They also drew from the environmentalism that was slowly emerging in the 1960s counterculture by utilizing nature and weather imagery. Examples included Miriam Therese Winter's "Joy is like the Rain" (1965) or her "Speak to Me, Wind" (1965), the St. Louis Jesuits' "Sing to the Mountains" (1975) and Ray Repp's "Benedicamus - The Song of the Earth" (1978).<sup>47</sup> And an emphasis on peace, love, and unity with one another and creation went hand in hand with an emphasis on a kinder, gentler God rather than the distant, authoritarian one commonly on display in traditional Catholic liturgies.<sup>48</sup> Witness Ray Repp's "Sing Out, My Soul" (1967): "Sing out my soul to the Lord / For he alone understands / The

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<sup>46</sup> Boccardi, *The History of American Catholic Hymnals*, 35. Thiem sang "brothers, sisters we are one... Jesus gave a new command, that we love our fellow man... Make the world a unity, make all men one family" while Scholtes proclaimed "we are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord and we pray that all unity may one day be restored" ("Sons of God," 1966 FEL, *Mass for Young Americans*; "They'll Know We are Christians," 1966 FEL, *Missae Bossa Nova*)

<sup>47</sup> Winter built "Joy is like the Rain" around the imagery of rain and nature: "I saw raindrops on my window, joy is like the rain... I saw clouds upon a mountain, joy is like a cloud... I saw Christ in wind and thunder, joy is tried by storm." On "Speak to Me, Wind," Winter calls on the wind, stars, and trees to speak to her. The St. Louis Jesuits sang about the rejoicing of creation: "Sing to the mountains, sing to the sea... Let all the earth rejoice." And Ray Repp crooned about the eternal movement of the seasons: "In the midst of the seasons dance is a summer who is singing her song and her glory will never die, moving together, the dance never ends and the season will sing on and on."

<sup>48</sup> Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven's Door*, 78.

loneliness you live in / Place all your cares in his hand / He'll be there when you're in need / And trust you when you go wrong / His love will carry you along."<sup>49</sup>

Most important, however, was what Mark Oppenheimer called the "non creedal universalism" in the lyrics. The religion present in many of the folk Mass songs was "not about doctrine or catechism," Oppenheimer noted, "but about the generalized spirit." "Whereas traditional Catholic liturgical music [reminded] people of the complexity and fanciness of Catholic ritual, these folk songs could easily be sung in a Methodist, Lutheran, or Presbyterian church." But by Oppenheimer's definition, a "non creedal universalism" sounds too broad. It would be more accurate to say that the lyrics embodied a "generalizing ecumenicism" or a "non-sectarian" flavor. They did not avoid naming God as father, Jesus, or Spirit. Take "They'll Know We are Christians" (1966), which actually was later sung by Methodists, Lutherans, and Presbyterians as it became one of the most well-circulated contemporary worship songs throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and even the 1990s. It served as a standard in the repertoire of the Jesus People movement in the early 1970s and most recently appeared in the evangelical mainstream via contemporary Christian artist Amy Grant on her album *Rock of Ages... Hymns & Faith* (2012). The song was originally written by Peter Scholtes, a Catholic priest, associate pastor at Saint Brendan Parish in Chicago's South Side in the 1960s, and a composer for

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<sup>49</sup> See also Joe Wise's "Meleita's Song / I'm in Love with My God" (1966): "Have you ever seen a rose / My God has and he loves them / Loves them so much he kissed them each one / And gave them his color, blooms to open wide," or Carey Landry's "And the Father Will Dance" (1970): "And the father will dance / As on a day of joy / He will exalt over you and renew you by his love."

the burgeoning folk Mass movement at the time. When evangelicals later picked up the song, there were no concerns of embracing Catholic liturgical elements or Catholic theology. And rightfully so, as the song never presented itself as a "Catholic" song. The lyrics could be enthusiastically sung by any Christians who were interested in being known by love and solidarity, not by their submission to papal authority or embrace of transubstantiation. At the same time, the song could not be picked up by Jews or Buddhists—proclaiming that "they'll know we are Christians by our love" did not make sense for people of other faiths.

There were, of course, exceptions. Oppenheimer noted Ed Gutfreund's "Alleluia, Praise to the Lord" (1978), which simply repeated the title over and over and had no reference to Jesus, the resurrection, or atonement. "It could appeal to Muslims or Jews. It could be Unitarian," Oppenheimer explained. And Gutfreund was not the only one. Divorced from its wider context, Miriam Therese Winter's "Spirit of God" (1965) could have been mistaken for an ode to nature worship: "Spirit of God in the clear running water / Blowing to greatness the trees on the hill / Spirit of God, in the finger of morning / Fill the earth, bring it to birth and blow where you will." Still, most folk Mass songs contained biblical or doctrinal references—however vague they may have been—that referenced the Christian faith.

Listening to Catholic leaders and clergy, the response to the folk Mass seemed to fall into one of two camps—love or hate. Its defenders and promoters included reform-

mindful priests and religious, liberal lay Catholics and of course the newly liberated folk musicians. For this group, there were two main motivations: to attract youth to church and to open the liturgy to more lay participation. In the Fall of 1968, brothers at St. Anthony Friary in Cincinnati, interested in attracting teenagers to church, started a nontraditional guitar Mass. Lay musicians, friends, relatives, and eventually nuns joined the group and by May 1970, there were two hundred and eighty-four members. Named the Community of Hope, the congregation received official parish status and lasted until 1989.<sup>50</sup> According to Eddie Bonnemere, music director at Church of St. Thomas in New York City, Catholics needed to express themselves in their own cultural setting, not via Gregorian chant, which had developed for monastic communities and "left people too passive and somber."<sup>51</sup> For folk musician Miriam Therese Winter, the advent of the folk Mass was "a match made in heaven, the wedding of word to a singable song."<sup>52</sup> For pastoral musician Maureen Tauriello, the folk Mass songs were "bright and easy to sing... 'cool' as opposed to the stuffy hymns."<sup>53</sup> Even Ethel Kennedy, the wife of the late Robert F. Kennedy, marked the one-year anniversary of her husband's assassination with a folk Mass, where an acoustic guitar accompanied seventy choir members.<sup>54</sup> Others seemed to share Ethel Kennedy's taste, as parish surveys in the summer of 1973

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<sup>50</sup> Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven's Door*, 82.

<sup>51</sup> Boccardi, *The History of American Catholic Hymnals*, 39.

<sup>52</sup> Winter, *The Singer & the Song*, 6.

<sup>53</sup> Canedo, *Keep the Fire Burning*, 58.

<sup>54</sup> "Folk Mass Will Mark Robert Kennedy's Death."

revealed that eighty churches in the Chicago area were circulating illegal photocopies of folk Mass songs in F.E.L.'s library. F.E.L.'s Dennis Fitzpatrick reasoned that thousands of parishes across the country were doing the same.<sup>55</sup>

Yet critics of the folk Mass abounded too. They included conservative Catholics, clergy and laity trying to protect the Gregorian chant tradition and choir members and choirmasters who felt threatened by "liturgical obsolescence."<sup>56</sup> Clergy such as Msgr. Hellriegel, pastor of Holy Cross Church in St. Louis, argued that Gregorian chant was worth too much to drop in favor of folk songs, while Godfrey Diekmann, OSB, editor of *Worship* magazine at St. John's Abbey, urged Catholics to "rescue the chant from the list of endangered species."<sup>57</sup> Whole parishes defended their choral traditions in a conflict (sometimes imaginary) between choir members and folk Mass enthusiasts,<sup>58</sup> foreshadowing the larger "worship wars" that would appear in Protestant churches in the 1990s and 2000s. But many defenders of pre-conciliar Catholic music were also constructing new histories in order to combat folk Mass music. Religious historian Martin Marty explained that because the post-conciliar changes in the Mass came fast and furious, "a cult of Catholic nostalgia quickly rose to counter them." This nostalgia for Catholic music past whitewashed the reality of what Catholic music had been,

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<sup>55</sup> Canedo, *Keep the Fire Burning*, 126.

<sup>56</sup> Devine, *Liturgical Renewal: An Agonizing Reappraisal*, 59.

<sup>57</sup> Boccardi, *The History of American Catholic Hymnals*, 39.

<sup>58</sup> Devine, *Liturgical Renewal: An Agonizing Reappraisal*, 59.



presenting "the Latin Mass as an aesthetic construct without the numbing boredom that accompanied it for many."<sup>59</sup>

While many critics voiced their opinions in their local parishes, some heralded their laments against the folk Mass to the wider world. Professor of music Ralph Thibodeau described the musical *aggiornamento* as "an aesthetic fiasco."<sup>60</sup> Renowned conservative William F. Buckley declared that the "hyperactive participation" involved in the folk Mass had fallen short of its goal.<sup>61</sup> Some critics even took a comedic approach. Ray Orrock, columnist for the *Oakland Tribune*, penned a parody he called "A Traditionalist's Lament," sung to the tune of "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious":

Introibo. Tantum Ergo. Kyrie Eleison.  
Give me back my pamphlet rack and surplices with lace on.  
If Catholic means rock-and-roll I'd rather be a Mason.  
Introibo. Tantum Ergo. Kyrie Eleison.

I used to sing of Christ the King and goodly saints of yore;  
But now some fool named Michael tries to row the boat ashore.  
The Father, Son and Holy Ghost have given way to trash;  
The Trinity has been replaced by Crosby, Stills and Nash! (Refrain)

They say they dropped the Latin hymns 'cause they weren't understood;  
And hymns that no one understands are neither wise nor good.  
Well, I will stop my nagging and shut up my wagging jaw,  
If someone will just tell me what is meant by KUM-BY-AH! (Refrain)

I fondly sigh that, when I die, no matter how I've sinned,  
The choir will sing Grant Him Rest not Blowin'in the Wind.  
And as I soar to heaven's door to rest among the stars,

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<sup>59</sup> Marty, *An Invitation to American Catholic History*, 186-187. Quoted on p. 24 of Boccardi, *Catholic Hymnals*).

<sup>60</sup> Thibodeau, "Fiasco in Church Music," 73.

<sup>61</sup> Buckley, *Nearer, My God*, 97.

Please bear me there with angel harps... not banjos and guitars! (Refrain)<sup>62</sup>

While many critics bemoaned the aesthetic quality or campy participatory nature of the folk Mass, musicologist Thomas Day<sup>63</sup> provided the most vitriolic critique of the burgeoning liturgy:

The victory of the folk style, reformed or otherwise, is so great and so blinding that many people cannot see beyond that apparent success to what could mildly be called the problem with this music: simply put, nearly all of it—no matter how sincere, no matter how many scriptural texts it contains—oozes with an *indecent narcissism*. The folk style, as it has developed since the 1960s, is Ego Renewal put to music.<sup>64</sup>

Day went on to explain that the folk Mass singers were "not really proclaiming the word of God," but were "acting out... charming theatrical episodes," where the use of "I" was the central focus, while "God [belonged] in the supporting cast." While folk Mass music focused introspectively on the singer instead of God, it also painted God as "our little friend and very much under our control, on the end of a leash."<sup>65</sup> Even God's own voice became the domain of the folk artist:

Here is the revolution. Here is where the folk phenomena [have] completely changed the very idea of worship. In all of the above religious songs, "I" and "me" do not mean the individual worshiper but God Himself. Through the miracle of "contemporary" music, the congregation (and each individual in it) becomes the Voice of God. The words sung by this God/congregation always

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<sup>62</sup> Presented by columnist Ray Orrock to the congregation at St. Francis de Sales during a four-week summer series in 1971 on humor. See Osuna's *How Awesome is This Place*, or Burns and Batiza's *We are the Church*, 53.

<sup>63</sup> See Day's *Why Catholics Can't Sing*, "A Syllabus of Musical Errors," and "When the Congregation Prays Twice."

<sup>64</sup> Day, *Why Catholics can't sing*, 60. Italics mine.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-64.

seem to be reassuring everyone that they live lives of unfailing, heroic saintliness and that they have purchased their own salvation through their good works.<sup>66</sup>

For Day, there was no confusion about the result: "since God is our friend who loves us and since the congregation so effortlessly becomes Him when singing His words from scripture, it would appear that the congregation is really in love with itself."<sup>67</sup> For critics like Day, the call of *Lumen Gentium* from Vatican II that was supposed to inspire Catholics to be "the people of God" had degenerated into "the people *are* God."<sup>68</sup>

While the folk Mass loomed idolatrous for Day and his fellow detractors, and stood as a beacon of liberation for Catholics like Miriam Therese Winter and her kind, for most American Catholics, it received a mixed review. Oppenheimer noted that while "some laypeople felt newly liberated to sing... others rued the thought."<sup>69</sup> If parishes had a folk Mass service, it was often offered as an option alongside traditional services, or performed in the church basement for the youth. Congregations like the Community of Hope, where the folk Mass took center stage, were an exception, not the rule. Though the late sixties produced a torrent of folk Mass tunes, congregations eventually grew tired of singing "Sons of God" or "Gonna Sing My Lord" as the experimentation of the sixties "gave way to more standardized liturgical forms." In the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, Catholic musical composition grew and matured "as contemporary liturgical music

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<sup>66</sup> Day, *Why Catholics can't sing*, 65.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>69</sup> Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven's Door*, 75.

became mainstream," drawing the choir, piano, and even organ back into contemporary arrangements.<sup>70</sup> Yet even while the campy lyrics and sole reliance on a chorus of guitars waned through the late seventies, the contemporary nature of the folk Mass made an indelible mark on Catholic liturgical music, providing a blueprint for how Catholic songwriters could pull from the musical forms of popular culture to coax the voices of the faithful into participation. Even their hands, too, as the folk guitar styles were easy for any aspiring musician to pick up—one just needed three chords and a little rhythm.

### **3.3 Impact**

Catholic folk Masses might have waned in the twenty-first century, but they made a lasting impact on American Catholicism. Institutionally, the folk Mass movement gave birth to the National Association of Pastoral Musicians in 1976, which came to serve as a home to songwriters, music and choir directors, organists, guitarists, and hand-bell coordinators sympathetic to the folk Mass version of the *aggiornamento*. By 1980, the NAPM encompassed twelve regional conventions in Philadelphia, Miami, San Antonio, Dubuque, Baton Rouge, and San Francisco, among others.<sup>71</sup> Culturally, the folk Mass movement had successfully answered the call of *Sacrosanctum*, though in ways Rome had not anticipated. As historian Oppenheimer noted, the folk Mass movement was essentially a mission, a "religious quest [that] was for newer music, less formality,

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<sup>70</sup> Canedo, *Keep the Fire Burning*, 111.

<sup>71</sup> Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven's Door*, 93.

and more warmth." Rome had christened this mission via Vatican II—responding "to demand by changing its supply" of musical forms available for the liturgy. "Once Vatican II gave priests the latitude to permit changes in the liturgy," Oppenheimer explained, "the popular liturgies were going to find homes, in the churches and the diocesan Cathedrals where at first Simon and Garfunkel and Peter, Paul and Mary were feared." And they found homes—sometimes in the church basement as a youth group event and sometimes at the center of the parish as in the Community of Hope.

Yet Oppenheimer understood the legacy of the folk Mass movement primarily as an aesthetic phenomenon. The Catholic Church "reacted to the counterculture by providing a place for the aesthetics of the late 1960s," Oppenheimer argued, "but without liberalizing in any other sense." The aesthetic change was momentous—American Catholicism went from the "most standardized liturgy of any American religion, a Mass fashioned by Rome," to a tradition that became famous for its guitar Masses. But as Oppenheimer reminded readers, these aesthetic changes "were almost entirely decoupled from politics... the hierarchy retained its tight, conservative control on what Catholics were supposed to believe, while the iconography of liberalism—the sandals, guitars, and hugging—seized the day, easily."<sup>72</sup>

As contemporary worship music (CWM) emerged from the Jesus People movement in the early 1970s, it carried the "iconography" of the counterculture as well—

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 94.

long hair, sandals, communal living, peace signs—but still firmly grounded in an evangelical culture that rejected drug use and extramarital sex. Following this model, contemporary Christian music (CCM) throughout the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century continued to embrace the iconography of rock music—the hairstyles, the dress code, the fog machines—while still rejecting, or at times transmuting, the secular, liberal, or even anarchic values that were associated with rock culture.

Even beyond this decoupling of aesthetics from values and politics, the Catholic folk Mass movement served as a prophetic microcosm of what issued from Protestants in the ensuing decades. Like the folk Mass movement, protestant CWM began with mostly amateur songwriters writing simple folk tunes reminiscent of camp songs or writing new words for secular folk songs. As the folk Mass movement grew in popularity, it was industrialized via Catholic publishers and their hymnals, while the music grew in complexity and production quality as the market demanded it. Similarly, the CWM that emerged from the Jesus People movement routinized along similar lines as its popularity grew, its market increased, and more writers, producers, and distributors got involved to produce ever more elaborate and "processed" records that moved beyond the rough quality of amateur recording and production. Protestant CWM also mirrored the folk Mass movement's utilitarian embrace of folk music. Like the brothers at the St. Anthony Friary in Cincinnati, who understood they could use folk

music as an evangelistic tool to attract youth to Mass, Protestant pastors and evangelists—like Chuck Smith at Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, CA—also came to understand that rock music could be an effective tool in evangelizing the unchurched or in attracting youth to church services. Finally, like the Catholic folk Mass movement, Protestant CWM had its detractors as well. Thomas Day had Protestant counterparts in David Noebel and Jimmy Swaggart, with a host of other ministers and critics joining them throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.<sup>73</sup>

While the Catholic folk Mass movement was prophetic for the worship music that was to emerge from Protestant circles over the next fifty years, differences remained. First, the clerical hierarchy of the Catholic Church stood in stark contrast to the church polities and ecclesiologies of the myriad Protestant denominations, traditions, and networks that dotted the American landscape. The folk Mass revolution, in part, came down from on high with the pronouncements of Vatican II. While the folk songs "bubbled up" from lay and religious Catholics for their own communities, it was the Catholic bishops at Vatican II who opened the doors that allowed folk music into the church with the promulgation of *Sacrosanctum*. Protestant CWM had no hierarchy "on

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<sup>73</sup> David Noebel waged a war in print against what he saw as a communist conspiracy theory to corrupt American youth with rock and roll. See *Communism, Hypnotism and the Beatles* (1965); *Rhythm, Riots, and Revolution* (1966); *The Marxist Minstrels* (1974); and *Christian Rock: A Strategem of Mephistopheles* (1975). Jimmy Swaggart released a scathing critique of Christian rock music in his *Religious Rock n' Roll – A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing* (1987). Other books peppered the critic's landscape, including *Satan's Music Exposed* (1980); *What About Christian Rock?* (1986); *Oh, Be Careful Little Ears* (1997); and *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement* (2002).

high" to come down from. Instead, the songs and musical cultures that "bubbled up" from localized songwriters and communities were circulated by Protestant networks, guided by the religious free market, and supported by a prevalent theology of evangelization that came to recognize rock music as a helpful tool for spreading the gospel. Further, the lyrical focus of the folk Mass movement differed from the lyrics that would pour out from Protestant songwriters. As we have seen, folk Mass lyrics, influenced by the social justice legacy of the American Catholic church and the activist ideals of the folk music movement of the 1960s, focused on peace, love, and the unity of the church. Later Protestant contemporary worship music would carry a more introspective focus, pivoting on an intimate, one-on-one relationship with God, on substitutionary atonement, and on the subsequent emotional response required from such good news.



## 4. Translators: The Jesus People, Calvary Chapel, and Maranatha! Music

"Listen! This is a warning! There is a little church over next to a bean field in Costa Mesa that you need to keep your kids away from. They raise their hands and speak in tongues. If any of your kids get caught up in it, try and get them out."

"What else do they do?" I asked.

"They sing for an hour and people fall down when they claim to be filled with the Spirit, plus they say they see healings."

"Well, what else do they do?" I asked.

"They sing rock and roll music to Jesus and have a wild preacher," he responded.

I was there the next night, and so was Jesus in presence and power. I saw some things I had never seen before, but I knew it wasn't a performance. I saw the power of God in ways that I had only heard about; the kingdom of God was present.<sup>1</sup>

Tom Stipe, the author of the passage above, decided to stick around after he visited that little church, Calvary Chapel, in Costa Mesa, California. He stuck around, became friends with the pastor, Chuck Smith, formed a rock outfit called Country Faith, and eventually became a producer and musical contributor for Calvary Chapel's record label, Maranatha! Music. Stipes's story spoke for thousands of American youth also drawn into the charismatic fervor and racket of the Jesus movement, where Christian rock and roll provided the soundtrack for a generation of "Jesus freaks." And what Stipes saw in the midst of that rock and roll singing to Jesus was not an artificial "performance," but what seemed an authentic presentation of the power and presence of

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Stipe, "Recovering the Ministry I Left Behind," in *Riding the Third Wave*, 201-202.

God. For the hippie youth of the Jesus movement—and just as important, for the entire generation of American Christian youth that they influenced—rock music became a spiritual conduit fraught with power, capable of doing authentic, emotional work in worship.

In both the rise of black gospel music in the early twentieth century and the emergence of the Catholic Folk Mass in the 1960s, American Christians wrestled with how best to integrate disturbing popular music into the worship life of the church. But up to this point our examples have provided windows mainly into African American and American Catholic communities. For white evangelicals, change came in the 1970s with the advent of the Jesus movement, and in particular from its epicenter at Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California, where hippie youth birthed contemporary worship music in Sunday evening services, weeknight Bible studies, and the Christian communes and coffeehouses that dotted the coast of Southern California. For the Jesus People and their sympathizers, early contemporary worship music flourished under a utilitarian ethic that embraced rock music<sup>2</sup> as an evangelistic tool *par excellence*. "Jesus rock" clothed

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<sup>2</sup> Rock, rock music, and rock 'n' roll are all contested terms. I use them interchangeably throughout this chapter, but some clarification is required. Lawrence Grossberg, in his historical work on the emergence and development of rock music, argued that defining rock musically was a futile endeavor: "Rock itself has a history which cannot be reduced to the history of its sonic register... rock cannot be defined in musical terms. There are, for all practical purposes, no musical limits on what can or cannot be rock." Instead, Grossberg pointed to the "rock formation," a historically-contingent cultural world that made up the definitional landscape of rock music: "particular musical and lyrical practices—which will be articulated differently in different alliances—are always in a complex set of relations, not only to other musical practices but also to images of performers and fans, structures of social and economic relations, aesthetic conventions, styles of language, movement, appearance and dance, ideological commitments, and sometimes media

the gospel message in the "hip" idiom of the counterculture, attracting hundreds of youth to formerly "square" Christian churches, events, and revivals.

As rock 'n' roll emerged (and surged) in the 1950s, it polarized Americans.

American youth were smitten with the new kings of the beat, like Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Buddy Holly, Little Richard and Elvis Presley. In an era of swelling "juvenile delinquency" and Cold War fears of a failing national morality, however, American parents grew wary of the negative influence that such rebellious music could have on their children. By 1956, rock sales had bloomed to \$331 million for the year, up nearly

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representations of the formations and alliances themselves." Grossberg astutely noted that rock could not be understood outside of its historical formation, particularly in its link with youth culture in the mid-twentieth century. "Understanding how rock functions," Grossberg argued, "requires that it be continuously placed back into its context to ask what were its conditions of possibility and what were the conditions constantly constraining its possibilities" (Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place*, 131-34). For more on the history and development of the "rock formation," see chapters 5-8 of Grossberg's *We Gotta Get Out of This Place*.

In this chapter, I try to take Grossberg's lead and point to the historical contingencies that shaped the rock music of the Jesus people. My understanding of rock music in this chapter assumes Grossberg's conception of rock music as a cultural world, a mixture of musical styles, conventions, and practices; production and consumption habits; commercial interests; ideological postures; and fan communities.

Musically, I mainly focus on what are often considered folk rock, country or southern rock, and folk singer/songwriter styles, as these were the main musical mediums used by the Jesus people in crafting their music. When I use the terms "rock" or "rock music," I am referring to these three styles interchangeably. Early in the chapter I use the term "rock 'n' roll" as well, which is a term usually reserved for early rock music produced in the 1950s, like that of Chuck Berry or Buddy Holly.

"Folk music" here deserves special attention, because I use the term in two distinct ways in this chapter. First, "folk music" can refer to a musical style common to the counterculture, the folk revival of the 1950s and 1960s, and to the Jesus movement. It was a musical style dominated by the acoustic guitar, often fingerpicked instead of strummed, and featured simple melodies sung with little vocal flourish. Occasionally the style would feature several vocalists singing multi-part harmonies and when there were flourishes in the vocal timbre, it usually came in the form of a subtle vibrato. Second, "folk music" can refer to a sociological type and an ideological framework. I use "folk music" in this way later in the chapter when I consider the work of Simon Frith.

fifty percent from the year before.<sup>3</sup> By 1957, historian Larry Eskridge argued, it was clear that rock music "had become the core around which American youth culture would revolve." More than ninety-five percent of the number one singles for the year had been classified as rock 'n' roll in a music industry where teens made up about eighty percent of the record-buying public.<sup>4</sup> "The reaction to this new music and to its triumphal progress," Eskridge explained, "was greeted with anything but enthusiasm by America's concerned elders." Much of the criticism carried racial undertones. Eskridge noted that one leader of Alabama's White Citizens' Council denounced rock 'n' roll as "the 'basic, heavy-beat music of Negroes' that brought out 'animalism and vulgarity' as part of a plot to boost 'the cause of integration,'" while Sigmund Spaeth, a New York-based musicologist, pronounced rock music a "reversion to savagery."<sup>5</sup> Rock 'n' roll allegedly scourged American morality and values, and in the mid-1950s the fear of "rock 'n' roll riots" prompted civic leaders to ban rock shows in several cities, including Washington, D.C., Jersey City and Santa Cruz.<sup>6</sup>

If American parents crusaded against rock 'n' roll, evangelicals led the way.

While most Protestants and Roman Catholics, including liberal mainliners, decried the

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<sup>3</sup> Ennis, *The Seventh Stream*, 229. Quoted in Eskridge, "God's Forever Family," 51.

<sup>4</sup> Eskridge, "God's Forever Family," 51. See also Whitburn, *Billboard Book of Top 40 Hits*, 603.

<sup>5</sup> Eskridge, "God's Forever Family," 51. For an extended review of American opposition to rock music in the 1950s and 1960s, see Martin and Segrave, *Anti-Rock*.

<sup>6</sup> Eskridge, "God's Forever Family," 52.

moral decay that came with rock music,<sup>7</sup> American evangelicals came forth as rock's "most vocal opponents" and sustained their criticism well into the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>8</sup> As we saw earlier, the Youth for Christ leader Marlin "Butch" Hardman declared that rock music "had a decided physical effect... which is hardly in line with the Word of God."<sup>9</sup> Hardman was just one of many pastors and evangelical leaders who saw rock music as a gateway for licentious activities, particularly dancing. Why dancing? Because it was a "gateway sin to all sorts of frivolous and licentious behavior," including drinking, smoking, gambling, immodesty, and most of all, sexual impurity. Fundamentalist publisher John R. Rice did not mince words about the powerful threat he saw in dancing: "Dancing has been definitely proved again and again to arouse lust and stir sex passion... again and again people have told me how the dance led them to give up modest behavior, then led them to ruin."<sup>10</sup> Wheaton College President V. Raymond Edman echoed Rice's sentiments: "I wonder... if you can really imagine the Lord Jesus taking part in the dance? I can't."<sup>11</sup>

While evangelical leaders were often "too proper and polite to push a blatantly racial attack" of rock 'n' roll, they implied as much when they condemned rock and roll for its "jungle rhythms," concerned by "missionary tales of wild music and dancing at

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<sup>7</sup> See Martin and Segrave, *Anti-rock*, 48-50.

<sup>8</sup> See Larson, *Rock & Roll*; Peters et al, *Why Knock Rock?*; and Smithouser and Waliszewski, *Chart Watch*.

<sup>9</sup> Hardman, "Rock 'n' Roll," 12. Quoted in Eskridge, "God's Forever Family," 55.

<sup>10</sup> Rice, *Amusements for Christians*, 19. Quoted in Eskridge, "God's Forever Family," 54.

<sup>11</sup> Edman, "Personal Problems," 9. Quoted in Eskridge, "God's Forever Family," 55.

tribal rites" that blended fears of primal savagery, demonic possession and miscegenation all at the same time.<sup>12</sup>

As noted, evangelicals also feared that rock music exerted a physical effect on the listener. Evangelical rock critic David Noebel declared that "the muscles are weakened, the heartbeat is affected, and the adrenal glands and sex hormones are upset by continued listening." Noebel further asserted, "rock music destroys house plants," and then asked, "if it destroys God's plants, what's it doing to young people?"<sup>13</sup> Even a young Billy Graham, when asked how teenagers should approach rock music, said, "if I were 17 today I'd stay as far away from it as I could."<sup>14</sup>

Of course, Christian teens did not stay away from rock for long. By 1970, David Di Sabatino explained, there were enough Christian rock albums for *Rolling Stone* to take notice: "With all the Jesus rock albums around today, what's a mother to do?"<sup>15</sup> Between Billy Graham's warning and *Rolling Stone's* quip, several musicians had begun knocking down the wall established between sacred music and contemporary pop music, and to that we now turn.

#### **4.1 Christian Rock on the Eve of the Jesus People**

The honor for first "Christian rock" album normally goes to Larry Norman, the golden-haired rock 'n' roll prophet and statesman of the Jesus People, with his 1969

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<sup>12</sup> Ayer, "Jungle Madness," 19-21. Quoted in Eskridge, "God's Forever Family," 55.

<sup>13</sup> Rabey, "A Noebel Cause," 25.

<sup>14</sup> Graham, *Billy Graham Talks to Teenagers*, 16. Quoted in Eskridge, "God's Forever Family," 56.

<sup>15</sup> Di Sabatino, *The Jesus People Movement*, 156.

album *Upon This Rock*. The album sold well and resonated with the musical culture of the Jesus movement emerging in Southern California. But Norman, at best, came in third place for first album. In 1966, The Crusaders likely released the first Christian rock album, which came with the unimaginative-yet-descriptive title: *Make a Joyful Noise with Drums and Guitars*. Essentially a mid-60s garage band, The Crusaders emerged from the California surf rock scene and caught the attention of rock label Tower Records (a subsidiary of Capitol Records). Their album featured several original songs, new arrangements of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "Onward Christian Soldiers," and one of the first "rock worship" songs in "Praise We the Lord":

Praise we the Lord!  
With guitar and drums, with electric beat  
Down on our knees, Lord help us please  
Our voices raised in the Lord's praise  
Praise we the Lord!  
Let the cymbal crash, and the tambourine ring  
God is in our hearts and our voices sing  
Praise we the Lord!<sup>16</sup>

*Billboard* reviewed the album as a collection of semi-religious "pop arrangements... aimed right at the teen market,"<sup>17</sup> while the album liner notes described the band as young men "who have chosen the Big Beat as the means of expressing their religious faith." "Now, for the first time," *Billboard* concluded, "God is praised in song

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<sup>16</sup> "Praise We the Lord" sounded a little too much like the Yardbird's "Mister You're a Better Man Than I." Maybe the first professional recording of a common practice among young Christians in the 1960s and 1970s, where a popular rock tune was reappropriated and given new devotional lyrics in order to use it in Christian settings.

<sup>17</sup> *Billboard*, December 3, 1966, 43.

through the most contemporary musical expression: The Beat."<sup>18</sup> While it might have been the first example of Christian rock, The Crusaders would not have any lasting effect on the future of Christian music. The band soon disbanded and eventually reformed as The Love Exchange with no further salute to religious lyrics.

When it came to the first *evangelical* Christian rock album, Larry Norman still did not come out on top. In 1968, the recent Wheaton College (Illinois) graduate John Fischer released his debut album, *Cold Cathedral*, beating Norman to the punch by three months. Ironically, because Ray Repp's Catholic label F.E.L. released it, Fischer's album saw no distribution in the Protestant music market. Fischer originally pitched his work to Protestant record labels, but nothing stuck. The Wheaton graduate later recalled that the Protestant record labels "were not that daring back then... not quite ready yet for rock-based Christian music." It had been the Catholic Church, he admitted, that "was actually ahead in this, with the Folk Mass."<sup>19</sup> So Fischer's first album went largely unnoticed by the young Protestant audience that would later pick up his second album and famous anthem "Have You Seen Jesus My Lord?"

John Fischer marked one of the few connections between the Catholic Folk Mass and the music of the Jesus People. Another came with the popular song, "They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love," written by Father Peter Scholtes, an associate pastor at

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<sup>18</sup> Powell, *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music*, 217. See also Di Sabatino, *The Jesus People Movement*, 156. As Powell explains, "Big Beat" and "The Beat" were euphemisms for rock 'n roll.

<sup>19</sup> Canedo, *Keep the Fire Burning*, 94.



Saint Brendan Parish in Chicago's South Side. The song was a favorite in Jesus movement communes, coffeehouses, and services, and a cover recording even appeared on Harvest Field's 1971 Jesus music album, *One Way*.

Though Catholic and Protestant youth shared countercultural influences and a love for Jesus, few institutional bridges connected them. Both cultures developed their own separate publishers and distributors for liturgical music, and before the 1970s, these companies saw little profit in expanding beyond their own ecclesiological worlds. Timing was another issue that separated them. The Folk Mass stormed Catholic parishes in the 1960s while it was not until the 1970s that Protestant labels and publishers were interested in Christian rock. Finally, Catholic and Protestant folk composers focused on different theological and liturgical emphases. Often clergy or seminarians, Catholic composers fused Catholic liturgical dispositions grounded in the Mass with the counterculture's concern for peace, love, and unity. Protestant composers situated in the Jesus movement wrote simple, repetitive choruses, easily memorized, that often focused lyrically on apocalyptic themes or evangelism.<sup>20</sup> Still, because the music of the counterculture heavily influenced both movements' young songwriters, their repertoires shared musical conventions and lyrical language. By the mid-1970s, the Catholic

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<sup>20</sup> Apocalyptic imagery was prevalent in the Jesus movement, whether in sermons, slogans, cartoons, or music. The most popular musical tribute to this theme came in Larry Norman's "I Wish We'd All Been Ready," a ballad that told of the sad horrors that would overwhelm the planet when God raptured Christians away in the blink of an eye. Songs with an evangelistic message were even more prevalent, as they could be sung at evangelistic events. Debby Kerner's "Behold I Stand at the Door and Knock" on Maranatha's *The Everlasting Living Jesus Music Concert* was but one example.

Charismatic Renewal that emerged from Duquesne University and Ann Arbor, Michigan, adopted much of the music issuing from the Jesus movement and its rock bands, creating yet another bridge between the musical worlds of the Catholic Folk Mass and the Protestant Jesus movement.<sup>21</sup>

Even before John Fischer or Larry Norman debuted their pioneering Christian rock, other Christian musicians outside of California pushed the boundaries between popular and sacred music. Eskridge noted that Cam Florio's Continental Singers and Thurlow Spurr's Spurlows "toured evangelical churches during the 1960s," employing a musical style that was a hybrid of "sacred, folk, and Hollywood/Broadway." "For many congregations," Eskridge argued, "exposure to such groups was a first step in going beyond the bounds of traditional hymnody within a church setting." In 1968, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship worker John Ankerberg started a three-piece psychedelic blues band called the Exkursions, formed to attract youth to evangelistic meetings at the University of Illinois Circle Campus. The Exkursions went on to tour more college campuses on the East Coast through 1970, even teaming up with English evangelist John Guest for coffee house events in Virginia Beach.<sup>22</sup> The year 1968 also saw

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<sup>21</sup> While attending a Catholic charismatic service, Robert Ellwood was struck by how "determinedly Protestant" the tone of the service was: "None of the hymns, prayers, or scriptural interpretation had any distinctively Catholic concepts or vocabulary, as far as I could see. The Holy Spirit of the 'charismatic' movement seems never to move a soul of whatever background to invoke Our Lady or the Sacred Heart, but only to utter such stock Pentecostal phrases as 'Jesus, we come to you just now,' 'Praise the Lord,' 'Yes, Jesus.'" See Ellwood, *One Way*, 126.

<sup>22</sup> Eskridge, "God's Forever Family," 256-257.

the release of Sons of Thunder's *Till the Whole World Knows*, produced, surprisingly, by the conservative Christian book publisher Zondervan.

Even contemporary worship music (CWM), which did not coalesce into a genre until the mid-1970s with the founding of Maranatha! Music, had its origins in the 1960s. Musicologist Monique Ingalls pointed to David and Dale Garratt as contemporary worship music pioneers, a husband and wife duo from New Zealand whose scripture-based praise choruses made their way into independent charismatic churches in the US in the late 1960s via their first album, *Scripture in Song* (1968). The Garratts developed a recording and publishing company with the same name, circulating their music via cassettes and songbooks while touring internationally. Ingalls noted that the Garretts were often acknowledged as influences on the charismatic praise and worship music<sup>23</sup> of the 1980s, while historian Donald Hustad held them up as the originators of "praise and worship" music.<sup>24</sup>

Yet even a decade before these various artists provided preliminary Christian excursions into the world of rock in the 1960s, the parachurch ministry Youth for Christ, the launching pad for evangelist Billy Graham, began integrating popular music into its ministries in the 1950s. And more than anyone else, Ralph Carmichael deserved credit.

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<sup>23</sup> "Praise and worship" emerged in the 1980s among charismatic congregations and often followed the liturgical pattern outline by Judson Cornwall in his popular book, *Let Us Worship*. For more on the liturgical structure of "praise and worship" and how it utilized CWM, see chapter four on CWM in the Vineyard Fellowship.

<sup>24</sup> Ingalls, "Awesome in This Place," 54. See also Hustad, *Jubilate II*, 285.

Carmichael grew up in a Pentecostal home dominated by the sounds of the tambourine and his father's trombone, while the choir and organ music at the big church down the street sounded of the devil. Carmichael's love and gift for music emerged when, in 1949, he enrolled at the Southern California Bible School in Los Angeles (later renamed Vanguard University), the first four-year college of the Assemblies of God denomination. Though school administrators condemned Youth For Christ events as "worldly," their contemporary approach entranced Carmichael, and he soon signed up as a music leader for the local YFC rally. Success came quickly, and soon local TV and radio stations offered to host Carmichael and his musical entourage. Criticism came quickly, too. The church hosting the local YFC rally began to censor Carmichael's musical experimentation, while the Bible school would not allow him to name his new TV show after the college. Neither measure stopped him. Carmichael's show—*The Campus Christian Hour*—was a hit, and eventually won an Emmy.<sup>25</sup>

Carmichael's success in Los Angeles put him on the national map for YFC. In 1955, he led the music for the annual YFC convention in Winona Lake, Indiana. With a giant choir, accompanied by trumpets, trombones and timpani, Carmichael made a splash with YFC youth and directors. Yet, just as before, he also caught flack from many

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<sup>25</sup> Bergler, "I Found My Thrill," 125.

adult attendees who condemned his "Hollywood production." This time their voices overpowered his music, and after just two years he lost the job.<sup>26</sup>

Though criticism would continue to follow his work, Carmichael remained undeterred. His talent for musical arrangement landed him shows with crooners such as Ella Fitzgerald, Nat King Cole, and Roger Williams. Yet he kept one foot in the world of Christian music. In 1965, Carmichael composed the score for Billy Graham's *The Restless Ones*, which introduced the hit song, "He's Everything to Me." In 1969 Carmichael teamed up with Kurt Kaiser to write the Christian folk musical, *Tell It Like It Is*, which became a hit among church choirs, selling five hundred thousand copies worldwide.<sup>27</sup> The musical featured Kaiser's song, "Pass It On," which would go on to serve as a banner anthem for the Jesus People.

Carmichael's work softened evangelicals' attitudes towards the appropriation of pop music for Christian evangelism and worship before Christian rock was even feasible. "What Carl Henry and Fuller Theological Seminary did for the small cadre of postwar evangelical intellectuals," historian Thomas Bergler argued, "Christian popular music did for the rank and file," and Carmichael's musical contribution played a major role. Carmichael, Kaiser, and other Christian artists and composers convinced evangelicals and fundamentalists that Christian pop music could draw youth to

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<sup>26</sup> Bergler, "I Found My Thrill," 126.

<sup>27</sup> McNeil, *Encyclopedia Of American Gospel Music*, 211.

outreach events and revivals. "By providing a setting and a rationale for musical innovation," Bergler explained, "the Youth for Christ movement played a crucial role in the transformation of musical tastes among American Protestants between 1940 and 1970."<sup>28</sup> Carmichael and YFC convinced many evangelicals that pop and rock music was not simply an immoral waste of time, or even a gateway to other licentious activities, but a tool for spreading the gospel to American youth. This evangelistic logic fueled the proliferation of "Jesus rock" as the Jesus movement developed on the West Coast.

## ***4.2 The Jesus People***

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the rise of a Christian revival movement among American youth. Though different revivals popped up across the country,<sup>29</sup> the epicenter of the movement's numbers, energy, and institutions emerged on the West Coast, particularly in Southern California.

In the late 1960s, the counterculture began fading from view. "The movement had lost its innocence," historians Randall Balmer and Jesse Todd argued, "and many in the movement had lost their hope." Older Americans remained unaccommodating to most of the political protests of the movement, and as a result, many activists gave up hope and exchanged their protest signs for transcendentalism. In particular, public

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<sup>28</sup> Bergler, "I Found My Thrill," 123.

<sup>29</sup> Michael Chrasta pointed to four epicenters for the revivals sweeping the nation in the 1960s and 1970s: Linda Meissner's Jesus People's Army in Seattle, WA; Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, CA; the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Ann Arbor, MI; and the college revival at Asbury College in Wilmore, KY. See Chrasta, "Jesus People," 10.

authorities showed the violent means they were willing to employ to secure order, as protesters experienced at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago and at Kent State. Further, for many on the West Coast, the drug trips had turned bad and the "Summer of Love" had devolved into "self-gratification instead of self-transcendence, and irresponsibility instead of trust."<sup>30</sup> Joan Didion captured the tragic heart of the counterculture poetically in her book *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*:

In the cold spring of 1967 adolescents drifted from city to torn city, sloughing off both the past and the future as snakes shed their skins, children who were never taught and would never learn the games that had held the society together.<sup>31</sup>

As the counterculture of the 1960s buckled from external pressure and began to crumble from within, hundreds of washed up beatniks and disillusioned hippies stumbled into the arms of evangelical Christianity via Christian rock concerts, communes, ocean baptisms, and hip churches. These West Coast revivals became the "Jesus movement," while the people involved were "Jesus People" or "Jesus freaks."<sup>32</sup>

Though popularized as such, it was hard to categorize the Jesus People as a movement. In their historical sketch of Calvary Chapel, Balmer and Todd commented that the Jesus movement "included a bewildering range of groups... [and] had no well-defined boundaries, just as it had no unified leadership."<sup>33</sup> Ronald Enroth, Edward Ericson, and C. Peters, in their 1972 analysis of the Jesus movement, argued that most

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<sup>30</sup> Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 670-671.

<sup>31</sup> Didion, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, 94. Quoted in Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 671.

<sup>32</sup> The "Jesus freaks" title came from Horton Davies, who defined the "freaks" as "those who were freaked out on marijuana or LSD and who are now freaked out on Jesus." See Davies, *Christian Deviations*, 15.

<sup>33</sup> Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 672.

studies of the Jesus People "assume, mistakenly, that the Jesus People [presented] a unified front, so that one may generalize from a part of the movement to the whole." In reality, they argued, there was "so much diversity within the movement that some elements of it [considered] others non-Christian, even demonic," while there was also a "surprising isolation of groups, so that one group usually [knew] little about others, especially those separated geographically."<sup>34</sup> In his dissertation, Michael Chrasta contended that the revivalism of the Jesus movement broke with that of Billy Graham or Billy Sunday, as "no single person was responsible for the mass baptisms, calls to repentance and reconciliation, or desires for a deeper communal life... no single evangelist had anything to do with originating these revivals or controlling the peculiar way the revivals replicated themselves elsewhere."<sup>35</sup>

Still, a few events stood as important markers in the timeline of the Jesus People. One marker was the movement's beginning in San Francisco, when Ted and Liz Wise opened a Christian commune, the House of Acts, in 1966. Five couples made up the first residents: Ted and Liz Wise, disc jockey Steve Heefner and his wife, cigarette salesman Jim Doop and his wife, Ted's friend Danny Sands and his wife and children, and Lonnie and Connie Frisbee. In 1967, the house residents began a coffee house ministry in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco and called it The Living Room.

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<sup>34</sup> Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, *The Jesus People*, 11.

<sup>35</sup> Chrasta, "Jesus People to Promise Keepers," 153.



Financially backed by local pastors, including *Christianity Today's* Edward Plowman, The Living Room became a meeting place for the house residents to "rap" with street people about Jesus and the Bible. The original residents eventually dispersed to form ministries elsewhere. The Heefners and Doops made their way to New Knoxville, Ohio, where they joined Victor Wierwille in building The Way, a ministry focused on "end times" theology. The Wises opened a drug prevention center in Menlo Park, south of San Francisco. Meanwhile, the Frisbees, feeling called by God to export Christian communal living to Southern California, hitchhiked down the coast and landed in Costa Mesa, California, where they helped kick-start another commune, this time called The House of Miracles.<sup>36</sup> The Frisbees eventually made their way to Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel, where Lonnie served as the youth minister.<sup>37</sup>

Between 1967 and 1971, the Jesus movement exploded up and down the West Coast via several ministry hubs. Linda Meissner, in conjunction with Episcopal priest Dennis Bennett and his charge, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, began a ministry to street hippies in Seattle in 1968. Meissner, a Pentecostal evangelist, had worked with David Wilkerson as an evangelist among New York City gangs, all made famous by

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<sup>36</sup> Christian communes sprung up throughout the country. Notable ones included House of Acts (San Francisco, CA), House of Miracles (Costa Mesa, CA), His Place (Hollywood, CA), Hosanna House (Eugene, OR), House of Joy (Portland, OR), House of Prayer (Detroit, MI), House of Judah (Buffalo, NY), and House of Smyrna (Toronto, Canada).

<sup>37</sup> Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, *The Jesus People*, 13-14.

Wilkerson's book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*.<sup>38</sup> Meissner's aggressive evangelism saw instant success and resulted in hundreds of baptisms in the Holy Spirit among Seattle high school youth. With a base at St. Luke's Church, the charismatic ministry quickly became known as the "Jesus People," while Meissner became the general raising up the "Jesus People's Army," a ministry rooted in her vision to build a young army capable of doing what the institutional church had not: taking the nation for Christ.<sup>39</sup>

In 1969, Tony and Susan Alamo started the Alamo Christian Foundation in Hollywood, California. The Alamos bought a building in Saugus, California, about an hour's drive north of Hollywood, and sent out missionaries to bring back street people to the Foundation for a meal and a bible study. Often visitors would stay for further training and become missionaries themselves. Featuring *glossalalia* and invocations for the baptism of the Spirit, the nightly service at the Foundation revealed the Alamo's Pentecostal disposition. Music also played a central role. Enroth and his colleagues described their overwhelming musical experience after attending a service at the Foundation.

[The music] is joyous; it is celebrate; it is nearly frenzy. And most of all, it is loud, almost unbelievably so. Thirty instruments and three hundred people singing at the tops of their voices in a space that would be comfortable for half that number make even shouting an ineffective means of communication. That is not enough for the Alamos. Though the natural amplification verges on the threshold of pain, microphones bracketed to beams in the ceiling pick up and magnify the

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<sup>38</sup> The book was eventually adapted into a film in 1970, starring the famous evangelical actor and singer, Pat Boone.

<sup>39</sup> Chrasta, "Jesus People to Promise Keepers," 149.

uproar. The effect is that of a spiral, each voice gaining intensity in an effort to be heard over an ever-increasing level of sound.<sup>40</sup>

Even though the sound was deafening, and the front of the meeting room bore the marks of a rock concert—amplifiers, microphones, speakers, and a plethora of musical instruments—the tunes sounded more like traditional church music than contemporary pop ballads. "Unlike most of the Jesus People," Enroth noted, "the Alamos do not transpose gospel lyrics to new and more popular musical scores." Instead, classic evangelical hymns, like "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder," "Nothing But the Blood," and "I'll Fly Away," saturated the air.

Other ministries dotted the Jesus movement landscape, particularly in Hollywood, like Arthur Blessit's His Place, a Christian coffee house on the Sunset Strip, and Duane Pederson's *Hollywood Free Paper*, a publication mouthpiece for the movement. In Huntington Beach, California, David Berg founded his Children of God ministry at a Christian coffee shop called the Light Club. The Children of God would go on to start several different communes across the country, all connected by Berg's published letters, affectionately called "Mo Letters," after one of Berg's nicknames, Moses. Like many of the Jesus movement ministries, the Children of God saw the institutional church as an

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<sup>40</sup> Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, *The Jesus People*, 58. The decibel level of the music seemed to be an important aspect of the communal experience for the Alamo's ministry. This use of microphones to pick up the audience's vocal participation anticipated later contemporary worship music live albums, where recording engineers would mic an entire live venue so that the crowd could be heard singing in the recordings. An integral part of the affective power of contemporary worship music emerged from the reinforcing "feedback" of communal singing amplified by microphones, which enhanced the communal feel of the experience, moving the individual worshipper into a transcendent experience.

ineffective tool for the gospel, or, at worst, as a godless apostasy. One of their songs testified to such a sentiment: "I hate the damned old sound, of the church bells ringing, and the people coming from miles around."<sup>41</sup>

Though theologically diverse among its institutions and leaders, three elements marked the breadth of the Jesus movement: apocalypticism, Pentecostal dispositions, and rock music.

#### **4.2.1 Apocalypticism**

While a penchant for the prophetic calculation of the end times peppered the history of American evangelicalism, the Jesus movement fused this eschatological fascination with the counterculture's appetite for the New Age. Balmer and Todd noted that although the secular counterculture lost its political edge by the late 1960s, "its rhetoric remained unabashedly millennial." Unlike the classic American millennial tradition, however, the youth of the movement drew inspiration from Eastern spirituality, not the bible, and ushered in the Age of Aquarius, not the second coming of Jesus. Still, this millennialism shared many of the same criticisms that had anchored American millennialism for centuries: "America's injustice and inequities [were]

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<sup>41</sup> Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, *The Jesus People*, 31. Declaring ringing church bells as a damned sound was not simply hyperbole for the Children of God. They were convinced that their movement represented pure Christianity while all other churches or ministries were imposters. By 1974 American parents began crying foul on the movement, claiming they stole away children and brainwashed them into their cult. The movement faced a PR disaster and subsequent reorganization when the public found out that Berg had instituted "flirty fishing" in Children of God communes, a controversial practice where female members were encouraged to have sex with strangers in order to bring them into the movement.

intolerable, its institutions morally bankrupt, [and] its social and economic games meaningless and inhumane." Like millennialists before them, the youth of the counterculture "struggled for peace and longed for deliverance into a world transformed."<sup>42</sup> When these same counterculture youth embraced Christianity in the Jesus movement, they baptized their defeated millennialism into a Christian apocalypticism that acknowledged the escalating brokenness of the world yet retained the conviction that a radical revolution was on its way. In a sense, their disillusionment with the counterculture led to a "sweeping pessimism about the future that reinforced both their old countercultural and newfound Christian perceptions."<sup>43</sup>

This dispensationalist pessimism was reinforced and nurtured under the guidance of evangelical mentors of the movement. "In Bible studies, sermons, informal 'raps' and in the dispensing of tapes and literature," Eskridge argued, "straight evangelical collaborators and enablers... turned to the prophetic to snare their audiences' interest." Evangelical leaders like Chuck Smith at Calvary Chapel regularly presented new converts with "the full gamut of dispensational teachings such as the importance of Israel, the secret 'Rapture' of the church, the appearance of the Antichrist and the horrors of the 'Tribulation.'"<sup>44</sup> As a result, apocalyptic themes showed up in

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<sup>42</sup> Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 671.

<sup>43</sup> Eskridge, "God's Forever Family," 140.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

Jesus rock songs, like Randy Matthews' "Evacuation Day" or Larry Norman's dark account of the Rapture in "I Wish We'd All Been Ready":

Life was filled with guns and war  
and everyone got trampled on the floor  
I wish we'd all been ready  
children died, the days grew cold  
a piece of bread could buy a bag of gold  
I wish we'd all been ready  
there's no time to change your mind  
the Son has come and you've been left behind<sup>45</sup>

While Norman wished that everyone had been rapture-ready, 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter of Acts, one of the bands that emerged from Calvary Chapel, found the coming apocalypse so obvious that it demanded a rhetorical question: "Well, haven't you heard / That the time of man is closing? / Well, can't you see / That the Son of God is coming?"<sup>46</sup> For both Norman and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter of Acts, the transparency of the end times came in no small part from Hal Lindsey's popular book, *The Late, Great Planet Earth*. Like many American religious leaders before him, Lindsey read the signs of the times and proclaimed that Jesus was coming soon, along with the rapture of the saints and the great tribulation of those left behind. With prophetic broadcasts from Lindsey and others, Jesus people kept an expectant air about their communities, certain that the Savior would return any day, as Larry Eskridge found in a survey of former Jesus people, where nearly eighty percent of participants said that they had thought Jesus' return was imminent in the 1970s.<sup>47</sup> The

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<sup>45</sup> Larry Norman, "I Wish We'd All Been Ready." *Upon This Rock*. Capitol 1969, MP3 file.

<sup>46</sup> 2nd Chapter of Acts, "Well Haven't You Heard." *Mansion Builder*. Navarre 1978, MP3 file.

<sup>47</sup> Eskridge, "God's Forever Family," 140.

Jesus people developed a yearning for the Second Coming as an end to the problems and miseries of the world, as one commune member told Walter Knight (apparently with a longing in his eyes), "the rapture will be something to behold."<sup>48</sup> Even the name of Calvary Chapel's record label, "Maranatha," was the Aramaic declaration that "the Lord is coming."

#### **4.2.2 Pentecostal Dispositions**

Though not all of the Jesus movement ministries had Pentecostal or charismatic sensibilities,<sup>49</sup> a significant number highlighted communion with the Holy Spirit and the gifts the Spirit provided. Journalist and scholar Hiley Ward proposed that two theological strands competed for the movement—the Baptist and the charismatic. Beyond speaking in tongues and the practicing of other charismatic gifts, Ward argued that the distinguishing factor appeared with the music:

You can tell which influence prevails as soon as an evangelist warms up and starts jumping and shouting, or as soon as the music gets under way. The Pentecostals (the Assemblies of God and other holiness groups) will begin to lift up their arms and wave their hands a little... The Baptist-oriented among them, whether they know it or not, keep their hands down. The Pentecostals are the ones with the raised hands, for raised hands are a form of special homage to the Holy Spirit descending.<sup>50</sup>

Though Protestants with non-charismatic leanings made up a portion of the movement, the Jesus people were predominantly charismatic or neo-Pentecostal in their

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<sup>48</sup> Knight, *Jesus People Come Alive*, 109.

<sup>49</sup> The Salt Company coffee house run by Hollywood Presbyterian Church, Arthur Blessitt's His Place in Hollywood, and Kent Philpott's evangelistic communes in San Francisco, among others, rejected speaking in tongues and other charismata.

<sup>50</sup> Ward, *The Far-out Saints of the Jesus Communes*, 122.

emphasis on experiential worship. Michael McFadden argued that the Jesus people turned to what he saw as Pentecostalism "to unleash the strong emotions" powered by their conversion experiences. "They sometimes speak in tongues," McFadden observed, "are taken into rapture, prophesy spontaneously and shout and stamp their feet."<sup>51</sup> Balmer and Todd put it another way, contending that the Jesus movement shared with Pentecostalism "an emphasis on an immediate, affective encounter with the divine."<sup>52</sup> Like Pentecostals in the early twentieth century, Jesus people employed dynamic music, prayer, and body movement to usher in the Holy Spirit.

Yet the Jesus movement was not synonymous with classic Pentecostalism. Many Jesus people disdainfully nicknamed Pentecostals "the Hallelujahs," those who used emotionalism to hide their "lack of true religious conviction" and whose insular tendencies stifled evangelism.<sup>53</sup> In reciprocation, not all Pentecostals came running to embrace the Jesus movement. Though Kathryn Kuhlman gave her blessing to the Jesus people by inviting Chuck Smith and Calvary Chapel youth onto her show in 1971, many Pentecostals feared the "countercultural trappings" of the Jesus movement—its penchant for long hair, hippie dress, devilish rock music, and liberal political leanings.<sup>54</sup>

Though the Jesus movement shared Pentecostalism's emphasis on experiential communion with the Holy Spirit, it also drew from the counterculture, equally bent on

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<sup>51</sup> McFadden, *The Jesus Revolution*, 196.

<sup>52</sup> Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 695.

<sup>53</sup> McFadden, *The Jesus Revolution*, 197.

<sup>54</sup> Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 695.



experiential living. In his book *Jesus Made in America*, scholar Stephen Nichols argued that the Jesus people were the hippies "that found what all of the hippies were looking for," an authentic alternative to the establishment. "In Jesus they found the real thing," Nichols explained, "in Jesus they found real love." Jesus movement slogans like "experience Jesus," "try Jesus," or "turned on to Jesus" revealed the priority of religious experience that both Pentecostalism and the counterculture shared.<sup>55</sup> "The transition from psychedelia to Jesus," religion scholar Robert Ellwood asserted, "was not as radical as it seemed on the surface—or to the converted." Ellwood argued that evangelicalism (which included Pentecostalism) and psychedelic culture shared several characteristics. Both emphasized subjectivity as a key to reality. Just as drugs were to be experienced within, so was the living presence of Jesus. Both also asserted that the goal of life was a "high," whether through pharmaceuticals or knowing the savior.<sup>56</sup> Enroth, Ericson and Peters concurred:

The Jesus People are overwhelmingly—one could almost say exclusively—experience-oriented. ...The word "trip," as used by the counter-culture and now by the Jesus People, is a synonym for experience; a "high" is an experience. ...When those in the counterculture talk about being turned on to Jesus, they are referring to an emotional experience that, for them, has striking similarity to the emotional experience induced by drugs.<sup>57</sup>

Ellwood also contended that evangelicals and countercultural youth shared a sense of belonging to an emerging community and culture. The hippy communes

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<sup>55</sup> Nichols, *Jesus Made in America*, 123-24.

<sup>56</sup> Ellwood, *One Way*, 18.

<sup>57</sup> Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, *The Jesus People*, 164.

marking the age of Aquarius paralleled the evangelical conviction that the church was the first fruit of a new age breaking into the world and one that would culminate in the second coming of Jesus. Finally, both cultures gave priority to communal expression through music. The counterculture's devotion to folk music as the anthems of an idealized rural and communal past echoed the evangelical sentiment for the fervor and piety of "old-time religion."<sup>58</sup>

### **4.2.3 Music**

Music unified and marked the diverse constituents of the Jesus movement, and again the music of the counterculture provided a blueprint. In his 1973 study of the Jesus movement, Ellwood observed that just as hymns united Christians of different allegiances, rock music united "all the spiritual quests of the new culture, from psychedelia to Jesus."<sup>59</sup> David Di Sabatino argued that in the spiritual experimentation of the 1960s, rock stars moved beyond icons of rebellion and became prophets and priests to a whole generation. In what became a "musical gnosticism," young fans poured over song lyrics, certain that the "musical avatars had buried the answers to life's mysteries within their record albums."<sup>60</sup>

Along with rock stars, the folk revival of the 1950s and 1960s also influenced the Jesus movement. While hard rock focused on rhythm and decibels, the non-amplified

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<sup>58</sup> Ellwood, *One Way*, 18.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>60</sup> Di Sabatino, *The Jesus People Movement*, 155.

music from Bob Dylan, Woody Guthrie, Joan Baez, and Pete Seeger became the soundtrack for thoughtful youth. "Rock offered ecstatic escape," Plowman argued, "but folk allowed for serious reflection." As an "excellent message conveyor," folk sounded like a musical form that older evangelicals could embrace. But popular folk lyrics and artists leaned a little too far left and offended conservative adults, pushing many of them "to stick with the trusted likes of Lawrence Welk."<sup>61</sup>

The counterculture also provided space for what radio disc jockeys called "God-rock," popular songs on Top-40 radio stations that contained a religious message or sentiment in their lyrics. Disc jockey Bill Huie called this "message" music and attributed its founding to Bob Dylan, who influenced "the politics, religion, and lifestyles of the entire youth culture."<sup>62</sup> For many of these songs, there was a particular focus on Jesus, as in Lawrence Reynolds "Jesus is a Soul Man," Ocean's version of "Put Your Hand in the Hand of the Man from Galilee," or The Byrds or the Doobie Brothers' version of "Jesus is Just Alright with Me."

Beyond the Top 40, hit musicals also brought Jesus to the forefront of pop culture and provided new God-rock anthems. Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's controversial *Jesus Christ Superstar* opened on Broadway in 1971 to both rave reviews and long picket lines. The accompanying album had actually gone ahead of the musical

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<sup>61</sup> Plowman, *The Jesus Movement in America*, 94-95.

<sup>62</sup> Knight, *Jesus People Come Alive*, 92.

to gauge public interest (and ire), and possibly because of both, it sold a whopping three million copies, featuring two hit singles for the charts in "Superstar" and "I Don't Know How to Love Him." The same year also saw the debut of *Godspell* off Broadway at the Promenade Theatre, which *Life* magazine called "a carefree beggar" when compared to Superstar's luxurious "Pharisee." Historian Stephen Prothero explained that even though both musicals offered unconventional perspectives of Jesus, *Superstar* ruffled more feathers than *Godspell* with a wholly human Jesus, a decent Judas, a sensuous Mary Magdalene and deicidal Jews. But both musicals provided mesmerizing soundtracks that, along with other God-rock, put Jesus front and center in pop culture. Though their church leaders denounced *Superstar* and cautiously eyed *Godspell*, like their secular counterparts, most evangelical youth could not resist either. *The Christian Century* mused whether "the Holy Spirit might be using the commercial stage to rescue Jesus from the church." Prothero thought the magazine was on to something. "One of the distinctive features of the Jesus movement," Prothero contended, "was its appeal to those who found church unappealing. *Godspell* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* did the same."<sup>63</sup>

The rise of hard rock as an aid for spiritual quests, acoustic folk music as an avenue for thoughtful messages, God-rock in the Top-40 charts and musicals that highlighted Jesus all provided the background from which the music of the Jesus movement emerged in the early 1970s. All four of those trends spurred Jesus People to

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<sup>63</sup> Prothero, *American Jesus*, 132-35.

write their own rock tunes, music that emphasized the spiritual nature of hard rock and that leveraged the narrative power of folk revival music in order to proclaim a message. Ellwood proposed that "the great vehicle" of the Jesus movement was this music, while McFadden concluded that nothing expressed "the joy, exuberance and vitality of the Jesus People better than their music."<sup>64</sup> The Jesus movement capitalized on the social and cultural properties of countercultural song to create a unifying soundscape separate from that of traditional church music, one that reinforced the shared, affective experience of rock. Ellwood explained it this way:

The ability of Jesus rock and gospel melodies to generate rich, powerful feelings in a mood and emotion-oriented age has brought and held the movement together. It is largely music that has made the movement a part of pop culture, and it is the Jesus movement as pop culture that distinguishes it from what is going on in the churches.<sup>65</sup>

Larry Norman's 1969 *Upon this Rock* became the landmark album of the movement, not because it was the first, but because it enjoyed wide distribution from Norman's label, Capitol Records. After *Upon this Rock*, the floodgates opened. LPs came fast and furious across the United States, though most of the artists called Southern California home. Well known Jesus singers led the way—Larry Norman, Love Song, Children of the Day, Randy Stonehill, and Randy Matthews—but, Edward Plowman argued, countless bands emerged from Christian coffeehouses, churches, Jesus festivals, campus events, park concerts, radio stations and communes to contribute to the scene as

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<sup>64</sup> Ellwood, *One Way*, 63; McFadden, *The Jesus Revolution*, 118.

<sup>65</sup> Ellwood, *One Way*, 63.

well.<sup>66</sup> Enroth agreed, noting that every Christian coffeehouse, church and commune had its "indigenous musical attraction."<sup>67</sup>

As Jesus music developed, so did an industry to support its production and distribution. Eskridge explained that in the late 1960s, the "evangelical recording industry" was practically nonexistent. For 1967, in a \$1.3 billion music market, the largest evangelical record company at the time, Word Records, managed well under \$10 million in sales, a "lightweight" compared to the massive numbers of any major secular label. Most Christian and gospel records were sold only in religious bookstores, by mail order from religious magazines, or by artists on tour. Finding an evangelical album in a record, drug or department store was rare. But by the turn of the new decade, the surge in upwardly mobile evangelicals resulted in a growth of evangelical publishing and book selling businesses. Like the rest of the American population, evangelicalism also saw a "maturing music-listening, record-buying Baby Boom population" arrive among their ranks, and the evangelical music industry benefitted.<sup>68</sup>

The music itself ranged from hard rock, like that from the band Harvest Flight, with its emphasis on distorted guitar tones and driving rhythm, to more minimalistic, acoustic folk arrangements like those from Children of the Day, which featured

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<sup>66</sup> Plowman, *The Jesus Movement in America*, 98-99.

<sup>67</sup> Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, *The Jesus People*, 83.

<sup>68</sup> Eskridge, "God's Forever Family," 280. For more on the rise of disposable income among evangelicals during this time, see McDannell, *Material Christianity*, 246- 247; and Michael S. Hamilton, "More Money, More Ministry: The Financing of American Evangelicalism", in Eskridge and Noll, *More Money, More Ministry*, 104-138.

fingerpicked acoustic guitars and vocal harmonies. Either way, Ellwood noted, the separation from traditional church music was clear: "there [were] no overtones of Palestrina, Handel, or even Arthur Sullivan."<sup>69</sup> Unlike traditional hymns, the lyrics were simple and laced with repetitive phrases. Though Ellwood thought they carried a "covert anti-intellectualism," they also contemporized the Christian message by putting it "in the 'hip' idiom of pop music."<sup>70</sup> Beyond a focus on scripture verses, like Karen Lafferty's "Seek Ye First," Jesus music also highlighted testimonies of Christian conversion, like Keith Green's "You Put This Love in My Heart." Overwhelmingly, though, Jesus music lyrics revolved around evangelism.

#### **4.2.4 Translating the Gospel: Jesus Music as Evangelism**

Evangelism, the act of proclaiming and spreading the good news of the gospel, dominated the lyrical focus of Jesus music. In this, the Jesus movement paid homage to an old practice in American evangelicalism. In post-Civil war revivals, the famous revivalist and preacher Dwight Moody always traveled with his song leader and composer Ira Sankey. A force in late-nineteenth century hymnody, Sankey published hundreds of hymns in his widely circulated volumes of *Gospel Hymns*. In the early twentieth century, evangelist Billy Sunday popularized his revivals with the help of music director Homer Rodeheaver, who used a combination of jokes, trombone playing

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<sup>69</sup> Ellwood, *One Way*, 64. This was not entirely true, as Michael McFadden observed during his visit to The Alamo Christian Foundation, where the nightly finale included a rousing rendition of Handel's Hallelujah Chorus, belted out by more than a hundred Californian youth. See McFadden, *The Jesus Revolution*, 54.

<sup>70</sup> Ellwood, *One Way*, 65.

and baritone singing to warm up the crowds and draw them into the service. And in the 1950s, Billy Graham drew record crowds with the help of gospel singer George Beverly Shea, who led the masses in energizing renditions of traditional hymns or quieted them with moving solos. All three of these evangelistic duos used music as a tool to attract audiences, share the gospel message, and move participants emotionally towards a decision for Christ. The Jesus movement's creative embrace of rock music for evangelism continued this larger tradition within American evangelism.<sup>71</sup>

The logic of translation animated evangelicals' embrace of rock music. Inspired by the apostle Paul, who became "all things to all people" in order to save some, American evangelicals had a long history of embracing media technologies in order to translate the gospel message to the unchurched. And since World War II, evangelicals had focused a lot of energy on American youth, drawing them to the gospel message with entertaining events and programs where music played a large role. A prescribed choreography animated this logic of translation. When first faced with a new cultural or technological medium, evangelicals often understood it as morally charged, embracing Marshall McLuhan's proverb that "the medium is the message." When radio was introduced in the 1920s, fundamentalists fretted over its properties and implications—would it dilute the gospel with worldly entertainment? Would the "church of the air"

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<sup>71</sup> See Romanowski, "Rock 'n' Religion," 14.



lure people away from churches made of wood and stone?<sup>72</sup> Some even feared that since Satan ruled as the "prince of the power of the air," radio carried a certain satanic quality to it.<sup>73</sup> Television elicited a similar apprehension, while rock music celebrated rebellious rhythms that led to licentious behavior. But once evangelicals understood that a medium could deliver the gospel message, it became morally neutral. Evangelicals then switched gears, and now *against* Marshall McLuhan's famous dictum, they operated under the assumption that the message could be separated from the medium. Christian songwriter Ralph Carmichael embraced this logic, explaining that the musical style was subordinate to the message: "As a Christian composer, I feel I must write in whatever idiom will be most effective for Jesus' sake," and in the 1960s and 1970s, the most effective idiom was the "hip" one, the rock beat and the folk ballad. While the gospel message did not change, its wardrobe did, and it could be translated and carried via a host of media. "Our message stands the same," Carmichael argued, "but the vernacular and communication tools must change in order to stay relevant."<sup>74</sup> Carmichael voiced a deep impulse of American evangelicalism, particularly of the neo-evangelicalism that

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<sup>72</sup> For more on fundamentalist concerns over radio, see Berkman, "Long Before Falwell," and Eskridge, "Evangelical Broadcasting: Its Meaning for Evangelicals."

<sup>73</sup> See Hendershot, *Shaking the World for Jesus*, 5; Wendell Loveless' *Manual for Gospel Broadcasting*, published by Moody Press in 1942, also had some excerpts from various Christian publications on the satanic dangers of radio: "The modern invention is like the double tongue, it sends out sweet water and bitter, but a great deal more bitter than sweet. The devil is the prince of the power of the air and he seems to have the right of way for his goods of every description." Another excerpt was equally damning: "The radio might well be called the helpmeet of the movie, the 'lust of the ear.' The serpent's mate has crawled from the window of the theater on Main Street, and coiled herself behind the gauze that covers the mouth of the radio, right in the parlor..." (Loveless, *Manual of Gospel Broadcasting*, 15-16).

<sup>74</sup> Knight, *Jesus People Come Alive*, 97.

emerged from fundamentalism in the mid-twentieth century: *all of culture was a potential tool for the spreading of the gospel*. Rock music became a utility for spreading the gospel, a relevant tool for unreached audiences. Separated from the message, where the moral energy resided, evangelicals embraced media as empty cisterns they could fill with morally good content. Media were means to an end, and the end always justified the means, particularly when it came to presenting the gospel via popular music.

Carmichael's collaborator, Kurt Kaiser, agreed: "Kids have been inundated with the same kinds of [rock music], and nowadays it's everywhere. I just think it's a very sensible way to reach kids. I can't imagine any evangelist who's interested in reaching kids going with any of the twentieth-century hymn writers." Richard Hogue, an evangelist who ran a program called SPIRENO out of First Baptist Church in Houston in the 1970s, concurred as well: "The new expression of music makes it easier to reach kids, simplifies getting them to come [to evangelistic events]." And Russ and Helen Cline, musicians based in Kansas City in the 1970s, approached their evangelistic ministry with the same logic.

The motivation which led us into producing our album was to find a way in which we could communicate with people not in the church. The only way to reach these people is to earn the right to speak. Then the kids will seek us out. We will not have to unzip the top of their heads and pour the gospel in. We will have enlisted their attention.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 97-98.

The Clines' approach to teenagers' heads as vessels waiting to be filled paralleled their approach to rock music—like unzipped heads, they unzipped rock and poured the gospel in. As Edward Plowman observed the Jesus people, he noted that for them, "without a doubt, modern music [was] a strategic communication vehicle," a language spoken by the counterculture that required its own translation of the gospel.<sup>76</sup> Fashioning themselves as Bible translators with guitars, Jesus musicians stepped forward to translate the good news into hip tunes.

Though Jesus music exploded in the early 1970s, as an evangelistic tool it first came in the form of live shows and events with little commercial infrastructure. Records and marketed tours were rare in the early days, in part because the construction of authenticity within the counterculture saw commercialization as inauthentic. Yet also because, as David Di Sabatino noted, a logic of evangelism was *the* priority of the Jesus movement. Given the counterculture's sense of authenticity, early Jesus musicians saw record production as "a secondary concern eclipsed by the primacy of personal intimacy developed with a live audience," an intimacy that could win some to Christ. Further, Di Sabatino argued, because Jesus People believed that Jesus' return to earth was imminent, recording an album wasted precious time available for evangelism at live shows.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Plowman, *The Jesus Movement in America*, 113.

<sup>77</sup> Di Sabatino, *The Jesus People Movement*, 157.

Of course, it did not take long for Jesus people to realize that rock records were simply another medium that could carry the gospel (as well as a means to raise necessary funds for their ministries). By the middle 1970s, most artists embraced some rudimentary form of music distribution through mail-order companies, while also focusing on self-promotion and constant touring. Christian coffee houses promoted artists as well, serving as venues on a Jesus music circuit, while Jesus music festivals, like the Icthus Music Festival in Wilmore, Kentucky or the Love Song Festival at Knott's Berry Farm in Southern California, provided further means of promotion for artists and their records.

As record evangelism became more prominent, Jesus musicians utilized lyrics for the proclamation of the gospel in different ways. Some songs took a testimonial approach to evangelizing, as Love Song's "Freedom":

Jesus is the One who changes slowly  
All the evil things that dwell so deep inside me  
Jesus is the One who cares forever  
Never let me down and never failed to guide me  
He'll do the same for you!  
(He'll give you freedom)  
He's reaching out for you!  
(He'll give you freedom)  
He's the only One who's true  
(He'll give you freedom)  
He'll set you free<sup>78</sup>

Other songs eschewed the soft approach and embraced rock's crassness, like Larry Norman's "Why Don't You Look into Jesus":

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<sup>78</sup> Love Song, "Freedom." *Love Song*. Good News Records, 1972. MP3 file.

Gonorrhea on Valentines Day,  
And you're still looking for the perfect lay,  
You think rock and roll will set you free,  
You'll be deaf before your thirty three,  
Shooting junk till your half insane,  
Broken needle in your purple vein,  
Why don't you look into Jesus, he's got the answer.<sup>79</sup>

Regardless of their approach, Jesus musicians were fueled by an evangelistic zeal to perform, write and record. Like generations of evangelicals before them, the Jesus people translated the gospel into the culture and language of their day, leveraging the "devil's music" to bring about the kingdom of God.

### **4.3 Calvary Chapel**

We now leave a broad view of the Jesus movement to focus on Calvary Chapel, a mega-church in Costa Mesa, California, that emerged as one of the many "hubs" of the movement in the 1970s. But why focus here on Calvary Chapel, as opposed to the plethora of other Jesus movement ministries that dotted the West Coast in the 1970s? In a historical narrative focused simply on the Jesus movement, or even a narrative chronicling the larger evolution of American evangelicalism in the late twentieth century, Calvary Chapel simply would be one more example among many others. But Calvary Chapel played a catalytic role in the history of contemporary worship music. There, Jesus music began to transform into the praise choruses that would anchor CWM.

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<sup>79</sup> Larry Norman, "Why Don't You Look into Jesus." *Only Visiting This Planet*. Solid Rock, 1972. MP3 file.

### 4.3.1 Calvary Chapel Origins

Calvary Chapel started small. Originally organized by pastor Floyd Nelson as a bible study for elderly "shut-ins," Calvary Chapel did not set out to revolutionize the non-denominational world or contemporary worship music. Instead, it aimed to provide community and bible study to an elderly population in a mobile home park in Costa Mesa, California. But after three meetings, the small group was denied use of the park and moved to a Girl Scout meeting hall in Costa Mesa. Consisting of "white middle-class conservative Orange Countians," the initial community included a local architect, police sergeant, and gas station owner. In the early 1960s, the church bought its first property on Church Street in Costa Mesa, establishing a permanent house of worship. But the congregation remained small, around twenty-five members, and soon entered a crisis of authority. In his dissertation on Calvary Chapel's music, Chuck Fromm<sup>80</sup> explained that pastor Nelson disagreed with the church board over who had ultimate authority in the congregation. Like many independent Pentecostal churches, Nelson argued for a life-tenured position and that ultimate "charismatic office" authority rested with him as the

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<sup>80</sup> I cite extensively from Chuck Fromm's work in this section for two reasons. First, Fromm wrote a dissertation on the music at Calvary Chapel in the 1970s, and thus provides interviews of several key actors in the musical development of the church. Second, Fromm, in his analysis, also provides a primary source, as he was present at Calvary Chapel during this period and was heavily invested in its musical development of the church and its record label, Maranatha! Music. Fromm is the nephew of Calvary Chapel pastor Chuck Smith, attended Calvary Chapel first in 1970-72 while a student at California State University in Fullerton, and became the CEO of Maranatha! Music in 1975. Fromm would go on to run Maranatha! until the 1990s, as well as found and direct *Worship Leader* magazine.

founding pastor. But the board disagreed and suggested Nelson take a six-month paid leave-of-absence while the church worked through the issue.<sup>81</sup>

During those six months Chuck Smith visited Calvary Chapel as a guest preacher. Congregants not only enjoyed Smith's articulate sermon, but also his rousing, pre-sermon baritone solo as well. Nelson saw Smith's talents too, and, finally giving up his life-tenure dream at Calvary Chapel, recommended that the church hire Smith. In November of 1965, after the church board debated salary issues, it offered Chuck Smith a pastoral position while Floyd Nelson would stay on as a pastoral consultant. Smith accepted and became the new pastor of Calvary Chapel.

Chuck Smith brought his own story to Calvary Chapel. After graduating from LIFE Bible college (now Life Pacific College) in 1948 with a G.Th. (Graduate of Theology) degree, Smith was ordained into Aimee Semple McPherson's small but sturdy Pentecostal sect, the Foursquare Gospel Church.<sup>82</sup> After a decade of ministry in that network, Smith grew tired of what he saw as "church-growth schemes propagated by the denominational hierarchy," where the congregation would divide "into two or more teams for a contest designed to fill their assigned pews by inviting the 'unsaved' to church."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> See Fromm, "Textual Communities," 136-144.

<sup>82</sup> Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 673.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 674.

"I couldn't face another Blues against the Reds," Smith confessed, and, ignoring the contest, decided to focus on bible teaching. Of course, without even knowing it or telling his congregation, Smith won the contest and an invitation to a denominational rally to collect his trophy. But disillusioned by what he saw as an overemphasis on church growth instead of discipleship, Smith left the Foursquare and accepted a pastoral position at a nondenominational church in Corona, California.<sup>84</sup> Smith explained his exodus: "I felt the endless competitive records, program charts for development and membership drives did not really serve to build up believers nor extend Christ's kingdom. There never seemed to be room for the Holy Spirit to work creatively among us."<sup>85</sup> Nor room for Smith to exercise his own creative control. Free from denominational restraints in Corona, Smith focused on his bible teaching, growing the small congregation before he received the call from Calvary Chapel.

Accepting Calvary Chapel's offer must have been hard, as the pay was bad and the prospects worse still. Smith's wife, Kay, had doubts about her husband's decision to relocate: "Why would he want to leave our work in Corona, California? It was a growing congregation of more than one hundred fifty. The people loved us. We had an important radio ministry and Chuck left it all to be second man to a dwindling congregation of twenty-five."<sup>86</sup> Smith supplemented his meager church income by cleaning carpets part-

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Smith and Steven, *The Reproducers*, 14.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 13.



time, but even with the stress of two jobs, his charismatic gift for leadership shone through—church membership increased at a rate of five percent a week, and by 1966, the small congregation had grown to ninety members and had maximized their current space.<sup>87</sup>

In 1969, Calvary Chapel constructed a new building on an old school site, met for Sunday services, and started Wednesday night bible studies. When the Wednesday night bible studies began, there were a dozen in attendance. By the summer of 1971, however, that number ballooned to more than a thousand people, mostly under the age of twenty-one, and similar numbers came on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday nights as well.<sup>88</sup> Hippie youth flooded the church, eager to hear Chuck Smith teach, discover Jesus, and experience what Chuck Fromm called "new song," a melding of acoustic folk and hard rock with spiritual lyrics.

Calvary Chapel's success came in the late 1960s with a change of heart. Though surrounded by the Orange County counterculture, Smith had no interest in hanging out with Southern Californian hippies. Early on, Smith was not impressed with the counterculture: "these long-haired, bearded, dirty kids going around the streets repulsed me."<sup>89</sup> But this repulsion eventually softened, possibly because of his daughter, who had begun dating a new Christian convert and former Haight-Ashbury acid-head. John, the

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<sup>87</sup> Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 674; Fromm, "Textual Communities," 158.

<sup>88</sup> Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, *The Jesus People*, 85.

<sup>89</sup> Smith, "The History of Calvary Chapel." Quoted in Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 674.

former beatnik, spent time witnessing at Huntington Beach, and when Smith showed some curiosity with the counterculture, he offered to bring some hippie friends over to the Smith house. John returned one evening with a new friend, Lonnie Frisbee, who had converted while on a drug high in the California desert. Smith was immediately impressed with Frisbee and invited him in to live with his family and then hired him as the new youth minister at Calvary Chapel. Smith's house soon became a "hippie pad" where countercultural youth could find shelter, food and Smith's bible teaching.<sup>90</sup> Between Smith's bible studies and Frisbee's unique gift for counterculture evangelism, Calvary Chapel became a magnet for hippies and street people in Southern California. When he ran out of room in his own house, Smith opened a new Christian commune called the House of Miracles and put Frisbee in charge. Smith also started new youth services on weeknights that featured folk singing and bible study, which hippies flocked to. Soon Smith declared Calvary Chapel the heart of the Jesus movement<sup>91</sup> while dunking hundreds of longhaired teenagers in the Pacific surf in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The influx of hippies and street youth at Calvary Chapel came at a time of disillusionment for the counterculture. "A formidable tradition in the very society the young had defied," Balmer and Todd explained, "evangelicalism proved to be for many

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<sup>90</sup> Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 674-75.

<sup>91</sup> Knight, *Jesus People Come Alive*, 34.

rebels both a balm for their souls and a means of continuing their protest, however muted." Apocalypticism, "in many ways a doctrine both of despair and protest," the experiential nature of the practices and sensibilities of the Jesus movement, and the activist-oriented message of evangelistic lyrics all provided a bridge between Haight-Ashbury and evangelical congregations. And as these countercultural youth found Jesus, and then as these Jesus people made their way into evangelicalism, Calvary Chapel was a primary beneficiary, in part because of Smith's openness towards them and his empowering of charismatic personnel like Frisbee. But Smith also combined theology and popular culture into an attractive form of charismatic Christianity, as Balmer and Todd explained.

Chuck Smith's genius lay in tying together various theological and cultural strands: premillennial apocalypticism, biblical inerrancy and literalism, fundamentalist behavioral codes, American revivalism, the social and political conservatism of surrounding Orange County, and, finally, a modulated Pentecostal worship with its strong emphasis upon experience and the accoutrements of the counterculture.<sup>92</sup>

Chuck Fromm argued that Calvary Chapel looked outwardly to countercultural youth primarily because of their conviction that the end times were here. Chuck Smith put a heavy emphasis on the coming apocalypse in his preaching and teaching, holding bible classes on Israel after the modern nation state won the Six Day War in 1967. Smith believed that Jesus was returning any day, and he encouraged his flock to live their lives accordingly. There was a sense of urgency for missionary work, for reaching out to the

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<sup>92</sup> Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 694.

lost in the "last days."<sup>93</sup> Of course, bringing the counterculture into the well-kept sanctuary posed problems. Smith recounted how several members posted a sign that read "No Bare Feet Allowed in the Church" after hippie youth had come into the sanctuary with dirty feet that soiled the carpet and bellbottoms that scuffed the pews. Smith immediately tore the sign down, called a church board meeting, and explained that no one, hippies included, would be turned away from the church because of soiled carpet and scuffed pews. If that were the case, then they would rip out the carpet and remove the pews.<sup>94</sup> The urgency to reach the lost in the last days outmatched traditional church aesthetics and propriety.

Though an apocalyptic disposition drove his embrace of countercultural youth, Smith also attracted the Jesus people because, as Balmer and Todd argued, he was himself a hippie. Impatient with institutional maneuvering, Smith bucked his own denomination, choosing to be "a rebel fleeing bureaucratic institutions" like the Foursquare. And "he sought what generations of Christian reformers have always sought," Balmer and Todd contended, "a more immediate experience of the divine unfettered by institutional constraints."<sup>95</sup> Yet his brilliance lay in his combination of rebellion and institutionalization. Smith built his own institution at Calvary Chapel, one that maintained a rhetoric of authenticity that denounced institutional religion while

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<sup>93</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 167.

<sup>94</sup> Eskridge, "God's Forever Family," 127.

<sup>95</sup> Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 674.

exploiting the power of institutional hierarchies and structures at the same time. As a result, Smith "effectively harnessed the religious energy and spiritual ardor of the Jesus movement" by providing a "haven where [the Jesus people] might continue their spiritual pilgrimages while retaining at least the trappings of their rebellion."<sup>96</sup> These trappings of rebellion came in many forms—informal preaching, ocean baptisms, church-sponsored communes, openness to counterculture dress—but most important, they came with the rock music. Before we turn to Calvary Chapel's music, however, we must first consider its Pentecostalism.

#### **4.3.2 Calvary Chapel and Pentecostalism**

Within the Jesus movement, Calvary Chapel maintained a contested middle ground between fundamentalism and Pentecostalism. There were other Jesus movement ministries—like the Alamos' Christian Foundation in Hollywood or the Children of God in Huntington Beach, California—that embraced the gifts of *glossolalia* (speaking in tongues) and prophecy, and others still who rejected the charismata, like evangelist Arthur Blessitt, Duane Pederson (founder of the *Hollywood Free Paper*), and author Hal Lindsey, who held to the cessationism, the conviction that the spiritual gifts had ceased with the deaths of the apostles.<sup>97</sup> Calvary Chapel sat between these two camps, allowing for "afterglow services" where the "baptism of the Spirit" could flourish, but essentially

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 695.

<sup>97</sup> Streiker, *The Jesus Trip*, 108.

behind closed doors and during "off-hours," outside of the normal services and bible studies. Enroth described the afterglow service that he had attended on several occasions:

Often [groups of youth] will form a big circle, heads lifted upward, softly singing and praying. After closing into a tightly packed prayer huddle or concluding the sessions with reverent singing of the Lord's Prayer, small groups slowly scatter or cluster off to the side, some speaking softly, others laughing joyously. To them, Jesus is "so heavy man, it's beautiful."<sup>98</sup>

While the afterglow services provided a charismatic outlet, Calvary Chapel did not tolerate the display of charismatic gifts in the main services or bible studies and, afterglow service or not, never encouraged spectacle. Smith took the display of Pentecostal practices and sensibilities during worship very seriously. "One of the important characteristics of Calvary Chapel," Smith declared in his book *Calvary Chapel Distinctives*, "is the centrality of Jesus Christ in our worship," which meant that the church did not allow "any practice or behavior that would distract people from focusing on Him." Even someone rising to stand in the midst of a moving worship experience found little sympathy:

The eye is interesting because it's attracted to motion. In many cases, I've seen those, who stand up by themselves in worship, conclude they're not getting quite enough attention so they raise their hands and start to sway. That's eye-catching. But it's also a distraction, and suddenly people are wondering why they're standing there.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, *The Jesus People*, 89. See also Knight, *Jesus People Come Alive*, 35.

<sup>99</sup> Smith, *Calvary Chapel Distinctives*, 65.

Those saints who wished to stand and sway, share a word God had given them, or speak in a tongue unknown were quietly and quickly escorted from the service and told that those activities were not allowed at Calvary Chapel.<sup>100</sup> "Disorderly outbursts in tongues that disrupt the Sunday morning message," Smith argued, "[were] the work of the flesh."<sup>101</sup> Far from wanting to silence the Holy Spirit, however, Smith sought to find a balance between Pentecostalism and fundamentalism: "There must be a middle position between the Pentecostals, with their overemphasis on experience, and the fundamentalists, who, in their quest to be right, in too many cases have become dead right."<sup>102</sup>

For Smith and Calvary Chapel, the Holy Spirit was "the dynamic" by which one could live, serve and love God, the one who gave the believer power and victory for an abundant life. This was true even for the afterglow service. "If you come to receive the power of the Holy Spirit," youth minister Ken Gulliksen explained to afterglow participants, "praise the Lord. But don't come for the gifts. We don't come for gifts, but for power."<sup>103</sup>

According to Balmer and Todd, Chuck Smith provided a theological amalgamation, a proponent of what they labeled "soft Pentecostalism." Rendered more palatable to a wider swath of evangelicals, Smith's "soft Pentecostalism" embraced

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>101</sup> Smith, *Charisma Versus Charismania*, 4.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>103</sup> Ward, *The Far-out Saints of the Jesus Communes*, 126.

Pentecostals' conservative theology and a belief in the charismata but also played down *glossalalia* and avoided an overemphasis on experience. The result was "an accommodation to mainstream, middle-class sensibilities" that granted Calvary Chapel wider appeal.<sup>104</sup> If the Jesus people translated the gospel to the counterculture, then Calvary Chapel translated Pentecostalism to the wider culture.

This translation was another step in the "pentecostalization" of American Christianity. Chuck Smith's soft Pentecostalism mirrored what historian Kate Bowler called Joel Osteen's "soft prosperity."<sup>105</sup> As Osteen would do decades later, Smith translated Pentecostalism in a way that smoothed over many of the sectarian or high-cost elements, like speaking in tongues.<sup>106</sup> "I believe it's important for these [spectacles] to be dealt with," Smith explained, "because displays like these will cause you to lose prospective members to the church. If I went into a church and that was happening, I might think that the sermon was great, but I can't quite handle all these other things."<sup>107</sup> Before anything else, Smith possessed the heart of an evangelist, and the evangelistic criteria trumped all other considerations. But when this zeal for evangelism combined with an informal openness to new musical forms carried over from Pentecostalism,

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<sup>104</sup> Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 684. Balmer and Todd very well could have borrowed the idea of "soft Pentecostalism," particularly as it pertained to Calvary Chapel, from sociologist Donald Miller, who used the term in an in-house 1992 documentary on Calvary Chapel called *A Venture in Faith*.

<sup>105</sup> For more on "soft prosperity," see Bowler, *Blessed*, 125-27.

<sup>106</sup> Smith described his approach to the charismatic gifts that appear in church services in his book *Calvary Distinctives*. Smith explained that because Jesus was at the center of their worship, they did not "allow any practice or behavior that would distract people from focusing on Him." When people stand up in the middle of the service, for instance, "the focus is taken off Jesus and placed onto the person who's standing."

<sup>107</sup> Smith, *Calvary Chapel Distinctives*, 66.



Calvary Chapel became an ideal place for newly baptized hippies to bring their new Jesus songs.

At the heart of Calvary Chapel's "soft Pentecostalism" lay not just a rejection of uncontrollable spectacle, but also a distillation of the experiential forms of Pentecostalism into the music—into the affective energy of rock forms. As Edward Plowman had explained, hard rock provided an ecstatic escape while acoustic folk allowed for serious reflection. Both were cultural mediums that created affective states, ones that elicited emotional responses and structured them within given contexts, whether in the individualized experience of listening to a record or the communal experience of a concert. While speaking in tongues might have been off-putting to many, a whole generation understood the emotive power of rock music.

### **4.3.3 Music at Calvary Chapel**

In 1968, Chuck Smith and his hippie protégé, John Higgins, began a weeknight bible study for local youth. They quickly found that many of the youth were musicians, eager to share songs written in response to what they learned in the bible studies. With the opportunity to make the bible study more palatable for youth with some homegrown music, Smith invited musicians to share their songs before he taught his lesson. In June of 1968, the first guitar showed up at Calvary Chapel. Over the next few years, the youth bible study exploded as teens came to learn from Smith and sing along

with strumming guitars. By 1971, the bible study served as a major hub of the Jesus movement.<sup>108</sup>

The songs that first appeared at these bible studies developed as lighthearted sing-a-longs. Kenn Gulliksen, one of Smith's many protégés, remembered singing silly songs like "Rise and Shine" ("The Lord told Noah to build him an Arky Arky") or Disney's "It's a Small World." Attending youth also combined advertising jingles, like Pepsi's "We're the Pepsi Generation coming at you," with new "Christianized" lyrics: "We're the Jesus Generation coming at you." "The worship," Gulliksen recalled, "was more of a sing-a-long, camp songs, singing Scripture, taking the Coca Cola song and making it about Jesus... it was really like camp singing."<sup>109</sup> This form of lighthearted folk singing was not new, as it had roots in evangelical camp revivals, YMCA Christian youth camps, and in the youth ministries that developed after World War II, where it functioned as an entertaining attraction and created an informal setting that made space for hesitant youth.

But the setting quickly changed with the introduction of original music. Original tunes first appeared at The House of Miracles,<sup>110</sup> Calvary Chapel's Christian commune, in response to what many of the youth (including youth leader John Higgins) saw as an

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<sup>108</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 2-3, 175.

<sup>109</sup> From a 2005 interview with Kenn Gulliksen. See Fromm, "Textual Communities," 175-176.

<sup>110</sup> The House of Miracles was a two-bedroom house that opened as Calvary Chapel's first Christian commune in 1968. Run by the Frisbees and the Higgins, the house quickly filled up with twenty-one young converts within a week of opening. By the end of the second week, there were thirty-five youth living in the house, with one sleeping in the bathtub (Fromm, "Textual Communities," 175).

offensive lack of experiential authenticity. The advertisement jingles were inauthentic because they were commercialized, while the silly songs were inauthentic because they were regarded as childish tools of entertainment and frivolity. More important, however, both jingles and camp songs were inauthentic because they were not composed from direct, personal experiences with God. The Jesus people at Calvary Chapel were looking for songs "that were written from the heart." "If these other guys wrote these songs, like 'Great is Thy Faithfulness' and 'Amazing Grace,'" Higgins explained, "we knew that they had an experience with Christ and out of that experience came this music." The youth at The House of Miracles wanted that too, and so they banned the silly songs and the jingles. Higgins explained the conviction: "No singing that stuff, let's not do that. Let's work hard, let's let our lives express Christ and let's write songs that come from our life and our experience rather than copying the world."<sup>111</sup>

For the youth at Calvary Chapel, musical authenticity meant songs written out of their own lives and experiences, where direct experiential knowledge was privileged over everything else.<sup>112</sup> "We expected that songs about Jesus came from one's own

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<sup>111</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 176.

<sup>112</sup> Balmer and Todd noted that the emphasis on experience, while central for the counterculture and American evangelicalism, was especially important in the Pentecostal tradition, "where it has always enjoyed precedence over dogma" (677). Interestingly, in an in-house 1992 documentary on the rise of Calvary Chapel, Chuck Smith argues strongly for the opposite, particularly in terms of the split between Calvary Chapel and the Vineyard Fellowship. Smith contended that Wimber and his associates left Calvary Chapel because they sought to privilege charismatic experience over biblical doctrine, whereas he was

feelings or experience," Calvary Chapel songwriter Marsha Stevens<sup>113</sup> explained, "and had the specific purpose of relating one's heart to another person or sharing one's heart with others and with Jesus."<sup>114</sup> This sentiment echoed sociologists Michael Emerson and Christian Smith's argument that a major component of the evangelical cultural tool kit was relationalism, a strong emphasis on the importance of interpersonal relationships with God and others.<sup>115</sup> Just as a personal relationship with Jesus was critically important to the faith life of evangelicals, so was forming interpersonal relationships in order to spread the gospel. When it came to the communicative medium of music, this relationalism privileged original songwriting as a contextualized witness for the gospel. If Calvary Chapel evangelicals were going to use rock music as a means of evangelism, it had to be written from the heart, from personal experience, in order to be authentic and effectual.

For the Jesus people and the youth at Calvary Chapel, authenticity also involved spontaneity. Chuck Smith praised the "freshness" that came with spontaneity when he explained how the youth would present their songs to him for consideration:

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trying to do the opposite—emphasize the teachings of the bible and let experience flow from it. See Smith et al., *A Venture in Faith*, 1:20.

<sup>113</sup> Stevens wrote the early Calvary Chapel hit "For Those Tears I Died" in 1969.

<sup>114</sup> From a 2005 interview with Marsha Stevens. See Fromm, "Textual Communities," 183.

<sup>115</sup> For more on the concept of an evangelical cultural tool kit, see chapter four of Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*.

I had these Monday night studies for the young people and the kids would come and they'd say, "you know, the Lord gave me a song and can I share it tonight?" And so we were letting the kids share their music and it was exciting because it was fresh. ...There was a beauty and an excitement about it because you weren't singing of someone else's experience that took place fifty years ago, seventy-five years ago in their culture, but you're expressing something that happened to me today.<sup>116</sup>

Yet the youth at Calvary Chapel were not simply creating fresh songs for worship. They were also writing music within the Pentecostal tradition of the spontaneity of the Spirit. "Although the singing... is highly patterned in many respects," Balmer and Todd observed, "the music at Calvary Chapel conveys the impression of spontaneity. The worshippers insist that their music is inspired and directed by the Spirit."<sup>117</sup> As much as Smith rejected the spectacle of the charismatic gifts within worship services, he retained a Pentecostal logic that privileged spontaneity as an authentic movement of the Spirit in his ministry to hippie youth. This was the musical parallel of speaking in tongues, where the Holy Spirit not only appeared via song but also spoke to the congregation through the new musical language of rock. As Smith explained, the Spirit spoke here and now and inspired a specific song to share for this context, not the old words of staid songs that had come before. These new words, these new tunes, communicated the gospel in a language that the young members of Calvary Chapel could understand.

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<sup>116</sup> See Smith et al., *A Venture in Faith*, 53:30.

<sup>117</sup> Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 683.

As they wrote from the heart, Calvary Chapel musicians also wrote their songs in response to sermons and bible lessons they received under Smith's tutelage. As Peter Jacobs of the band Children of the Day explained, "there was a direct correlation" between the songwriting and Smith's preaching and teaching.<sup>118</sup> As Smith led the youth verse-by-verse through the bible with his expository studies and sermons, they wrote "songs of adoration, thanksgiving, and praise" in response, often drawing directly from Scripture.<sup>119</sup> One of the most popular songs was Karen Lafferty's "Seek Ye First." Lafferty chronicled the inspiration for her hit song:

What happened is that I ran out of money... And it just so happened that that night [at church] they were teaching out of Matthew 6... where Jesus was saying, "consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air and how they don't sow or reap but God takes care of them. So how much more does he care for you? So seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you." So I went home and in those days we were writing a whole lot of scripture choruses, just straight King James scripture. So that's what I did, I just picked up my guitar and first wrote a little tune. I thought, "Oh, we don't have a song to this scripture, we need a song to this one."<sup>120</sup>

Musicologist Monique Ingalls noted that this kind of narrative of composition was common among Jesus musicians writing worship music, a link connecting Calvary's music to the ideology of authenticity common in the folk revival of the 1950s and 1960s:

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<sup>118</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 177.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 185. All of these songs eventually were recorded and released on Maranatha! Music's first *Praise Album* in 1974.

<sup>120</sup> Karen Lafferty interviewed by David Sullivan, featured on "Karen Lafferty on 'Seek Ye First.'" While Lafferty's account goes beyond the divine inspiration normally accredited to hit songs, it fit the classic testimonial mold: a bad situation was getting worse until the person turned to God, who then blessed the person with more than they could have asked for. For more on Lafferty's account of "Seek Ye First," see Christensen and MacDonald, *Our God Reigns*, 129-33.

Accounts of the origins of praise choruses emphasize the amateur nature of these compositions: that these were common, everyday people—not trained musicians—composing simple, Spirit-inspired songs which grew from their own life experiences. These songs, in turn, were effective because they expressed something "real," grounded in the personal spiritual life of the songwriter.<sup>121</sup>

Songs like "Seek Ye First" became known as "praise choruses" because of their content (focus on praising God) and their form (short with words few and simple), or "scripture choruses" if they drew directly from the bible. With such simple songs, song sheets and books proved unnecessary—Smith and the congregation could sing them from memory—while the simple melodies proved more accessible to people with little or no musical ability. Memorability served as an integral trait of what Chuck Fromm and Balmer and Todd labeled as an "oral tradition" at Calvary Chapel.<sup>122</sup> The songs encapsulated both the doctrinal lessons and the emotions associated with them, and were easily passed on in a communal setting because they were easily memorized.<sup>123</sup>

As much as Smith condoned the use of new music at the weeknight bible studies, through the early 1970s Sunday morning services remained a traditional affair at Calvary Chapel, where the congregation sang traditional hymns out of the hymnal, led by piano or organ. But the two music cultures blended at the Sunday evening service, where Smith led songs *a cappella*, first singing a traditional hymn and then moving to one of the new "praise choruses" or "scripture choruses" developed in-house among

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<sup>121</sup> Ingalls, "Awesome in This Place," 65.

<sup>122</sup> See Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 682 and Fromm, "Textual Communities," 185.

<sup>123</sup> Balmer and Todd noted that "although songbooks are not used at any time other than Sunday morning, everyone associated with the church for any length of time seems to know the words" (Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 682).

Calvary Chapel's youth. Music played a large role in Calvary Chapel's youth services on Sunday evening and during the week. Singing, interspersed with testimony, lasted for up to two hours before the bible study began. After attending several of these youth services, Enroth noted that the participants eagerly embraced the music with active singing, swaying bodies, and interlocked arms, what appeared as a unique combination of "1950-vintage Youth for Christ rallies [and] 1970 rock festivals." If the content echoed Youth for Christ, the language mimicked the counterculture. "The jargon of the hip youth culture is pervasive," Enroth observed, "words like 'heavy,' 'right on,' 'far out,' and 'for sure' are as prevalent as long hair and tie-dyed shirts." The youth even raised their hands in symbol at the end of the song, though instead of the peace symbol, they presented one finger pointing upward—the sign that there was only one way to heaven and that was through Jesus Christ.<sup>124</sup>

Chuck Smith's embrace of the Jesus people and the subsequent surge of Jesus music at Calvary Chapel dramatically grew the church in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Starting in 1969, Calvary Chapel saw large increases in attendance in its weeknight bible study for youth, Sunday morning and evening services, and in particular in its church-sponsored, monthly Saturday night rock concerts. One such sponsored show was the Everlasting Living Waters Rock Concert, which attracted five thousand local

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<sup>124</sup> Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, *The Jesus People*, 86-87.



teenagers.<sup>125</sup> Though there were several musical outfits featured at the concert, most of the teens came to see one band: Love Song.

Love Song emerged as Calvary Chapel's premier rock band, replete with the country rock twang and distinctive vocal harmonies of the Eagles and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young.<sup>126</sup> Before the four-man rock group arrived in February of 1970, Fromm explained that Calvary Chapel's music scene featured "boomer teenagers with guitars, true folk singers with no commercial base... [who were] expressing their heart through their guitars and three major chords." But when Love Song began attending Smith's bible studies and youth events, the musicianship and commercial reach of Calvary Chapel expanded. "They sounded like a popular rock band," Fromm recounted, "and like many bands of the day communicated spiritual insight in their lyrics. There was no problem for youth to connect with them or to their message. They spoke their language."<sup>127</sup> Love Song also dressed the part. "We looked wise," front man Chuck Girard recalled, "we had beards and we looked very sage and very heavy... [even though] we were just a bunch of bickering babies."<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Knight, *Jesus People Come Alive*, 31. Romanowski noted that the audience size for most of these Saturday night concerts ranged from 2,000 to 5,000 (Romanowski, "Rock 'n' Religion," 93).

<sup>126</sup> Edward Plowman noted that Love Song's sound fused soft rock, folk rock, folk, country, and western styles, but hard rock and acid rock were curiously absent. "Many Christian groups eschew hard rock forms," Plowman explained, "because, they say, they are too enmeshed with psychedelic overtones and too sexually suggestive." Chuck Smith agreed, arguing against the catchall term rock and favoring instead the label "contemporary gospel" (Plowman, *The Jesus Movement in America*, 105).

<sup>127</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 191-192.

<sup>128</sup> Chuck Girard interviewed by Chuck Fromm, 2005. See Fromm, "Textual Communities," 191.

Love Song's band members—Chuck Girard, Tommy Coomes, Jay Truax, and Fred Field—all came of age in rock-steeped Southern California, though none set out to play Christian rock. The band formed as all four members met each other at a community house in Laguna Beach, California in 1969. Field and Truax stumbled into Christianity via evangelistic tracts and friendships, creating tension in the band as the four musicians tried to work out its direction. While traveling through Costa Mesa, the band decided to stop by The Blue Top—one of Calvary Chapel's Christian communes run by the charismatic Lonnie Frisbee—to work out their issues. They had heard about the commune and Calvary Chapel from various hippies picked up along the Pacific Coast Highway and found themselves intrigued by a church that embraced the counterculture. Soon Girard and Coomes converted as well, and Frisbee introduced the band to Chuck Smith.<sup>129</sup> In an interview with Chuck Fromm, Smith recalled his first encounter with Love Song:

[They said] the Lord had given them some music and they wanted to know if they could share it at the church. So I said, "Well, I'd like to hear it."... They started singing and it was "Welcome Back" and it was so moving, so touching. I said, "Whoa, yes, I'd like you guys to sing tonight."... [Love Song was the band] that really inspired the others to then start forming groups, because they realized that that music could be used in church, at our church anyhow, and in worship.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 193.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 194. Chuck Smith Jr. had a similar recollection of Love Song's introduction at Calvary Chapel: "Love Song had more popular appeal than the folk-type music that was germane to most hippie Christians who could play three or four chords on a guitar and could strum or pick, but not hammer out a screaming riff. I cannot overemphasize that people heard the Christian message in their own voice. The reaction of hundreds of thousands of young people—even if Love Song did not sell hundreds of thousands of albums—was,

This was a typical introduction for Smith, who commonly invited musicians to share their music on the spot. Smith's embrace of countercultural music was not the only attraction for hippie youth. His highly flexible, fast-moving leadership style also enticed youth to come to Calvary Chapel, because there they had instant access to the pastor and a platform to share their music and creativity. Smith maximized his uncanny ability to empower others more creative than himself in their ministries and utilized that to grow Calvary Chapel. "While Smith may not have been an innovator on a personal level," sociologist Donald Miller explained, "he allowed young converts around him who were extremely culturally savvy to do the innovation."<sup>131</sup>

As Love Song inspired other musicians to form bands—The Way, Mustard Seed Faith, Parable, Aslan, Country Faith—Calvary Chapel became the new epicenter for Jesus music in the early 1970s. And as these bands grew in popularity from Calvary's monthly Saturday night concert series, they toured further afield, visiting churches first across Southern California and then up and down the West coast. The mission, however, remained the same—their music was an evangelistic tool, a vehicle for the gospel. And in response to this outward movement of Jesus music, Smith and Calvary Chapel began

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'Wow! This is my music and my faith.' The two had always been separated—at least since the advent of rock 'n' roll." (194-95).

<sup>131</sup> Moll, "Day of Reckoning," 53.

a new ministry that would support the artists' efforts in spreading the gospel in song by bottling it in a consumable form. They called it Maranatha! Music.

#### **4.4 Maranatha! Music**

Founded in 1971, Maranatha! Music began as a Calvary Chapel ministry designed to record and publish the Jesus music emerging there. Beginning in March of 1971, Calvary Chapel began holding outreach concerts outside of Orange County. Bands like Love Song, Children of the Day, Country Faith, and Blessed Hope performed, drawing a few thousand inside the venues (normally local high schools) and attracting more than ten thousand listeners outside.<sup>132</sup> Their popularity on the rise, the bands began touring churches throughout Southern California. But often the artists never recouped the financial costs involved with touring—food, lodging, and gas money—and it became difficult for the young musicians to build sustainable music ministries. So Chuck Smith had an idea—he would start a record company "as a sort of pragmatic solution to the care and feeding of [Jesus] musicians" and base it out of Calvary Chapel.<sup>133</sup> Smith explained the situation in an interview with Chuck Fromm:

They would go drive five hundred miles and of course they would play for a handful of people, the pastor would give them five bucks, say, "thank you for coming," and they wouldn't have money to go to the next place. ...[With M!M] they could sell the albums and at least they would get enough money to get gas and food to support the ministry because the churches were really taking advantage of them, not really compensating them. So that was the whole point of

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<sup>132</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 219.

<sup>133</sup> Romanowski, "Rock 'n' Religion," 93.

M!M, and so we put the first *Everlastin' Jesus'* album together... and it was a sampler album so all the groups could take it and have a number on it.<sup>134</sup>

While Smith founded Maranatha as a tool for artist support, the Calvary Chapel musicians saw something else. "For the artists," Fromm recalled, "it was something entirely different. They saw the company simply as a tool for evangelism. Because of the subcultural values they brought with them, they simply never thought of self-support, only supporting the [Christian] vision."<sup>135</sup> In the end, Maranatha was both, as it brought in a profit for the musicians and established a media company that could record and distribute the gospel in musical form.

Smith put up \$2,500 from his own funds to jumpstart Maranatha and produce its first album, *The Everlastin' Living Jesus Music Concert* (1971), a compilation record that featured Love Song, Children of the Day, Selah, Country Faith, Blessed Hope, Gentle Faith, Debbie Kerner, and The Way.<sup>136</sup> Maranatha quickly followed up with Children of the Day's *Come to the Water* (1971) and Debby Kerner's *Come Walk with Me* (1972). Success came quickly. The first two albums sold more than 25,000 copies, and Fromm recalled that the trio of original recordings "were adopted by the Calvary Chapel community as well as the Jesus Movement as core symbols of [the] faith."<sup>137</sup> But Maranatha's early distribution was limited. Smith noted that the first album originally sold "from the trunk

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<sup>134</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 218.

<sup>135</sup> Romanowski, "Rock 'n' Religion," 93.

<sup>136</sup> Different sources report different amounts that Smith contributed to start Maranatha! Music. Steve Rabey reported that Smith contributed \$2,500 in Rabey, "Maranatha! Music Comes of Age," while Chuck Smith reported it was \$3,500 to start Maranatha in Smith, "The History of Calvary Chapel."

<sup>137</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 220.

of Mike Macintosh's car as he went around to the bookstores in Southern California" to peddle the new Jesus music.<sup>138</sup>

As the Jesus music coming out of Calvary Chapel grew in popularity, Maranatha needed to find a way to circulate its music nationally. With few companies interested in the burgeoning Jesus music scene, Maranatha and other Jesus music producers turned to Bob Cotterell's Creative Sound Records. Creative Sound was a Los Angeles-based record production and distribution company that Cotterell founded in 1966. A member of Bel-Air Presbyterian in Los Angeles, Cotterell worked as a young salesman for Sacred Records when he devised his new strategy to distribute the flood of new Christian music emerging in California. Creative Sound distributed Larry Norman's One Way records, music from Arthur Blessitt and Duane Pederson, Love Song's albums, and Maranatha's catalogue.<sup>139</sup> Most of their sales were via mail order, scholar Bill Romanowski noted, as the new-fangled contemporary Christian music coming out of Southern California was still boycotted by most respectable Christian bookstores at the time.<sup>140</sup>

#### **4.4.1 The Praise Series**

In the early stages of the music at Calvary Chapel, little distinguished what would become "message songs" and "praise songs."<sup>141</sup> Calvary Chapel and Maranatha

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<sup>138</sup> Smith, "The History of Calvary Chapel."

<sup>139</sup> Eskridge, "God's Forever Family," 280.

<sup>140</sup> Romanowski, "Rock 'n' Religion," 120.

<sup>141</sup> This was the beginning of a genre split that remains prevalent in the early twenty-first century. By the late 1970s, message music had come to dominate the nascent contemporary Christian music industry and would

featured both styles indiscriminately in services and on early records. Starting in the early 1970s, however, the two forms of music began to take shape. Monique Ingalls noted that message songs became "oriented toward those in attendance [at Calvary Chapel events] and intended to encourage the conversion of the unsaved or to express the joys of Christian community, [and] were generally performed only by the featured musicians onstage."<sup>142</sup> Message songs often were focused lyrically on personal testimony and an evangelistic message, like Country Faith's "Two Roads":

Does all of this confound you? Do you want to understand?  
Make the choice before you, your own will or Jesus' plan  
Do your choosing, please don't hesitate  
Eternity lies in the choice you make  
Two roads from which to choose, road to glory or the fool's highway  
Two roads from which to choose, the rocky one or the Lord's new freeway  
Choose before the savior comes, the road to glory or the rocky one  
Please decide before the Lord descends, sweet road to glory or the bitter end<sup>143</sup>

Praise songs (also known as praise choruses or scripture songs), on the other hand, "were intended for communal singing." These songs were written for congregational services and used in the liturgies of the church. They often drew directly

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remain the genre with greater visibility and larger market share throughout the 1980s (with artists like Amy Grant, Petra, and Stryper) and the 1990s (with artists like Steven Curtis Chapman, Michael W. Smith, and Jars of Clay). By the 2000s, contemporary worship music would reemerge as a major commercial sub-genre within CCM, driven by the rising visibility of megachurch worship and the increased adoption of rock and pop styles in church services.

<sup>142</sup> Ingalls, "Awesome in This Place," 60.

<sup>143</sup> Butler, Chuck and Tom Stipe. "Two Roads," performed by Country Faith. Maranatha! Music HS-777/1. Vinyl. 1971. CCLI #523775.

from scripture,<sup>144</sup> like "Holy, Holy, Holy" on *The Everlastin' Living Jesus Music Concert*, which riffed on Revelation 4:8:

Holy, holy, holy is our lord God almighty  
Who was and who is and who is to come  
Glory, glory, glory to our lord God almighty  
Who died and now lives and who is to come  
Oh God fill our hearts with the love of Jesus Christ<sup>145</sup>

Or they featured simple devotional lyrics, like Terrye Coelho's "Father I Adore You":

Father I adore You / Lay my life before You / How I love You  
Jesus I adore You / Lay my life before You / How I love You  
Spirit I adore You / Lay my life before You / How I love You<sup>146</sup>

The split between these two forms of music at Calvary Chapel concretely appeared in Maranatha's *The Praise Album* in 1974, the first album of praise songs produced specifically for congregational worship.<sup>147</sup> The record marked Maranatha's first nod towards what would become CWM, and the first record in a long series of

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<sup>144</sup> Ingalls, "Awesome in This Place," 61.

<sup>145</sup> Unknown author. "Holy, Holy, Holy," performed by all artists on *The Everlastin' Living Jesus Music Concert*. Maranatha! Music HS-777/1. Vinyl. 1971.

<sup>146</sup> Coelho, Terrye. "Father I Adore You," performed by Terrye Coelho. Maranatha! Music HS-777/8. Vinyl. 1974. CCLI #26557.

<sup>147</sup> Ingalls argued that, alongside *The Praise Album* in 1974, the 1973 songbook *Rejoice in the Lord Always* should be considered Maranatha's first foray into products marketed specifically for worship. However, *Rejoice in the Lord Always* was simply the songbook for *Maranatha 3: Rejoice in the Lord*, the third compilation album released by the company in 1973. There were arguably praise songs on the record in "Psalm 42" and "Why Art Thou Disquieted," but a majority of the record's songs were focused on testimonies and evangelism instead of praise or scripture. Ingalls may have meant the *Rejoice in Jesus Always* songbook, also released around the same time and one that did focus exclusively on praise music for worship. Fromm asserted that the songbook had sold more than 500,000 copies, though it's unclear over what period of time his assertion covered (Fromm, "Textual Communities," 185). As for recorded music, it was not until 1974's *The Praise Album* that Maranatha made an explicit differentiation between message music and praise music.



highly successful praise albums,<sup>148</sup> eight more of which Maranatha would produce in the 1970s.<sup>149</sup> Still, in the mid-1970s, Maranatha's Praise series jostled for attention among the rest of its records and artists. Not until the end of the decade would Maranatha drop all of its message music in favor of praise music.

As some of the first contemporary worship music records, Maranatha's *Praise* series provides a window into the development of the musical form that would come to dominate American churches. Unlike other Maranatha albums, the *Praise* series omitted the names of its recording musicians. Though the same Calvary Chapel artists featured on other Maranatha albums (artists like Love Song, Children of the Day, and Karen Lafferty), they organized anonymously under the banner of the "Maranatha! Singers" in order to distinguish music intended for worship from music intended for entertainment or Christian messages. In theory, by rendering the artists anonymous, the focus shifted to the songs and to worshipping God.<sup>150</sup> The Praise series also featured landscape

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<sup>148</sup> By 1978, *The Praise Album* had sold 300,000 copies, while *Praise II* had sold 150,000. See "Tape Growth for Christian Music Label." By 1989, Maranatha's *The Praise Album* and *Kids Praise 1* had both sold more than 500,000 copies (see "Benson/Maranatha! Music Announce Long-term Pact," quoted in Romanowski, "Rock 'n' Religion," 165.)

<sup>149</sup> The 1970s saw Maranatha release eight albums intended for congregational worship: *The Praise Album* (1974), *Praise II* (1976), *Praise Strings* (1976), *Praise Strings II* (1978), *The Gift of Praise* (1978), *Praise III* (1979), *Hymns of Praise* (1979), and *Praise Strings III* (1979).

<sup>150</sup> Of course, Maranatha still needed to market their music and were not above highlighting the star power they brought in with their guest singers. A 1979 advertisement for *Praise III* in *ThirdWay* magazine noted that although "the singers... remain anonymous," few listeners "will fail to recognize the lovely voice of Evie, guest soloist on 'Spirit Song.'" So even though anonymity was an important aspect of the *Praise* series, records still had to be sold.

photography for all of its album covers.<sup>151</sup> The result was album art that drew the listener's attention not to the artists but to the beauty of God's creation or the serenity of a pleasant landscape. This trend of "faceless" music in both album art and the lack of acknowledged artists would dominate contemporary worship music in the 1980s and 1990s, including series coming from other worship labels like Vineyard Music and Hosanna! Music, until the worship music industry turned to single artist development in the late 1990s.<sup>152</sup>

Musically, the Praise series evolved over the course of the 1970s. *The Praise Album* (1974) featured songs built from a fingerpicked folk guitar or a slow ballad piano and led by both male and female vocalists singing in double-octave unison. The "praise chorus" layout, which featured one repeated melodic line (the chorus) or "vocal hook" without verses, dominated the album. Two other musical elements kept the record from tediousness.<sup>153</sup> Vocally, several songs featured rounds that layered the repeated melody and provided some complexity to otherwise simple songs. Instrumentally, string arrangements and synthesizers peppered the record, while songs like "Cause Me to

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<sup>151</sup> *The Praise Album* featured a road in the woods, *Praise II* a shot of what looked like a medieval castle surrounded by rolling fields, *Praise III* an aerial view of a majestic Mesa of the American Southwest, *Praise 4* a sunrise over the ocean, and *Praise 5* a snow-covered mountain foregrounded by an open, green field of wildflowers.

<sup>152</sup> For more on the transition from faceless worship music to marketed worship celebrity, see chapter six.

<sup>153</sup> In a *Christianity Today* interview, Love Song member and producer of *The Praise Album* Tom Coomes explained the balancing act between authenticity and monotony in recording Calvary Chapel's new worship music: "we were trying to document the songs we had heard and had been using at church during worship... but we were trying to record them in such a way that you could listen to them over and over again" (Rabey, "Maranatha! Music Comes of Age," 47).

Come (to the River)" featured audio samples as sound effects (in this case, a recording of a flowing stream). Overall, however, *The Praise Album* revealed the influence of the folk revival on Calvary Chapel's worship music—simple melodies, simple instrumental arrangements, and lots of repetition.

*Praise II* (1976) and *Praise III* (1979) represented Calvary Chapel and Maranatha's embrace of the accoutrements of professional studio recording and production. When featured as soloists, vocalists presented more sophisticated vocal timbres, adorned with vibrato and washed in reverb. When guitars appeared in the mix, they were highly compressed and stripped of their low-end roll via EQ manipulation, making a better "fit" in a more complex mix. Lush string arrangements dominated the records, present on every track on *Praise II*, while cellos, oboes, trumpets, flutes, and church bells added orchestral flair to the songs. The records—dominated by piano-driven ballads—had moved well beyond the simple production of *The Praise Album* and were a far cry from the raw, guitar-dominated folk and rock songs of *The Everlastin' Living Jesus Music Concert*.

#### **4.4.2 Exporting Maranatha! Music**

Maranatha music first made its way across the country via Calvary Chapel's tape recordings. In 1969 church member Ed Plummer, a marketing manager for a Pasadena-based electronics company, established a tape duplication process for Chuck Smith's bible studies, giving congregants access to Smith's lessons and sermons. With a

background in audio electronics, Plummer had the expertise to establish a duplication process in a church, a rarity in the 1970s. Plummer started with a reel-to-reel seven-inch recorder connected to four separate cassette decks that could produce four tapes at a time.<sup>154</sup> But demand continued to outpace supply, and Plummer soon quit his marketing manager job and established Promedia, an independent auxiliary arm of Calvary Chapel's outreach ministries, which started out producing forty-eight tapes a month. By 1972, Promedia's sales had exploded to a few thousand. The cassette tapes revolutionized Calvary Chapel's reach, and as Peter Jacobs of Children of the Day explained, they were crucial to "the spread of revival."<sup>155</sup>

With the introduction of cassette tape duplication technology, churches like Calvary Chapel could afford to duplicate and distribute their own media, in effect creating a new media market. Suddenly congregants could "take their pastor with them" to work or on vacation, bands could listen to Smith's sermons while out on tour, and entire bible studies and outreach churches across the country gathered weekly to listen to Smith's tapes.<sup>156</sup> In his book *The Reproducers*, Smith recounts how one man in Kansas City ran a Christian fellowship of more than three hundred members that used his tapes as their primary teaching aid.<sup>157</sup> While radio had long provided a broadcasting medium

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<sup>154</sup> Smith and Steven, *The Reproducers*, 67.

<sup>155</sup> 2005 interview with Chuck Fromm. Fromm, "Textual Communities," 215.

<sup>156</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 212-15.

<sup>157</sup> Smith and Steven, *The Reproducers*, 68.

for church sermons, cassette tapes became "time shifters," enabling audiences to listen to the sermons at their leisure and pass them along to friends and family.

Calvary's cassette tapes also included music along with Smith's lessons. They featured Love Song bible study performances, providing audiences with access to new Jesus music and musicians with access to another platform that could expand their fan base and eventual commercial visibility. By 1970, Chuck Smith thought that Calvary's music ministry was ready for its own distribution organization and so he funded and established Maranatha! Music, in part, as the musical equivalent of Plummer's Promedia.<sup>158</sup> As Smith's tapes continued to spread around the country via word of mouth, they introduced many Christian communities to the new music coming out of Calvary Chapel, preparing the way for Maranatha! Music's national appeal and distribution.<sup>159</sup>

Maranatha music also made its way across the country via para-church youth organizations, rallies, and conferences. Young Life, Campus Crusade, InterVarsity Fellowship, and the Navigators all held national or regional events and rallies that featured Christian speakers and contemporary Christian music, often performed by Jesus movement musicians, like those at Calvary Chapel. Campus Crusade's Explo '72

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<sup>158</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 217.

<sup>159</sup> By 1978, Maranatha's music sales came predominantly from tape. Maranatha creative director Dave Swaney explained to *Billboard* magazine that cassette sales were rising "because Christian music buyers [were] set up for tape." "There is a lot of teaching going on with cassette," Swaney explained, "messages and sermons are recorded on tape and duplicated in great numbers catering to this market," a market that had begun with businesses like Ed Plummer's Promedia ("Tape Growth for Christian Music Label").

was the largest of these parachurch rallies. Described as the "Jesus Woodstock" by *Time* magazine, Explo '72 attracted more than a hundred thousand youth to its final day-long music festival in the Cotton Bowl in Dallas, Texas. Performing alongside headliners Johnny Cash and Kris Kristofferson, Maranatha artists Children of the Day and Love Song became household names overnight for evangelical youth. And with the distribution of 170,000<sup>160</sup> Explo '72 compilation albums, their music traveled with Explo participants across the country, helping to fuel a new market for Christian music.<sup>161</sup> Explo '72 catapulted Love Song and Children of the Day on to national and international tours as they capitalized on the "spiritual explosion" that occurred in the Cotton Bowl. The first fruits came a few months later at a concert dubbed "Jesus Joy: A Solid Rock Gathering at the Garden," a well-publicized show at Madison Square Garden in New York City.<sup>162</sup> Ingalls argued that Explo '72 was a watershed event because "it represented a large scale attempt to 'mainstream' Jesus music, targeting not the unchurched agnostic

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<sup>160</sup> Larry Norman provided the ballpark number of 170,000 albums in an interview article featured in the Jesus movement newspaper *The Liberator*. For the reprint, see Larry Norman, "The Jesus Movement: Singing a New Song" (reprinted by One-Way.org, cited 14 June 2013), available from <http://www.one-way.org/lovesong/norman.htm>. Monique Ingalls argued that while other sales statistics for the album were not available, 170,000 "is altogether plausible, given the large-scale nature and influence of the event." See Ingalls, "Awesome in This Place," 70.

<sup>161</sup> The success of Explo '72 also brought commercial changes, as Maranatha teamed up with nine other Christian record labels to collaborate in a marketing venture that would garner them more attractive deals with distributors, booking agents, and publishers. See "10 California Religious Labels Unite in Marketing Venture," *Billboard*, January 13, 1973: 3, 10.

<sup>162</sup> The concert was advertised in *New York Magazine*. See "Concerts." The concert was also described in Baker, *Contemporary Christian Music*, 55.

youth of 1970s West Coast counterculture but churched youth of the heartland."<sup>163</sup>

Famed mega-church pastor Rick Warren remembered first encountering the Jesus music coming out of Calvary Chapel, not as an unchurched hippie but as a Christian teenager working as a lifeguard at Cazadero Christian Camp in Northern California in 1970:

Some of the campers came up from Orange County and brought "Come to the Waters" and other early Jesus People songs. It was "our kind of music" — written by us, not for us, in contrast to the many youth musicals that were circulating in churches those days.<sup>164</sup>

Warren was right. Maranatha's music originally was not written for them, but for unbelievers. But it was written *by* them, or more specifically, by their peers, hip Christian youth who had a better grasp on their generational pulse than the adults writing the youth musicals. Warren's experience signaled things to come, as the late 1970s brought a shift in focus for contemporary Christian music. The utilitarian approach to rock music as an evangelistic tool for unbelievers gave way to a pursuit for "wholesome rock" for young believers, a desire for a "baptized" alternative to secular musical hits and music that middle-class Christian youth could safely perform, consume, and enthusiastically enjoy.

Though Billy Graham heralded the Jesus People in his 1971 book *The Jesus Generation*, by 1975, *Christianity Today* was asking, "Whatever Happened to the Jesus

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<sup>163</sup> Ingalls, "Awesome in This Place," 69.

<sup>164</sup> Rick Warren interviewed by Chuck Fromm in 2005. Quoted in Fromm, *New Song*, 204-05.

Movement?"<sup>165</sup> "By the middle of the decade," historian Martin Marty argued, "the only Jesus movement that mattered much was made up of middle-class young people. Young Life, Campus Crusade, the Navigators, the InterVarsity Fellowship, and various denominational groups attracted the young."<sup>166</sup> So the movement faded, but its legacy lived on. The culture established by Christian hippies on the West Coast—their slogans, symbols, language, and particularly their music—found a new home with middle-class American youth via youth rallies and gatherings, large ones like Campus Crusade's Explo '72, but also local and regional events, like the Southern Baptists' "Associational Youth Rallies." Historian Terry York argued that these denominational rallies, in conjunction with the parachurch events, inspired youth and their newly hired "youth pastors" to import the theatrics, energy, and music of the Jesus Movement into their local youth groups.<sup>167</sup> "The gospel of a Jesus in long hair and blue jeans," Balmer and Todd noted, "appealed not only to former hippies but also to very young teenagers, those not old enough to have doped the 'alternative lifestyles' of the sixties."<sup>168</sup> By the late 1970s, hundreds of youth ministries across the country were singing Kurt Kaiser's "Pass It On" or Karen Lafferty's "Seek Ye First."<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Plowman, "Whatever Happened to the Jesus Movement?" Quoted in Prothero, *American Jesus*, 145.

<sup>166</sup> Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land*, 469. Quoted in York, *America's Worship Wars*, 26.

<sup>167</sup> See York, *America's Worship Wars*, 27.

<sup>168</sup> Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 672.

<sup>169</sup> In the 1980s and 1990s, these "contemporary services" that featured rock songs like those coming out of Calvary Chapel moved from the youth service in the church basement to the sanctuary upstairs as alternative services coexisting with more traditional services.



Though Love Song and Children of the Day performed in Madison Square Garden, Maranatha's *Praise* series caught the attention of hundreds of churches and youth ministries across the country because it fit naturally into their explicitly Christian events. The "message music" that made up the bulk of Maranatha's early catalog focused on evangelistic settings and topics, written for non-Christians. But by the late 1970s, the main consumers of Maranatha's catalog were middle-class Christian youth and their youth pastors, looking for contemporary music they could use in church settings to attract young Christians, not non-Christians, to church.

At the same time, the "message music" of the Jesus Movement evolved into Contemporary Christian Music (CCM). Though explicit evangelism through music remained an interest for message music artists, more musicians began focusing their lyrical attention on topics that interested Christians—dealing with love and loss, facing hard times, or celebrating God's gifts. The budding CCM industry coalesced around record labels like Word's Myrrh Records, Benson's Greentree Records, and Billy Ray Hearn's newly formed label, Sparrow Records. By 1980, CEO Chuck Fromm<sup>170</sup> decided that Maranatha! Music could not maintain the expensive A&R resources required to compete with Myrrh, Sparrow, and others and with a change in strategy, decided to

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<sup>170</sup> Chuck Smith brought his nephew, Chuck Fromm, on as CEO of Maranatha! Music in 1975. Fromm first served as a volunteer promoter for weekly Jesus music concerts connected with Calvary Chapel before his uncle asked him to lead Maranatha. Fromm went on to run Maranatha for the next twenty-four years, resigning in 1999 in order to spend more time on *Worship Leader* magazine, which he founded in the early 1990s.

drop Maranatha's message music artists and concentrate solely on praise music and children's music.<sup>171</sup> Tommy Coomes, creative director at Maranatha! Music and producer of the *Praise* series, explained the decision:

What I do recall clearly is that the [message music bands] all wanted and needed career development, high-level marketing and bigger and bigger production budgets. [Chuck Fromm] felt that we were not called to build super stars and that other labels like Word and Sparrow and Light were set up to do that much better than Maranatha! Music. We [could not] afford to take them further.<sup>172</sup>

Maranatha released all of its message music artists from their contracts, freeing them to sign with other labels like Word and Sparrow, which many did.<sup>173</sup> Fromm and company then focused their attention on the *Praise* series and on building up the successful children's series, *Kid's Praise*, which featured Psalty, the singing songbook (a creation of Maranatha artists Ernie and Debbie Rettino). In 1983, Maranatha built on their praise music success with *Psalms Alive*, a collection of new musical settings (rich in 1980s synthesizers) for several Psalms. Fromm recalled that Word Records, who distributed and marketed much of Maranatha's music, thought the project quaint and not worth their investment for marketing:

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<sup>171</sup> Romanowski, "Rock 'n' Religion," 170

<sup>172</sup> Coomes, Tommy, e-mail message to Wen Reagan, June 21, 2013. Chuck Fromm said effectively the same thing in a conference paper he gave at Oxford in 1983: "At Maranatha! Music in 1979, we had a full roster of popular contemporary Christian artists, each requiring substantial recording and promotional budgets to continue their "ministries." Fewer artists were receiving greater attention with diminishing results. At the same time, that branch of Maranatha! Music involved with simple songs of worship, called Praise Music, was flourishing. Our mandate seemed clear: by 1980 we had released from contractual obligations all of our artists and began concentrating our efforts on a program of equipping young music ministers for active roles in local communities." See Fromm, *New Song*, 20.

<sup>173</sup> Former Maranatha artists Leon Patillo, Benny Hester, and Denny Correll released records with Word & Myrrh after Maranatha dropped them.

At the time [*Psalms Alive*] was proposed and developed, the Christian music industry was moving away from music as an expression of folk, community values and towards a paradigm of single-artist development. The music-industry professionals initially declined to support the *Psalms Alive* (1983) project because, as they saw it, the music-as-ministry approach was increasingly less viable as an investment of marketing dollars.<sup>174</sup>

Maranatha pushed on without a marketing budget and, 150,000 copies later, showed Word and the other labels that there was indeed a market niche for music that could, as Fromm put it, "capture the collective charisma of Jesus Movement worship practices."<sup>175</sup> *Psalms Alive* grew into a series that featured three albums in the 1980s. Though Word had rejected *Psalms Alive*, the album showed that CWM had a future even in the midst of popular Christian artists like Amy Grant. "Faceless" worship records would continue to grow in popularity through the 1980s and early 1990s as Vineyard Music and Hosanna! Music joined Maranatha! Music and CWM continued to invade American churches.

While Maranatha! Music began as a financial aid for Calvary's touring musicians, by the late 1970s it had become one of the most successful record companies releasing Christian music. Between 1971 and 1977, Maranatha published thirty-six albums, and by the end of the decade had released sixty albums featuring more than forty artists.<sup>176</sup> By 1978, Maranatha music was distributed in thirty-five countries, recorded in twelve

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<sup>174</sup> Fromm, *New Song*, 243-44.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.

<sup>176</sup> For a complete Maranatha! Music discography, see <http://www.bsnpubs.com/word/maranatha/maranatha.html>.

different languages, and sold more than a million recordings a year.<sup>177</sup> Maranatha's rise had come with the distribution of Smith's sermon cassette tapes and the exposure of Calvary Chapel music artists at events like Explo '72, and its continued success came with the distribution of its albums and songbooks, particularly among youth, and the adoption of its music into hundreds of youth ministries, events, and eventually sanctuaries around the country. But Maranatha's rise had also come because of its novelty—the Calvary Chapel record company pioneered the sound and style of what would evolve into CCM and CWM for decades to come. Maranatha's success showed the power and draw that rock music could bring to both evangelism and worship.

#### **4.4.3 Constructing Authenticity**

Translating the gospel into the idiom of the counterculture required authenticity. The gospel message had to be not only comprehended but also received as true—true to experience and to the emotions. Calvary Chapel embraced the counterculture's conception of authenticity—that which was fresh, experiential, often communal, and unmediated by external interests. But authenticity was not a natural given, a static quality inherent to reality. *It was a constructed language, a culturally negotiated meaning shared by giver and receiver, by musicians and their audiences.* In this sense, authenticity proved an ideological rendering of how truth was communicated in culture, and for the

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<sup>177</sup> Fromm, *New Song*, 249.

music of Calvary Chapel (and the Jesus movement at large), it emerged from the ideology of the folk revival.

In his article tracing the "folk ideology" in rock music, sociologist Simon Frith explained the traditional ethos of folk music, as established by early twentieth century ethnographers and music collectors: "a music made directly, spontaneously, by the rural communities themselves; it was the music of working people and expressed their communal experience of work. There was no distinction between folk artist and folk audience." Frith argued that rock artists and fans leveraged this folk ideology of "true music" to separate rock from the rest of pop. Rock, as they saw it, was not "imposed from above" (like the rest of pop), did not fake emotion, and remained a reflection of communal experience, where the music materialized from a natural kinship between performer and audience.<sup>178</sup>

Yet ideology was not the same as reality. "The rock-folk argument," Frith contended, "is not about how music is made, but about how it works." Frith went on to explain:

Rock is taken to express (or reflect) a way of life; rock is *used* by its listeners as a folk music—it articulates communal values, comments on shared social problems. The argument, in other words, is about subcultures rather than music-making; the question of *how* music comes to represent its listeners is begged.

The question for Frith was not whether rock actually was a genuine folk music—by any ideal definition, surely it was not—"rock is, without a doubt, a mass-produced,

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<sup>178</sup> Frith, "The Magic That Can Set You Free," 159-60.

mass-consumed, commodity" —but instead what were "the effects of a particular account of popular culture—the ideology of folk—on rock's interpretation of itself."<sup>179</sup> The primary effect, Frith argued, came in a shift in how to judge authenticity—from a sociological reality to musical conventions. Frith explained:

The cultural claims made for rock by the end of the 1960s... derived from the assertion that the music was the authentic expression of a youth community. But this was not a sociological assertion. The rock claim was that if a song or record or performance had, in itself, the necessary signs of authenticity, then it could be interpreted, in turn, as the *sign* of a real community—the musical judgment guaranteed the sociological judgment rather than vice versa. There was no need to provide an independent, non-musical description of the rock "community," nor to describe how such a community came to make music for itself. What was at issue was a set of musical conventions.<sup>180</sup>

In turn, "without a material analysis of how specific songs have actually been made and used," the result was a circular argument that justified itself: "an aesthetic judgment that folk songs are more 'authentic' than pop songs is the basis for the contrast between means of production (community creation v. commercial exploitation) which is used to explain why folk songs are more authentic than pop songs."<sup>181</sup> If it looked and sounded like "folk music" (via signs of authenticity found in musical and performative conventions), then it must have been created by folk (a communal creation), and therefore it truly was folk music (and more authentic than pop music).

Frith did not analyze the rock music coming out of Calvary Chapel (he probably had no idea it existed), but because its musicians were steeped in the ideology and

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 159-60. Emphasis mine.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 161.

conventions of the folk revival, we can employ Frith's analysis in trying to understand how Calvary Chapel constructed musical authenticity.

We should start with Chuck Fromm because of how he appropriated Frith's work in trying to understand the music at Calvary Chapel. Fromm argued that Calvary Chapel's rock music *actually was* what Frith had called "folk music."<sup>182</sup> Fromm tried to connect what he saw as Frith's definition of folk music as "oral, immediate, traditional, idiomatic, [and] communal"<sup>183</sup> to what took place at Calvary Chapel:

Although the folk singing at Calvary Chapel borrowed something from the folk music of the day that dealt with issues of meaning: spiritual, political and social, it was "pure" and primal. It was fashioned for an audience of one—God—or fashioned to win a lost heart. It also sometimes had a childlike hootenanny quality to it. It knew nothing of recording studios, or radio. It was musical communication, heart to heart, abandoned, lacking in self-consciousness, and imbued with passionate excitement.<sup>184</sup>

Here Fromm missed Frith's assertion that rock-as-folk was about how the music *worked*, not about how it was made. But before we turn to that, we should note that Fromm did not cite Frith's definition of folk music. It was actually literary critic Robert

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<sup>182</sup> Here "folk music" should not be confused with the musical genre that dominated the folk revival of the 1950s and 1960s, where acoustic guitars took center stage. Instead, Frith understood "folk music" as a cultural discourse that could be found in any musical genre, one that defined authentic music as that bubbling up from the people, unmediated by commercial or industrial forces: "Rock ideologues like Jon Landau claimed their music as folk in order to distinguish it from the rest of pop: rock was popular music that was not 'imposed from above', that did not fake emotion. 'Folk', in other words, did not describe musical production but musical values, and these values were derived from a critique of commercialism: the description of folk creation (active, collective, honest) was, in fact, an idealized response to the experience of mass consumption (fragmented, passive, alienating)." See Frith, "'The Magic That Can Set You Free,'" 160.

<sup>183</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 185.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

Cantwell's observation of the folk revival of the 1950s and 1960s who explained how the mythology of "the old Free America" powered the revival:

The revival made the *romantic* claim of folk culture—oral, immediate, traditional, idiomatic, communal, a culture of characters, of rights, obligations, and beliefs, against a centrist, specialist, impersonal technocratic culture, a culture of types, functions, jobs and goals.<sup>185</sup>

Frith cited Cantwell as further evidence that what the folk revival posited as true authenticity actually remained an ideological assertion based in romantic ideals rather than a natural given. If there was such a thing as pure folk music, Frith argued that it existed outside of the modern, Western capitalist world and was constructed in terms of its cultural necessity, where the "appreciation of music [was] therefore tied up with an appreciation of its social function." This made sense, Frith argued, in non-Western, non-Capitalist cultures. Yet the desire for this connection between appreciation and function was also evident in the American and British folk revivals of the 1950s and 1960s via two assertions of the revival's music: "firstly, the music was an authentic 'reflection of experience'; secondly, the music reflected the experience of a community—there was no distinction of social experience between performers and audiences."<sup>186</sup> But to Frith this seemed a paradox, as he wondered how Western, capitalist cultures could sustain the folk discourse where "folk music is, according to its own anti-modernist ideology,

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<sup>185</sup> Cantwell, "When We Were Good, 57. Cited in Frith, *Performing Rites*, 40-41. Emphasis mine.

<sup>186</sup> Frith, "The Magic That Can Set You Free," 159.



impossible?"<sup>187</sup> The answer was through what Niall MacKinnon called "an elaborate construction of informality"<sup>188</sup>—musical settings, conventions, and practices that broke down the barrier between artist and audience.

This construction of informality appeared with gusto, Frith and MacKinnon argued, in folk clubs and festivals. MacKinnon detailed his first time at a folk club: "People sang. They sang to each other, without a stage, without amplification, with no special clothes, and with no special flourish which said 'we are performers.'"<sup>189</sup> And at folk festivals, Frith argued, artists had to abide by certain conventions:

The famous performer must come and have a drink with the audience in the tent after the show, and, often enough, take part in workshops; anyone in the audience must be able to stand up somewhere on the site—in a "club room"—and perform herself, informally; there is a constant attempt to deny the actual (commercial) separation of folk stars and folk fans.<sup>190</sup>

The folk clubs and festivals valued the natural, the spontaneous, and the immediate, but those values only appeared via "a kind of subterfuge," subtle performing conventions that consciously rejected the protocols of commercial music. "Folk conventions only work," Frith argued, "because of their difference from the perceived

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<sup>187</sup> Impossible in the sense that forces and concerns external to music-producing communities mediated the writing, performance, recording, and distribution of their music in Western, capitalist societies via the music industry. The folk ideology demanded an unmediated, communal connection between performers and their audiences, but given the industrial apparatus that influenced artists' sounds, marketing, presentation, and then audiences' tastes and consumption habits, this "pure" connection between artist and audience was at best partially constructed and at worst, impossible.

<sup>188</sup> MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene*, 81. Quoted in Frith, *Performing Rites*, 40.

<sup>189</sup> MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene*, 19. Quoted in Frith, *Performing Rites*, 41.

<sup>190</sup> Quoted in Frith, *Performing Rites*, 41.

rules of commercial pop."<sup>191</sup> Folk revival artists and performers really only existed and thrived in rebellion against the "impersonal, technocratic culture" of the post-industrial world. Folk performance was, as MacKennon put it, "a very conscious destroying and destruction of glamour."<sup>192</sup>

Calvary Chapel imbibed this destruction of glamour, poignantly so when in 1971 Chuck Smith and the church youth visited Kathryn Kuhlman's TV show "I Believe in Miracles." During the program, soft-spoken musicians with scraggly beards, unkempt hair, and informal dress gave their testimonies and introduced their songs without drama. As they performed, they remained fairly stationary, careful not to display any theatrics that would communicate an "over-the-top" performance, and often closed their eyes as they sang, faithfully fitting MacKinnon's description of folk performance conventions: "the obligation on performers to 'shrink from overtly stylized presentations of self,' [and] to avoid elaborate stage movements."<sup>193</sup> When introduced on the studio stage or after finishing a song, the musicians would deflect applause by raising one finger, signaling that Jesus was the "one way" to heaven and deserved the praise.<sup>194</sup> This all stood in stark contrast to Kuhlman herself, who had an overly stylized studio persona

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<sup>191</sup> Frith, *Performing Rites*, 40.

<sup>192</sup> MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene*, 81. Quoted in Frith, *Performing Rites*, 40.

<sup>193</sup> MacKinnon, *The British Folk Scene*, 81. Quoted in Frith, *Performing Rites*, 40.

<sup>194</sup> For examples of these performing conventions, see Kathryn Kuhlman's TV show "I Believe in Miracles" in 1971, where Chuck Smith and Calvary Chapel youth were invited to visit with Kuhlman and play some of their music. Children of the Day, Love Song, Debby Kerner, and Country Faith all performed during the show. Video footage is available at <http://www.one-way.org>.

with lots of hand gestures, smiling, and an odd, attention-grabbing cadence to her speech.

Fromm was not necessarily wrong in his assertion that Calvary Chapel created "folk music," but he failed to contextualize it properly within Frith's framework.

Describing the music at Calvary Chapel as "pure and primal" because it had a childlike innocence to it, because it knew nothing of radio or recording studios, and because it was heart-to-heart communication that lacked self consciousness revealed that Fromm himself *embraced* this folk ideology, claiming these qualities as natural to the music instead of as an ideological construction.

In contrast to all this, Frith saw the folk revival as a persuasive rhetoric, a romanticization of musical conventions that constructed authenticity in a certain way. Given Frith's arguments, much of what Fromm saw as pure and primal was nothing of the sort. Though the artists themselves knew nothing of radio or recording studios (yet), they had invariably learned their instruments, musical styles, and conventions of performance via those two commercialized technologies. Their songs, even when written from the heart and in the context of the church, were steeped in the larger culture of commercialized music.<sup>195</sup> And in contrast to Fromm's description, all of this

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<sup>195</sup> On a similar issue in blues music, Frith quoted Charles Keil, who argued that "all the best known blues artists from 1930 forward learned as much or more from records as from oral transmission." Frith's interpretation makes the point here: "Rather than a 'folk' style developing 'naturally,' as it were, out of sight or hearing of the media until it becomes too big or noisy to be ignored (the supposed rock 'n' roll story, for example), it actually develops in the soundscape mapped by the media—whether providing different

was inherently self-conscious. As they pulled from the counterculture and the folk movement, the musicians at Calvary Chapel consciously chose how they spoke, how they sang, and how they presented themselves in front of others. The "authentic" was not a given, but what Calvary Chapel youth had adopted from the musical mannerisms of the counterculture and the folk movement.<sup>196</sup>

Still, Fromm was on to something, particularly when it came to worship music at Calvary Chapel. Frith noted the limits of his musical discourse typology:

The sociological point, to conclude, is that we're dealing here with different sorts of music, whether jazz or rap, folk or rock, which are all, in one way or another, handling the issues thrown up by their commodification. (If we wanted to look at musics with really different sociological bases, we'd need to examine those with quite other functions than market exchange—*religious music*, for example, or military music, which cannot be discussed in art/folk/pop terms.)<sup>197</sup>

Presumably, Frith excluded religious music from his typology because its appreciation was actually "tied up with an appreciation of its social function," a function

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pleasures to those of mainstream mass culture, or offering opportunities to local media entrepreneurs (providing 'residual cultural resources' for 'petty capitalists')." See Charles Keil, "People's Music Comparatively," 124-25 and Frith, *Performing Rites*, 231.

<sup>196</sup> Fromm was not alone in embracing the folk ideology. Other scholars, like Steven Nichols, made the same assertion as Fromm, and have thus embraced this same definition of authenticity when it came to the music of the Jesus people: "While the early days of Jesus music had an edge, arising as it did from the streets, CCM today has dulled the edge producing music that is safe, not all that complex and artistically ranking a little below the songs on pop albums that don't make it into radio circulation" (Nichols, *Jesus Made in America*, 174).

Nichols imagined Jesus music "arising from the streets" in a pristine form that was later debased by the CCM industry. But this turned a blind eye to the cultural forces external to the movement—including already present music industries—that influenced and shaped the styles and conventions of Jesus music even in its inception.

<sup>197</sup> Frith, *Performing Rites*, 45-6.

that traditionally excluded commodification. Religious music, in some sense, truly could be folk music, in that its consumption/appreciation/enjoyment was inherently tied to its function/use in religious services, not simply market exchange. It could be the music of the people, for the people in their "work" (where work was liturgy, "the work of the people"). This was certainly true for Calvary Chapel, where the praise songs were written for and used in the local worship life of the church. So Fromm was right to say that Calvary Chapel created folk music, but not for the reasons he presented. By Frith's typology, Calvary Chapel created folk music in that the appreciation of the music was tied to its social function (worship), not because the music was actually pure and primal, unmediated by forces external to the heart. Calvary Chapel's music *was* written from within the church and used by the community, so it was "from the heart" in that sense. But the church's musicians borrowed guitar styles, vocal harmonies, conventions of stage presence, and dress from the rock stars and folk heroes of the counterculture. Calvary Chapel youth imported these conventions of musical authenticity into the community as yet another translation tool, a language they could speak to their peers to show that the gospel message was true.

Even the folk revival's socialist conceptions of music's function paralleled the music at Calvary Chapel. Here again Frith's analysis was helpful:

The American folk revival was based on a contradiction. The "spontaneous folk creations" it celebrated were the result of musical judgments made by outsiders, by urban performers... What was at issue was a definition of "the people," and in the 1930s communist party music policy shifted from making "a *new kind* of song, which will be so identified with the workers that nobody can take it from them,"

to using "native folk consciousness and tradition—a treasury of the people's art." The political problem was how to use music to attract people into an organization, to develop their class consciousness; and if the tactics changed—from developing a new form of workers' music to using an old form—the cultural position did not: "correct" songs were still correct in as far as they built a sense of class solidarity. The authenticity of music was, despite the folk language, still being judged by its effects rather than its sources.<sup>198</sup>

Though it would have never embraced building "class solidarity" in a socialist sense, Calvary Chapel nonetheless attempted the Christian parallel. Like the communist party, Fromm explained how Calvary Chapel crafted "new song,"<sup>199</sup> a novel form of church music that enabled congregants to express their Christian identity in a contemporary idiom. And like the communist party, Calvary Chapel utilized music as a way to attract people into the church and to develop their consciousness as Christians in the counterculture. Instead of the communist strategy to drop the creation of new songs for an embrace of old song forms, however, Calvary Chapel combined both impulses, writing and performing new songs steeped in the romanticized "old traditions" of the folk revival and influenced by folk ideology, which sought to reclaim a pure and pristine musical culture devoid of commercial taint.

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<sup>198</sup> Frith, "The Magic That Can Set You Free," 161.

<sup>199</sup> Fromm on his concept of "new song": "Formerly, the 'song,' had been limited to forms and symbols created from a distant culture and sung in a style that was foreign or seemed non-authentic in the present era. This was reflected in the attempt to use hymnology to impart doctrine, the indulgences of overly romantic Gospel songs and inspirational pep-rally choruses. These forms asked questions no one was asking: 'Do Lord... do you remember me?' New song was music communication that declared a narrative of personal salvation and redemption" (Fromm, "Textual Communities," 204). In a conference paper, Fromm described new song as "a fresh expression of spontaneous praise and worship [that] celebrates the deliverance. The experience of salvation becomes the substance of song" and later defined it as "any music motivated by faith, celebrating the work of God, and often expressing itself in popular idioms" (Fromm, *New Song*, 4). Though Fromm emphasized expression, the communal practice of singing new song was a tool for identity formation and thus contributed to "faith solidarity" as well.

The communist party and Calvary Chapel shared dispositions of authenticity as well. "Correct" music for both built class solidarity, or in Calvary Chapel's case, *faith solidarity*. The church's rock music helped form the collective identity of the congregants, whether in its use as a tool for evangelism or for worship. And what was true for the communist party in terms of the criteria for authenticity—that "the authenticity of music was, despite the folk language, still being judged by its effects rather than its sources"—was also true for Calvary Chapel. In the end, even with an emphasis on amateur novelty in songwriting, Jesus music was authentic in so far as it was effective—effective in terms of recruiting new members (evangelism), effective in terms of its ability to create Christian communal identity (faith solidarity), effective in communicating the authenticity of the counterculture, and eventually effective in terms of its affective power in worship, how well it moved congregants into emotional states fit for worship.

#### **4.4.4 The Maranatha Sound: Communicating Authenticity through Technology**

The construction of authenticity became messier as Calvary Chapel commodified its music via Maranatha! Music. Once Maranatha launched, the commercialization of Calvary Chapel's music meant that in addition to its role in worship, it functioned as a commercial product and had to deal with the same issues that Frith argued faced every other genre in pop music, "issues thrown up by their commodification."<sup>200</sup> As

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<sup>200</sup> Frith, *Performing Rites*, 45.

Maranatha's audience expanded beyond the communal fold of Calvary Chapel, Christian youth across the country picked up Maranatha's records and sang their songs in their churches. How could folk authenticity be communicated via a recording technology that separated artists from audiences in time and space? Did the music still communicate "from the heart" if that heart was in another community and possibly cultural context?

From its beginning, Maranatha! Music wrestled with these tensions as it attempted to package the interactive, dynamic nature of live music at Calvary Chapel into records pressed for commercial distribution. Again, Simon Frith's analysis contextualizes Maranatha's predicament. In his essay "Technology and Authority," Frith categorized the evolution of music recording technology into three phases: the folk stage, the art stage, and the pop stage. In the folk stage, "music is stored in the body (and in musical instruments) and can only be retrieved through performance. Music is either marked off from the everyday as ritual and ceremonial, or is so totally integrated into everyday social practices (work song, for example, or lullabies) as to be part of their meaning."<sup>201</sup> This was what Chuck Fromm argued for and what the musicians at Calvary Chapel, in many ways, tried to achieve, and in some sense did achieve, in that the music at Calvary Chapel was tied to religious ritual and ceremony and that the songs were so integrated into the social practices of worship that they became a part of their meaning.

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 226.



Before Maranatha began distributing the church's music, the music was stored in the bodies of Calvary Chapel's songwriters as they performed and in the minds of the congregants as they memorized and recalled the songs.

In the art stage, music was stored through notation instead of the body or the instruments. In this stage, Frith argued, "[music] can still only be retrieved in performance, but it also has now a sort of ideal or imaginary existence (against which any individual performance can be measured—and found wanting)." The art stage primarily marked classical music and as such is not applicable to the music at Calvary Chapel.

The third and final phase was the pop stage, where music was stored on a mechanical, digital, or electronic medium. Frith argued that this fundamentally changed the material experience of the music, now ubiquitous and "mobile across previous barriers of time and space." Separated from the performer, the music became "a commodity, a possession." Yet Frith contended that the pop stage also carried a conundrum of authenticity:

Ideologically... listening to recorded music becomes contradictory: it is at once public and private, static and dynamic, an experience of both present and past. In the world of recordings there is a new valorization of "the original." It is as if the recording of music—its closeup effect—allows us to recreate, with even greater vividness, the "art" and "folk" experiences which the recording process itself destroys.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 227.

Here Frith tried to describe a peculiar phenomenon of recorded music, its ability to place the listener "inside" the music.<sup>203</sup> Amplified by microphone technology, the textures of the instrumental tones, the grain of vocal timbres, the enveloping stereo space created from artificially constructed reverb and delay effects were all, in a sense, larger than life, giving the listener a "close-up" experience of the music that would have been impossible in the concert hall (or in real space and time at all). By providing such vivid audio detail, the record accentuated the cues of musical convention, making them more "visible" to the listener's ear. At the same time, listeners still interpreted the music through ideologies of authenticity, marked and transmitted by musical and performative conventions. The contradiction lay in the fact that while the record could still communicate these values (at least through the musical conventions that records could capture), it was, as a musical object, inauthentic, in that the decisions of the producer, the engineering practices of the recording studio, and the financial interests of the record label all mediated the musical connection between artist and audience. The listener felt as if she stood in the middle of the performance, enjoying an intimate connection with the performing artist, and yet that could not be further from the truth—the performance of the artist was separated from the response of the audience by space,

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<sup>203</sup> Lawrence Grossberg made a similar argument, contending "the experience of voicing someone else's words (whether by singing along or reading another's paper) carries with it a seemingly overpowering desire to 'own' the words, to claim them as one's own. This materiality makes music 'perhaps the most non-signifying and de-territorializing of all' cultural forms. To describe [pop music] as 'the soundtrack of our lives' too easily trivializes the import of the relation and the power of sonic events" (Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place*, 153).

time, and mediating forces. From the logic of the folk ideology, the music record constructed an authentic sound via amplified musical conventions, only made possible via inauthentic processes of recording and production.

Maranatha struggled with this conundrum in its early works as its artists and producers tried to capture the authenticity of the live experience found at Calvary Chapel. Chuck Girard, front man for Love Song, served as producer for Maranatha's first album, *The Everlastin' Living Jesus Music Concert* (1971), and began a production trend that emphasized a "live" sound as opposed to the highly orchestrated arrangements common in professional production:

I decided that—as we did with the first Love Song album—we didn't want any violins or sweetening. We just wanted to capture the raw thing that was going on. So consequently... the performances were like they would be if you were hearing the band live.<sup>204</sup>

Here again was a construction of authenticity common to the counterculture and the folk revival. The goal was to avoid any commercializing elements of production, recording or editing techniques that would create a fictional soundscape unfaithful to the live performance, in effect creating what Chuck Fromm called a "facsimile of live performance."<sup>205</sup> Authenticity was experiential, and in order to capture the truest essence of the experience of the live music, the production had to mimic the live sound, not balloon with artificial enhancements. But for Chuck Girard and the other musicians at

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<sup>204</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 220.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

Calvary, authenticity also stood on a literalism. Like the Scottish Common Sense realism that dominated biblical exegesis in nineteenth century America,<sup>206</sup> the ideal music record could capture and disseminate the "raw truth" of the musical performance. The *ideal* record literally *bottled* the performance, without any "sweetening," and provided the listener with a direct, unmediated connection to the live experience.

Frith traced a similar impulse and its subsequent evolution in classical music records. When producers first started recording classical music in the early twentieth century, the goal was to capture a perfect copy of the live performance. The live experience was the ideal that the records aimed for, but often fell short because the limits of sound reproduction technology at the time—the pops, clicks, and hiss of the early phonograph—paled in comparison to the rich, immersive sound of the auditorium. But it was not long before the rapidly expanding capabilities of recording technology eclipsed the quality of the live concert:

Recording technology... allowed classical record producers to claim that their work represented the perfect (or impossible) musical object embedded in the score. Using tape splices, retakes, remixes, and so on, it became possible for a performer like Glenn Gould to set aside the usual "hazards and compromises" of

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<sup>206</sup> See chapter 1 of Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. While the emphasis in Scottish Common Sense Realism was on the perspicuity of scripture in terms of its interpretation, in our context the emphasis on perspicuity was both in terms of production and interpretation. In other words, in recording and producing a record, those working on the Maranatha albums hoped to bottle the pure essence of the live experience, and then hoped that unadulterated live experience could be purely received by a listener. This concept of the music recording as an *unmediated medium* of experience between producer and consumer undergirded the production philosophy of most contemporary worship music recordings through the 1980s and early 1990s.

concert performance, and to take to the recording studio "in a quest for perfection."<sup>207</sup>

Recording technology made the impossible possible, creating musical experiences unachievable in live music. And while some would always see this as inauthentic, many, like composer Milton Babbitt, embraced the "perfection" available via the new technology:

I can't believe that people really prefer to go to the concert hall under intellectually trying, socially trying, physically trying conditions, unable to repeat something they have missed, when they can sit home under the most comfortable and stimulating circumstances and hear it as they want to hear it.<sup>208</sup>

With the advent of recording technology, "recording perfection ceased to refer to a specific performance (a faithful sound) and came to refer... to a constructed performance (an ideal sound). "The 'original,'" Frith argued, "ceased to be an event and became an idea." The ability to splice the different samples and fuse them together into a faultless recording opened up new possibilities for what kind of musical objects records could be. But this forced a question: "was [the record] an event (a real or fake live performance) or a work (a score, the piece of music itself)?"<sup>209</sup> Implicit in the question was the issue of interpretation. If an event, then its authenticity relied on how well it captured or represented a situation in time and space. But if the record was a musical work, it became an interpretation of the performance (or set of performances), often sculpted by record producers in conjunction with artists and audio engineers.

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<sup>207</sup> Frith, *Performing Rites*, 227.

<sup>208</sup> Gould, "The Prospects of Recording," 47. Quoted in Frith, *Performing Rites*, 228.

<sup>209</sup> Frith, *Performing Rites*, 228.

By the 1960s, with the ubiquity of multi-track recording technologies and the dominance of the professional studio and its host of producers and engineers, the record-as-work won out. "To record a work," Frith argued, "is just as much to interpret it as to perform it in any other way."<sup>210</sup> Pianist Glenn Gould agreed: "One cannot ever splice style—one can only splice segments which relate to a conviction about style."<sup>211</sup> So as recording technologies developed over the twentieth century, records moved from primitive copies of the "true music" found in live performances to perfect ideals of what a musical work could and should be.

Maranatha mirrored this evolution.<sup>212</sup> If *The Everlastin' Living Jesus Music Concert* (1971) revealed the counterculture's emphasis on the experiential nature of live music, then the production of *The Praise Album* (1974) revealed how Maranatha's producers and engineers, even Chuck Smith, shaped the sound of Calvary Chapel's worship music. In an interview with Chuck Fromm, Calvary Chapel pastor Mike MacIntosh recounted his original vision for *The Praise Album*:

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>211</sup> Gould, "The Prospects of Recording," 49. Quoted in Frith, *Performing Rites*, 230.

<sup>212</sup> While in certain ways the development of CWM, particularly as I have shown here with Maranatha, followed Frith's historical trajectory of classical music—moving from a quest to capture the perfect live event to the attempt artificially to construct the perfect work—its trajectory was not so clean cut. Since its inception at Calvary Chapel, CWM has maintained both impulses in its recording development over the last forty years. While professionally produced studio records have grown in number and sales since the 1970s, CWM artists and producers have also continually released "live" albums as well. Even in the early twenty-first century, Passion and Hillsong artists often released live concert recordings alongside studio albums, both selling well. The desire to capture the live event remained strong in CWM, in part because of the quest for emotional authenticity—what was more authentic than capturing the engaged audience as the music moved it in worship? This construction of authenticity that privileged the audience's participation and emotional response emerged from the fusion of Pentecostal and countercultural sensibilities that in turn influenced the culture of record production in CWM.

I realized all we need to do is capture what's happening in our own hearts and lives. The tender touch. I went back to [Chuck Smith] and I said, "Chuck, I know we're doing the rock 'n' roll and I love the rock 'n' roll but how about a whole new style of worship? What we're doing at Calvary Chapel... capture that."<sup>213</sup>

While the first Maranatha album had focused on capturing a live concert experience, MacIntosh sought to replicate the "heart experience" that Calvary Chapel had crafted in the communal singing of its praise songs. Still grounded in the folk ideology of the counterculture, MacIntosh and company wanted to replicate an experience, but now the *affective* nature of that experience, the emotional tenor that the music somehow both communicated to and elicited from the congregation.

While *capturing* this heart experience was the goal, the production of *The Praise Album* revealed *construction*. Love Song member Tommy Coomes took on the role of producer for the record and set out to perform the hard work of collating and arranging the songs:

I set out cataloging and collecting the songs that seemed to be working. [I] started meeting with different musicians in our fellowships—band members and soloists like Gary Arthur and Dana Angle, Erick Nelson, Peter Jacobs, The Love Song guys, etc.—and getting opinions and ideas for arrangements of the songs. ...I kept searching until each song had as unique an arrangement as possible. I also remember thinking through how to make these simple songs worth listening to over and over again. I wanted to record them in such a way to accurately capture the words, melody and spirit of the songs as they were written and used in congregational form.<sup>214</sup>

As Coomes attempted to "accurately capture the words, melody and spirit of the songs" he also actively selected what he saw as the most unique arrangements and then

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<sup>213</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 231.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

crafted them to allow for repeated listening. When Coomes had finished his work in the studio, he presented the final mixes to Chuck Smith for approval:

Chuck felt that the song selection was too broad and picked out the more inspirational songs and gave me the order. I believe he said something like, "This doesn't sound like a Praise album to me!" Turned out he was a good judge of what people would respond to at that time.<sup>215</sup>

There were two important points here. First, what Smith deemed "inspirational" was not based on any objective criteria inherent to the music itself. Instead, Smith provided a subjective judgment of what praise music *should* sound like, and as Chuck Fromm noted, Smith actively created the musical criteria for the nascent genre of CWM in his decision-making.<sup>216</sup> Second, Smith echoed Frith's assertion that the authenticity of the music was "still being judged by its effects rather than its sources." Coomes explained that Smith picked out the "more inspirational" songs, ones that "people would respond to at that time" and ones that would "work." For Smith, authentic praise music *elicited* a certain response from the congregation, inspiring them in some sense. At the same time, Smith described this judgment with a *musical* criteria: "this doesn't *sound* like a Praise album to me!" And so the connection between musical conventions and elicited emotional responses that marked folk authenticity appeared here too. The criteria for authentic worship music was the work that it did—did it elicit or inspire an emotional response from the congregation? *Yet those emotional responses could be triggered by*

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 232.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 233.



*perceiving authenticity through musical conventions.* Thus why Smith could listen to the music and know whether it would elicit a response. In the end, whether Coomes' attempt to source what he deemed as interesting and unique arrangements or Smith's conception of what authentic praise music sounded like (or resulted in), both played a significant role in sculpting the worship music that Maranatha exported from Calvary Chapel, as well as the criteria used to judge its authenticity.

#### **4.4.5 Musical Work**

Monique Ingalls contended that the Jesus movement's legacy was an argument "for the inclusion of popular musical styles in worship by unmooring musical style from its social and cultural contexts, attempting to remove the associational 'baggage' from the music."<sup>217</sup> This was certainly true, as Jesus people embraced electric guitars but not the sex and drugs that often accompanied them. But the rock music brought into the sanctuary was not completely unmoored from its social and cultural contexts; else it would have lost all communicative power. Instead, the movement selectively embraced the cultural capital available in rock music and put it to work.

First, churches like Calvary Chapel looked to the counterculture in their utilitarian embrace of rock music. As we have already seen, the Jesus movement incorporated rock as a tool for evangelism in part because of the evangelical penchant for using new mediums to spread the gospel. But the Jesus movement also approached

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<sup>217</sup> Ingalls, "Awesome in This Place," 72.

rock music as a medium for a message because the counterculture had done the same with its protest songs, from Bob Dylan's "The Times They are A-Changing" to Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young's "Ohio." The countercultural *ideal* for protest music was not programmatic entertainment dispensed from above, but fresh music written by the people, from the heart, that served *as a means to action*. The songs were understood as tools for social and political action, megaphones for protest, for speaking truth to power. They were not simply commodities to be consumed or enjoyed, but tools that did work. Calvary Chapel youth also imagined that their music did work—the "message work" of translating the gospel into the idiom of the counterculture. Jesus people wrote their own "protest songs" to speak truth to a world mired in sin and on the verge of apocalyptic collapse.

Yet as "message music" gave way to "praise music" at Calvary Chapel, rock music came to do other work. While delivering a message was still important, the music became *a means to worship*, a part of the liturgy—the work of the people. The protest became praise. Borrowing from the counterculture, Calvary Chapel conceived of rock as a useful means to action *within* the sanctuary—an authentic, communal medium wielded for the work of worshipping God, not just for play or protest. And more than anything, rock did emotional work.

Calvary Chapel youth were able to employ rock to do emotional work because of its affective power. In his historical analysis of the development of rock, historian Lawrence Grossberg made note of the emotional force of music:

Music, perhaps more directly than any other medium or relationship, brings its audience into an affective space. Music does not so much produce narratives or representations of people's experience as moods which can be attached to them... Would it not then be more accurate to say that music is the most powerful affective agency in human life? Music seems, almost independently of our intentions, to produce and orchestrate our moods, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Behind the diverse uses of music is the implicit recognition that, somehow, such musical environments strongly influence the rhythms, tempos and intensities of our lives.<sup>218</sup>

Grossberg echoed what we already considered in chapter one, the affective power of music utilized in black gospel music. While the folk revival did not highlight the intense displays of emotion that black gospel artists did, emotional response still marked authenticity, and even if the counterculture's attempts to narrate or represent experience through music failed, rock still created moods— affective dispositions— that then attached to those experiences. The undergirding conviction of the folk movement was that real emotions could not be faked, and therefore musical conventions that both presented "truthful" emotions and in response elicited real emotions from the audience supported the folk ideology of authenticity. If artists and audiences unified, if artists showed they came from the people, then the emotions presented and elicited through their music *were* the emotions of the people, the communal cry "from the heart."

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<sup>218</sup> Grossberg, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place*, 153.

Calvary Chapel's music harnessed this affective power of rock for worship, providing worshippers with affective dispositions that combined pietistic devotion with the moods associated with a haunting folk voice, a twinkling fingerpicked acoustic guitar, or the feedback of a distorted electric guitar. And by using the musical conventions championed by the folk ideology, Calvary Chapel youth understood their music as authentic, enabling it to move them emotionally.

Whether it communicated a message or crafted emotional states, Calvary's rock music worked as a means to action. So while Calvary Chapel and Maranatha! Music translated the gospel into the hip idiom of the counterculture, the reverse was equally true—they translated the counterculture's conception of rock as a means to action and baptized it into the church, where it did the emotional work of building personal intimacy with God.

#### **4.5 Legacy and Impact**

At the end of their 1972 study on the Jesus people, Enroth, Ericson, and Peters considered the future of the movement:

What will become of this movement? Is it a fad? Or is it of the Holy Spirit? The answer seems to be some of both. It is... impossible to deny that many faddish elements remain in the Jesus Movement: the One Way signs (one finger pointed in the air), the Jesus cheers (give me a J, "J," give me an E, "E"—), the hip lingo, the hippie clothing, beads, medallions, long hair, beards, and the like, and the rock music. These things will pass, but the people who are now in the movement will live on.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Enroth, Ericson, and Peters, *The Jesus People*, 241.

While Enroth correctly predicted the overall faddishness of the Jesus movement, he was quite wrong in his forecast about its music, which not only stuck around but thrived, evolved, and grew into a massive industry. Far from a dissipating trend, it remained the most powerful, lasting legacy of the Jesus people. A year later, at the end of his own study on the Jesus People, Robert Ellwood presciently predicted that the movement would live on, even if not in its then-current form:

The movement—not necessarily the original people, but the rhetoric, the music, the signs, and the basic themes—will become part of the heritage of ordinary evangelical Christianity, part of its warp and woof, indistinguishable from the rest except to the historian.<sup>220</sup>

Ellwood had it right, at least when it came to music. The culture of the Jesus movement survived in its musical form, deeply shaping American evangelicalism via CCM and CWM. While the utilization of rock music as a tool for evangelism faded (though never completely), its employment in worship only grew, resulting in a liturgical revolution that revitalized evangelicalism for a new generation, one not steeped in the bellbottoms and long hair of the counterculture.

Balmer and Todd argued that the Jesus movement both reintegrated burned-out hippies into the "mainstream" of American evangelicalism and extended the counterculture at the same time. Calvary Chapel sat at the heart of this. Despite welcoming hippies into the sanctuary, Chuck Smith built Calvary Chapel on classic evangelical pillars: biblical literalism, premillennialism, and personal religious

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<sup>220</sup> Ellwood, *One Way*, 120.

experience. "Calvary Chapel," Balmer and Todd contended, "was a large—and largely successful—evangelical rescue mission to the troubled youth of the 1960s." But Calvary Chapel was also an extension of the counterculture, "[perpetuating] the protests of the counterculture that spawned it." The Jesus People at Calvary Chapel retained "the casual dress that many more traditional Christians found offensive, the unstructured worship and hip jargon, [even] the bias against institutionalization."<sup>221</sup>

This extension was particularly clear at Calvary Chapel and Maranatha! Music, where musicians preserved countercultural dispositions towards authenticity in their embrace of rock music. Psychologist Rollo May described the turn towards authenticity for the countercultural generation:

[The mythos of care] points toward a new morality not of appearance and forms, but of authenticity in relationship. ... These [young] people are not interested in money and success; these things are now "immoral." *They seek an honesty, openness, a genuineness of personal relationship; they are out to find a genuine feeling, a touch, a look in the eyes, a sharing of fantasy. The criterion becomes the intrinsic meaning and is to be judged by one's authenticity, doing one's own thing, and giving in the sense of making one's self available for the other.*<sup>222</sup>

The quest for authenticity in Calvary Chapel's music mirrored the counterculture's criterion of intrinsic meaning and the "genuine feelings" that revealed it. The music had to be "fresh," spontaneous, and new to be authentic. It was not routine, but charismatic, dynamic, and contextual. And it had to speak from the heart, unadorned by commercial or institutional conventions. This was also true for Chuck

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<sup>221</sup> Balmer and Todd, "Calvary Chapel," 671-72.

<sup>222</sup> May, *Love and Will*, 306. Emphasis mine.

Smith's "soft Pentecostalism," where populism, iconoclasm, and the pursuit of the Spirit's fresh anointing buttressed an authenticity that privileged novelty (albeit structured novelty) over institutional routine.

This fusion of countercultural and Pentecostal constructions of authenticity framed Calvary Chapel's music, in both songwriting and performance. And it was most visible in the church's emphasis on love. Whether Smith's assertion that "the greatest manifestation of the Holy Spirit is love,"<sup>223</sup> or Fromm's claim that "the most repeated description of Calvary Chapel's message, its atmosphere and Smith's demeanor [was] 'love loving,'"<sup>224</sup> or the name of the church's most famous band, Love Song, or even the myriad songs focused on love, like "They'll Know We are Christians by our Love" or Calvary's own "Charity," love as an idea, a practice, and an emotion took center stage at Calvary Chapel. For the "love children" of the 1960s and 1970s that made their way into the church, the music of Calvary Chapel and Maranatha spoke their language. "Music is the language of feeling and emotion," Fromm contended, "and as the community grew in understanding of God's love, love songs poured out." Calvary Chapel youth fused the folk ideology of the counterculture, which defined authentic music as an unmediated creation and performance "from the heart," with a Pentecostal emphasis on the Spirit's

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<sup>223</sup> Knight, *Jesus People Come Alive*, 35.

<sup>224</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 202.

fresh gift of love to create love songs to God that did emotional work, framing affective dispositions for congregants in their worship.

Calvary Chapel's construction of authenticity had strong parallels with black gospel's construction of authenticity that we saw in chapter one. Both constructions showed how musical cultures formed by fusing existing musical genres (blues for black gospel, folk and rock for Calvary Chapel) with Pentecostal dispositions. The difference came in a matter of degree. Calvary Chapel's musical aesthetic did not meet the emotional intensity communicated in black gospel, where the vocalist presented an overflow of emotion through body language and vocal conventions (yells, screams, shouts, moans, and grunts). The folk ideology did not allow for those more "visible" performative and musical conventions for fear that they may communicate an over-the-top, artificial emotional approach and appear staged or inauthentic. Yet both constructions sought the communication of honest emotion. As in black gospel, the folk ideology (and Calvary's embrace of it) privileged forms of spontaneity and exhibited emotion as authentic, and in the language of the counterculture, this came through the focus on love.

At the same time, Calvary Chapel's construction of musical authenticity showed its contingency to its own time and place. As CWM evolved in the 1980s and 1990s into a larger, more commercialized musical culture, other ideologies and theologies would influence its construction of musical authenticity. The folk penchant for a humble stage



presence and intimate, communal spaces would give way to larger, louder, and more professional productions, further separating artist from audience and turning the worshipper towards an inward posture of intimacy with God instead of towards the communal warmth shared with other congregants. But the folk ideology would not completely disappear. Its legacy would live on in musical style (where simple melodies and the acoustic guitar often remained center stage) and in the constant concern over the commercialization of worship music.

Though inspired by the Spirit, the rock music of the Jesus movement, Calvary Chapel, and Maranatha did not miraculously appear as tongues of fire bursting forth from the lips and guitars of Christian hippies. Its' rhythms, instrumental techniques, structure, style, and performative conventions were imported from the counterculture. And as the hippie youth brought their music with them into the Christian communes, coffee shops, and churches, they refashioned it as a tool that could translate the gospel back to the counterculture. The music—in all of its styles, accouterments, and conventions—was a cultural language, a vessel that could render the gospel authentic for a generation that had rejected a postwar conformist culture. But the vessel was not empty and cultural translation was a two-way street. Rock was more than just guitars, more than just a style of music. It carried forth an entire cultural world, pregnant with its own language, conventions, and ideologies. And while church leaders embraced rock as an empty vessel they could use to change unbelievers, Christian youth adopted rock's

language, conventions, and ideologies into their worship life. The message *was* the medium, and the medium was fraught with power. The power to bring an entire youth culture, with all of its energy, into the sanctuary; the power to create an entirely new industry for the production and distribution of worship music; and the power to affect congregants emotionally via constructions of authenticity. The hippies who discovered Jesus used the most powerful and a/effective language they knew to introduce him to the bell-bottomed masses. It only made sense that with such a powerful and moving language, they would want to use it to communicate with God too.

## 5. Intimacy: The Music of the Vineyard Fellowship

"I would have to say that before I visited the Vineyard church in the High School, I did not really know what real worship was... I came into the gym and sat down and was quite overwhelmed by the natural, down to earth experience that was different from any church I had been to before. When John Wimber sat at the piano and played the first chord, I immediately started crying, and felt a presence that was so overwhelming, I realized this must be the Holy Spirit... and I experienced an intimacy that I had not before. I felt like the words were piercing my heart and I realized I was experiencing love, grace, mercy and God himself was there with me. I suddenly realized that worship was an experience between me and God and in this case music was the tool in which he was meeting me."<sup>1</sup>

Calvary Chapel had introduced many American Christians to the enticing sound and powerful authenticity of rock music, mostly in the form of the folk rock of the counterculture. Chuck Smith and his followers had embraced rock as a powerful tool for evangelism, a utilitarian logic that would continue to influence the shape and direction of CWM well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Yet the undeniable connection between rock music and Pentecostal dispositions, which found its strongest synergy at the intersection of rock's affective power and Pentecostalism's embrace of such power, remained unrealized in Calvary Chapel's theological culture, where Smith kept overt charismatic practices in the "back room." By the 1980s, a new church network, the Vineyard Fellowship, emerged out of Calvary Chapel in part to realize this connection between rock forms and charismatic practices, embracing rock as a tool to facilitate "intimate worship." The leader of the Vineyard movement, John Wimber, and his followers came

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<sup>1</sup> Mike Turrigiano, Senior Pastor of the NYC Vineyard (email to Cindy Rethmeier, 19 May 2006) in Ruth, *Loving God Intimately*, 61.

to use rock's lyrical and musical power to shape emotion and mood in order to create worship services focused on personal, intimate communion with God. Before we move to this concept of intimacy, however, we need to first consider the origins of the Vineyard Fellowship.

### **5.1 Growing the Vineyard<sup>2</sup>**

Though the creative and expressive songwriting of the Jesus People that had developed at Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa made its way across the country, the impulse for simple and spontaneous folk tunes in worship made the most prominent mark in the burgeoning Vineyard network in the late 1970s. That came in part because the Vineyard network originally developed as a subset of Calvary Chapel churches that, led by Calvary pastor Kenn Gulliksen, emphasized a more "intimate" setting in corporate worship, where intimacy implied folk simplicity in the music, lyrics of adoration expressed in the second-person, and emotional expression of the body in worship.

Ordained into the Calvary network by Chuck Smith in 1971, Kenn Gulliksen and his wife Joanie first moved out to El Paso, Texas, before returning to southern California

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<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to the work of Lester Ruth and his forthcoming book *Loving God Intimately: Worship with the Anaheim Vineyard Fellowship, 1980*. His work in documenting and narrating the character of early Vineyard music was valuable for this chapter. As Ruth noted, attempting to come to grips with the historical progression of Vineyard music is a difficult process. "It is easy to forget about writing documentation in exciting new movements," Ruth explained, "particularly those where spontaneity and extemporaneity are highly valued. Sometimes that means that no paper trail for later historians was created because pieces here and there that could have been helpful were discarded inadvertently because their historical significance was not recognized at the time" (18).

to plant a Calvary Chapel church in Los Angeles.<sup>3</sup> Gulliksen teamed up with Love Song's Chuck Girard and Christian rock star Larry Norman to start bible studies in Beverly Hills and the San Fernando Valley. By 1975, Gulliksen had brought these bible studies together with others for a Sunday morning service. Over the next four years, Gulliksen and fellow ministers planted a network of six churches and took up the name "Vineyard." At this point the network still understood itself as a part of the larger Calvary Chapel movement and reported back to Chuck Smith in Costa Mesa.<sup>4</sup>

Even from these early beginnings, a pursuit for intimacy in worship shaped Vineyard's culture. Melody Green, wife of the late musician Keith Green, recounted her and Keith's first experience at Gulliksen's Vineyard church:

As we sat cross-legged on the floor, Kenn led the group in some songs we'd never heard before. ...The words just flowed over me. People broke into gentle harmonies that all seemed to weave in and out of each other. I felt a strange sense of peace start to wash over me... Only this time it wasn't coming from a drug-induced hallucination.<sup>5</sup>

The powerful ties between music and emotional dispositions that Melody experienced that night would come to mark the worship of Vineyard churches. Vineyard pastor and historian Bill Jackson asserted that while the people who came to the Vineyard bible studies and fledging churches were often artsy musicians or Hollywood types (Keith and Melody Green, Bob Dylan, Debby Boone, Hal Lindsey, and Larry Norman), the

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<sup>3</sup> Sociologist Donald Miller noted that Gulliksen's Calvary Chapel church plant in El Paso grew rapidly in part because of people moving out of the Episcopal Church and looking for a church home that emphasized the presence of the Holy Spirit. See Miller, "Routinizing Charisma," 222-23.

<sup>4</sup> Jackson, *The Quest for the Radical Middle*, 80.

<sup>5</sup> Green, *No Compromise*, 133.

people were not what ultimately made the Vineyard distinct from the larger Calvary Chapel network. The real difference, he argued, came from Vineyard's focus on intimacy and simplicity in worship. Even from the beginning, Gulliksen's Vineyard churches emphasized emotional expression in music lyrics and the charismatic gifts more than the larger Calvary Chapel network ever did.<sup>6</sup>

While Gulliksen's work in planting the original Vineyard congregations gave birth to the Vineyard movement, that was only half of the story. The other half came with another Calvary Chapel pastor, John Wimber.

### **5.1.1 John Wimber**

As the charismatic face of the Vineyard Fellowship for almost twenty years, Wimber's life has garnered the spotlight of several Vineyard studies and testimonies. This has meant that Vineyard historians and enthusiasts have repeatedly documented his life and influence, albeit, as historian Lester Ruth has warned, with a dash of hagiography thrown in. Wimber's towering presence has obscured, as Ruth noted, the impact and influence of several other key players in the rise of the Vineyard Fellowship, including his wife, Carol, Carl Tuttle, and Kenn Gulliksen.<sup>7</sup> To be sure, Wimber left an indelible mark on the Vineyard Fellowship, yet Vineyard scholarship remains in its

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<sup>6</sup> Jackson, *The Quest for the Radical Middle*, 82.

<sup>7</sup> Ruth, Rethmeier, and Park, *Loving God Intimately*, 18.

infancy and, though he passed away in 1997, Wimber's presence and legacy still exerts a strong gravitational force that bends Vineyard historiography.

John Wimber's journey to the Vineyard Fellowship, vividly told in Carol Wimber's biography of her husband, *John Wimber: The Way It Was*, and Bill Jackson's *The Quest for the Radical Middle*, had all of the qualities of a dynamic Christian testimony. From 1950 to 1962, Wimber made a living as a professional musician, and as a songwriter and band member of the famous Righteous Brothers musical outfit, Wimber had "made it" in the music industry by the early 1960s with two albums in the *Billboard* Top Ten. Yet his pursuit of musical success, combined with his hectic schedule, led to the deterioration of his marriage and family life. By 1962, separated from his wife and facing an impending divorce, Wimber was distraught. While on an extended tour in Las Vegas, the Righteous Brothers songwriter journeyed out into the Nevada desert, searching for inner peace. On the brink and crying out in desperation, it was there that Wimber first felt the presence of God, and when he returned to his hotel, he found that his wife, Carol, had left him a message saying that she wanted to give their marriage one more shot. As Wimber would later recall, it was the first of many divine interventions that would change the direction of his life.<sup>8</sup>

As they started patching up their marriage, John and Carol developed a curiosity for religion. By April of 1963, they found themselves sprawled across the floor of a

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<sup>8</sup> Jackson, *The Quest for the Radical Middle*, 45.

Quaker bible study, confessing their sins and need for God with teary sobs.<sup>9</sup> As Bill Jackson narrated it, it was an eventful, dramatic conversion for both John and Carol, but it was also the beginning of the end for John's professional music career (at least as a secular jazz musician). Grabbing hold of Jesus' parable of the pearl of great price, Wimber felt that God had called him to give up his lucrative music career as a sign of faithfulness, so he traded in his records and scores for a job in a factory. Jackson recounted Wimber's "last temptation" from the music industry in the spirit of Jesus' encounter with Satan in the desert:

One day when he was filthy from cleaning out an oil drum, [Wimber] heard a familiar voice. It was an old partner in the music business with a contract worth a lot of money. Looking at John with oil all over him, he asked, "What are you doing here?" John remembers feeling like he had somehow missed the pearl. He said, "God did this to me." His ex-partner responded, "He's never going to do it to me!" and drove away.<sup>10</sup>

As time would tell, of course, Wimber had not really dropped music altogether. Although he would never reunite with the Righteous Brothers, Wimber would go on to found Mercy Records in 1985, a record company designed to collect, record, and produce music coming out of Vineyard churches. But until then, Wimber felt that God had called him to drop his music career, and so he did.

From his conversion in 1963 to 1970, Wimber served as a prolific evangelist for his Quaker congregation, the Yorba Linda Friends Church in Yorba Linda, California. In

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<sup>9</sup> Wimber's dramatic conversion at a Quaker bible study included convulsing and sobbing on the floor, which resonated with the traditional Quaker concept of "quaking," where the individual, filled with the Holy Spirit, shook with involuntary bodily movements.

<sup>10</sup> Jackson, *The Quest for the Radical Middle*, 49.



1970, Wimber joined the church staff as co-pastor and Carol followed him into Quaker leadership as a church elder. During his tenure as co-pastor, the Yorba Linda Friends Church grew from 200 to 800 members, becoming the largest church in the denomination.<sup>11</sup>

Yet after four years of successful church growth, Wimber had reached another crisis of faith and decided to leave the pastorate to sort things out. He headed to Fuller Theological Seminary to study under church growth professor C. Peter Wagner, who quickly recognized Wimber's aptitude for growing churches. The result was an offer to serve as Fuller's new director at the Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth. Over the next four years, from 1974 to 1978, serving as a church consultant for the Institute, Wimber embraced church growth strategies and philosophies from C. Peter Wagner, Donald McGavran, and Win Arn, while also encountering Pentecostal sensibilities that championed the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. Wimber's exposure to these Pentecostal sensibilities came through the stories of foreign missionaries who recounted miraculous healings abroad and the work of charismatic writers like British Pentecostal Donald Gee and Roman Catholic charismatic Morton Kelsey.<sup>12</sup>

After a few years at Fuller, the Wimbbers' spiritual crisis had not abated, but intensified. John's hectic travel schedule as a church consultant for Fuller took him away

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 54.

from his wife and children and left him "spiritually bankrupt," while Carol Wimber's struggle to come to grips with the charismatic gifts led to what she termed a "personality meltdown." Carol dropped her teaching responsibilities at church, resigned her eldership, and struggled through a period of depression as she attempted to sort out what God had called her to do. In 1976, broken and spiritually and emotionally depleted, Carol joined a small group of church members at Yorba Linda Friends Church who had experienced similar spiritual brokenness and sought to meet with one another for encouragement and spiritual refreshment. It was out of this small group that the Anaheim Vineyard Church and its musical culture was born.<sup>13</sup>

### **5.1.2 Growing a New Church**

The small group morphed into a house church as weekly attendance grew from 12 to 50 over the first few weeks. The goal was, as the members of the group saw it, to "heal their hearts" and recover from their burned-out spiritual lives through extended prayer and corporate singing. Carl Tuttle, who's sister, Candice, hosted the group, recounted that he became the unofficial music leader of the fledging company when they realized that he was the only one who could play the guitar. Meetings were informal and filled with times of prayer and extended singing, sometimes going on for a few hours. But attendance continued to grow and Carol was eventually able to convince

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 56-58.

John to visit the group. Though at first uncomfortable with the intimacy and vulnerability of the small group, John eventually came around.<sup>14</sup>

By January of 1977, John Wimber had become a regular attender while the group had filled out the interior of the house, with people crowding underneath the kitchen table and lining the halls. By April of that same year, the "small group" had outgrown its moniker, expanding beyond a hundred members and out of the house, now with John as its leader. After a mutual breakup with the Yorba Linda Friends Church, the Quaker congregation blessed John and Carol's new flock as it set out on its own. Though the Wimbers had not set out as midwives, a new church had been born.<sup>15</sup>

While attending the small group, Carol had attended a Calvary Chapel church and once she told the pastor, Don McClure, that she and her husband were helping to start a new church, McClure encouraged them to affiliate with the Calvary Chapel network. Unable to find any space to rent for his new church, John Wimber struck a deal with the local Masonic chapter and on Mother's Day, May 8, 1977, Calvary Chapel of Yorba Linda had its first service at a Masonic lodge. There were 150 in attendance, but that number quickly grew. Within two months, there were 200 attendees. A year later and in a new location, El Dorado High School, attendance had increased to 300. Yet another year later and at another location, Esperanza High School, attendance climbed

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<sup>14</sup> Phone interview with Carl Tuttle, April 7, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Jackson, *The Quest for the Radical Middle*, 62-3.

to 400. And four years later, meeting in a larger facility at Canyon High School, attendance skyrocketed to 2000.<sup>16</sup>

From 1977 to 1983, Calvary Chapel of Yorba Linda (CCYL) not only grew 2000 percent but also adopted charismatic practices of speaking in tongues and healing. At first, these practices were peripheral to the services at CCYL, and generally focused on speaking in tongues. But as Wimber preached through the book of Luke, he felt that God was calling him to make healing a central part of his ministry at CCYL. So Wimber began initiating altar calls for the sick, laying hands on those with ailments and praying for healing. As Bill Jackson chronicled, the initial results were terrible—no one was healed and some church members even began catching the illnesses of those that they were laying hands on and praying for. As Wimber kept pressing healing in the services without any success, disgruntled church members started to leave, and after ten months of failure, Wimber was ready to throw in the towel on healing. As was common in the narratives of conversion testimonies, the day after Wimber had reached his nadir, God gave him the miraculous healing he had been praying for. After healing a new church member of the flu, Wimber reportedly cried out in jubilation, "We got one!"<sup>17</sup> Over the next month, Wimber healed more people and eventually decided to setup "healing clinics" in order to teach church members how to participate in CCYL's ministry of

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 63-4.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 69-70.

healing. What began as a disappointing experiment became one of the dominant narratives in Wimber's ministry, one that deeply shaped Vineyard culture.

While Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel network had allowed room for the charismatic gifts behind closed doors, Wimber's endorsement of practicing the gifts in public services, particularly the gift of healing, moved CCYL outside of the orbit of practice for Calvary Chapel. Yet the healing ministry at CCYL might have remained below the radar if it had not been for the "charismatic explosion" that came to CCYL on Mother's Day in 1980. The instigator was Lonnie Frisbee, one of Chuck Smith's early protégés and a former influential leader of the Jesus Movement in Southern California. Frisbee had left the southern California church scene to join the Shepherding movement in Florida, but began attending CCYL on his return to southern California in the late 1970s. Asked by Wimber to speak at a CCYL service, Frisbee narrated his testimony before initiating a spectacular revival service that included congregants uncontrollably sobbing, jerking, falling on the floor, and speaking in tongues. While at the time Wimber was "wide-eyed and angry," and while several church members left the service in disgust, Frisbee's revival became a watershed event for CCYL and the future Vineyard Fellowship, ushering in a new emphasis on the overt practice and display of the charismatic gifts.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Jackson, *The Quest for the Radical Middle*, 73-74.

### 5.1.3 The Birth of the Vineyard Fellowship

Bill Jackson argued that John Wimber had planted CCYL in part because he wanted to "field-test the discoveries he had made at Fuller on the correlation between signs and wonders and the growth of the church." Wimber's original alignment with Calvary Chapel came from his assumption that Chuck Smith and the Calvary Chapel culture would make room for his practicing of the charismatic gifts. But when Wimber "began to promote in the front room what Calvary was doing only in the back room," problems arose. And when reports of Frisbee's fomented charismatic event reached Chuck Smith and other Calvary Chapel leaders, they called John Wimber to account. In April of 1982, Wimber met with Chuck Smith at a pastor's summit to discuss the practicing of the charismatic gifts in a Calvary Chapel setting. Unable to come to an agreement on the gifts, Smith requested that Wimber drop "Calvary Chapel" from his church's name so as not to confuse congregants theologically. This was the first step in the creation of the Vineyard Fellowship.<sup>19</sup>

The second step came when John Wimber and Kenn Gulliksen joined forces. Bill Jackson recounted that Wimber and Gulliksen had met in 1979, hit it off, and quickly realized that they could make a good team. Gulliksen had ambitious dreams for the expansion of the Vineyard, but also knew that he did not carry the charismatic authority to lead it. As Gulliksen explained, once he spent time with John Wimber and saw his

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 84-5.

emphasis on intimate worship, his sensitivity to the charismatic gifts, and his clear talent with training pastors and inspiring church growth, he realized that Wimber could lead the Vineyard network. And so with the “blessing”<sup>20</sup> of Smith, Gulliksen invited Wimber to take over as the leader of the Vineyard movement.<sup>21</sup> Wimber accepted and wasted no time getting started. Just one month after his disagreement with Chuck Smith at the pastors’ summit, Wimber setup a separate Vineyard pastor’s conference at a hotel in Morro Bay.<sup>22</sup> What Chuck Smith had understood as a rebranding had quickly and quietly developed into a schism, and the Vineyard Fellowship, as a network independent from Calvary Chapel, was born.

Chuck Fromm contended that the split was a charismatic clash, not simply in the sense of a fight over the practicing of the charismatic gifts, but a clash between two influential charismatic leaders. As a leader who believed he had been anointed by God to teach, perform, and encourage the charismatic gifts among his congregation, Wimber was bound by his conscience to assert his leadership over CCYL. And Chuck Smith—and just as important, the structure of fellow pastors and theological culture he had built at Calvary Chapel over the years—was not going to let Wimber build an uninhibited

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<sup>20</sup> Blessings in the early history of the Vineyard movement were quite interesting. Vineyard leaders conceived of them as powerful assets that were divorced from intention, much like the blessing that Jacob secured from his blind father through deceit rather than favor. The Wimbers’ efforts were begrudgingly blessed by both the Friends Church and Calvary Chapel, two churches that effectively severed the Wimbers and their movement from fellowship.

<sup>21</sup> Jackson, *The Quest for the Radical Middle*, 86.

<sup>22</sup> Fromm, “Textual Communities,” 281.

charismatic culture in a Calvary Chapel church. To remain in fellowship with Calvary Chapel was tantamount with remaining accountable to Chuck Smith and fellow Calvary Chapel pastors on this issue, which Wimber simply could not afford to do in good conscience.

Worse than the split between Smith and Wimber was the fallout between churches. Fromm estimated that some forty Calvary Chapel pastors decided to join Wimber and Gulliksen in their new Vineyard Fellowship. These were pastors who shared Wimber's vision for the fusion of charismatic gifts with intimate worship, and pastors that, according to Fromm, Wimber had actively wooed away from Calvary Chapel.<sup>23</sup> Bill Jackson painted a more passive picture, explaining that Wimber and Gulliksen had not anticipated (nor actively sought after) the dozens of Calvary Chapel pastors that wound up joining the Vineyard movement.<sup>24</sup> As Gulliksen saw it, the Calvary Chapel congregations that joined the Vineyard "were pastored by people who were hungry for more of the Holy Spirit in their own churches, in their own lives. They were more risk takers, possibly more pioneering, and they were people who had previous relationships with John [Wimber]."<sup>25</sup> Regardless of how active or passive the Vineyard was in recruiting Calvary Chapel congregations, the result was a new denomination that hit the ground running with several seceding congregations, leaving

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 281-82.

<sup>24</sup> Jackson, *The Quest for the Radical Middle*, 86.

<sup>25</sup> Donald Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism*, 49. Quoted in Jackson, *The Quest for the Radical Middle*, 87.



a sour taste in the mouths of the Calvary Chapel leadership. Still, though these churches jumped ship, they would always carry Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel culture in their DNA.

## **5.2 Music of the Vineyard**

The most potent "genetic trait" that the Vineyard inherited from Calvary Chapel was its approach to worship music. While they differed on the practice of charismatic gifts, both Calvary Chapel and the early Vineyard shared a musical culture rooted in the songs of Maranatha! Music. Like Galapagos finches on a separate island, the music of the Vineyard eventually evolved into a distinct musical culture once the two movements split, but its roots remained in the sound of Calvary Chapel and Maranatha! Music, its songs grounded in the soft rock and adult contemporary sound of Maranatha's *Praise* albums, and its eventual music production arm mirrored the origins of Maranatha! Music.

Both Gulliksen's early Vineyard congregations and Wimber's CCYL shared the same worship music repertoire as Calvary Chapel because they all drew from Maranatha's catalogue. The early Vineyard relied heavily on this shared repertoire of Maranatha songs and helped spread Maranatha's music across the country as new Vineyard churches were planted. Eventually this shared repertoire gave way as John Wimber, Andy Park, Carl Tuttle, Eddie Espinosa and other Vineyard worship leaders

began publishing new worship songs for the Vineyard in the mid-1980s. Yet musically, Maranatha's sound continued to shape the sound of Vineyard music.

The first Vineyard albums, including *Hosanna* (1985) and *You Are Here* (1985), had much in common with Maranatha's *Praise II* (1976), *Praise III* (1979), *Praise IV* (1980), and *Praise V* (1981) albums: vocal soloists who sang in the adult contemporary vein, which often highlighted a prominent vibrato and expressive vocal timbres found in Broadway musicals, and the highlighting of the vocal performance with a long-delayed reverb tail (the effect that made a singer sound like they were performing in a giant concert hall or even a cave); arrangements grounded in the electric piano and that heavily featured synthesizer pads in the background; and heavily compressed guitars and bass to lower the dynamic range of the songs and keep them mellow.

Vineyard and Maranatha music also shared the same sound in the early 1980s because they shared a common architect. Before he left Calvary Chapel, John Wimber had shaped the sound at Maranatha! Music in several ways. In 1978, Wimber was asked to serve on the music company's board of directors and hired as a consultant in the training and development of Maranatha artists and in planning outreach for the company. Wimber was also responsible for hiring several key Maranatha! Music staff members who helped shape Maranatha's sound and went on to help develop the

Vineyard's music ministry, like Sam Thompson, Randy Swanson, and Jack Simms.<sup>26</sup>

With his energetic charisma, Wimber also quickly established relationships with several key Maranatha musicians, including Tommy Coomes, Randy Rigby, and Danny Daniels, and even served as a songwriter for Maranatha's *Praise* series, which featured two of his songs: "Isn't He" (1980) and "The Spirit Song" (1981). After the founding of the Vineyard Fellowship, Randy Rigby and Danny Daniels left Calvary Chapel to join Wimber in his new venture. Chuck Fromm argued that with his combination of charisma and musical talent, Wimber played an influential role in Calvary Chapel's music culture:

Wimber had risen to prominence and achieved success within the ranks of Calvary Chapel's Community and leadership because of his acknowledged gifts as a composer/musician—a worship leader who specialized in the performative gift of music and song, who was expert at sensing the mood of the congregation and rhapsodizing the joyful sense of intimacy with God. His years of experience within the rock music industry lent credibility to his charismatic authority as a musician... [Wimber] was also an expert at spotting and cultivating the talent of others, and for this reason, when he set about the business of intentionally establishing the Vineyard as a denomination, he recruited some of the most gifted musical and leadership talents among the Calvary Chapel leaders.<sup>27</sup>

When Wimber decided to form Mercy Publishing in 1984, which would become the Vineyard Music Group (VMG) by 1990, he followed the precedent that Chuck Smith had established in forming Maranatha! Music from his own funds to produce and distribute the music emerging from Calvary Chapel. Wimber began Mercy Publishing as a personal venture to help publish a songbook of the Vineyard's music so that new Vineyard worship leaders could easily learn the songs emerging from the Anaheim

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<sup>26</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 264-65.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

Vineyard and share them with their own congregations. Yet demand for the songbook skyrocketed as churches outside of the Vineyard began using it to guide their worship music, and Wimber realized that Mercy Publishing could also spread the Vineyard's music to a larger audience via LPs and cassettes. So Wimber setup another wing of the company called Mercy Records to produce albums of worship music for distribution, and in 1985, in order to quash rumors of his personal gain in Mercy Records' success, Wimber handed Mercy Records over to Vineyard Ministries International (VMI), Vineyard's ministry wing in charge of Wimber's conference schedule and the distribution of Vineyard materials.<sup>28</sup>

Calvary Chapel and Maranatha! Music left an indelible mark on the Vineyard's music, in part because of a shared repertoire, a shared leader, and a shared institutional setup that paired a denominational network with a record company.

There were also differences, of course, between Calvary Chapel and the Vineyard. We have already seen how Kenn Gulliksen started the Vineyard as an internal alternative to the standard form of Calvary Chapel worship, where he pushed for a greater emphasis on what he saw as intimacy and freedom in worship. Here intimacy meant an overt emphasis on the love relationship between God and the worshipper.

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<sup>28</sup> Wimber, *The Way in Is the Way On*, 124. Christy Wimber, John's daughter, recounted her father's reasoning for turning over Mercy Records to VMI: "[Mercy Records] obviously grew as new worship leaders and new churches were planted through the years. At one point, John began to see a possible way for people to misunderstand him or the worship that was being released. Therefore, he felt it would be wise to make a change. He gave Mercy/Vineyard over to VMI and then over to Vineyard Music."

This ethos of intimacy appeared in songs that highlighted this one-on-one relationship, like Gulliksen's "Oh Lord Amen," which featured a first-person perspective:

I heard the words Jesus spoke  
And felt the thrill of His hope  
He said my Son today  
Your sins are washed away  
If you'll only pray  
Oh Lord forgive my sin  
Redeem and enter in  
Let my life begin<sup>29</sup>

Gulliksen's early Vineyard congregations also utilized other songs from Maranatha's catalogue that employed a first-person perspective, several of which were in Maranatha's 1973 song book, *Rejoice in Jesus Always*. Take, for example, Jerry Sinclair's "Jesus Lifegiver":

Jesus lifegiver for you I have waited  
In hope for a miracle to see  
Now I am seeing that life's greatest miracle  
Is new birth in Jesus  
I come to you Father, I'm drawn by your Spirit  
In hope for finding the way  
Come for me savior, I'm ready to follow  
And leave earth's wisdom behind<sup>30</sup>

Gulliksen and his early Vineyard congregations also emphasized the freedom to clap hands or stand during worship, practices that did not happen on Sunday morning at Calvary Chapel.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> "Oh Lord Amen" by Kenn Gulliksen. © 1977 Maranatha! Music. CCLI #380750.

<sup>30</sup> "Jesus Lifegiver" by Jerry Sinclair. © 1972 Southern California Music Publishing.

<sup>31</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 258-60.

Wimber's small group in Yorba Linda, which eventually became CCYL and then the Anaheim Vineyard Christian Fellowship, also built a musical culture distinct from Calvary Chapel. That culture first developed under the direction of Carl Tuttle, the elected worship leader of the Yorba Linda small group and the eventual front man of the Anaheim Vineyard worship team. At the time of the small group's inception, Tuttle's repertoire consisted of a few worship choruses from Calvary Chapel and the Maranatha catalog, which became the group's standard anthems.<sup>32</sup> Yet the musical setting of the group continued to develop. "At first it was a few minutes," Tuttle explained, "but over a few months, and as the group exploded, [the singing] would go on for at least 45 minutes." Even as the musical set list expanded, Tuttle noted, the organizational factor remained low to make room for God's direction: "We had no lyrics, no list, and frankly no plan but to try to be sensitive to God and not get in the way. It was clear He was doing something very special with this group of people."<sup>33</sup>

The lack of organization in Tuttle's music planning and the quest for spontaneity among the group at large paralleled the tradition of "tarrying for the Holy Spirit"

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<sup>32</sup> Jackson, *The Quest for the Radical Middle*, 58.

<sup>33</sup> Tuttle, "Vineyard Worship - The Wimber Years." Tuttle went on to explain that the lack of a rigid set list or organizational structure for music at the Anaheim Vineyard continued for several years: "John, Dick, Jerry, and I were the worship team every Sunday morning and night service from May of 1977 to May of 1983. On Sunday mornings we did about 30 minutes of worship and Sunday nights about 45 minutes. I have a recording of one set we did in 1982 on a Sunday night where we did 17 songs! Our approach didn't vary during this time; we would get together and tune our instruments, pray and then I would simply start a song and the guys would follow. In all that time we never rehearsed, never had a set list, never had any monitors and never provided lyrics for the congregation. The songs were all so simple back then and our repertoire was only about 30 songs, so if you stuck around you learned them pretty quickly."

practiced in traditional Pentecostalism and most charismatic congregations. Yet it also resonated with a Quaker theology of worship, fitting for a small group that emerged from a Friends church.<sup>34</sup> Though they did not emphasize silence as the Society of Friends traditionally did, the Yorba Linda small group translated prayer and singing into a form of silence, in that both were used as practices that enabled the members to wait for and receive the Lord's presence and communication. And for Tuttle, sparse organization went hand-in-hand with other values inherent to the fledging Vineyard, like simplicity and what he understood as a "lack of hype" or showiness. These two values were endemic to Quaker theology, but, not surprisingly, were also native to the counterculture's construction of authenticity. The result of this combination—combining these values of simplicity and anti-hype with the utilization of music as a "space of silence" to wait on God—was a fusion of the folk singing and charismatic sensibilities of the Jesus Movement with a Quaker theology of worship picked up at the Yorba Linda Friends Church.

The concept of "intimate worship" sat at the heart of this fusion.<sup>35</sup> As the members of the small group tied the idea of worship to intimacy, they came to expect in their practice of worship an emotional connection with God that was spontaneous, unrehearsed, and the result of God's in-breaking presence, not a result of human

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<sup>34</sup> For more on the Vineyard-Quaker connection, see Ruth, Rethmeier, and Park, *Loving God Intimately*, 27.

<sup>35</sup> For more on the concept of "intimate worship" in the Vineyard, see Ruth, Rethmeier, and Park, *Loving God Intimately*, 19.

strivings.<sup>36</sup> This required waiting on God to move them, yet, ironically, this occurred most powerfully through active participation in song, and in particular, through active participation in songs<sup>37</sup> that offered individualized, one-on-one language with God, songs like Eddie Esponosa's "Lord, I Love You":

Lord, I love You,  
You alone did hear my cry;  
Only You can mend  
This broken heart of mine.  
Yes, I love You,  
And there is no doubt  
Lord, You've touched me  
From the inside out.<sup>38</sup>

Or Danny Daniels' "Hold Me Lord":

Hold me, Lord (hold me, Lord)  
In your arms (in your arms)  
Fill me, Lord (fill me, Lord)  
With your Spirit  
Touch my heart (touch my heart)  
With your love (with your love)

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<sup>36</sup> In some ways, this mirrored aspects of the Quaker concept of the "inward light," God's revelatory and salvific presence experienced internally in the individual soul, an experience that could be known individually without external interpretation and an experience that could not be contrived with human action. As a result, the concept of the "inward light," even cultural translations of it across the landscape of evangelical Quakerism in Southern California, likely influenced two values of the Yorba Linda small group: 1) the juxtaposition of the highly individualized experience of emotional intimacy with God and, at the same time, the necessity to practice "intimate worship" in community and 2) the charismatic emphasis on receiving, and not controlling, the ministry of the Holy Spirit as it manifested in emotional experiences and eventually miraculous healings. Though the Quaker concept of the "inward light" was not synonymous with a Pentecostal pneumatology, there were strong parallels in that both emphasized the free, unpredictable, and uncontrollable movement of the Holy Spirit and the corollary of that belief—waiting in patience for the Spirit to move.

<sup>37</sup> Carl Tuttle noted that writing intimate worship songs began early on in the formation of the Vineyard: "It was very early in the process when we discovered we could write our own songs. John [Wimber], Eddie [Espinosa] and I began to contribute several songs to the ones we picked up elsewhere. Almost every song we wrote was in the first person direct to God, very personal and very intimate." (Tuttle, "Vineyard Worship - The Wimber Years.")

<sup>38</sup> Eddie Esponosa, "Lord, I Love You." ©1982, 1985 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing.



Let my life (let my life)  
Glorify your name.<sup>39</sup>

While Gulliksen had emphasized Maranatha songs that employed a first-person perspective, these songs communicated intimacy with God by speaking to God in the informal, second-person. And while worship traditionally meant more than singing, the songs became the focus, as they provided the setting for the creation of affective dispositions, emotional states that enabled the worshipper to commune with God in intimacy. Referring to God as "you" transformed God as an object into a subject and provided worshippers language, even a discourse, that modeled an intimate relationship with God. Carol Wimber explained:

We sang many songs, but mostly songs about worship or testimonies from one Christian to another. But occasionally we sang a song personally and intimately to Jesus, with lyrics like "Jesus, I love you." Those types of songs both stirred and fed the hunger for God within me... As we talked about worship, we realized that often we would sing about worship yet we never actually worshiped—except when we accidentally stumbled onto intimate songs like "I Love You, Lord," and "I Lift My Voice." Thus we began to see a difference between songs *about* Jesus and songs *to* Jesus.<sup>40</sup>

Singing songs *to* God instead of *about* God became an important marker distinguishing the worship music of the Vineyard. It marked the difference, as Carol Wimber explained, between authentic and inauthentic worship. To sing *about* God could be done without actually *worshipping* God, while singing *to* God, as Carol explained, moved the worshipper into conversation with God and ultimately into a state of

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<sup>39</sup> Danny Daniels, "Hold Me Lord." ©1982, 1985 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing.

<sup>40</sup> Wimber, *Thoughts on Worship*, 1-2. Emphasis mine.

worship. John reiterated Carol's point in his book *The Way In Is The Way On*, explaining one "can still keep a certain reserve intact" while singing hymns that focus on the doctrinal aspects of the faith.<sup>41</sup> "These songs are wonderful and I'm thankful for every one of them," John explained, "but when you sing, 'You Bless Me Lord Forever' or 'Whom Have I But You?,' it breaks through to your inner being and expresses what your spirit needs to say."<sup>42</sup>

As we saw with the construction of authenticity in the counterculture and in the Jesus movement in chapter four, here the construction of authenticity emphasized informality and the lack of mediation between parties, though now the parties were God and the worshipper. When lyrics were directed *to* God, it was, as John and Carol saw it, impossible to remain detached emotionally from the divine. At the same time, Vineyard worshippers did not understand authentic worship as a utility, a means to another end—whether as an evangelistic tool for the counterculture or a tool for church growth. The act of authentic worship had, in and of itself, value. At John Wimber's memorial service in 1997, Carol Wimber reminded friends and family what John had taught them about authentic worship and what they had learned together in the small group in Yorba Linda:

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<sup>41</sup> The emphasis of "I" over "we" was, in its own way, a classic extension of the "Solas" of the Protestant Reformation—faith alone, bible alone, Christ alone, etc.—to the personal realm with "I alone" in terms of relating to God.

<sup>42</sup> Wimber, *The Way in Is the Way On*, 108.

You don't use worship for anything other than to worship God, and you don't use emotion either. ...You let God be God and He will do what He will and He doesn't need "creaturely activity" (as the Quakers used to call it) to accomplish that... Worship is not a vehicle to warm up the congregation for the preacher, or to soften people up for the offering.<sup>43</sup>

The irony, however, was that though worship (music) was held in high esteem for its own sake in the Vineyard, it *was* a tool, even from the very beginning. Though it did not have to be manipulative, and though it did not serve as a "warm up" for the preacher or to soften the people up for the offering, worshippers at the Yorba Linda small group used worship songs as tools to craft affective dispositions that facilitated intimate worship. Though singing songs with intimate lyrics might not have *caused* the ministry of the Holy Spirit, it certainly facilitated the Spirit's work, and the absence of intimate lyrics, as John Wimber reminded his readers, allowed worshippers to "keep a certain reserve intact," keeping them from breaking through to their inner being and expressing what their spirits needed to say.<sup>44</sup> Without intimate lyrics, then, there was no intimacy with God and no true worship.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Wimber, *The Way It Was*, 216-17.

<sup>44</sup> Wimber, *The Way in Is the Way On*, 108.

<sup>45</sup> In his book *Homespun Gospel*, Todd Brenneman argues that much of the attractive power of contemporary Christian music (which, for his purposes, includes CWM) can be attributed to its sentimentality. Brenneman's concept of "sentiment" certainly considers the affective power of music, but focuses on the feelings of domesticity and nostalgia. While at times CWM draws from these powerful sentiments of domesticity and nostalgia, for the Vineyard (and others that followed) intimacy was a more powerful motivation than sentiment. Like sentiment, intimacy was fueled by affective dispositions, yet with intimacy came tones of erotic love, abandonment to God, and the overwhelming power of the Spirit. In a sense, it was the opposite of a domestic sentiment. Worshippers sought the raw, the authentic, and the transcendent experience of God, not the ordered, well known, and even mundane feelings that came with domesticity and nostalgia. For more on Brenneman's exploration of sentiment in contemporary Christian music, see Brenneman, *Homespun Gospel*, 95-100.

### 5.2.1 The Vineyard's Model of Worship

Though I use the term CWM throughout this study, it is a rather recent term used to describe the broad and diverse world of rock and pop music used in worship services around the country. Starting in the 1980s, another term, "praise and worship" or "praise and worship music" (P&W), became the common moniker for what would become known as CWM. However, P&W was not exactly synonymous with CWM. Instead, P&W had a narrower range of meaning rooted in a specific theology of worship. This theology of worship emerged in a nebulous form in the late 1970s and early 1980s among charismatics and emphasized, simply, a distinction between the concept of praise and the concept of worship. It was then systematized and popularized by charismatic worship leader and former Assemblies of God pastor Judson Cornwall in several books, the most popular of which was *Let Us Worship*, published in 1983.

Cornwall argued for a five-phase model for "praise and worship," also conceived of as "the Journey into the Holy of Holies" or "Worship in the Outer and Inner Courts." The model moved, as music scholar Barry Liesch explained, from celebration to adoration, following the Old Testament concept of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which

began with "entering the city's gates with praise," and ended with entering "the Holy of Holies."<sup>46</sup>

Cornwall's first phase began with songs of personal testimony in the camp outside of Jerusalem's gates, where worshippers were concerned with their personal needs and daily challenges rather than focused on God. As worshippers entered the second phase, moving through Jerusalem's gates with thanksgiving, the worship service began, often with lively, celebratory songs focused on thanking God for what he had done in history or in believers' lives. Cornwall explained:

The procession through the eastern gate into the outer court should be a joyful march, for thanks should never be expressed mournfully or negatively. While the people are singing choruses of thanksgiving they will be thinking both of themselves and of their God, but by putting the emphasis upon the giving of praise, but it will not produce worship [adoration], for the singers are not yet close enough to God's presence to express a worship response.<sup>47</sup>

The third phase, entering into the temple courts with praise, was a phase of transition. Songs moved from an emphasis on what God had done to an emphasis on God's character, on "blessing his name and thinking less of one's self and more of God." In the fourth phase, entering into the Holy Place, worshippers again transitioned, but this time from praise (thanksgiving) to worship (adoration).<sup>48</sup> According to Cornwall, the entire liturgical and musical tenor changed in this phase: "Clapping will likely be replaced with devotional responses of upturned faces, raised hands, tears, and even a

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<sup>46</sup> Liesch, *The New Worship*, 67.

<sup>47</sup> Cornwall, *Let Us Worship*, 156. Quoted in Liesch, *The New Worship*, 71.

<sup>48</sup> Liesch, *The New Worship*, 72.

subtle change in the timbre of the voices. When there is an awareness that we have come into the presence of God we step out of lightness into sobriety."<sup>49</sup>

The fifth and final phase, entering the Holy of Holies, became the climax of the worship time. All attention was now focused on God while worshipers often lost themselves in communing with the divine, either through quiet, repetitive song or silence. Liesch noted that this phase paralleled the worship in ancient Israel's inner sanctuary: "an atmosphere of quiet reverence enveloped the space: The flickering flame of the candlesticks, the smell of the incense, and the outstretched wings of adoring cherubim..."<sup>50</sup>

Liesch argued that Cornwall was one of the first charismatic writers to distinguish "praise" from "worship," explaining to his readers that praise, or celebratory songs of thanksgiving, took place in the outer court during the first part of the service, while worship, the quieter songs of adoration often associated with authenticity and intimacy, occurred in the inner courts and the Holy of Holies.

The Vineyard developed a theology of worship strikingly similar to Cornwall's model for praise and worship. While there was no specific evidence that the P&W model directly influenced the Vineyard model, Cornwall's method and theology was widespread in charismatic circles by the time John Wimber and his worship leader at the

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<sup>49</sup> Cornwall, *Let Us Worship*, 157. Quoted in Liesch, *The New Worship*, 73.

<sup>50</sup> Liesch, *The New Worship*, 72.

time, Eddie Espinosa, began developing their model at the Anaheim Vineyard. In addition, the models bear noticeable similarities. Both models feature five phases that move the congregation from celebratory, upbeat songs to quieter, simpler songs that help congregants focus internally on adoring or intimately communing with God.

Based on Psalm 95, John Wimber's model began with an invitation phase. "The first phase is the call to worship," Wimber explained, "which is a message directed toward the people or toward God. It is an invitation to worship... [and] the underlying thought of the call to worship is 'Let's do it, let's worship God now.'"<sup>51</sup> Liesch noted how this phase was used both to arouse the congregation and focus their attention:

It accepts people where they are and begins to draw them into worship. It can be celebratory and accompanied by hand clapping. The key point is that the lyric is directed mostly to the people—and less directly to God—and it tells them what they are about to do. The lyric does the focusing without your having to resort to verbal scolding.<sup>52</sup>

The second phase was one of engagement. In this phase, Liesch explained, the congregation began to "draw near to God," while the lyrics changed focus, "now addressed to the Lord, not one another." Eddie Espinosa compared this phase to a couple's engagement, when casual interest became more serious and attentive.<sup>53</sup> Wimber noted that during this phase the language of worship was still quite broad, including

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<sup>51</sup> Wimber, *The Way in Is the Way On*, 122.

<sup>52</sup> Liesch, *The New Worship*, 56.

<sup>53</sup> Liesch, *The New Worship*, 56.

"expressions of love, adoration, praise, jubilation, intercession, petition—all of the dynamics of prayer interlocked with worship."<sup>54</sup>

The third phase was a transition into an atmosphere of intimacy, instigated by a move towards more intimate lyrics. "Being in God's presence," Wimber explained, "excites our hearts and minds as we want to praise God for the deeds He has done, for how He has moved in history, for His character and attributes. This kind of intimacy often causes us to meditate, even as we are singing about our relationship with the Lord."<sup>55</sup> Vineyard worship leader Andy Park noted that this phase "could lead to strong expression in worship, whether physical or emotional. Dance and bodily movement were possible."<sup>56</sup>

John Wimber labeled the next phase as the congregation's expression in worship. Here dance and body movement were also possible, though the main action became waiting for God to respond to the congregation's expression. "Stop talking," Wimber encouraged, "and wait for Him to speak, to move... when we cultivate stillness as a part of our worship time together, we are enriched by the deep communion that can take place."<sup>57</sup> Andy Park labeled this phase a "time of visitation from God,"<sup>58</sup> while Barry Liesch identified this time as one of adoration and intimacy. "The people can be seated,"

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<sup>54</sup> Wimber, *The Way in Is the Way On*, 122.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>56</sup> Ruth, Rethmeier, and Park, *Loving God Intimately*, 34.

<sup>57</sup> Wimber, *The Way in Is the Way On*, 122-23.

<sup>58</sup> Ruth, Rethmeier, and Park, *Loving God Intimately*, 34.



Liesch explained, "the dynamics subside, the melodic range may reduce to five or six notes, and the key words may be *you* and *Jesus*."<sup>59</sup>

Liesch labeled the fifth and final phase one of "intimacy." At this point, Liesch's model of Vineyard worship clearly splits with Wimber and Park's model, which labels the final phase as one of giving, where congregants have the opportunity to give back to God their financial tithes and offerings. Most likely Liesch's fifth phase was presupposed in Wimber and Park's fourth phase. This final phase was "the quietest and most personal of all," where God was addressed as "Abba or Daddy." Lyrics transitioned from speaking in a corporate "we" to the personal, one-on-one intimate language of "I" and "you."<sup>60</sup>

As Wimber explained, the goal of the five phases was to achieve intimacy with God: "As we experience these phases of worship, we experience intimacy with God, the highest and most fulfilling calling men and women may know."<sup>61</sup> This patterned structure of worship, of course, was absent in the beginning of the Vineyard's musical development, when there were no set lists and Tuttle and Wimber crafted a spontaneous flow to the service. However, as Park noted, Wimber eventually "observed a progression

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<sup>59</sup> Liesch, *The New Worship*, 57.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 57-8.

<sup>61</sup> Wimber, *The Way in Is the Way On*, 124. Missing from Wimber's five-phase model was contrition of the heart or a confession of sin. While contrition and confession certainly appeared within the various song lyrics sung during worship, or even during the period of individual prayer that occurred towards the end of a Vineyard service, the Vineyard model did not include a standardized moment for confession in its early development and implementation.

of heart attitudes and responses to God as a worship service unfolded from beginning to end," and crafted this model as a description of what he saw. Park explained that even though Wimber never meant for his model to be prescriptive, it became the dominant form for Vineyard worship by the late 1980s, moving the Vineyard away from its early spontaneity and towards a settled liturgy.<sup>62</sup> Whether influenced by the spread of Cornwall's model in neighboring charismatic churches, developed organically among the Vineyard faithful, or prescribed by Wimber's model, the spontaneity of early Vineyard worship slowly routinized into a normative, five phase liturgy that moved congregants from praise to worship, from celebration to adoration, from loud to quiet, from distance to intimacy.<sup>63</sup>

### **5.2.2 Routinizing the Vineyard Sound**

From the beginning of Mercy Records in 1985 to its expansion into the Vineyard Music Group in the 1990s, Wimber leveraged his music industry experience with both the Righteous Brothers and Maranatha! Music to develop Vineyard's music ministry into the most visible wing of the Vineyard Fellowship, popularizing Vineyard music around the world via church plants and influencing the worship music of hundreds of American

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<sup>62</sup> Ruth, Rethmeier, and Park, *Loving God Intimately*, 34.

<sup>63</sup> Making emotional responses in worship normative brought problems as well. For those who could not connect in intimacy with God through the music and the liturgy, Wimber's "observations" of how worship developed became unattainable burdens. This tension—between the necessity of specific affective dispositions in worship and the reality that worshippers could not force themselves to feel moved—transcended Vineyard music and became a permanent concern for CWM, albeit often one under the surface. When it did surface, it appeared in critiques of CWM's emotional manipulation, like that found in Brian McLaren's "Open Letter to Worship Songwriters," or in the desire to reject "going through the motions" and return to authentic intimacy with God in songs like Matt Redman's "Heart of Worship."

congregations in the process. Yet the exportation of Vineyard music (and its emphasis on intimate worship) required bottling and packaging its sound for others to consume and replicate. While songbooks played a large part in expanding the reach of Vineyard's songs, records remained the tool that could capture the imagination of worship leaders in churches around the country.

Mercy Records' first series was titled *Songs of the Vineyard*, and featured 12 albums released on LP and cassette (and eventually compact disc) between 1985 and 1993. The first three albums—*Hosanna* (1985), *You are Here* (1985), and *Come Holy Spirit* (1986)—were recorded at several studios, including Asaph Studio in Anaheim, Whitefield Studios in Santa Ana, and West Oak Recorders in Westlake Village, CA. By 1987, Wimber decided to build his own studio for recording and production, and the Vineyard Studio was born. The fourth album in the *Songs of the Vineyard* series, *Glory* (1987), and all subsequent albums were recorded (at least in part) in this new studio.<sup>64</sup>

As more Vineyard churches were planted (there were 233 churches by 1986), Vineyard leadership had to find ways to train their worship leaders and keep them up-to-date on new worship music emerging first from the Anaheim Vineyard and eventually from Vineyard churches around the world. In the late 1970s, when the Anaheim Vineyard was still Calvary Chapel Yorba Linda, Carl Tuttle developed "Worship Leader Fellowships," meetings where all of the worship leaders of the church

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<sup>64</sup> Edwards, "Where Do I Begin?"

(there were worship leaders for each small group) would gather and play and learn songs together. Then, in 1980, Tuttle and fellow worship leader Cindy Rethmeier began developing "Worship Leader Training Tapes" in order to accommodate the growing number of worship leaders requesting training. Channeling Steve Jobs's proverbial garage, Tuttle recounted these first recordings of Vineyard music:

Cindy [Rethmeier] and I recorded these tapes in the bathroom at the Wagner's house, where our church office was located. ...The recordings started with me plunking away at each guitar string so people could tune their guitars to the tapes and play along. They were not exactly the type of thing you would find on a Paul Baloche web site!<sup>65</sup> To this day I will hear that someone has one, or both of these tapes we did, and honestly I'd hate to hear them, but for the time they were a useful tool and people devoured them.<sup>66</sup>

In 1987, Carl Tuttle, with the help of Vineyard producer Randy Rigby, developed a Vineyard ministry wing called the Worship Resource Center. "The idea," explained Tuttle, "was to collect songs from Vineyards around the country and world, do simple recordings of these, and get them out to the churches along with a quarterly newsletter as a means of resourcing our churches in worship ministry." Members of the Worship Resource Center received a quarterly tape of new Vineyard worship songs as well as Vineyard's in-house worship newsletter, the *Worship Update*. The resource center also occasionally hosted worship conferences, like *Worship '87*. As an in-house, centralized ministry, the Worship Resource Center sought to consolidate the Vineyard's musical endeavors so that they could be shared throughout the denomination, providing a

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<sup>65</sup> Paul Baloche, an internationally celebrated worship leader, runs one of the most popular worship leader training websites at <http://www.leadworship.com>, complete with professionally produced training videos.

<sup>66</sup> Tuttle, "Vineyard Worship - The Wimber Years."

popularizing platform for new music emerging from different Vineyard congregations as well as a forum for collaboration and further training. Mercy Records then could filter out the best songs from this ministry to record and distribute. The first recording fruits of the Worship Resource Center came in the 1987 album *Glory*. Recorded in Vineyard member Smitty Price's garage studio, *Glory* featured simplified, clean arrangements, with the goal of featuring a record as under-produced as possible. Yet it also featured a host of musicians beyond the pale of the Anaheim Vineyard, including future Vineyard leader Andy Park.<sup>67</sup> "It was so important to integrate songs from elsewhere," Tuttle explained, "rather than relying so heavily on stuff that was just coming out of what was now the Anaheim Vineyard. The truth is we were criticized for just focusing on our own music. I think the criticism was valid and we needed to move beyond our local church." And because *Glory* did just that, Tuttle argued it became a watershed album for the Vineyard, showing that Vineyard music was not simply a phenomenon native to Anaheim, but a developing culture in the entire Vineyard movement.<sup>68</sup>

Mercy Records dropped "Records" from its logo in 1989 and then reorganized in 1990 under a new name, the Vineyard Music Group (VMG) in an effort to expand Vineyard's music ministry to accommodate the growing demand for new albums and

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<sup>67</sup> Andy Park served as a worship leader at the first Vineyard church in Canada, Langley Vineyard, located in Langley City, a suburb of Vancouver. The Langley Vineyard became the birthplace of several future Vineyard songwriters and worship leaders, including Daphne Rademaker, Craig Musseau, Brian Thiessen, Chris Janzen, and the Vineyard's most famous worship leader, Brian Doerksen.

<sup>68</sup> Tuttle, "Vineyard Worship - The Wimber Years."

songbooks. Until 1996, all albums were copyrighted under Vineyard Ministries International and John Wimber was listed as executive producer. Donn Edwards argued that holding the title of executive producer "was characteristic of John Wimber's servant heart: he took full responsibility (and therefore criticism and blame) for what was done, freeing up others to get on with the task of getting the albums out."<sup>69</sup> While that may have been true, Wimber's perpetual title of executive producer also revealed how hands-on he had been in the production of Vineyard music. Unlike Chuck Smith, who had given the seed money to start Maranatha! Music but then had indirectly influenced the organization, Wimber remained the charismatic musician, songwriter, arranger, and producer he had always been, putting his stamp on more than forty Vineyard albums from 1985 to 1996.

In addition to the *Songs of the Vineyard* series, VMG initiated several new series in the 1990s, including a series called *Touching the Father's Heart*, which focused on capturing live, congregational worship instead of creating studio productions. *Touching the Father's Heart* went on to become the Vineyard's longest-running and most successful series, featuring 37 albums released between 1990 and 1999.<sup>70</sup> As we saw in chapter 3, Maranatha! Music moved from trying to capture a live experience on *The Everlastin' Living Jesus Music Concert* (1971) to constructing a "heart experience" in the studio on *The*

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<sup>69</sup> Edwards, "Where Do I Begin?"

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

*Praise Album* (1974). Mercy Records picked up where Maranatha left off, attempting to actively construct the authentic sound of worship in a professional studio setting in its first series *Songs of the Vineyard*. Yet Carl Tuttle noted that though the early Vineyard recordings sounded professional and were well produced, they could not "bottle the intimacy" that worshipers experienced in the midst of a Vineyard service.<sup>71</sup> Vineyard experimented with recording live worship services as early as 1982, but it was not until Tom Davis arrived in the late 1980s, he explained, that Vineyard music began producing semi-live recordings.<sup>72</sup> By 1990, with the introduction of the *Touching the Father's Heart* series, the pendulum had finally swung back the other way. The live experience, instead of the meticulously constructed studio recording, became the locus of authenticity for worship records.<sup>73</sup>

Donn Edwards, in looking back on the difference between the studio recordings of the *Songs of the Vineyard* series versus the *Touching the Father's Heart* series, revealed this change in how authenticity was judged: "In the early days one of the goals was to

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<sup>71</sup> Personal Interview with Carl Tuttle.

<sup>72</sup> Looking back on the exploding popularity of Hosanna! Music's live worship albums, Tuttle felt that Vineyard missed a golden opportunity to be the first worship record label to pioneer live worship recordings. See Tuttle, "Vineyard Worship - The Wimber Years."

<sup>73</sup> The Vineyard did not pioneer this change in authenticity. Hosanna! Music, a small worship music publishing company that emerged in the mid-1980s, and which developed into Integrity Music in the 1990s, was the source of the change. Hosanna released several live worship albums in the late 1980s to wide acclaim. The Vineyard's change, then, came as a response to Hosanna's rising popularity and success in the worship music market. I take a closer look at Hosanna! Music in chapter 7.

produce a 'slick' sounding album. By the time that Chris Wimber<sup>74</sup> took the helm it was to document what was going on in worship: the true, real, unaltered sound." Here Edwards viewed the professional studio album as "slick," a production that feigned authenticity but was actually artificial, as compared to a recording of live worship, which documented sound unaltered and true. This was a move away from "constructing" and towards "capturing," or as Edwards explained, "capturing the 'anointing' that congregational worship can provide." However, the difference between "constructing" and "capturing" was only stark in the ideal. In practice, the line between "capturing" and "constructing" remained blurred. Edwards noted that live recordings were "sometimes supplemented in a studio environment, allowing for more consistent quality, and for much greater attention to the detail of each song."<sup>75</sup> Joe Randeem, a former producer for VMG and Creative Services Director at the Anaheim Vineyard, explained how VMG staff would clean up the live recordings in the studio:

The only thing that we do in the studio is fix blatant mistakes such as wrong chords, or a wrong word sung. We might add a guitar part down or an organ because they were not available at the time of recording. We do very little fixing on the recordings. We only fix the most horrible mistakes: there's plenty of mistakes left in.<sup>76</sup>

So the pendulum had not *completely* swung back. While capturing the live experience once again became the pinnacle of worship authenticity, overt errors had to

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<sup>74</sup> Chris Wimber, John and Carol's son, took over the leadership for VMG in the early 1990s and pushed for live recordings in the *Touching the Father's Heart* and the *Winds of Worship* series.

<sup>75</sup> Edwards, "Where Do I Begin?"

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.



be scrubbed out so that they did not, effectively, adulterate the "anointing" of the live experience. And here lay the crux: *the goal was not simply to capture a live experience, but to capture the affective disposition created by that live experience, to capture the "anointing" of the worship service.* The worship music had emotional power, and that emotional power was most evident when its *effect* on worshippers was evident, visible, or audible. Live recordings provided this evidence because they recorded the congregation singing even as they recorded the worship band performing. The congregation matched the intensity of the worship team, swelling with the musical crescendos. This in turn energized the worship leaders, who then ratcheted up their own performative affective dispositions. The congregation, then, became a feedback loop for the emotional tenor of the worship service. And to capture this in a recording allowed the listener to experience the building of this emotional and musical energy. However, while not an issue for a congregant immersed in the moment, an out-of-tune guitar, or a wrongly placed chord, or a wrong word sung could destroy the affective power of a recording. This was because the live recording provided a sonic clarity of a live mix in ways that an on-site congregant would have never heard.<sup>77</sup> So the recording had to be "cleaned" to make sure it could effectively communicate its affective energy to the listener.

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<sup>77</sup> Live recordings, though they attempted to "capture" the sound of a live setting, were never perfect replications. If the live recording included mixing what the audience heard from their vantage point with direct channel feeds from the mixer board, the listener of the live recording heard a much clearer and cleaner mix of all of the instruments and vocalists than the audience member would have. This is because the live recording listener was essentially listening to a studio recording layered over a live recording. In

### 5.3 The Impact of Vineyard Music

When Carol Wimber first convinced John to attend the Yorba Linda small group, he had his reservations:

I took my seat on the couch a few minutes late. When I looked around the softly lit room, no one looked back. Eyes were closed, postures relaxed, a few were seated, some knelt and two women stood with their hands turned upward. ...They seemed to sing forever. What was the point? I thought. Weren't we there to study the Bible? ...I felt the heat rise in my cheeks; my palms became sweaty; and I was embarrassed by the intimate language of the songs being played. Lord, am I supposed to sing to you like that too? I certainly hoped not!<sup>78</sup>

Yet John kept attending, and eventually warmed up to the emphasis on intimate worship that Carl Tuttle and others had cultivated in the small group:

Within a few weeks, I felt my heart soften. I was caught off-guard by the power of the lyrics in those songs. Tears rolled down my cheeks as the music played. My mind couldn't comprehend what my heart was experiencing. Singing those sweet simple love songs to the Lord led me into personal revival. Intimate worship transformed my life as a Christian. In fact, what I experienced in this small group became the foundation for the Vineyard movement. The Lord's reviving presence in us spilled over into the lives of tens of thousands of people over the next 25 years, and it continues to this day.<sup>79</sup>

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this case, an out-of-tune guitar, a wrong chord, or a misplaced word would be accentuated in ways that audience members would not have experienced.

Even when a live recording was simply pulled from microphones setup among the audience, the frequency range of those microphones were different from that of the human ear, highlighting different aspects of the soundscape than those that would have been highlighted on-site.

<sup>78</sup> Wimber, *The Way in Is the Way on*, 111-12. This provided another example of the difference between Vineyard's sense of intimacy and Brennenman's concept of "sentiment" in American evangelicalism. Here Wimber sensed the emotional dispositions as erotic, which made him uncomfortable. This was not a sentiment of domesticity or nostalgia. Yet a latent eroticism became an important component Vineyard's sense of intimacy with God. To be sure, it was not a dominant theme of the Vineyard's music, but the focus on intimacy had to allow for the possibility of erotic language and imagery, as that was integral to a sense of intimacy. For more on erotic language in CWM, see Percy, "Sweet Rapture."

<sup>79</sup> Wimber, *The Way in Is the Way On*, 112.

Though he had the advantage of hindsight, Wimber's testimony was no less true. The conviction that intimate worship was authentic worship—in short, that intimacy connoted authenticity—sat at the heart of Vineyard music and remained its most influential export to CWM. It was the driving force behind the lyrics of several of the Vineyard's most influential worship songs, including Brenton Brown's *Lord Reign in Me*, Cindy Rethmeier's *Breath of God*, Kathryn Scott's *Hungry*, and Andy Park's *In the Secret*. All of these songs featured language that referred to God in the second person and described a relationship with God using a language of desire, passion, and vulnerability. It could also be found outside of Vineyard Music, in many of the most popular CWM songs over the last twenty years, including Paul Baloche's *Open the Eyes of My Heart*, Tim Hughes' *Here I Am to Worship*, Martin Smith's *I Could Sing of Your Love Forever*, and Billy Foote's *You are My King*. What Kenn Gulliksen and Carl Tuttle had independently stumbled upon in the late 1970s, and what John Wimber and his Vineyard worship leaders had then popularized via Vineyard Music in the 1980s and 1990s, became the dominant lyrical mode for CWM for the next twenty-five years. Because of the Vineyard, intimate worship music became *real* worship music.

This new vision for worship became contagious among American evangelicals as they saw the emotional experience it provided in worship. In 1980, Chuck Smith, Jr. (son of the Calvary Chapel leader) visited the Calvary Chapel in Yorba Linda to see for himself what John Wimber's congregation was doing:

The first few songs were completely new to me, but I enjoyed them. They were lyrics of love and devotion sung directly to God or Jesus, and the music sounded very contemporary... I worshiped God that night. A week earlier I could not even define worship or describe what it looked like. But that night I worshipped; I was one to one with Jesus, telling Him I loved Him, adored Him, that He is truly awesome, and I was grateful for His love and sacrifice for me. I left CCYL that night in a state of "spiritual mourning" that lasted for several days, because I felt, by comparison, our church was dead. The life of the Spirit in worship was definitely not with us. So we made immediate changes.<sup>80</sup>

Smith, Jr. testified to the affective power that the Vineyard's concept of intimacy brought to the worship experience. Others agreed. By the 1990s, Vineyard Music had emerged as one of what scholar and church consultant Robb Redman labeled "the big four" in CWM, the four record companies that dominated the CWM market.<sup>81</sup> Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the intimate worship pioneered by Tuttle, Wimber, and countless other Vineyard worship leaders could be seen every Sunday at almost any evangelical church with a contemporary worship service: lyrics that shrank the distance between worshipper and deity, hands raised or open in effusive expressions of thanksgiving and adoration, teary or closed eyes reacting to the affective power of the worship experience, and faces that exuded the emotional resonance of communing intimately with the divine.

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<sup>80</sup> Interview with Chuck Fromm in 2005. Fromm, "Textual Communities," 270-71.

<sup>81</sup> Redman, *The Great Worship Awakening*, 58.

## 6. Science: Growing Churches with Music

Church growth as a science helps us maximize the use of energy and other resources for God's glory. It enables us to detect errors and correct them before they do too much damage. It would be a mistake to claim too much, but some enthusiasts felt that with church growth insights we may even step as far ahead in God's task of world evangelism as medicine did when aseptic surgery was introduced.<sup>1</sup>

Why look at the church growth movement when thinking about the development of CWM? CWM's journey from obscurity in the early 1980s to ubiquity in the 1990s had been fueled in part by the Vineyard's captivating vision of utilizing CWM to commune in intimacy with God. American congregations found the pursuit of intimacy through CWM appealing because it provided a new surge of emotional energy to the sanctuary, provided a new avenue for religious authenticity, and served as a panacea against what many saw as the staid liturgical malaise of "traditional" worship. Yet that was only half of the story. CWM's national export would have been impossible without a more powerful incentive that transcended denominational and theological borders, an incentive that sat at the heart of the competitive free market of religion in America: church growth. As American congregations realized that they could attract new members—and not just youth, but adults as well—by inviting guitars and drums into their sanctuaries, they enthusiastically embraced CWM. Churches, however, soon discovered that they could not simply throw a guitar on stage and the masses would flood in. There were variables to deliberate on, strategic considerations to be made,

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<sup>1</sup> Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow*, 41.

research to be done. CWM may have been an intimate art, but it was also a science. And no one knew this better than the leaders of the church growth movement.

If John Wimber and the Vineyard established CWM's obsession with intimacy, it was the church growth movement that established CWM as a scientific tool for growing churches. The church growth movement played a major role in fueling the exportation of CWM from a small set of charismatic churches (mostly in southern California) to the wider world of American evangelicalism (and eventually American mainline denominations). Though the 1970s had seen the exportation of church rock music via parachurch campus ministries like Campus Crusade for Christ and national youth rallies like Explo '72 and Intervarsity's annual Urbana conference, in the 1980s the church growth movement catalyzed American evangelicals' importation of rock music into their sanctuaries. Budding megachurches and their influential pastors, like Bill Hybel's Willow Creek Community Church in suburban Chicago, Ed Dobson's Calvary Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Rick Warren's Saddleback Church in Orange County, California, incorporated rock music into their services not necessarily because of its ability to connect congregants in intimacy with God, but because it was the best music to get people—lots of people—in the door.

## ***6.1 The Church Growth Movement***

In the 1970s and 1980s, American evangelicals' coupled their love for the great commission with a new pragmatism steeped in marketing strategies. The result was a

new emphasis on church growth and, as historian Kate Bowler pointed out, its working mantra became "bigger is always better."<sup>2</sup> While liberal mainline churches had their own church growth scholarship that focused on the social context surrounding their membership decline, conservative evangelicals concentrated on institutional factors that would facilitate growth.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, megachurches (congregations larger than 2,000 members) were on the rise—the 50 megachurches present in 1970 would balloon to 310 by 1990.<sup>4</sup> Evangelical leaders who came to emphasize church growth found their inspiration in the work of two missionaries-turned-scholars at Fuller Theological Seminary's School of World Mission, Donald McGavran and C. Peter Wagner, and the famous possibility-thinking megachurch pastor, Robert Schuller.

After serving as a missionary in India for some thirty years, Donald McGavran headed back to the states in 1961 to establish the Institute for Church Growth at Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Oregon. By 1965, McGavran's ideas had

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<sup>2</sup> Bowler, *Blessed*, 101.

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth W. Inskeep noted that "the contemporary literature on church growth developed in two very different cultural worlds and under very different circumstances." Inskeep argued that mainline studies were "undertaken by professional social scientists working within academic communities," whose goal was to construct models that could explain membership declines in mainline churches by looking at the social context outside the walls of the church. Conservative evangelical church growth researchers, however, approached the question from the flip side, attempting to develop internal, institutional models and techniques that would catalyze growth in congregations. For more, see Inskeep, "A Short History of Church Growth Research."

<sup>4</sup> Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, 6. Cited in Bowler, *Blessed*, 101. Thumma and Travis noted argued that though Elmer Towns (dean of the school of religion at Liberty University and Fuller's School of World Mission graduate) counted 16 megachurches in 1969, there were quite a few African American megachurches that were not as well known and should be added to the list. By 1984, they noted, megachurches had increased to 70, and then 310 in 1990, 600 in 2000, and 1,250 by 2007. This exponential growth fueled evangelical focus on techniques and strategies for church growth.

disseminated down the pacific coast and landed him an offer as the founding dean of the new School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He accepted Fuller's offer, under the condition that he could bring his institute with him as a merger, not an acquisition. Fuller obliged and the School of World Mission and Institute of Church Growth was born.<sup>5</sup> When the school opened, McGavran only enrolled foreign missionary pastors, one of which was C. Peter Wagner. Wagner had served as a missionary in Bolivia for fifteen years when he enrolled in McGavran's new School of World Mission. Wagner soon became McGavran's protégé, and in 1968 McGavran invited Wagner to teach in the field of church growth. By 1971, Wagner had joined the faculty. When American pastors, who could not enroll at the school because of McGavran's foreign missionary requirement, began asking for church growth classes in 1972, McGavran joined up with Wagner to teach a class on church growth in America. The course quickly grew in popularity and served as the training grounds for several future leaders of the church growth movement like Elmer Towns, dean of the School of Religion at Liberty University, and Win Arn, founder of the Institute for American Church Growth.<sup>6</sup>

McGavran and Wagner influenced many church growth enthusiasts through their publications as well. McGavran's most influential book, *Understanding Church*

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<sup>5</sup> Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 238.

<sup>6</sup> Towns and McIntosh, *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement*, 16.



*Growth* (1970), laid the foundation for the church growth movement and the emergence of American megachurches. In that book and others, McGavran focused on four questions that he thought every church should ask: What are the causes of church growth? What are the barriers to church growth? What are the factors that can make Christian faith a movement among populations? And what principles of church growth are reproducible?<sup>7</sup> Media Studies scholar Mara Einstein argued that, in asking these questions, McGavran was actually initiating marketing research, though he did not define it as such.<sup>8</sup> This focus on marketing research, often expressed under different names—church growth principles, leadership principles, cultural surveying, and seeker strategies—became the core practice within the church growth movement. Robert Schuller, pastor of the Crystal Cathedral in Orange County, Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in Orange County, and Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in suburban Chicago, all carried out survey work asking the same questions in their respective locales. Whether directly or indirectly, McGavran's marketing research approach was influential on these and many other megachurch pastors. Rick Warren even recounted the influence McGavran's work had on him back in 1974: "The day I read [an article profiling McGavran] I felt God directing me to invest the

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<sup>7</sup> Hunter, "The Legacy of Donald A. McGavran," 158.

<sup>8</sup> Einstein, *Brands of Faith*, 62.

rest of my life discovering the principles—biblical, cultural, and leadership principles—that produce healthy, growing churches. It was the beginning of a lifelong study."<sup>9</sup>

C. Peter Wagner followed in McGavran's footsteps, serving as his understudy for ten years until McGavran retired in 1981. In 1984, Wagner released his influential book *Your Church Can Grow* while also becoming the first holder of the Donald A. McGavran Chair of Church Growth at Fuller's School of World Mission.<sup>10</sup> While Wagner shared McGavran's emphasis on marketing research, he had also become an ardent supporter of Robert Schuller's "possibility thinking faith,"<sup>11</sup> a combination of Norman Vincent Peale's positive thinking, pragmatic marketing research strategies for church growth, and a theology of prosperity that inverted the Protestant Reformation's theocentric focus in favor of a therapeutic focus on human self-esteem. In the foreword that Wagner wrote

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<sup>9</sup> In his book *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren recounts reading a profile article on Donald McGavran in Intersarsity Christian Fellowship's student publication, *HIS*, titled along the lines of "Why is This Man Dangerous?" The article was Warren's introduction to McGavran's work on church growth, which would become a major influence in his approach to building Saddleback Church (Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 29).

<sup>10</sup> Towns and McIntosh, *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement*, 17.

<sup>11</sup> Wagner wrote the foreword to Robert Schuller's 1986 book *Your Church has a Fantastic Future*. Wagner professed his love for Schuller's work: "For more than ten years I have assigned the earlier edition of this book entitled, *Your Church Has Real Possibilities*, to every one of my Doctor of Ministry students at Fuller Seminary and have asked them to write reports on it. Many hundreds of pastors and denominational executives have written reports, and all have been positive. Few books have been so helpful in enabling pastors and other church leaders to understand the reasons for growth or non-growth and to make the necessary adjustments to lead their churches into a better future." Wagner also acknowledged the influence that Schuller's Institute for Successful Church Leadership had on him: "As a professor of church growth, I am personally indebted to Robert Schuller for much of what I know and teach. I visit the Crystal Cathedral often. Back when it was called the Garden Grove Community Church, I had the privilege of attending a Robert Schuller Institute for Successful Church Leadership. It was a life changing experience. Not only did I learn new principles of church growth, but I also received a fresh measure of inspiration and motivation which I had not previously known. This helped move me to what I now call in my own writings and classes the "third level of faith" or "possibility thinking faith."" See the foreword in Schuller, *Your Church has a Fantastic Future*.

for Schuller's 1986 book *Your Church has a Fantastic Future*, he professed his love for Schuller's work, explaining that he had assigned the book in his Fuller classes for more than ten years and that "few books have been so helpful in enabling pastors and other church leaders to understand the reasons for growth or non-growth" in their churches. Later in the foreword, Wagner also acknowledged the influence that Schuller's Institute for Successful Church Leadership had on him:

As a professor of church growth, I am personally indebted to Robert Schuller for much of what I know and teach. ... I had the privilege of attending a Robert Schuller Institute for Successful Church Leadership. It was a life changing experience. Not only did I learn new principles of church growth, but I also received a fresh measure of inspiration and motivation which I had not previously known.<sup>12</sup>

Wagner also advocated for the burgeoning "signs and wonders" movement emerging from John Wimber's Anaheim Vineyard Fellowship Church in Orange County. In 1974, Wagner invited John Wimber to serve as the founding Director of the Department of Church Growth at the Charles E. Fuller Evangelistic Association, which eventually was renamed to the Charles E. Fuller Institute for Evangelism and Church Growth. There Wimber oversaw a popular church consulting program focused on local church growth. In 1982, Wagner teamed up with Wimber to teach a new course in the School of World Mission called "Signs, Wonders and Church Growth." The course, which offered optional "labs" to practice the spiritual gift of healing, was both controversial and extremely popular among students. By 1986, the uproar over in-class

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<sup>12</sup> Schuller, *Your Church has a Fantastic Future*, foreword.

miracles forced Wagner and Wimber to cancel the course, though to the dismay of many students eager to enroll.<sup>13</sup> Though Wagner founded the North American Society for Church Growth in 1985 (and served as its first president), Southern Baptist church consultant Thom S. Rainer contended that Wagner's push towards the charismatic signs and wonders movement in the 1980s led to his loss of influence in the wider church growth movement.<sup>14</sup> Still, between his popular publications, his training of students at Fuller, and his partnership with visible megachurch pastors in Orange County, Wagner was the glue that connected several church worlds, including Fuller Theological Seminary, John Wimber's Anaheim Vineyard, Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral, and even Rick Warren's ministry at Saddleback Church.<sup>15</sup>

If McGavran initiated the church growth movement and Wagner helped him institutionalize it at Fuller, then Robert Schuller was its great popularizer. A Reformed Church in America pastor, Schuller came to Southern California in 1955 with the challenge of starting an RCA church far away from its Midwest, ethnically Dutch base. Schuller knew for his church to succeed he would need to find ways to connect with the surrounding culture of Orange County. So he began his preaching at a drive-in theater in Garden Grove, Orange County, where Californians could drive up in their family

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<sup>13</sup> Chandler, "Fuller Seminary Cancels Course on Signs and Wonders," 48-49.

<sup>14</sup> See Rainer, "New Dimensions in Evangelism and Church Growth."

<sup>15</sup> Rick Warren received his D.Min from Fuller Theological Seminary in 1993. While there, he studied under C. Peter Wagner, who served as his dissertation advisor. See Warren, "New Churches for a New Generation."

sedans to hear his positive sermons. And positive they were, as Schuller came to model his preaching off of his mentor, positive thinking promoter Norman Vincent Peale. Within six years his congregation had outgrown the movie theater and moved into a worship space designed by famed modernist architect Richard Neutra in 1961. But the church continued to grow and, in the late 1970s, Schuller commissioned another famous architect, Philip Johnson, to design a "glass and iron filigree" sanctuary, which materialized into the Crystal Cathedral in 1980, seating 2,700 people.<sup>16</sup>

Schuller's Crystal Cathedral and "Hour of Power" television show put him in the national limelight as one of America's most popular preachers. But it was his 1974 book *Your Church Has Real Possibilities* and his seminar offerings at the confidently named Robert Schuller Institute for Successful Church Leadership that had a major influence on future megachurch pastors, including Rick Warren and Bill Hybels. In conjunction with *Your Church Has Real Possibilities*, Schuller's annual institute hosted at the Crystal Cathedral translated his possibility thinking into marketing for church growth: "What is possibility thinking? It's having the right value system, asking the right questions and making the right decisions." The right questions and the right decisions, Schuller argued, could be found in the principles of successful retailing: accessibility, surplus parking, inventory (having available what people want), customer service, visibility, and good

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<sup>16</sup> Adams, "The Peak of Possibility Thinking," 2-3.

cash flow.<sup>17</sup> Schuller's marketing approach was aggressively demand-side<sup>18</sup>: "The secret of winning unchurched people into the church is really quite simple. Find out what would impress the non-churched people in your community." Whether guest speakers, sermon topics, or the genre of music, Schuller crafted all elements to appeal to the customers he wanted.<sup>19</sup>

Bill Hybels had begun reading Schuller's *Your Church Has Real Possibilities* while still leading the youth group, Son City, at South Park Church in Park Ridge, IL and in 1975, he headed out to Southern California to attend Schuller's institute.<sup>20</sup> After hearing about Schuller's successful marketing survey for the unchurched, Hybels replicated the idea in suburban Chicago in order to jumpstart Willow Creek.<sup>21</sup> Over the next decade, Schuller and Hybels developed a friendship. Hybels returned to Schuller's institute with twenty-five members of Willow Creek's leadership team for further training, where Schuller publicly recognized his efforts in Chicago. Dave Holmbo, fellow leader at Willow Creek at the time, described this recognition:

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<sup>17</sup> Schuller, *Your Church Has Real Possibilities* (25, rest of chapter 3).

<sup>18</sup> I do not use the terms "demand-side" and "supply-side" in this chapter in the traditional economic sense, as used in the fiscal policies of the Reagan administration in the 1980s. Instead, I use these terms to explain the difference between church policies that arise from a posture of theological normativity and those that arise from a market-based approach. The theologically normative approach, the "supply-side" option, is an ideological, top-down policy that starts with theological values concerning the appropriateness of different aspects of the liturgy, including music. In contrast, the market-based approach, the "demand-side" option, is a pragmatic policy that starts from the bottom up, asking what congregants want in their liturgy instead of proclaiming what they need.

<sup>19</sup> Pritchard, *Willow Creek Seeker Services*, 51.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

Even at the conference, Bill was recognized. As people were all sitting at the church, Schuller pointed Bill out and just asked Bill to stand up and said, "I want you to know that this man right here is doing something out in Chicago which is actually what we are talking about at this conference." That was real affirming to us.<sup>22</sup>

In 1979, Hybels invited Schuller to Willow Creek as a guest speaker for a major fundraising event for the church and later took up Schuller's advice to buy a large plot of land for the future home of Willow Creek. As Willow Creek grew and Hybels' national stature rose, Schuller asked Hybels to return to his institute to speak on his success in church growth.

Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral was not a bastion of CWM. The music at the Crystal Cathedral was a mixture of traditional organ-based hymns, large choral productions, symphonic instrumentals, and the occasional operatic vocal solo. Schuller's choice of music, however, did not come from his personal or theological preference. Instead, the musical selection at the Crystal Cathedral was the result of his marketing research, providing unchurched Southern Californians the music they wanted to hear in church. Had a majority of his targeted demographic desired rock music, Schuller would have obliged. Yet by utilizing and peddling a demand-side marketing approach to worship music, Schuller helped open the door to CWM for upstart megachurches around the country.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 54.

Schuller's legacy for CWM, then, along with that of McGavran and Wagner, was not an embrace of liturgical rock per se but a dissemination of church growth strategies that implored pastors and their churches to approach church music from a market researched demand-side, not a theologically principled supply-side. This was the pragmatic, ends-justify-the-means evangelistic approach that evangelicals had taken towards rock music, but with a new twist. The Jesus People had embraced rock as a translation tool with which they could broadcast the gospel into an unreached counterculture. And while the goal of evangelism was still present and the ultimate end for the church growth movement, rock music in the church growth movement became a tool to *grow large churches*, churches filled with the unchurched, which would inevitably, as the logic went, lead to more souls saved. The end of soul saving was still there, but it had been pushed back further in the equation while the means had evolved and extended into new strategies. In the 1970s, the new hippie Christian in Costa Mesa could pick up an acoustic guitar and present the gospel through a folk song to his unsaved friends, while Chuck Smith would allow newly baptized youth at Calvary Chapel to participate by singing an unrefined folk song written a few hours earlier. But with the church growth movement the emphasis shifted to a meticulously researched and crafted musical presentation, run by highly skilled volunteers or paid musicians, and delivered as one part of a larger package that provided entertainment as much as spiritual succor. In conjunction with trained greeters, an accessible parking lot, a culturally relevant



sermon, comfortable seating, and a litany of church programs, rock music in the sanctuary created a church atmosphere that could attract even the most disaffected baby boomers.

Both Bill Hybels and Rick Warren carried forward this church growth approach and embraced rock music in their church services as a means to attract unchurched baby boomers. And because of their success as megachurch pastors, they became highly influential among evangelicals and mainliners seeking growth in their own churches. In the 1990s and 2000s, both pastors sought to provide resources, franchises even, that would help other churches adopt their strategies for church growth. Rick Warren's "Purpose Driven" ministry included books,<sup>23</sup> accompanying resources, and a "40 Days of Purpose" church course focused on personal and corporate spiritual revitalization, while Bill Hybels established the Willow Creek Association in 1992 as a network of affiliated churches and church consultant hub that sought to do church the "Willow Creek way." Because of their influence on American churches via the church growth movement and their respective national ministries, Warren and Hybels' approach to CWM provided a window into how American church leaders came to approach it as well.

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<sup>23</sup> Warren first released *The Purpose Driven Church*, a revision of his D.Min thesis at Fuller Theological Seminary, for church leaders and consultants in 1995. It was not until 2002 that he released the 40 day devotional *The Purpose Driven Life* for general audiences, which went on to sell 30 million copies by 2007.

## **6.2 Willow Creek**

### **6.2.1 Beginnings: Son City**

Willow Creek Community Church began amidst the ear-splitting music and silly antics found at "Son Life," the youth group at South Park Church in Park Ridge, Illinois in 1972. There the two youth ministers, Bill Hybels and Dave Holmbo, constructed a youth group circus that attracted teens in droves. By the Summer of 1973, Son Life had been transformed into a heavily evangelistic youth group smorgasbord called "Son City," influenced by parachurch ministries like Campus Life, where 150 teenagers made their weekly pilgrimage to South Park Church for a night of games, tournaments, rock music, dramatic skits, and to hear a message about Jesus. By 1974, that number had grown beyond 400, making South Park's youth-group-turned-evangelistic-revival a "church within a church."<sup>24</sup>

Bill Hybels had made his way to South Park via the acoustic guitar. Dave Holmbo, who had come on staff at the church in 1971 as an assistant minister of music, had formed a friendship with Hybels at the Christian camp AWANA in Wisconsin as a teenager.<sup>25</sup> Once at South Park, Holmbo began attracting youth to the church by incorporating rock music into youth ministry. The result was "The Son Company," a youth band that provided popular music for youth ministry events. But Holmbo needed an acoustic guitarist, so he called up his friend Bill. "He was a hack acoustic guitarist,"

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<sup>24</sup> Beuttler, "Revivalism in Suburbia," 174-5.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 174.

Holmbo recalled of Hybel's musical ability, "he sort of banged on the guitar." Yet banging was enough to get The Son Company up and running and high schoolers attending.<sup>26</sup>

The Son Company and its music became the foundation for what grew into a gigantic youth ministry endeavor. "Throughout the 1972-73 school year," historian Fred Beuttler noted, "Hybels and Holmbo used the format of The Son Company rehearsals for spiritual instruction of a core group of young people, combining Bible study with music practice."<sup>27</sup> And music remained at the center of Son City, serving, as Holmbo explained, as a "doorway for kids to walk through."<sup>28</sup> Yet this was not the Vineyard. Rock music at Son City served a particularly evangelistic purpose. This was not worship music that created a certain affective disposition that helped worshipers commune in intimacy with God. This was music from the Beach Boys, the Eagles, and Paul Simon; music that was entertaining and fun. And while the audience might sing along, there was no sense of participatory congregational singing. As a "doorway," then, the music served as an exciting element of the program that would attract teenagers to events and prepare them to hear an evangelistic message. It became, in many ways, the "sugar that helped the medicine go down." Understood primarily for its evangelistic utility, the music appeared in specific spaces in Holmbo and Hybel's program. First, there was an instrumental jam

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<sup>26</sup> Pritchard, *Willow Creek Seeker Services*, 37.

<sup>27</sup> Beuttler, "Revivalism in Suburbia," 173.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

session by a high school rock band that served as the program's prelude, setting the carefree atmosphere of the event. Somewhere in the middle of the program, there was another musical performance, usually upbeat and performed by a group of singers. And finally, after the silliness of the skits, games, and multimedia presentations had subsided, one more musical performance—this time mellower and quieter than the first two sets—would set the stage for the message.<sup>29</sup>

Though music's utility at Son City looked different from in the Vineyard, there were similarities. While Son City used music to attract non-Christians to their evangelistic events, it also used music to shape and guide the emotional tenor of its program. The use of background rock music to start the event provided a welcoming atmosphere for teenagers, putting them at ease. A second performance mid-program provided an entertaining spectacle for the audience that reinforced an entertaining and carefree environment. And the use of a mellow, quiet performance before the message helped calm the crowd, focus their attention on the theme of the event, and shape an emotional tenor that could provide the message with more punch.

At the same time, just as had been the case with Calvary Chapel and the Vineyard, the rock music used at Son City (and eventually Willow Creek) had to connote authenticity, had to speak the language of the congregation, or in this case, the youth audience. So, as Beuttler explained, Hybels and Holmbo often encouraged the

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 180.

band to play popular rock songs of the day, whether from the Eagles or the Beach Boys.

But they also made sure the music was loud. Beuttler explained:

Volume was essential. The loudness was what made Son City "as unique as it was." The style and volume was "entirely designed for high school kids," and the fact that it usually put adults "right through the wall" was viewed by the Son City leadership as a benefit. This facilitated reaching out to young people, music being often a major source of conflict between teenagers and their parents, and thus changed the perception of the Christian message as relevant to youth, rather than as imposed by an adult authority.<sup>30</sup>

Beuttler's comment provided an example of how the adoption of rock music in churches was also the incorporation of an entire musical culture, not simply musical sounds. Loud volumes, because it floored adults, provided that sense of rebellion that teenagers found so attractive. Rock was—in a deep, cultural sense—about rebellion. This was, in part, why evangelicals in the 1950s had rejected it. Yet at Son City, that rebellion was rationalized and baptized as a tool of authenticity to show teenagers that the Christian message was for them, too.

Yet loud music was not simply about rebellion. Volume was also an integral component of the affective energy created by rock music. Volume helped shape the affective dispositions that rock enabled, creating a transcendent, all-enveloping environment where the audience was surrounded by the music, as well as moving the individual body to participate and reverberate with the rhythm of the music. Because

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 180.

experiencing rock music, especially in concert venues and as an audience, often involved high volume levels, Son City kept the music loud in order to keep it authentic.

Likewise, constructing authentic rock music also required constructing authentic rock environments. At Son City, participatory congregational music was discouraged because it took away from the entertaining value that the rock performance provided. Audience members at rock shows were not expected to sing along, and so Hybels and Holmbo refused to place that burden on their teenagers, agreeing that "participatory singing was thought to make the newcomer uncomfortable." In addition, they utilized professional light and sound equipment to further blur the line between rock venue and church sanctuary. Flashing lights, blaring guitars, and thumping bass "made the church a comfortable environment for the teenager,"<sup>31</sup> and in the evangelistic strategy to utilize rock music as a tool to draw youth into the church, comfortability became an integral part of constructing rock authenticity.

While Hybels and Holmbo designed Son City as an evangelistic event to attract non-Christian youth, they formed a parallel youth leadership corps that they billed "Son Village." Son Village developed as the Christian side of Son City, where youth who had converted to the faith could come to study the bible, receive training for Son City evangelism, and worship, particularly through song. The music of Son Village differed from that of Son City. While Son City featured full rock productions and performances,

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 181.

the music of Son Village was simpler and highlighted participatory congregational singing. "The whole group joined in simple choruses," Beuttler explained, "accompanied only with a piano or guitar."<sup>32</sup> The use of simple choruses, led from the piano or the guitar, echoed the worship practices of the Vineyard Fellowship and Calvary Chapel, and it was likely that Vineyard and Maranatha songs dominated the set list at Son Village.

While Son City, The Son Company, and Son Village all flourished, Hybels and Holmbo's rapid success quickly attracted attention among South Park's leadership, and for all the wrong reasons. While Hybels and Holmbo drew hundreds of new high schoolers to the church, they did so using high school entertainment. One of Son City's former leaders explained:

We are in that auditorium and the windows are open and the music is howling at ear-splitting decibels. There are flashing lights going all over the place with these big ambulance lights. There are kids literally bouncing off the walls screaming at the top of their lungs. Everything that you would not think would be happening in a church sanctuary, is definitely happening in a church sanctuary.<sup>33</sup>

For Hybels and Holmbo, the motto was "anything bigger, better, and more bizarre."<sup>34</sup> Yet church board members were concerned with the destruction of church property that came with hundreds of kids participating in dance parties in the pews, gymnastic routines running down the center aisle, and elaborate special effects that brought

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>33</sup> Pritchard, *Willow Creek Seeker Services*, 36.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 36.

extensive amounts of gunpowder into the sanctuary.<sup>35</sup> And, of course, the music was too loud.

By the Spring of 1975, tensions between church leadership and Son City had reached a boiling point. The church board voted to limit the independence of Son City while the deacons recommended that the youth ministry disband all activities in the sanctuary except for bible study. Finally, in the summer of 1975, the church board placed Son City under the direct (and subduing) control of the church deacons, even though it was at its height in growth, regularly attracting more than a thousand high school students to weekly events. In response, Holmbo and Hybels resigned.

The rest was history. Hybels and Holmbo took their Son City evangelistic strategy to the Willow Creek amphitheater in a neighboring suburb to begin what would become Willow Creek Community Church, one of the largest churches in America. And the bifurcation between Son City and Son Village, between entertaining, evangelistic events and the more overt Christian service, became a strategy that Hybels and Holmbo further developed at Willow Creek in the distinction between the seeker service and the traditional worship service.

## **6.2.2 Music at Willow Creek**

Bill Hybels and Dave Holmbo jumped in at the Willow Creek Amphitheater in Palatine, IL where they left off with Son City at South Park Church. Utilizing

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 36.



entertaining skits, music, and a short message like they had at Son City, Hybels and Holmbo quickly attracted curious locals, most under the age of thirty. Within a few months the glorified youth group had developed into a budding church and growth came exponentially. By 1985, ten years later, Willow Creek Community Church regularly hosted 4,000 people for its Sunday morning service, and by 2000, that number had increased to more than 16,000.

Before Hybels had jumped ship from South Park Church and started Willow Creek, he had begun reading Robert Schuller's *Your Church Has Real Possibilities*. Inspired by Schuller's declaration of "unlimited potential" for local churches, Hybels traveled to California to attend The Robert Schuller Institute for Successful Church Leadership in 1975. Scholar Gary Pritchard argued that Hybel's experience at the Schuller Institute "solidified a profound influence that Schuller was to have on Hybels and Willow Creek."<sup>36</sup> That influence came in Hybel's reconceptualization of church programming: transforming Son City's entertaining model for youth into a market-researched seeker strategy for disaffected baby boomers, the "unchurched Harry and Mary"<sup>37</sup> of suburban Chicago.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>37</sup> "Unchurched Harry" and "Unchurched Mary" became popular nicknames at Willow Creek church to describe the target audience for its seeker service. While there were certain elements that were geared towards unchurched Mary, the main focus was on Harry. In Willow Creek's video *An Inside Look at the Willow Creek Seeker Service*, Programming Director Nancy Beach explained that Willow Creek was uniquely called to reach out to the unchurched Harry's of suburban Chicago. Harry was twenty-five to fifty years old, a well-educated professional, and someone who had experienced church in their youth, but for whatever reason, left the church. Willow Creek's calling to reach Harry was a strategic one. In general, churches,

While Willow Creek eventually developed a mid-week service for Christian believers called "New Community," the notoriety of the church came with its seeker service. The seeker service developed as an evangelistic program crafted to attract non-Christians (or Christians fed up with traditional church services) to church, and it grew out of a fusion of Hybel's experience with Son City and the influence of Robert Schuller. At the heart of the seeker service laid a simple conviction: *the effective presentation of the gospel to non-believers required packaging the gospel in a product that non-believers wanted.* And what did non-believers, curious about Christianity but uninterested in what churches traditionally provided, want? Hybels adopted Schuller's survey tactics to find out. Walking door-to-door throughout Palatine, Hybels and the rest of the Willow Creek leadership team set out to learn why residents did not attend church and what things, if offered at a church, would bring them into the sanctuary. The answers were manifold, but many said that the church was irrelevant to modern life, that the church was unhelpful to those in need, and, important for our purposes, that church services were utterly boring.

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Beach explained, were notoriously bad at reaching this male demographic, and Willow Creek thought it could leverage its past success with Son City to carve out a ministry niche. Beach also explained that reaching and attracting Harry would inevitably bring Mary and the kids along as well. Harry, then, was the bottleneck. If Willow Creek could attract Harry, then Mary and the rest of the family would follow along. See Hybels, Beach, and Strobel, *An Inside Look at the Willow Creek Seeker Service.*

Boring services meant insipid preaching, but it also meant dull music. So the survey results affected the music of Willow Creek as much as anything else. Hybels and Holmbo had already seen success by introducing hard rock into the church sanctuary at Son City, and Willow Creek started with that same youthful, energetic music, mostly because its early attendees were young people.<sup>38</sup> However, over the years, as the congregation grew up and the Schullerian survey assessments guided the direction of the service, the music at Willow Creek transformed from the hard rock featured in Son City events to the soft rock of the adult contemporary genre. Instead of highlighting the electric guitar and rocking front man, the Willow Creek music team featured several clean-cut, emotive vocalists up front with a jazz-based outfit in the back, which included bass, drums, percussion, guitars, piano, synthesizer, and a brass section of horns and saxophone.

By the early 1990s, Willow Creek had become famous across the country for its seeker service.<sup>39</sup> The church had professionalized several elements of its seeker

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<sup>38</sup> Lynn Hybels recounted the youthful, energetic flavor of the early Willow Creek services: "Our seeker services have grown up and mellowed over the years, as we have, but back then all the energy and boldness of youth flowed through everything we did. The music was loud, the drama was raucous (sometimes crossing the line of acceptability), and Bill walked onto the stage with no notes, no pulpit--just a Bible, and an outline engraved in his mind. But those services were electric with the power of God and our earnest desires." See Hybels and Hybels, *Rediscovering Church*, 62.

<sup>39</sup> By 1990, Willow Creek Community Church had been profiled in *Time*, *Fortune*, *Christianity Today*, *The Chicago Tribune*, and *The Los Angeles Times*. With its growth in popularity and churches around the country attempting to emulate the Willow Creek model, Bill Hybels saw a chance to help other churches by exporting an easily digestible format of the "Willow Creek Way." The result was the Willow Creek Association, founded by Hybels in 1991, which provided materials for member churches as well as an annual leadership conference called the "Global Leadership Summit." By 1996, the Willow Creek

production, using professional or semi-professional musicians for the music, installing professional lighting and sound systems in the auditorium, and hiring Nancy Beach as a programming director. In a video recording released in 1992, *An Inside Look at the Willow Creek Seeker Service*,<sup>40</sup> Willow Creek provided video footage of an entire service as well as backstage interviews with Bill Hybels and Nancy Beach. Beach's testimony in these videos and other staff members' testimonies in Gary Pritchard's *Willow Creek Seeker Services* provided an informative picture of the way that Willow Creek approached music in its services. And emotion played a large role. Pritchard described the strategy of the seeker service as "emotional programming," where the Willow Creek staff looked for powerful, emotional "moments" to anchor the programming. Pritchard interviewed Steve, a program staff member at Willow Creek who explained how their emphasis on emotional moments paralleled the TV sitcom *Life Goes On*:

One of the reasons why we love that show is because almost in every show there's some kind of moment. Now it's not a spiritual moment, but there's some point in those shows where you are glued emotionally... It moves people... Those kind of moments need to happen in church. Church should be a place where more of those happen than anywhere else. It's okay to be emotional, because our spirits are being moved, we're in touch with God, and the Holy Spirit is moving.<sup>41</sup>

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Association membership had grown to 1,700 churches in more than sixty denominations (See Trueheart, "Welcome to the Next Church," 57).

<sup>40</sup> Hybels, Beach, and Strobel, *An Inside Look at the Willow Creek Seeker Service*.

<sup>41</sup> Pritchard, *Willow Creek Seeker Services*, 110.

Here the efficacy of the emotional programming paralleled the movement of the Spirit, and programming (music and drama) that elicited an emotional response became a tool that made the audience susceptible to the Spirit. Beach agreed: "I think our primary goal in the music and the drama, when we feel we've really arrived, or done something that mattered, is when we can be used by God to create some kind of 'moment' for people. And that's a big word around here."<sup>42</sup>

Emotional programming was also highly valued at Willow Creek because the church leadership believed that it was a highly persuasive evangelistic tool. Lee Strobel, former teaching pastor at Willow Creek, explained that visitors, or "Unchurched Harrys," did not simply want to know something, they wanted to experience it. Experience, not evidence, remained Harry's main mode of discovery. "The objective of evangelism," Strobel argued, "should be to bring Unchurched Harry into a personal encounter with God, not just merely pass on information about God."<sup>43</sup> Yet, as much as the programming team emphasized experience, the main tool to communicate the gospel was still the sermon. And while the programming provided a moving experience, its main goal was, as Beach argued, "to harness the arts or a variety of mediums to sort of pave the way, or prepare the listener, for the message they're going to hear in the latter half of the service."<sup>44</sup> "All of the programming," Pritchard explained, "is considered

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 83.

preparation for the speaker's message."<sup>45</sup> This dual emphasis on experience and then the subordination of entertainment programming to prepare listeners for the sermon was old hat for American Evangelicalism, yet Strobel, Beach, and others at Willow Creek took an innovative approach in fusing the dramatic legacy of Aimee Semple McPherson's Los Angeles Temple and the musical legacy of Billy Graham's Crusades with the market-research assessment of Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral in order to create what the audience would understand as an authentic program.

Creating authentic programming, and therefore an authentic musical experience, was a crucial component of Willow Creek's seeker service. Musical authenticity at Willow Creek was a high priority and Nancy Beach and her programming team put a lot of time and effort into crafting a musical presentation that skeptical Unchurched Harry would find authentic. However, authenticity for Willow Creek's seeker services was different from the countercultural authenticity constructed at Calvary Chapel or its evolution found in Vineyard worship. Because the goal of the seeker service was to provide an unassuming, nonthreatening, and entertaining program that would attract the unconvinced non-Christian, authentic music at Willow Creek did not involve breaking down the barrier between audience and performer, celebrating the participatory musical experience, or communicating and modeling intimacy with God like Calvary Chapel and the Vineyard had done. Instead, music at Willow Creek was

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 88.

authentic when it was relevant to Harry's consumer tastes, music that unchurched Harry could relate to and that he found engaging and entertaining. "You have to get [Harry's] attention in the first few minutes," Beach explained, "or you've lost him. Because his life is on such a pace and he is so absorbed in other things, unless we are relevant... we are going to lose him." As a result, Willow Creek crafted its music around Harry's "target audience profile," performing songs that accommodated Harry's musical preferences, which usually gravitated towards adult contemporary and soft rock.<sup>46</sup>

Authenticity in Willow Creek's music involved not only relevance, but professionalism as well. Because, as Nancy Beach argued, Unchurched Harry "has been exposed to excellence through movies, television, [and] theater," Willow Creek had to provide a professional production that met the standards of modern media entertainment if it wanted to hold his attention. Lee Strobel agreed, contending that because "*Sesame Street* and Disney World have set high standards in the minds of today's consumers," Willow Creek had to rise to the competition.<sup>47</sup> The result was a professional production that featured "highly skilled and thoroughly prepared" musicians and vocalists. While some of the volunteers were professional musicians during the week, a majority of "highly skilled" volunteers were talented and experienced amateurs who auditioned and passed rigorous tests before joining the church's music team. And all

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 101.

were "thoroughly prepared," attending several weekly practices to work out not only notes and melodies for songs, but also how best to communicate and express themselves in front of the audience.

Expression here involved more than crafting a performance that was entertaining and engaging. It also involved crafting performative affective dispositions as well, channeling and modeling the emotions that the Willow Creek leadership hoped to elicit in Harry as he experienced the musical presentation. These affective dispositions, unlike what we saw with black gospel, Jesus music, and the Vineyard's music, were not primarily focused on connecting with the divine. Instead, they were *evangelistic* affective dispositions. The communication of emotion through the musical performances of Willow Creek's seeker service was intended to emotionally prepare the audience to hear the gospel message. Though this was not an attempt to hijack the emotional energy of rock music *for worship*—as we saw in Thomas Dorsey and Mahalia Jackson's gospel songs in chapter one—it was still a hijacking. Willow Creek hijacked the affective power of rock music and leveraged it to make the audience emotionally susceptible to the culmination of the program, when the gospel message would be proclaimed. "If you give [the audience] a musical experience or a dramatic experience," Beach explained, "you can go through what we call the back door and you can somehow get them to emotionally and intellectually respond... to some things, and they hardly even know it's



happening because their resistance is much, much lower."<sup>48</sup> As Willow Creek saw it, this was a wonderful way to give Unchurched Harry "ears to hear," helping to cut through his biases against what he thought Christianity and the church were and what would normally keep him from hearing the gospel message. However, others, like Pritchard, wondered if Willow Creek crossed the line between emotional persuasion and manipulation.<sup>49</sup>

Whether benign or malignant, Willow Creek's commitment to professional production—its commitment to using participants who were highly skilled and thoroughly prepared—also meant that Harry could be put at ease. "The result of this commitment [to professionalism]" Pritchard explained, "is that Harry comes to the weekend services knowing that he is going to see a professional production. He won't have to listen to a voice that is breaking while trying to hit a high note or have to see inept actors," or as Lee Strobel admitted, "I didn't have to sit there and worry that somebody was going to sing really bad and I was going to feel really embarrassed for them." At the root of Willow Creek's professionalism, then, was its commitment to providing entertainment that could compete with Harry's time and attention week in and week out and provide him with a nonthreatening atmosphere. With Harry's barriers

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<sup>48</sup> Pritchard, *Willow Creek Seeker Services*, 112.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 113-14.

down and his interest piqued, the affective power of Willow Creek's programming, in which music played a large role, could go to work.

While the music of the Willow Creek seeker service remained nebulously Christian in its lyrics, it was often not the CWM sung in Vineyard congregations. The overt focus on God in CWM did not fit well into the entertaining and nonthreatening mold of the seeker service. Yet Willow Creek's seeker service *was* still a church service, regardless of whether the leadership at Willow Creek billed it as that or not. As Willow Creek grew in numbers and national prominence, particularly through the export and franchising of its model via the Willow Creek Association, more and more American churches started seeker services in order to attract the unchurched into their sanctuaries (or nondescript gathering spaces, as it were). As a result, Willow Creek's "non-Christian service" became one of the most popular types of Christian services in the country and its embrace and celebration of rock music (even in its soft forms) helped catalyze the wider adoption of rock forms in American congregations. So while Willow Creek did not directly expand the reach of the nascent CWM emerging from organizations like the Vineyard, it did popularize the use of rock music in churches, and as a flagship for the church growth movement, it was successful in convincing hundreds of other American churches to do the same. And though congregations may have first warily adopted rock forms in their seeker services in the name of evangelism, this was the trojan horse. Those that first attended the seeker services (unchurched or not) and were then interested in

moving on to the "Christian service" had no intention of losing the engaging and entertaining music they had experienced in the seeker services, just as evangelical youth, when they graduated from youth group and its Son City-inspired rock events, had no intention of trading in their guitars for monotonous church choirs. Instead, the "seekers," just like the youth, took their rock with them.

### **6.3 Other Seeker Services**

Willow Creek Community Church, though it may have been the most visible megachurch to utilize a seeker service, was not alone in popularizing seeker services in the 1980s and 1990s. Ed Dobson's Calvary Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan and Rick Warren's Saddleback Valley Community Church in Orange County, California both became large megachurches in part because of their successful seeker services. And both churches utilized rock music in their services in order to attract the unchurched.

#### **6.3.1 Calvary Church**

Not to be confused with Chuck Smith's Calvary Chapel network, Calvary Church was a nondenominational church located in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In 1987, Calvary Church called Ed Dobson, a former leader of Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority political organization and dean at Falwell's Liberty University, to serve as pastor. By 1990, Dobson had developed a thriving seeker service in the mold of Bill Hybel's model at Willow Creek, offering an "edgy" service on Saturday nights that was tailored to the tastes of the unchurched forty-five years old and younger. That meant, as Dobson

explained in his book *Starting a Seeker Sensitive Service*, that the service embraced rock music:

We decided on contemporary music (Christian and non-Christian rock) led by a band composed of a lead guitar, bass guitar, synthesizer, piano, and drums. We chose this musical style for several reasons: (1) it is the primary musical language of our target audience, (2) it is definitely not traditional, and (3) it engages the audience through tapping their feet and moving their bodies to the beat.<sup>50</sup>

Here Dobson made some important claims. First, the musical repertoire at Calvary Church included not only Christian rock, but non-Christian rock as well. This came as a result of the role that the music played in the service. The music was intended to create a non-traditional atmosphere, to speak the language of the target audience, and engage the body. It was not intended to disseminate doctrinal theology or direct the congregation towards worship specifically, but to create an attractive option that could compete for the time of the unchurched. Like Hybels and Willow Creek, Dobson argued for the inclusion of rock music as a way to reach this targeted audience and ultimately as an evangelistic tool that could help spread the gospel. A few pages later, Dobson further fleshed out his embrace of rock in Calvary Church's seeker service:

We wanted people who attend "Saturday Night" to know immediately that it is not a traditional service. ...Not more than a handful of churches in Grand Rapids open with a live band every week. We wanted to be radical because it was necessary to break the mold of expectation in a conservative community. Second, we wanted a style of music that communicated to people aged twenty to forty-five. That style of music, without question, is rock. ...Third, we wanted a musical style that would elicit a response. Unchurched people come to a service hesitantly. Their mind-set is "you're not going to get me." Their defenses are up.

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<sup>50</sup> Dobson, *Starting a Seeker Sensitive Service*, 26.

We felt that a style of music that would get them moving in a physical way (nodding heads and tapping feet) would help break down their defenses.<sup>51</sup>

Here Dobson epitomized the church growth approach to utilizing rock music.

First, rock was "unconventional" in a church setting, and as such allowed for Calvary Church to move into a niche unoccupied by other churches, opening up a new market for growth. Second, as we saw in the evangelistic efforts of the Jesus People at Calvary Chapel, rock remained a dominant cultural language, able to effectively translate the gospel message to younger generations (or at least attract them to a place where the gospel message could be presented). Third, rock carried the power to move the audience emotionally, "breaking down defenses" through the sculpting of affective dispositions or through bodily participation. All three of these motives—market niche, evangelistic "language," and affective power—made rock a potent instrument in the church growth toolkit.

Like Willow Creek, Calvary Church also did not use congregational singing in its seeker service. "Although the songs were simple, contemporary praise songs," Dobson explained, "the unchurched who came in increasing numbers were hesitant to sing. They didn't know the songs. We felt that by forcing them to sing we were putting them on the spot." Congregational singing in the seeker service, in effect, created an uncomfortable atmosphere for the unchurched, and so it was dropped. While Calvary Church members cried foul over the exclusion of congregational singing, its absence was well grounded in

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

the seeker service logic. The seeker service was not a worship service, but an evangelistic event. And in popular music culture, entertainment and spectacle, not participation, were at the root of musical performance. Unchurched audiences were far more comfortable, Dobson argued, with enjoying the music as spectators (or even consumers) than as participants.<sup>52</sup>

So Ed Dobson, like Bill Hybels, did not directly propagate CWM in his seeker service. Yet Calvary Church, like Willow Creek, did popularize the use of rock music in church sanctuaries in the name of evangelism. As other American evangelicals read books like *Starting a Seeker Sensitive Service*, Dobson and Calvary Church captured their imagination and persuaded them to adopt rock music as a tool for church growth. Of course, the popularization of rock music in church services in the name of evangelism was not simply a phenomenon of the mid-west. Southern California, as the birthplace of both CWM and the church growth movement, had its own take on how to adopt rock music for church growth, and Rick Warren was its guru.

### **6.3.2 Saddleback Church**

Saddleback Valley Community Church began in 1980 with a service of two hundred people at Laguna Hills High School in Mission Viejo, located in Orange County, California. Its young architect was Rick Warren, a California native and recent graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Warren

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 33, 51.

and his wife Kay had traveled back to California from Texas with a vision to plant a church in booming Orange County, hoping to persuade non-Christians to enter a church sanctuary. Twelve years after planting the church, and even without a permanent home, the church had grown to 6,000 regular attendees.

Rick Warren had fallen in love with the idea of church growth as early as 1974 while a student missionary in Japan. Seeking to understand the commonalities that thriving large churches shared, Warren threw himself into the study of church growth::

I began a life-long study by attending every church growth conference and seminar that I could find. I began to read books and, over the next years, I read about 75 books on church growth. I read everything in print on church growth and I visited growing churches. The ministry I was in then—conducting youth revivals—required traveling and I took notes on every church I visited about what was working well.<sup>53</sup>

In his last year of seminary, Warren wrote letters to the hundred largest churches in the United States asking them what made their churches grow.<sup>54</sup> And though he would attempt to portray his church growth naiveté in his popular account of Saddleback's origins in his 1995 book, *The Purpose Driven Church*,<sup>55</sup> Warren began Saddleback with six years of church growth study under his belt and a decent

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<sup>53</sup> Warren, "New Churches for a New Generation," 1-2.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>55</sup> In *The Purpose Driven Church*, Warren argued that he "didn't know enough to call [his] survey of the community a 'marketing' study," yet if he had read church growth literature for six years prior, as he had claimed in his 1993 dissertation, he was fully aware that the survey approach was a marketing strategy that could help churches grow. Further, Warren claimed that when he wrote an open letter to the unchurched in Saddleback Valley, he "knew nothing about direct mail, marketing, or advertising." While he may not have been experienced in running direct mail campaigns, he revealed in his dissertation that he knew enough to know that he could expect a .5 percent response rate, and so if he wanted to have 150 in attendance, he would need to send out 15,000 letters. See Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 40-1, and Warren, "New Churches for a New Generation," 7.

understanding of what made the biggest churches tick. In the summer of 1979, he studied the census statistics and demographic data available on the West Coast states and found that the Saddleback Valley was the fastest-growing area in the country, so he and Kay moved as soon as they could. And just like Robert Schuller and Bill Hybels before him, Warren then spent twelve weeks going door-to-door and surveying local residents about what they wanted in a church. The results provided Warren with a picture of what he came to call "Saddleback Sam," a relative of Hybels' "Unchurched Harry." Saddleback Sam was a well-educated baby boomer who enjoyed his job and living in Southern California, prioritized health and fitness, preferred the casual over the formal, struggled with his work/life imbalance, did not trust organized religion, and preferred the anonymity of large groups.<sup>56</sup>

In order to draw unchurched Saddleback Sam into the sanctuary, Warren had to build an attractive seeker service, much like that found at Willow Creek. And just as it was for Willow Creek, music played a large role. Warren laid out his philosophy for worship music in *The Purpose Driven Church*, explaining that the kind of music that best fit the seeker service model adhered to the acronym IMPACT. First, successful worship music should "inspire movement:"

To begin our service, we wake up the body of Christ by waking up our own bodies. When people enter a morning service they usually feel stiff, sleepy, and reserved. After our "Inspire Movement" opening song the atmosphere always

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<sup>56</sup> Warren, "New Churches for a New Generation," 24-5.



changes to being more cheerful and alert. The difference this opening song makes is absolute amazing.<sup>57</sup>

The change in atmosphere to a more cheerful and alert setting was a change in the affective dispositions of the congregants. For Warren, just as it was for Hybels, music then served as a utility that shaped the affective disposition of the service:

This is what we want to do with the opening song. We use a bright, upbeat number that makes you want to tap your foot, clap. Or at least smile. We want to loosen up the tense muscles of uptight visitors. When your body is relaxed, your attitude is less defensive.<sup>58</sup>

A cheerful disposition, Warren argued, primed the audience for the rest of the service and for hearing the message at the end. And upbeat music that inspired movement was an effective way of creating this cheerful atmosphere.

The next letter in IMPACT, "P," stood for "praise." Praise songs, Warren asserted, were joyful songs that were specifically *about* God. So upbeat songs that inspired movement gave way to upbeat, joyful songs that moved the lyrical attention to God. "A" stood for "adoration," when the music at Saddleback would move from upbeat songs talking *about* God to "more meditative, intimate songs *to* God." This movement from lyrically unfocused upbeat music, to celebratory songs about God, to softer songs sung to God mirrored both Wimber's five-phase model and Cornwall's temple model. "C" stood for "commitment," which was a song in the middle of the service that gave attendees "an opportunity to affirm or reaffirm a commitment to God," a song that

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<sup>57</sup> Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 256.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

usually featured lyrics sung in the first person singular in order to connect the individual with God. Finally, "T" stood for a song that "tied it all together," a short, upbeat song that closed the service and sent attendees out in a similar affective disposition that Saddleback crafted at the beginning of the service.

The IMPACT model revealed that Warren understood how to harness the affective power of music and utilize it as a tool to shape the affective dispositions for the service. Yet perhaps a better example of Warren's understanding of music's power to craft mood came in his recommendation to use background music, even before a church service started:

Have taped music playing when people enter your buildings. Most public buildings have music playing in the background. You can hear it in retail and grocery stores, doctors' offices, professional buildings, and some elevators. They even play music on many airplanes as they sit on the runway. Why? Because music relaxes people.<sup>59</sup>

Here background music provided two effects. When played in churches, background music blurred the line between sanctuary and retail store, putting the unchurched at ease when entering a religious building, possibly for the first time. But background music also shaped affective dispositions. Because Warren, like Hybels, wanted to create a comfortable atmosphere that was inviting to those skeptical of church, he utilized music's ability to construct moods in providing background music

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 258.

that put people at ease. Yet he also understood that certain variables of background music could be changed to produce different moods:

We've noticed an interesting phenomenon: The louder you play back ground music, the more animatedly people talk. If you play quiet music, people talk softly. When visitors walk into a building where people are talking normally to each other and upbeat music is playing, it eases their fears. They notice that people are enjoying each other and are happy to be there. They notice that there is life in the church.<sup>60</sup>

So background music, when played at higher volumes, could be used to increase the palpable social energy among the attendees in the sanctuary, thereby creating an atmosphere that presented a lively church. And this was not a phenomenon that Warren simply discovered. It was a well-established marketing practice of large retailers, another example of the church growth movement's adoption of business marketing practices and strategies.

### **6.3.2.1 Rick Warren's Philosophy of Worship Music**

In chapter 15 of his book *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren provided his readers with a sustained consideration of the powerful role of music in growing churches. Like Hybels, Warren explained his utilitarian approach to worship music in terms of evangelism. "A song," Warren explained, "can often touch people in a way that a sermon can't. Music can bypass intellectual barriers and take the message straight to the heart. It is a potent tool for evangelism."<sup>61</sup> Yet music's potency went beyond its

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 259.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 279.

ability to bypass barriers. More than any other element of the service, Warren argued, music had the power to shape the constituency of the service. The Saddleback pastor explained:

The style of music you choose to use in your services will be one of the most critical (and controversial) decisions you make in the life of your church. It may also be *the* most influential factor in determining who your church reaches for Christ and whether or not your church grows. You must match your music to the kind of people God wants your church to reach.<sup>62</sup>

In other words, Warren contended, the music of a service "positioned" the church in the community, defining who it was as a church, and determining, as he saw it, "the kind of people you attract, the kind of people you keep, and the kind of people you lose."<sup>63</sup> Intended or not, worship music became the arbiter of a church's style and of the demographic it reached. As such, music became a church's dominant marketing tool, determining which audiences it effectively attracted. It was the "defining product" of a church service that attracted a specific type of consumer. Yet, Warren argued, because audiences were often exclusionary in their musical tastes, a church had to pick its musical niche to reach its intended demographic. Like other markets, consumer preferences drove diversification. A church could not rely on providing all different types of music in the hopes of attracting all different demographics, as consumers were only interested in their preferences, not in the preferences of others. Warren learned this the hard way:

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 280.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 280-1.

Not only did I underestimate the power of music when we began Saddleback, I also made the mistake of trying to appeal to everybody's taste. We covered the gamut, "from Bach to Rock," often in a single service. ...The crowd never knew what was coming next. The result: We didn't please anybody, and we frustrated everybody! ...It's impossible to appeal to everyone's musical preference and taste. Music is a divisive issue that separates generations, regions of the country, personality types, and even family members. ...You must decide who you're trying to reach, identify their preferred style of music, and then stick with it. You're wasting your time if you're searching for a style of music that everyone in your church will agree on.<sup>64</sup>

Missing from Warren's testimony was any conviction that normative worship music existed. Warren's philosophy for worship music was inherently utilitarian and results-based, and musical aesthetics mattered only insofar as they facilitated church growth. Like Ralph Carmichael, Rick Warren saw musical form as an ethically neutral cistern that could be filled with moral content via lyrics:

Churches also need to admit that no particular style of music is "sacred." What makes a song sacred is its message. Music is nothing more than an arrangement of notes and rhythms; it's the words that make a song spiritual. There is no such thing as "Christian music," only Christian lyrics. If I were to play a tune for you without any words, you wouldn't know if it was a Christian song or not.<sup>65</sup>

Warren was adamant about the ethical neutrality of musical form, arguing that "to insist that one particular style of music is sacred is idolatry." "You must decide," Warren pressed his readers, "whether your church is going to be a music conservatory for the musical elite or whether your church is going to be a place where common people can bring unsaved friends and hear music they understand and enjoy." Released from a culture of musical normativity, churches could then focus on using different

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 280.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 281.

musical forms, including rock, in order to attract their preferred audience, which was exactly what Saddleback had done. After surveying the congregation about their radio station preferences, Warren learned that 96% of his church listened to "middle-of-the-road adult contemporary music... bright, happy, cheerful music with a strong beat."<sup>66</sup>

Warren then took those results and implemented sweeping musical changes at Saddleback:

After surveying who we were reaching, we made the strategic decision to stop singing hymns in our seeker services. Within a year of deciding what would be "our sound," Saddleback exploded with growth. I will admit that we have lost hundreds of potential members because of the style of music Saddleback uses. On the other hand, we have attracted thousands more because of our music.<sup>67</sup>

For Warren, in the end, the results were what mattered. Traditional hymns became liabilities in the quest to attract the unbeliever who enjoyed soft rock on the radio. Yet Warren, like Hybels, realized that providing appealing music for a targeted audience was only half the battle. That music also had to construct the appropriate affective dispositions for a service, producing the intended emotional results in the audience. "At Saddleback," Warren asserted, "we use music for the *heart*, not for the *art*."

The question of affective utility became an important one:

Ask, "How does this tune make me feel?" Music exerts a great influence on human emotions. The wrong kind of music can kill the spirit and mood of a service. Decide what mood you want in your service, and use the style that

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 282, 290, 285.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 285.

creates it. At Saddleback, we believe worship is to be a celebration so we use a style that is upbeat, bright, and joyful. We rarely sing a song in a minor key.<sup>68</sup>

Here Warren helped shed light on the broader gravitational pull towards upbeat, celebratory music in CWM. Because churches like Saddleback focused on creating an attractive, comfortable, and appealing atmosphere for the unchurched in their seeker services, there was an instant bias towards songs written in major keys with faster tempos. While CWM had a cathartic impulse that fused Vineyard's emphasis on intimacy with the rock love ballad, songs designed in an outright minor key were few and far between, in part because they did not create the appropriate affective disposition that would attract the unchurched (and eventually the churched) week in and week out.

Warren's approach to worship music was steeped in the common marketing strategy of "working backwards" to achieve results. Who was your intended audience? What was your intended mood? With those goals in sight, then a church could move backwards, picking the right musical tool for the job. As we have already seen, American evangelicalism had long embraced the ends justifying the means, and Rick Warren's approach to worship music sat at the heart of this tradition. For Warren, in the end, the results were what mattered, and if a church wanted to grow, it had to be willing to embrace the music that would get the job done. Traditional hymns and songs written in minor keys became liabilities in the quest to attract the unchurched, who enjoyed continuity between their radio preferences and the services they attended. And just as

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 286.

was true with Willow Creek, these unchurched visitors, when they finally became "churched" members and started attending the non-seeker service, had no intention of suddenly pushing the radio (and their consumer preferences) out of the sanctuary. Rock had become an integral part of experiencing the faith, and rock was here to stay.

## **6.4 Conclusion**

The church growth movement played a significant role in the rise of CWM in American churches. While the Vineyard used rock to translate the Pentecostal pursuit of rapturous communion with the Spirit into a musical emphasis on intimacy, the church growth movement came to celebrate rock as one of the most effective tools in its "church growth principles" toolkit, a toolkit that could successfully attract the unchurched into the sanctuary. This toolkit was synonymous with marketing, but it was also, as the movement understood it, scientific. Here science was about predictability, replicability, and control. Church growth principles, including the use of rock music, led to predictable results, could be replicated across churches, and enabled a church to manipulate and control both the scope and direction of its growth. Rock's affective and attractional potency could be wielded to provide certain church growth results, whether shaping the emotional tenor of a service or attracting a certain demographic.

Because of their meteoric growth, success in developing the seeker service model, and visibility in the church growth movement, Willow Creek, Calvary Church, and Saddleback came to shape the liturgical imagination of American Christianity,



popularizing the use of rock in churches, first for evangelistic seeker services, but then for Sunday morning services as well. They not only normalized the use of drums, the electric guitar, and the electric bass in church sanctuaries, but, through their survey work and subsequent rapid growth, revealed that Americans wanted rock in their churches.

Rock music, of course, was not simply about drums and guitars. Rock music was also a cultural world, one that was pregnant with its own language, styles, affective dispositions, and habits of consumption. And while the church growth movement, like the Vineyard, utilized the affective power that rock provided in order to influence the emotional vector of church services, it also embraced the wider habits of consumption that rock brought with it. This came in part because the church growth movement sought to incorporate the marketing principles of the business world into church policy, chiefly by transforming church growth into a demand-side endeavor. The pursuit of "Unchurched Harry" or "Saddleback Sam" was nothing short of developing a consumer profile. Consumption, then, came to mark the logic of the church growth movement. Like in the business world, the consumer was king, and ultimately shaped both the direction and feel of the church. Rock music, like any other product, was marketed to the consumer, which had led to of diversification of rock genres into market niches. Rick Warren understood this connection, and utilized it in growing Saddleback, as he explained to his church in his "State of the Church" message in 2004:

I'll let you in on a little secret. Someday we're going to have thirty venues. Someday we'll have fifty venues on this 120-acre campus. Then you can say, "Today I think I'd like to go to the polka worship." Or, "I feel like heavy metal today. What mood are you in for?" It'll be like going over to Edwards 21 Theaters, "Now showing at 9:00, 9:15, 9:30, 9:45, 10:00." You can choose the time, the style and even the size of service you'd like to be involved in.<sup>69</sup>

In Warren's vision, Saddleback would become a baptized shopping mall, providing the consumer with all of the liturgical diversification they could want. The result would be growth, and, as the evangelical logic dictated, saved souls. Though Saddleback's example in this regard was outside the capabilities of most churches, it did reveal the consumer logic that was an inherent part of the cultural world of rock. Though other factors like time and size differentiated Warren's venues, their primary distinguishing factor was the musical genre they employed, which varied from edgy alternative rock to country to jazz to soft adult contemporary.

From rock's inception in the 1950s, the music industry had shaped rock movements into marketable genres, corralled rock musicians into marketable rock stars, and organized fans into marketable consumer profiles. Rock was as much a marketed industry as it was a sound or a disposition. Calvary Chapel and the Vineyard, as movements that developed outside of the marketing logic of the church growth movement, had little industrial awareness in their early development.<sup>70</sup> But churches

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<sup>69</sup> Rick Warren, "Mapping the Future! 2004 State of the Church Message" (weekend sermon), Saddleback Church, September 12, 2004. Quoted in Wilford, *Sacred Subdivisions*, 80.

<sup>70</sup> This, of course, was not true for their respective record labels, Maranatha! Music and Vineyard Music, which became fully developed music companies, integrated into the larger music industry that connected artists, producers, distributors, and marketers to bring music products to market.

like Willow Creek and Saddleback began with the marketing logic of the church growth movement, sculpting their liturgical experience around the demands of the consumer from the very beginning. They not only celebrated the affective power of rock, but its use as a precise marketing tool. Rock could attract new consumers to the sanctuary, but the differentiation of rock into genres could also be used to shape the target audience, allowing churches to situate themselves into desired market niches. In the free market of American religion, rock enabled opportunistic churches to leverage consumer preferences in the sanctuary, giving them an edge in attracting Americans who had been taught to approach everything—religion as much as music—as a consumable product.

## 7. Industry: Contemporary Worship Music Comes of Age

As soon as Christian artists started realizing that, you know, we cannot only minister to people with our song but we can also help them have a worship experience, it was a great asset to them because it started to turn some of these concerts into concert/worship times. So people like Michael W. Smith and just about every rock band has done a worship project. And, you know, again, there's pros and cons. I mean, now that worship has sort of become a buzzword, every time I hear anybody say the "Christian music business" I want to say, "three words that should never be used in the same sentence!" But it has evolved into that, so there's always going to be analytical people who are gonna say, "Hey, you know, your band really needs to do a worship project." Well, that doesn't sound like it came from the throne room of God at all, it came from somebody's marketing white board. But, you know, you take the good with the bad.<sup>1</sup>

The above epigraph by worship leader and producer Tom Brooks, one of the founding musicians of Hosanna! Music (later Integrity Music), is a fitting picture of the evolution of CWM in the 1990s and 2000s. First, the idea of "worship experience" continued to gain acceptance as the Vineyard's experiential worship philosophy—where the congregant sang love songs to God—combined with the immersive environment afforded by louder sound systems and new display technologies. Second, the "concert/worship" hybrid was the fruit of the further commercialization of CWM, where popular CCM artists like Michael W. Smith "crossed over" into CWM, producing live recordings of worship concerts. And finally, Tom Brooks' uneasiness with (and ultimate acceptance of) the commercialization of worship music represented the tension found in the "worship wars" of the 1990s and 2000s, where believers fought over the importation

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<sup>1</sup> "The History of Integrity Music - Part 7." In this YouTube series, Liberty University adjunct instructor of worship studies Travis Doucette interviews Tom Brooks, one of the original musicians and producers associated with Hosanna! Music, which became Integrity Music.

of a commercialized music industry in their sanctuaries. American Christians, as Brooks did, took "the good with the bad." Yet the widespread adoption of CWM, not the debate over its merits, is the story of this chapter. The 1980s ended with significant gains for CWM via Vineyard Music and the church growth movement, but it remained a sideshow, albeit a large one, on the American liturgical scene. By the 2000s, CWM had become the 900-pound gorilla in the room. How?

While the 1970s saw the birth of contemporary worship music in the Jesus Movement of Southern California and the 1980s saw its growth through the music of the Vineyard and the rise of the church growth movement, the 1990s and 2000s marked CWM's "coming of age," when the genre reached a critical mass that caught the attention of the music industry, major Christian artists, and churches around the country. The evolution of CWM in the 1990s and 2000s came at the hands of industrialization and technological development, and in conjunction with the rise of the megachurch, all of which produced a new economy replete with its own revenue streams, record labels, artists, producers, and consumers.

First, the 1990s and 2000s witnessed the adoption of a new technology in church sanctuaries. The digital revolution was in full force by the 1990s and shaped CWM through the introduction of digital overhead projectors. The overhead projector, which churches began adopting in the 1970s, gave way to digital projectors in the 1990s and 2000s as new display technologies like LCD (liquid crystal display) and DLP (digital

light processing) projection replaced the analog technology used in overhead projectors. While megachurches with large budgets could afford early adoptions of digital projection technology, by the late 1990s, digital projectors had become cheaper, lowering the barrier to entry for smaller churches.<sup>2</sup>

Second, the 1990s and 2000s brought the industrialization of CWM. Major record labels began investing in Contemporary Christian Music (CCM)<sup>3</sup> by either buying out independent Christian labels or founding their own subsidiaries. As major record labels moved into Christian music, the industrial support system followed. Marketing research firm Nielsen began integrating sales data on Christian music into its SoundScan system, providing a picture of which Christian artists and songs were popular—and therefore financially profitable—at both record stores and major retail chains. This in turn

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<sup>2</sup> Digital audio recording followed a similar pattern. Traditionally audio had been recorded via an expensive, analog process, recorded on tape. When digital audio recording technology emerged in the 1980s, it offered the potential to drastically reduce the cost of recording by moving the process from expensive tape to cheaper hard drives. By the early 1990s, digital audio workstations, which were still in their infancy and expensive, made their way into major recording studios that could afford such an investment. As the 1990s progressed, digital audio recording became more affordable and thus more accessible to large churches looking to build their own recording studios and produce their own worship albums in-house. By the 2000s, even smaller churches could create a small recording "studio" (basically a computer rig for recording) for under a thousand dollars.

<sup>3</sup> Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) is a popular music genre that emerged in the wake of the Jesus People movement of the 1970s. Though the genre has gone by many names—including Christian rock, gospel music, inspirational music, and positive pop—the moniker that stuck came from the magazine of the same name, which began as a tabloid trade publication in 1978 in Santa Ana, California. Unlike most other popular music genres, CCM is lyrically, not musically, based. Though other genres have a history of discernable lyrical constellations, like country music with its focus on surviving hard times or rock and roll's emphasis on sex and rebellion, CCM is primarily focused on lyrical content. While CCM covers a large musical territory—including rock, folk, pop, R&B, country, and adult contemporary—its lyrics are grounded, explicitly or implicitly, in some rendering of a Christian perspective. This can look like CWM, with a language of worship and doctrine, or it can be radio pop songs that feature a subtler embrace of themes of love, disappointment, or beauty from a Christian viewpoint.

influenced which records consumers bought and which musical acts labels invested in. At the same time that CCM developed into a major popular genre, CWM began to flower into its own unique industry. While still considered a sub genre of CCM, CWM developed its own distinctive economy in the 1990s that delivered new worship music to churches. At the center of this economy was Christian Copyright Licensing Incorporated (CCLI), which emerged as the dominant licensing firm for CWM, creating new revenue streams for worship songwriters and, like SoundScan, framed the most popular worship songs across the country through its published rankings data. This in turn influenced churches—particularly growth-oriented churches interested in employing market research to attract their targeted congregant—in their selection of worship music.

Third, the 1990s and 2000s brought a surge in the demand for CWM. This emerged in part because of the advent of new digital technologies in the sanctuary and CWM's industrialization, but also in tandem with the rise of the megachurch, which bore the fruits of the church growth movement from the 1970s and 1980s. As more and more megachurches popped up around the country and sought to emulate national leaders like Willow Creek and Saddleback Church, their preference for rock music and the professionalized sound and venues that often accompanied it pushed CWM into the limelight, which in turn encouraged smaller, aspiring churches to adopt the CWM sound as a key to their growth.

The combination of industrialization and increased demand for CWM gave rise to new worship music artists and eventually to the worship music superstar. By the end of the decade, worship groups like Hillsong Music and Passion had emerged as dominant forces in a maturing worship marketplace, while CCM mainstays like Michael W. Smith and Third Day sought to capitalize on the new worship music market by "crossing over" into CWM, releasing their own worship albums.

In the 1990s and 2000s, then, CWM developed its own industrial feedback loop. As more churches began using CWM in their services, the worship music industry met demand by increasing the supply of new worship music and new worship artists. This in turn encouraged the development of businesses like CCLI that could solve the revenue stream issues for songwriters. As CCLI solved the licensing issue, more churches and songwriters joined in the production and consumption of CWM, which further spurred the music industry to invest new resources in worship music. All of this, of course, continued to increase the popularity of CWM in American churches, creating a feedback loop. As CWM supply and demand evolved via this loop, it came of age, developing into the dominant form of church music in America.

### ***7.1 New Technology: Overhead Projection***

While larger American churches enthusiastically embraced modern media technologies like radio and television broadcasting throughout the 20th century, it was the ubiquitous embrace of overhead projection from churches big and small that



revolutionized worship music in American sanctuaries. And the rise of overhead projection in church sanctuaries went hand in hand with the rise of CWM. Overhead projectors—whether the analog type with slide "transparencies" or the later digital advancement that connected to a computer—provided a flexible and customizable platform that enabled CWM, with its improvisatory nature and rapid embrace of new material, to flourish. Chuck Fromm agreed, arguing that New Song (what he called the new CWM emerging from Calvary Chapel in the early 1970s) "required new technology to facilitate the freedom of expression required." "The flood of new songs," he contended, "exceeded the ability of denominational committees to approve and develop new hymnals," and as such, the overhead projector filled in where published books were too slow to respond.<sup>4</sup> Further, overhead projectors democratized song selection and curation. There was no hymnal committee that decided which songs would be projected or not. Anyone could create a transparency. Replication and dissemination were thrown into the hands of the masses, all in near real-time.

This initial technological revolution for church music coincided with the rise of the Jesus music of the 1970s, and the adoption of analog overhead projection continued to expand into American sanctuaries throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Yet the new display technology disrupted the legal and economic structure that traditional hymnal publishing had been built upon. As new material flooded the worship music market,

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<sup>4</sup> Fromm, "Textual Communities," 298.

there was no centralized, established distribution system. The result was hundreds of new songbooks competing for church adoption. In a 1983 article for *Christianity Today*, the evangelical flagship magazine, Marcus Bigelow argued this created problems for churches trying to adopt new music: "there are so many songs flooding the market that it does not make sense to buy one or two chorus books for corporate use since each one will have only a few songs that the congregation wants to sing. The economics of 200-plus books multiplied by \$3.95 or more, times three different chorus books, will be easily understood by church finance committees."<sup>5</sup>

Churches, of course, did not respond by buying several new songbooks, but by turning to the overhead transparency to deliver the new material. The only problem, Bigelow noted, was that using those transparencies was illegal without the publisher's permission. Again, because there was no centralized licensing system, this meant that a church had to contact each publisher and negotiate a contract to use their song on a transparency. Bigelow explained how this was no easy task. After writing to seven publishers to secure their permission to make transparencies or publish their songs in the church bulletin, several of the publishers required prohibitive royalties from \$5 to \$20 per song, while others allowed use if the church would send them an advance copy of the weekly bulletin, even though a majority of churches produced their bulletins the week of. Frustrated, Bigelow offered his readers a response equal to the publishers'

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<sup>5</sup> Bigelow, "God Gave Me a Song," 86.

prohibitive option: "My personal solution to this situation is radical. I will no longer buy or sing music produced by companies that will not allow my congregation to use it for congregational singing."<sup>6</sup>

Most churches interested in using transparencies, however, did not share Bigelow's radical response. Instead, they simply ignored the legal issues involved in breaking copyright and made their own transparencies to use for worship without permission. This, of course, upset publishers, as it threatened their revenue streams. The problem was neatly summarized by the tagline to another 1983 article in *Christianity Today*: "Publishers fear modern technology has made every church a printing plant." The article's author, Carol Thiessen, extrapolated on her tagline.

When the [copyright] controversy takes up residence in the church, it moves beyond mere legality. Suddenly morality, ethics, and even spirituality, become part of the problem. Are Christian music publishers really defrauding the church, hiding behind the language of U.S. Copyright law and taking unfair advantage of congregations, choirs, and individual Christian musicians? Or are churches and parachurch groups, and the performers within them, the real culprits, creating instant hymnals and music libraries with the aid of overhead projectors, photocopies, and tape recorders?<sup>7</sup>

The legal and ethical dilemma surrounding overhead projection in the early 1980s was only exacerbated by the "digital revolution" of the 1990s. Digital projectors came to replace analog overhead projectors because they provided easier means to duplicate texts and allowed for multimedia in the place of static transparencies.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Thiessen, "The Clash Over Music Copyright," 18.

Connected to a computer, digital projectors could display any format of typed document, which could be copied with the click of a mouse (as opposed to the hand of a scribe). And with the advent of the Internet, sharing such documents around the world became a real-time possibility. Further, digital projectors allowed for the presentation of different media formats in motion, whether picture slideshows, movies, or text animations, a feat that transparency slides could not accomplish.

Yet digital projection technology was not financially accessible until the 1990s. While some large churches with massive budgets installed rear-projected CRT projectors in the 1980s for around \$100,000, most churches could not afford such solutions. "Trying to sell a projector to a pastor used to be like trying to sell them a Mercedes," argued Kevin Barlow, a business manager for Sharp Electronics, "There were only a select few who had that kind of budget."<sup>8</sup> But by the turn of the century, churches could purchase LCD (liquid crystal display) or DLP (digital light processing) digital projectors for under \$3,000. As a 2001 article in *Entertainment Design* explained, "new technology, lower costs, and a larger market put the "V" back in AV for the church."<sup>9</sup>

Digital projection eventually shaped the affective dispositions of congregants as well. Starting in the 1990s and picking up speed in the 2000s, megachurches with large sanctuaries borrowed a technique from large, professional entertainment venues and

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<sup>8</sup> Zielinski, "Multimedia Ministries," 30.

<sup>9</sup> Fielding, "Display Technology for Churches," 11.

began projecting those leading on stage onto the big screen. The primary rationale was to provide those in the back of the sanctuary with a better visual presentation of what was happening on stage. The pastor and musicians could now be seen clearly, which mitigated the disadvantage of sitting in the back of a giant auditorium. Yet this projection of the leaders on stage had other effects as well. It amplified the affective power of the worship leader, projecting their musical performance, yes, but also projecting the affective dispositions of their bodies and their faces. This communication of emotion helped to transfer the emotional energy from worship leader to the congregation. Further, as megachurches began hiring video production specialists, the video projection of the stage evolved from documentation to cinematic programming. The combination of visual choreography, the splicing of several different live video feeds with different vantage points, and the addition of real-time digital effects integrated into the video output created a cinematic experience, further moving the congregant out of the ordinary and into a surreal space, where the affective energy became more palpable.

## ***7.2 Industrialization***

Contemporary Christian Music (CCM), the parent genre that encompassed CWM, exploded in the 1980s with successful crossover artists like Amy Grant, Petra, Michael W. Smith, and Christian heavy metal band Stryper. By the early 1990s, major record labels took notice and began investing in Christian music by buying out

independent Christian labels and transforming them into their own subsidiaries. In 1992, major label EMI bought Sparrow Records, one of the first and most successful Christian record labels. Founded in 1976 by Billy Ray Hearn, Sparrow became home to several famous CCM artists in 1980s, like Keith Green, Steve Taylor, and Phil Keaggy. A year later, MCA bought the Benson Music Group, which included several famous CCM artists on its Impact label, including Sandi Patty, The Rambos, and DeGarmo and Key. In 1994, EMI continued its expansion into Christian music with its acquisition of Star Song Communications, a Christian record label founded in 1974 and home to artists like The Resurrection Band and Petra. And in 1996, EMI bought Forefront Records, home of famous CCM rock outfits DC Talk and Audio Adrenaline.<sup>10</sup>

At the same time, in 1995, Nielsen Media's music sales reporting arm, SoundScan, began tracking CCM beyond traditional gospel music, providing a quantitative voice that could narrate the commercial rise of CCM. SoundScan technology aggregated sales data from retailers with a "point of sale" inventory system, which provided Nielsen with real-time sales data based on actual transactions instead of the verbal reporting of sales data that was common before (and error prone). While SoundScan began recording CCM sales in major retail stores and record shops, SoundScan technology also made its way into Christian bookstores, providing a clearer, more consistent picture of the large number of CCM record sales outside of mainstream

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<sup>10</sup> See Price, "Christian Music Market Expands," 34 and Price, "As Christian Music's Biggest Year Ends," 58.

retail outlets. Once SoundScan starting tracking CCM, music publications like *Billboard* responded in kind with a chart for the top Christian albums and songs based on the new SoundScan data. The tracking by SoundScan and the charting by Billboard brought further visibility and commercial interest to Christian music. CCM record execs agreed. "SoundScan has brought a new awareness to the Christian music industry," said Star Song Records CEO Jeff Moseley, while Reunion Records president Terry Hemmings noted that SoundScan data "firmly establishes that [CCM] is not a small cottage industry with no economic impact."<sup>11</sup>

This further industrialization of CCM via sales tracking and charting would eventually serve as a visibility mechanism for CWM in the 2000s, once CWM became a more lucrative and popular sub genre for CCM and received more radio play and retail attention. In the 1990s, however, CWM had its own parallel industrial revolution, and its primary catalyst came in the formation of the music licensing company Christian Copyright Licensing Incorporated (CCLI).

### **7.2.1 Christian Copyright Licensing, Inc.**

Established in 1988 by music minister and business entrepreneur Howard Rachinski, CCLI quickly became the dominant reporting agency for licensing and charting of CWM sung in congregations, first in the United States, but then eventually around the world. By 2012, CCLI had agreements with more than 147,000 copyright

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<sup>11</sup> Price, "From SoundScan to Christian Label Acquisitions," 55.

license holders (churches), annually produced more than \$22 million in copyright licensing revenue, and annually distributed more than \$17 million in copyright royalties to artists in the United States and Canada alone. From 1988 to 2012, CCLI paid out more than \$256 million in royalty payments to worship songwriters and copyright holders.<sup>12</sup>

CCLI's success was tied to the rise of CWM in churches in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. When churches began incorporating CWM into their congregational repertoires, they started using songs that were outside of the traditional hymnal economy, not covered under the licensing agreement and royalty structure that was built into the purchase of a hymnal. Starting in the 1970s, churches began replacing their hymnals with projectors, first with analog overhead projectors and then with digital projectors connected to computers. Analog overhead projectors utilized transparencies as slides for projection, and CWM made its way into churches on such transparencies. The problem, however, was that transparencies were easy to produce and reproduce, and churches created song transparencies without paying for the right to produce such media. The problem was further exacerbated when digital projectors replaced overhead projectors, as digital computer files were even easier to reproduce and deploy without purchasing a license. Further compounding the problem was the reality that churches were unaware or uninformed on the legality regarding copyright when it came to new forms of media like lyrical projection.

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<sup>12</sup> "CCLI 2012 Annual Report."



The result was a licensing problem where churches were not paying for the right to reproduce the new CWM not covered in hymnals. Several organizations preceded CCLI and attempted to provide solutions to this licensing quagmire. CWM publisher Maranatha! Music created "Music-net" in 1982 as an attempt to solve its own licensing issues and recover some of its lost revenue. For \$10 a year, subscribers to the Music-net service had unlimited use to a song, including the ability to reprint it and produce it on transparency slides. In the UK, a consortium of worship publishers (Thankyou Music, Scripture in Song, Word Music, and Jubilate Hymns, among others) established the Christian Copyright Licensing Scheme (CCLS) in 1985. CCLS offered a single license that churches could purchase to cover the catalogs from all of the publishers involved. CCLS charged churches based on their average attendance, a policy that CCLI eventually adopted. By 1987, CCLS had issued more than 2,000 licenses and launched a sister organization, the Christian Music Association (CMA), which in turn released its own trade magazine, *Worship*, a publication that included a chart of the most popular songs covered under the CCLS.<sup>13</sup>

CCLI's founder, Howard Rachinski, first stumbled on this licensing problem in 1984 while serving as the music minister for Bible Temple (now City Bible Church), a charismatic congregation in Portland, Oregon. That year a federal district court found

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<sup>13</sup> Ward, "The Economies of Charismatic Evangelical Worship."

the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago guilty of copyright infringement.<sup>14</sup> Dennis Fitzpatrick, president of F.E.L Publications, had filed suit against the archdiocese in 1976 for making copies of FEL's music without acquiring a license to do so. Fitzpatrick began F.E.L. in the midst of the Catholic Folk Mass movement of the 1960s, and the publishing company held the copyrights for several popular Catholic folk Mass tunes, including "They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love," written by Father Patrick Scholtes.<sup>15</sup> Fitzpatrick was awarded \$3.1 million in damages, which, as far as Rachinski was concerned, sent a clear message to churches that they were legally liable for copyright infringement when they reproduced transparencies or printed homemade songbooks for their congregants without a license. Though F.E.L. never saw most of this money, as the decision was overturned the next year,<sup>16</sup> the suit inspired Rachinski to develop a "permission to use" concept in 1985 that would provide churches with a blanket license for specific types of reproduction. He called the program Starpraise Ministries and it was CCLI's direct predecessor.<sup>17</sup>

By 1987, Starpraise Ministries had 1,150 churches participating in its licensing program and began looking to its UK equivalent, the CMA, for guidance on how to expand. The CMA's success taught Starpraise that it should not combine publishing

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<sup>14</sup> "About CCLI."

<sup>15</sup> "Church is Guilty in Copyright Case."

<sup>16</sup> Grady, "Publisher Won't End Battle over Hymns."

<sup>17</sup> "About CCLI."

activities with licensing activities, as Maranatha's "Music-net" had attempted.<sup>18</sup> First, that would be a conflict of interest, which would inhibit Starpraise's ability to sign deals with other publishers. But just as important, if each publishing company tried to provide its own licensing scheme, churches would then have to reach agreements with each publisher, and such a paperwork burden would push many churches back into the practices of illegal copying, as it would be far easier than managing several agreements. Like the CMA, Starpraise realized that if it could provide a blanket license for churches, it would find a ready market.

In 1988, Starpraise incorporated under a new name, Christian Copyright Licensing, Inc., and signed agreements with 120 publishers. One year later, CCLI had provided licenses to more than 9,500 churches and held licensing agreements with more than 200 publishers and their music catalogs. By 1990, CCLI had expanded its membership to more than 23,000 churches and in 1991 CCLI assumed control of the CMA's operation in the UK, adding more than 7,200 more church license holders to its membership.<sup>19</sup> CCLI continued its meteoric expansion through operations across the world in the 1990s, and by 1997, administered licenses to an estimated 98,000 churches

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

globally.<sup>20</sup> As of 2014, that number had grown to more than 200,000 churches worldwide.<sup>21</sup>

CCLI effectively solved the copyright problem of the 1980s. It provided an easy avenue for musicians and publishers to get paid when churches used their music, and churches with an affordable license to use new worship music in their services. While the hymnal economy continued (supported by traditional congregations), CCLI bypassed it and created an entirely new market. Church sanctuaries became, in effect, cover band venues, producing royalty revenue every Sunday morning. With this new revenue stream came new producers—artists, publishers, record labels, and distributors.

While CCLI's greatest impact on CWM came with its introduction of this new market via a new revenue stream for licensing, it also indirectly influenced both the production and consumption of CWM via its charting of popular worship music. From its inception, CCLI maintained records of the songs played in churches in order to make accurate payouts to artists and publishers. A byproduct of this data was a Top 25 chart published twice a year (once a reporting period). Like *Billboard's* own charts, the CCLI Top 25 chart eventually came to influence the direction of CWM by providing market metrics to both producers and consumers.

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<sup>20</sup> Ingalls, "Contemporary Worship Music," 149.

<sup>21</sup> "About CCLI."

As producers of CWM, record labels could focus their A&R development on the styles that dominated the top of CCLI's charts. In selecting their worship music, churches were inherently conservative (this was evident by the glacial turnover of artists and songs on CCLI's top 25 list) and tended to adopt the same kind of songs they were already singing. It was then in the record label's best financial interest to raise success and lower risk by releasing records that sounded like those at the top of the charts.

CCLI's Top 25 also influenced churches as well. CCLI's charting provided direction for churches interested in taking a demand-side perspective on worship music. Rather than focusing on local or denominational music, many churches turned to marketing questions: What do people want to sing in church? What worship songs are popular? CCLI provided a pulse on the most popular worship songs in the country, raising awareness of the national market for worship music as it emerged.

While we can think of churches as consumers when it comes to CWM, they were also more than that. Though all churches consisted of "end users"—the worshippers who consumed CWM as an end product—growth-oriented churches were also often "retailers" of CWM, in the sense that they conceived of CWM as a product, even a marketing tool, that would attract their targeted customers. Similar to how movie theaters selected the films that they believed would attract the most customers, growth-oriented churches often conceived of CWM as a means to another end. In this sense, CCLI's Top 25 gave these churches market-tested songs with proven results. By filling

their services with the most popular worship songs available, growth-oriented churches could in turn provide their congregants (and visitors) with songs already familiar and favored, played on Christian radio and sung in churches around the country.

As a result, worship moved away from simply a spiritual practice to a much more self-conscious means of advertising for attracting a potential audience. Utilizing resources like CCLI, churches in turn became more data-driven in their market analysis; they moved from abstraction to context, from a template church that simply sang contemporary worship songs to a market-research driven custom experience where the worship music was specifically selected for its popularity and geared towards church growth and target audiences. And no one leveraged the power of CCLI better than the megachurch.

### ***7.3 The Rise of the Megachurch***

As megachurches<sup>22</sup> grew in size and number in the 1990s, they developed a culture of their own that transcended denominational boundaries. Though independent of each other, megachurches shared the challenges and opportunities available to institutions with such large economies of scale. Because of their massive operating budgets they developed programs, bought equipment, and hired staff that smaller churches could never afford. And one critical budget item of any megachurch was its

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<sup>22</sup> Megachurches are generally considered churches that have two thousand or more regular attendees.

music ministry.<sup>23</sup> Worship under one large roof, with so many people packed into a single worship space, created an urgent need for music that would narrate what amounted to a weekly revival. Pastors realized that music was as integral to attracting members as their well-honed sermons, and it had to play a part in drawing and inspiring the kind of numbers that would sustain the machinery of big-church economic and spiritual life. Successful megachurches were not only built on talented preaching and an efficient church bureaucracy, but on professional music performed by a talent-laden music team as well. Musical excellence, though a luxury for most churches, became one that megachurches could afford.

As noted, Bill Hybels's Willow Creek Church in South Barrington, Illinois was one of several megachurches that developed this strategy in the 1980s. Inspired by the church growth movement that emerged from Donald McGavran's School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary and Robert Schuller's Institute for Successful Church Leadership in the 1970s, Hybels and his director of programming, Nancy Beach,

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<sup>23</sup> Scott Thumma, a sociologist at the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, reported that average expenditures for megachurches in 1999 was \$4.4 million ([http://hrr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/faith\\_megachurches\\_FACTsummary.html#worship](http://hrr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/faith_megachurches_FACTsummary.html#worship)). See also the National Congregations Study, which showed in 1998 that the median budget of churches with under 1,000 regular attendees over the age of 18 was \$55,000, while the median budget of churches with 1,000 to 2,000 regular adult attendees was more than twelve times as much, coming in at \$700,000. For churches with more than two thousand regular adult attendees, the median budget was \$1,000,000, more than eighteen times larger than the median budget of churches with less than 1,000 regular adult attendees. With eighteen times the money to spend, megachurch music and sound budgets were guaranteed to be much larger than those of small churches. See Chaves, Mark, Shawna L. Anderson, and Alison Eagle. 2014. *National Congregations Study*. Cumulative data file and codebook. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University, Department of Sociology.

developed "seeker services" that catered to unchurched baby boomers and their kids. The programming featured what Beach called "studio bands," professional musicians and vocalists who could provide musical programming that matched the genres most familiar to the audience--pop, jazz, soft rock, and adult contemporary. Inspired by a seeker-sensitive logic that sought to comfort the unchurched, songs were catchy and non-doctrinal. The lyrics revolved around the theme for the day, while the music highlighted jazz sax interludes, distorted electric guitar solos, and syncopated reggae bass lines. Beach explained that choirs were never used, as that communicated "traditional church." Instead, small vocal ensembles of professional vocalists exuded a strong stage presence, replete with smiles and synchronized hand gestures.<sup>24</sup> But this kind of professional production was costly, requiring expensive equipment and paid professional musicians, sound technicians, and production specialists like Beach herself. Only church economies of a certain size could afford to offer such production.

Megachurches, then, became the sites of cutting-edge CWM. Because they were growth-oriented, they sought to integrate CWM musical trends into their services, highlighting the top of the CCLI charts. They also had the means to replicate the most complicated studio production techniques found on CWM albums, providing congregants with an experience that paralleled what they heard on the radio or on a CD. Yet more important than providing a "professional" venue for CWM, megachurches

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<sup>24</sup> Hybels, Beach, and Strobel, *An inside look at the Willow Creek seeker service*.



became trendsetters for churches around the country, giving smaller, aspiring churches a picture of what they could become. Of course, most of these smaller churches would not accomplish what these pioneering megachurches had, but that was beside the point. Megachurches shaped the liturgical imagination of smaller churches, influencing the direction of their worship services and their embrace of CWM.<sup>25</sup> And luckily for the smaller churches, CWM scaled nicely with the advent of the digital revolution. Though they could not replicate the professional production of the recording studio like the megachurch could, smaller churches *could* afford a digital projector, a small but powerful sound system, and a set of young volunteers who could pound away on the simple, three-chord progressions that served as the backbone for so many contemporary worship songs. In this way CWM helped reduce the difference between small and large churches.

The rise of the megachurch not only shaped the consumption of CWM, but its production as well. CWM had first developed in large churches in Southern California, like Calvary Chapel, which gave birth to Maranatha! Music, and the Anaheim Vineyard Church, which gave birth to Vineyard Music. What became the third pillar of CWM

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<sup>25</sup> An example of this influence was evident in the popularity and success of both Willow Creek and Saddleback's franchising programs. Willow Creek's Willow Creek Association provided member churches with consulting materials to help them craft a growth-oriented, seeker-friendly service while Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Ministries provided similar consulting materials (like his book *Purpose Driven Church*) for churches looking to build contemporary worship services to attract new visitors. See <http://www.willowcreek.com> for Willow Creek Association Resources or Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*.

record labels, Hosanna! Music, also developed in a large congregation, Grace World Outreach Center in St. Louis, Missouri. There musician and producer Tom Brooks began releasing live recordings of the church's worship service, first featuring worship artists like Ron Tucker and Kent Henry. Though Brooks would team up with Christian businessman Michael Coleman (president of now-defunct New Wine Magazine) in 1983 to turn the recordings into a mail order audio tape business called Hosanna! Music,<sup>26</sup> it nonetheless began in a large, charismatic church, just as Maranatha! Music and Vineyard Music had. Hosanna! Music, which eventually transformed into Integrity Music in 1987, recorded most of its albums at megachurches, capturing the interplay between a talented worship leader like Ron Kenoly and his<sup>27</sup> large congregation, like Kenoly's Jubilee Christian Center in San Jose, California.

Even though CWM developed an industry outside church doors, churches remained an integral part of the professional development of CWM, as most worship songwriters were actively practicing and honing their songwriting craft within the context of a local congregation, refining their songs via weekly interaction with a congregation. This was almost universally true for major CWM artists: Darlene Zschech got her start leading worship at Hillsong Church outside of Sydney, Australia; Matt

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<sup>26</sup> "The History of Integrity Music - Part 1."

<sup>27</sup> From 1983 to 1995, all of Hosanna! Music's albums featured male worship leaders. While Integrity Music (formerly Hosanna! Music) now features several female worship leaders, and while previous albums often featured female vocalists, it was not until the rise of Hillsong's Darlene Zschech that female worship leaders truly entered the mainstream of CWM.

Redman at St. Andrews in Chorleywood, England; Paul Baloche at Community Fellowship in Lindale, Texas; Chris Tomlin at The Woodlands United Methodist Church in The Woodlands, Texas; and David Crowder at University Baptist Church in Waco, Texas. Megachurches often housed these artists, as they could provide talented worship leaders with professional sound equipment, a competitive salary, and a weekly captive audience in the thousands. Megachurches, then, became artist hubs, producing and sustaining CWM artists as "base camps" from which talented worship leaders could write songs, produce albums, and leverage the visibility of the megachurch to boost their own popularity. Megachurches and their pastors could, in turn, leverage the popularity of their worship leaders and their music to continue to build their audiences and influence. The result was a synergistic, "cross-marketing" of celebrity between megachurch pastor and worship leader.

#### ***7.4 The Rise of the Worship Music Star***

The mutual leveraging of celebrity between pastor and worship leader emerged as CWM grew as an industry and as the megachurch sought to grow its brand and audience. Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas provided a great example. There Joel Osteen—founding pastor John Osteen's son and heir to the megachurch's pulpit—changed his father's approach to worship music when he took over the pastorate in 1999. Worship at Lakewood in the 1990s had been led by the buoyant and energetic Gary Simons, who rotated between choir director, pep leader, and entertainer. Yet Simons

was no celebrity worship star. He had no hit records, no popular worship songs sung around the country, and represented the aesthetic of traditional southern gospel, not the rock style that had come to mark CWM. A talented stage persona, Simons led the music well and combined entertainment with a southern gospel aesthetic popular among older television and congregational audiences. Yet he was not a celebrity that enlarged Lakewood's brand.<sup>28</sup>

When Joel Osteen took over the Houston megachurch in 1999, he transformed the church's worship into a platform for the Lakewood brand. In 2000, the younger Osteen hired seasoned Christian artist Cindy Cruse-Ratcliff to lead worship, and then, in 2001, hired a second worship leader, up-and-coming worship artist Israel Houghton. Cruse-Ratcliff was a product of the Cruse Family band, which had won two Dove awards (the Christian equivalent of the Grammys), and had years of experience leading worship for several ministries before joining the Houston megachurch. In 2001, Israel Houghton was still an unrealized talent, but Osteen clearly saw his future potential. That foresight paid off for Osteen, as Houghton would go on to win four Grammys for his infectious style, which fused black gospel, rock, pop, and folk into songs that attracted a multiethnic audience.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Bowler and Reagan, "Bigger, Better, Louder," 205-206.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

Lakewood's expansion into the former sports arena complex for the Houston Rockets further transformed the church's musical style and setting. The church choir, which once served as the visual focal point for the worship service, was split into two and relegated to bleachers beside the main stage, while Cruse-Ratcliff, Houghton, and their musical entourage were headlined with the dynamic spotlighting of a professional concert venue. These changes combined to create an intense focus on the worship leader and a minimal focus on the choir, further enhancing the visibility and celebrity of the worship music star.<sup>30</sup>

Joel Osteen's implementations were part and parcel of a liturgical revolution that was sweeping through the largest megachurches in the country, one that displaced the traditional worship setting centered on a church choir with a worship band led by celebrity worship leaders. It was a liturgical revolution that brought the worship leader's musical performance to the heart of the worship service, making them as much the "face" of the church as the pastor.<sup>31</sup> With its new formula in place—enigmatic worship leaders, a weekly captive audience of twenty-five thousand, and millions more around the world watching via broadcast--Lakewood secured a record contract with Integrity Media, one of the largest Christian worship music record labels, and released *We Speak to*

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 206-207.

<sup>31</sup> Certainly there were Americans more interested in George Beverly Shea than Billy Graham, or even Americans more interested in Ira Sankey than Dwight Moody, so in that sense this is not a completely new phenomenon. Yet those duos were evangelists, not local preachers. For the local church, even the local megachurch, it was the rise of CWM that gave the worship leader a new prominence in the church.

*Nations* (2002) and *Cover the Earth* (2003). The album art for both records simply featured the two worship leaders and the name "Lakewood," capitalizing on the celebrity synergy created between Osteen's megachurch and Cruse-Ratcliff and Houghton's popular music. It was a perfect match: Osteen provided his worship leaders with salaries, television exposure, and advertising as the musical engine behind the largest church in America; in return, the musical success of Cruse-Ratcliff and Houghton kept their home church in the national spotlight.<sup>32</sup>

Before Joel Osteen transformed Lakewood Church, however, the rising celebrity of the worship music star was already at hand.<sup>33</sup> While compilation series dominated the contemporary worship music industry through the mid-1990s, by the late 1990s, the industrial focus shifted from these compilation series towards an artist-centered branding strategy. Integrity Music GM John Coleman explained that "in the early '90s, we were definitely nameless, faceless church music," but that by the end of the century, "different worship leaders began to arise in terms of having greater influence."<sup>34</sup> The shift was most noticeable in album art, and the album art from Hillsong Church in

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 207-208.

<sup>33</sup> Starting in the mid 1990s with the import of Hillsong's worship songs into American worship services, CWM took on a decidedly international flavor, led by artists in Australia (like Hillsong's Darlene Zschech) and the U.K. (like Martin Smith of the band Delirious? and Matt Redman and Tim Hughes, who both cut their teeth leading worship for Soul Survivor festivals in the U.K.). Because I focus on worship music in America in this dissertation, I do not narrate the rise of CWM in other countries. While CWM first developed in the United States, a "British Invasion" of sorts came in the 1990s with music from Hillsong, Delirious?, and the British worship leaders involved in the Passion conferences. By the 21<sup>st</sup> century, CWM had emerged as a global phenomenon with an interconnected global network and industry. For an excellent history of CWM in the U.K., see Ward, *Selling Worship*.

<sup>34</sup> Price, "Praised Be!," 28.

Sydney, Australia was a case in point. Hillsong's 1994 album *People Just Like Us* featured a shot of Sydney's famous Harbor Bridge while the front cover of their 1996 album *Simply Worship* was a photograph of an angel statue. But by 1997's album, *All Things Are Possible*, the cover art featured a photograph of Darlene Zschech, Hillsong's most famous worship leader and author of the top worship song "Shout to the Lord." Darlene's face was then front and center on albums *Blessed* (2001), *You Are My World* (2001), and *Hope* (2003). Meanwhile, famous CCM artists who normally did not write and produce music for church services entered the market and found meteoric success. Michael W. Smith's *Worship* (2001) and *Worship Again* (2002) had sold 1.7 million and 769,000 copies respectively by 2008, while Third Day's *Offerings: A Worship Album* (2000) and *Offerings II: All I Have to Give* (2003) had sold 961,000 and 764,000 units respectively by the same year. These were big numbers, and they were not alone. Other CCM stars moved into CWM and released worship albums, like the Newsboys, Rebecca St. James, and CeCe Winans, while new worship stars garnered visibility from the Passion Conferences, like Chris Tomlin, the David Crowder Band, Charlie Hall, Matt Redman, and Tim Hughes.<sup>35</sup>

Though individual artists came to dominate the worship market at the turn of the century, the compilation albums did not disappear. Labels and distributors realized that they could build awareness of their worship artists by working together, so they joined up to release annual "Greatest Hits" series in order to promote their artists and

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

albums. Many of these compilations featured the latest and greatest worship songs from around the country, but covered by famous CCM artists. One such series was WOW Worship, which began in 1999 and emerged from the already successful WOW Hits series that started in 1996. Sometimes compilations featured CCM artists' original worship songs, like on the City on a Hill series, which released three albums in 2000, 2002, and 2003 and featured big name CCM artists like Caedmon's Call, Sixpence None the Richer, and Jars of Clay. The most successful compilation series to promote the budding worship industry, however, was *Songs4Worship*, a collaboration between Integrity Music (formerly Hosanna! Music) and Time Life Music that began in 2000. By 2008, the *Songs4Worship* series had released more than thirty albums and sold more than twenty-million units. Time Life VP/executive producer Mitch Peyser explained that *Songs4Worship* was so successful because it "gave many fans their first chance to hear praise and worship in their homes performed by top worship leaders." The series' success and visibility catapulted it beyond the orbit of Christian bookstores and landed it into general retail and on Christian radio, where it saw tremendous success.<sup>36</sup>

## **7.5 Impact**

The 1990s and 2000s saw the blossoming of CWM into a full fledged commercial music genre, one that developed its own industrial calculus rooted in the licensing economy powered by CCLI. The 1990s and 2000s also saw the widespread adoption of

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 29.



CWM within churches as digital projection technology became more affordable and ubiquitous in church sanctuaries, and saw megachurches provide platforms for talented worship leaders to produce and promote new songs while inspiring smaller churches to adopt CWM as a liturgical tool to attract new congregants.

Yet not all American Protestants came running to embrace rock music in their churches. Like the naysayers of the adoption of black gospel music in the 1920s and 1930s, and like the cadre of critics that lambasted the Catholic folk Mass in the 1960s, CWM had its own detractors, and their voices swelled in the 1990s in what many titled the "worship wars." Congregants who preferred the traditional hymns, pipe organ, and accompanying liturgies found CWM threatening to both their theological and aesthetic sensibilities. Some voiced their concerns to their music directors and pastors, while others published. Over the last two decades, dozens of books and articles have rehearsed the worship wars as scholars and culture critics have argued over propriety, aesthetics, theology, and commercialization.<sup>37</sup> While there was plenty of handwringing

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<sup>37</sup> Over the last two decades, there have been several publications that have featured critical commentary on CWM. For examples, see Paul Westermeyer, "The Future of Congregational Song," *The Hymn*, v. 46 (1995): 4-9; Marva J. Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995); Anderson M. Rearick, "Onward, Christian Praise Teams," (*The Christian Century*, 118.31, November 14, 2001: 7-8); John G. Stackhouse Jr., "Memo to Worship Bands: Five Sound Reasons to Lower the Volume," (*Christianity Today*, 53.2, February 2009: 50); D. H. Williams, "The Cultural Medium and the Christian Message: What Kind of Christians Do Contemporary Services Produce?" (*Christianity Today*, 55.6, June 2011: 46); and T. David Gordon, who has published several rebuttals of CWM, including *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Rewrote the Hymnal* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub, 2010) and "The Imminent Decline of Contemporary Worship Music: Eight Reasons," (*Second Nature*, October 27, 2014). Accessed January 8, 2015. <http://secondnaturejournal.com/the-imminent-decline-of-contemporary-worship-music-eight-reasons/>.

among its detractors, the CWM industry marched on, generally unaware of this critique. The industry marched on because, though CWM's critics had gotten louder, they could not compete with all of the congregants, pastors, and musicians clamoring for more CWM in their churches, whether because it suited younger worshippers who sought something more authentic than staid, old hymns; older congregants who simply preferred the liveliness of the CWM service; or because it attracted new members.

This was especially true for megachurches. In a 2005 megachurch survey, sociologists Scott Thumma and Dave Travis found that 93 percent of megachurches surveyed used the electric guitar or bass in their services, while 94 percent used drums or other percussion, and 95 percent used visual projection. Compare that to the 2005 Faith Communities Today Study, which considered churches of all sizes: only 33 percent of all churches used electric guitar, bass, or drums in their services, while only 38 percent used visual projection.

It may seem, then, that CWM was not that popular if only 33 percent of churches were using electric guitar, bass, or drums in their churches, but comparing churches was not the same thing as comparing attendees.<sup>38</sup> As Mark Chaves has shown, the size distribution of American congregations is skewed. In 1998, about half of American congregants could be found in the largest 10 percent of all congregations.<sup>39</sup> By the end

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<sup>38</sup> Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, 152-53.

<sup>39</sup> Chaves, *Congregations in America*, 18-19.

of the 2000s, this statistic was still true, but the concentration of congregants into the largest churches had snowballed since 1998, such that approximately 15 percent of all people, staff, and money could be found in the biggest one percent of Protestant churches.<sup>40</sup>

Looking at data from the National Congregations Study (NCS) on drum use in religious services provides a useful case in point. While only 19.8 percent of all *congregations* in 1998 used drums in their main service, 25.1 percent of all *congregants* said that drums were used in their service. In 2006, that number jumped to 32.4 percent of all congregations, yet, because of the large concentration of congregants in the largest churches, the number jumped to 36.4 percent of all congregants. This trend continued into 2012, where the total number of congregations using drums in their main service only jumped a slight bit to 34.2 percent, while the number of congregants in churches using drums in their main service jumped much higher to 45.5 percent.<sup>41</sup> Further, once controlled for church size, the megachurch embrace of CWM became even more evident. After dividing the NCS data into four groups for number of regularly attending adults (1-100, 101-250, 251-500, 501+), a clearer pattern emerged. In 1998, only about 17 percent of churches with 1-100 regularly attending adults used drums in their services, while

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<sup>40</sup> Chaves, *American Religion: Contemporary Trends*, 111.

<sup>41</sup> "National Congregations Study: Cross Tabulation of Number of Regularly Participating Adults in Congregation by Drums Used During Main Service." *National Congregations Study*. Accessed January 5, 2015. <http://www.thearda.com/ncs/explorencs.asp?rowvar=19&colvar=75>. See also Chaves, Mark, Shawna L. Anderson, and Alison Eagle. 2014. *National Congregations Study*. Cumulative data file and codebook. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University, Department of Sociology.

churches with 101-250 regularly attending adults, churches with 251-500 adults, and churches with 501 plus adults saw drums use at about 25 percent, 26 percent, and 24 percent, respectively. By 2006/2007, these numbers had increased: about 30 percent of churches with 1-100 regularly attending adults used drums in their services; while churches with 101-250 regularly attending adults, churches with 251-500 adults, and churches with 501 plus adults saw drums use increase to 36 percent, 38 percent, and 38 percent, respectively. By 2012, churches with 1-100 regularly attending adults saw no change from 2006, while churches with 101-250 regularly attending adults, churches with 251-500 adults, and churches with 501 plus adults saw drums use further increase to 41 percent, 44 percent, and 52 percent, respectively.<sup>42</sup>

Yet drum use does not account for all churches that employ CWM in their services. Many churches cannot afford drums, do not have a drummer, or utilize CWM with just guitars and pianos given a small meeting space or a preference for no percussion. A better picture could be drawn from guitar use in church services. Unfortunately, the NCS survey does not have a consistent question about guitar use across its three waves in 1998, 2006/2007, and 2012. And though there is a consistent question that asks about piano use, that is too broad to correlate directly with CWM. Many churches led traditional church music from a piano instead of an organ and never

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<sup>42</sup> Data analyzed from Chaves, Anderson, and Eagle, *National Congregations Study*. Cumulative data file and codebook. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University, Department of Sociology.

utilized CWM. However, we *can* look at the collective data on guitar use that the NCS collected, which still painted the same pattern that we saw with drum use, albeit more pronounced. In 1998, the NCS asked about electric guitar use in church services. Again, controlling for church size, we find the same pattern: about 18 percent of churches with 1-100 regularly attending adults used electric guitars in their services, while churches with 101-250 regularly attending adults, churches with 251-500 adults, and churches with 501 plus adults saw electric guitar use at 24 percent, 31 percent, and 36 percent, respectively. In 2006/2007 and 2012, the NCS asked churches if they used *any* guitars in their church services (not just electric guitar). Though the question broadened the requirement for guitar use, the pattern remained the same for the four size groups: 30 percent, 42 percent, 46 percent, and 51 percent for 2006/2007 and then 24 percent, 45 percent, 49 percent, and 62 percent for 2012. Interestingly, guitar use actually went down in churches with 1-100 regularly attending adults (from 30 percent to 24 percent) between 2006/2007 and 2012. Yet among larger churches, guitar use climbed, increasing by three percentage points for churches with 101-250 regularly attending adults and churches with 251-500 regularly attending adults, and an astounding 11 percentage points for churches with greater than 500 regularly attending adults.<sup>43</sup> And when we weigh the data according to number of attendees in services that use guitars (as opposed

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

to the number of congregations), we see the adoption of guitars was even more pronounced, given that a majority of American churchgoers attend large churches.

Between 2000 and 2014, the adoption of CWM has been widespread across different sizes of churches, yet most active in larger churches. The more regularly attending adults in a congregation, the more likely that congregation was to employ CWM in its services. And while CWM has become established as a major form of church music, the worship wars have not faded. Religion scholar David Gordon felt that the war was still on, releasing a thorough critique of CWM with his book *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Rewrote the Hymnal* in 2010 and "The Imminent Decline of Contemporary Worship Music: Eight Reasons," in *Second Nature* in 2014. In 2011, *Christianity Today* editor Mark Galli noted that even though he's not convinced that "we're still fighting 'worship wars,'" it was clear that "we are still living through a tense truce."<sup>44</sup> That tense truce appeared in megachurches with the absence of congregants who preferred traditional church music, or the absence of CWM in small churches with older congregations steeped in liturgical traditions. But it mostly appeared in the separate services for traditional and contemporary worship that still structured the worship life of local churches around the country, where members of the same congregation could self-segregate into their preferred liturgical soundscape. Rick Warren's vision of several different services, each catering to the worship consumption

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<sup>44</sup> Galli, "The End of the Worship Wars," 5.

preferences of different congregants, may have been a sign of vitality for his megachurch, but for most American congregations, worship segregation within a congregation represented a tenuous ceasefire in the worship wars.

Regardless of whether CWM shrinks or expands further in the future, its widespread growth in the 1990s and 2000s came because of the industrial feedback loop that emerged, establishing a tipping point for CWM's adoption. The combination of affordable technologies that changed the shape of music in church sanctuaries, the rise of megachurches that could create a rock show on Sunday mornings, the adoption of CWM among smaller churches subsequently inspired by megachurches, the rise of CWM songwriters and albums via CCLI's new licensing scheme, and the industrial expansion that followed and helped create the worship music star created a potent and fruitful environment for CWM to take over American churches. And, of course, none of these elements could have come about without the musical foundation and theological rationale developed over the previous decades by Maranatha! Music, Vineyard Music, and the church growth movement. What had begun as a collection of folk tunes among a small cadre of Jesus freaks in Southern California had exploded into a multi-million dollar phenomenon, capturing the liturgical imagination of American Christianity.

## 8. Epilogue

"Music has power, or so many people believe. Across culture and time it has been linked with persuasion, healing, corruption, and many other transformational matters. The idea behind these linkages is that music acts – on consciousness, the body, the emotions. Associated with this idea is another – the idea that music, because of what it can do, should be subject to regulation and control."<sup>1</sup>

"What's sure is that pop can't be sensibly analyzed just in terms of musicology or aesthetics. Yes, we do respond to the song-in-itself but that song-in-itself is soon encrusted with uses and memories and references. Once a pop song is launched on the world, all sorts of things can happen to it... And if unexpected things happen to songs, so songs have unexpected effects on us... If pop is precisely the music we would usually include in such banality, it is also pop – more than any other form of music – that changes if not our lives then certainly the ways in which we feel about them."<sup>2</sup>

How did CWM come to dominate the music life of Christian worship in America? Over the previous fifty years, rock music in the church has come a long way. From its dubious beginnings outside the church – understood as a nefarious music that encouraged licentiousness, miscegenation, and overall delinquency – rock music slowly but surely made its way into the sanctuary, becoming a ubiquitous adoption and the default definition of "worship" in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This championing of CWM resulted from several different motivations that made the fusion of rock and Christian worship attractive. For Christian hippies at Calvary Chapel in the 1970s, it was rock's potency as a translation tool for the gospel, its ability to express the gospel in the "hip" idiom of the counterculture. For the Vineyard Fellowship, it was rock's potent affective ability to aid

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<sup>1</sup> De Nora and Adorno, *After Adorno*, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Frith, Simon, "Pop Music." In *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock*, 107.



worshippers in communing with God in intimacy. For the proponents of the church growth movement, it was rock's precision and effectiveness in marketing the worship experience to targeted audiences and its ability to prepare audiences emotionally for the gospel message. By the 1990s, CWM had "come of age," buoyed by the explosion of digital projection technology in church sanctuaries, the expansion of the worship music industry that provided new songs (and the new celebrity worship artists that wrote them), and the rise of the megachurch that popularized CWM and brought visibility to the worship leader.

I end with a follow up to our original question—not how, but why did CWM come to dominate Christian worship in America? The rise of CWM was a complex affair, involving different actors and movements at different times with different motivations. We have focused on the trees in order to sketch the forest, yet it can also be instructive to look at the forest in order to better understand the trees. What does the forest, as a whole, look like? Does it reveal a pattern or theme? When we look at the entire story of CWM, the issue of authenticity arises as the common underlying force. And if authenticity can serve as the dominant undergirding theme connecting all of CWM's disparate actors, movements, and moments, it gives us yet another way to consider why CWM has become such a force in the worship life of Americans.

The issue of authenticity shaped all of the historical engines fueling the rise and transformation of CWM over the last fifty years. For the Catholic Folk Mass, the pursuit

of an authentic liturgy that accurately represented the voices and participation of the laity undergirded the embrace of the folk music of the counterculture. For the Jesus People, the pursuit of an authentic music that could translate the gospel into the contemporary idiom of the 1960s and 1970s—as well as the embrace of performative and musical conventions that conveyed the counterculture's own construction of authenticity—fueled the embrace of folk and rock music in their churches, coffee houses, and communes. For the Vineyard Fellowship, the desire for a musical repertoire that afforded an authentic emotional experience in worship brought to life a church culture that embraced the affective power of rock and its ability to facilitate intimacy with God. For the church growth movement, it was the conviction that churches could attract new members if they harnessed the marketing power of what the targeted demographic considered authentic, relevant music. And even as CWM came of age in the 1990s and 2000s, the pursuit of "authentic worship"—now tied to a construction of authenticity that privileged the sound, spectacle, and experiential nature of rock—supported the adoption of digital display technologies, the development of the CWM industry, and the rise of the megachurch experience.

Musical authenticity was never a given. American believers actively constructed musical authenticity in their churches, tweaking and changing what they considered to be the authentic look, feel, and sound of worship. To construct that musical authenticity, Jesus People songwriters and worshippers borrowed the counterculture's "folk

ideology," emphasizing the fresh, experiential, often communal, and unmediated connection between artist and audience performed in the folk movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The Vineyard Fellowship inherited this folk ideology from Calvary Chapel, but reshaped it to emphasize the unmediated connection not between artist and audience, but between the individual believer and God. As much as the worship leader singing the song, the believer became the performer before God, utilizing first- and second-person language and amorous imagery in order to commune, personally and intimately, with the divine.

For both the Jesus People and the Vineyard Fellowship, the construction of musical authenticity was an *implicit* activity—what was properly authentic was assumed, not understood as constructed. Yet for the church growth movement, that construction became explicit as a marketing tool. Was the church growth movement influenced by both the Jesus People and the Vineyard Fellowship? Certainly. The Jesus People's folk ideology influenced the church growth movement's adoption of rock music in that growth-oriented churches utilized rock music that was fresh and experiential, while the Vineyard Fellowship's "intimate authenticity" influenced the church growth movement's embrace of rock music that moved the individual worshipper emotionally.

Yet the church growth movement developed its own construction of authenticity, situated more in the ends rather than the means. While the folk authenticity adopted by the Jesus People at Calvary Chapel focused on authentic musical means—the ways in

which the music was written, performed, and received—the church growth movement flipped the equation, starting not with the question of *means*, but of *ends*. What worship music did targeted audiences consider authentic? Once the answer was in hand, growth-oriented churches like Willow Creek Community Church and Saddleback Church actively constructed worship programs and liturgies that utilized the musical and performative cultures that targeted audiences considered authentic.

The worship music of the Vineyard Fellowship sat somewhere in the middle, a transition between the Jesus People and the church growth movement. On one hand, the Vineyard Fellowship held a deep conviction that the authenticity of worship music was located in the actual songs, specifically in their informal, first and second-person lyrics, and therefore in their writing as well. Yet the Vineyard Fellowship also located authenticity in the end product that the worship music created—did the song aid the worshipper in communing intimately with God? Was the song effectively affective? In this sense the results, the ends—not the means—decided whether the music was authentic.

American worshippers also tied the construction of authenticity in CWM to its affective power. For the Christian hippies at Calvary Chapel, it was the performative conventions of the folk ideology—the unassuming posture, the quiet explanation of the song, the unpolished vocal vibrato, the subdued facial expressions, the closed eyes, and the deflection of praise—that created an attractive affective disposition for worship by a

"destruction of glamour." Once combined with the simple, memorized lyrics and the communal singing that often overpowered the un-amplified acoustic guitar, the result was an emotional experience that provided hippie believers with a fresh sound for worship, channeling the intimate setting of campfire a cappella singing. For worshippers at Vineyard churches, a song's authenticity rested on its ability to craft an affective disposition that facilitated intimate worship. Musically this came with the slower tempos and quieter arrangements afforded by the adult contemporary genre. Lyrically, it came with an emphasis on simplicity and repetition, but most important on first- and second-person language and an embrace of imagery that bordered on the romantic, even erotic. For growth-oriented churches like Willow Creek, an authentic program provided "emotional programming," entertaining audio-visual elements that emotionally prepared the audience to hear the message at the end of the service. And for the edgier "modern worship" that appeared in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the overwhelming spectacle afforded by the conventions of the rock arena constructed an affective disposition in the opposite direction of the Jesus People, actively embracing the glamour of the rock show rather than seeking to destroy it. In its embrace of the rock arena, "modern worship" music harnessed the affective energy available in the *spectacle* of the arena rock show through overwhelming sound systems, light shows and giant displays that created a "larger than life" experience, and the liminality that emerged among a giant audience in sync with each other and the beat.

In an article on music and emotion in worship, theologian Jeremy Begbie argued that because "emotions entail beliefs and evaluations about states of affairs beyond our own making," they can assist us in our "grasping for truth." Begbie went on to explain that faithful worship is *truthful* worship, and because the emotions can assist us in comprehending truth, they "can play a key part in truthful perception."<sup>3</sup> For our purposes, this was another way of explaining the deep connection between affect and authenticity. If emotions helped worshippers perceive truth, then it made sense that they played a role in helping believers understand what was authentic, or truthful, in worship music. Believers embraced CWM as authentic because the affective dispositions that it afforded *cohered* with their reality. As an authentic musical, performative, and cultural form, CWM spoke to believers' experiences and in their common tongue, whether that was the folk ideology of the counterculture, the charismatic pursuit of intimacy with God, or the seeker mentality that put the comfort of Top 40 radio in the church sanctuary.

Begbie also argued that faithful worship was a uniting activity, and again, that emotions played an integral role, as they could "be instrumental in generating and sustaining powerful bonds between people."<sup>4</sup> Whether in the communal singing at Calvary Chapel, the "atomized participation" of the intimate worship of the Vineyard, or

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<sup>3</sup> Begbie, "Faithful Feelings," 333, 337.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 337.

the liminal space constructed in the affectively charged atmosphere of arena rock worship, the unifying power of these emotional environments played a part in the construction of musical authenticity as a communal culture.

This deep connection between authenticity and affect in CWM, though it emerged among the evangelistic adoption of secular musical forms, has been, and remains today, undergirded by Pentecostal sensibilities, not in the theological abstract, but in the historical, material origins of CWM. Several of the actors, movements, and moments we have considered, from Chuck Smith to John Wimber, were influenced by Pentecostal and charismatic doxological practices in some form. As we saw with the development of black gospel music in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jesus music in the 1970s, and the Vineyard Fellowship's worship music in the 1980s, the emphasis on an authentic, affective experience was inherent to Pentecostal and charismatic worship, and music played a critical role. As churches around the country replaced hymns with CWM and hymnals with projectors, worshippers outside of Pentecostal and charismatic traditions, in many ways, *became* Pentecostal and charismatic, actively participating in this intentional pursuit of an authentic, affective experience in worship via new musical forms. No longer tethered to books, they began raising their hands. And soon memorizing the simple, repetitive lyrics, they began closing their eyes. In both, believers adopted charismatic liturgies of the body in pursuit of intimate communion with God. Or they began clapping, shouting, and jumping, moved by the overwhelming spectacle

of sound and light exploding from the sanctuary stage, now transformed into a rock arena. And even in this—in the movement of the body and the participation in the explosive affective energy of an energetic rock show experience—worshippers pulled from a Pentecostal and charismatic logic that embraced affective authenticity as integral to proper worship. With such power, the musical portion of the worship service came to represent the whole of "worship" as believers experienced the movement of the Holy Spirit through the affective energy available in rock.

I end with a prediction, which is always dangerous business for a historian. If CWM is here to stay, whatever form it takes and however it evolves, it will remain rooted in this charismatic pursuit of affective authenticity. That does not mean that it will look or sound the same, but simply that it will continue to rest on contemporary constructions of authenticity and continue to harness the affective power of rock music. In fact, this almost guarantees that it will *not* remain the same, for this pursuit of authenticity in CWM is not the pursuit of a static, normative ideal, but an actively changing, negotiated construction of shared truth. What type of music *sounds* true and speaks to my experience? What lyrical forms ring true to the way I understand God? What performative conventions cohere with my understanding of honest displays of emotion? Over the last fifty years, CWM's authenticity has not been a negotiation over established theological doctrines (though even those could be affected), but a conversation about which mediums have created affective dispositions that worshippers



can perceive and receive as true. And that negotiation *was* a conversation. It was not a personal, “whatever you want” kind of relativism, but one grounded in a communal conversation, guided less by personal whims and more by shared cultural meaning. And that conversation—like the consideration of what counted as "noise" or what counted as "beautiful"—constantly evolved with changing aesthetics, cultural idioms, musical fashions, and as believers often saw it, with the fresh movement of the Spirit.

What had begun as the noxious noise of rock n' roll had become the beautiful sound of worship for many, and this beauty brought significant change to Christian worship in America. It exported the Pentecostal and charismatic disposition towards affective authenticity to the larger world of American Christianity, brought a new emphasis on intimacy with God in worship, attracted thousands of disaffected baby boomers back to church, brought a multi-million dollar industry into the heart of the Christian sanctuary, and established rock music as the preeminent force in the church service, making "worship" synonymous with "worship music." All of this took place because beauty not only brought change, but power. The evangelistic power to translate the gospel to a new generation, the marketing power to attract thousands to church, the commercial power to sustain an industry, and, most important, the affective power to move worshippers emotionally and help them commune intimately with the divine.

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## Biography

Wen Reagan was born in 1983 in Raleigh, NC. He received a BA from Trinity College at Duke University in 2005, master's in theological studies from Duke Divinity School in 2008, and PhD from Duke University in 2015. Wen received a James B. Duke Fellowship for the PhD track in Religion from 2008 to 2012, the Gurney Harris Kearns Summer Fellowship for 2011 and 2012, the Duke University Dissertation Research International Travel Award in 2012, the E. Bayard Halsted Scholarship in 2012, a Louisville Institute Dissertation Fellowship in 2012, a Louisville Institute Postdoctoral Fellowship in 2013 (declined), and the Duke University Dean's Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2014. Wen's academic publications include "Bigger, Better, Louder: The Prosperity Gospel's Impact on Contemporary Christian Worship," co-written with Kate Bowler, in *Religion and American Culture* (2014) and "Blessed to be a Blessing: The Prosperity Gospel of Worship Music Superstar Israel Houghton," in *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity* (forthcoming in 2016). Wen lives in Durham, NC with his wife, Casey, and their son, Ezra.