

Western Worship Music through the Ages

Introduction

- Last week, Matt referenced **Ephesians 5:19** in his sermon [*“speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord”*]. This is a good **start** for the discussion today, but we will get more specific and look at music in worship from the beginning to the present day.
- As we go through this material, I want you to keep **3 points** in mind which frame the terms of music used in worship:
 1. The influence of culture on the church and the music used
 2. What constitutes “acceptable” music, and who decides
 3. Style vs. substance
- This is **not meant to be exhaustive** at all (!), and in the time I have I will skim the surface at best.
- My **background** is as a musician, majoring in theory and composition. So, there will be aspects of the discussion that tie together musical elements together with worship. So, you may get some musical terms you’re not familiar with, or music examples – I do plan on playing some – that you may not know. Feel free to ask **questions** if I use terms you don’t know.
- The focus will be on music in the church and music that can be performed in a concert hall also, for example, Handel’s Messiah.
- I want to show that **all through history there has been a battle between music that is intended for worship – sacred music – and the influence of the worldly**, and to discuss the idea of our **cultural views of “good” church music** – that which is appropriate for worship.
- The scope will be **broader** than what is in our services. And, I need to say up front, that my knowledge of Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) is not deep. I’m familiar with some of the recent popular artists – Shane & Shane, Brandon Lake, and others – but what I listen to is about 25 years old. Finally, with the exception of Rap, I like and listen to a lot of styles of music, most of which you may not be familiar with, and might not have on your playlist.
- I have read that after the Teaching Pastor, the next most difficult position to fill is that of the Music and Worship Pastor, which leads directly into my last point of the introduction.
- In all of church musical history, **there is a wide variety of styles and preferences**, based on churches, leaders and musicians, the specific times and cultures, and taste. But as with everything, **this gift that God has given, and which is meant to be used to glorify Him, has the potential for abuse**. We’ll look at some ways this plays out in each of the general periods and styles of music through the ages.

Early Church Music

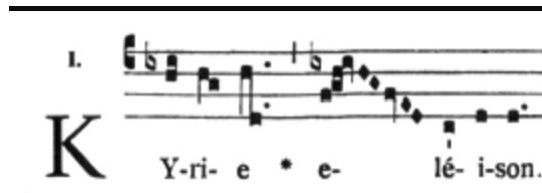
- There isn’t much written about **early church music**, mostly because music wasn’t studied or written; it was played or sung.
- As far back as the beginning, Scripture speaks of music. In Genesis 4:23-24, Cain sang to his wives of his pride and revenge: *“If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-*

seven times.” And coming down from the mountain, Moses heard singing coming from the camp – the Israelites were making music and dancing around the golden calf (Ex. 32).

- In Job 21, we read of the wicked that “they sing to the timbrel and harp and rejoice at the sound of the flute. They spend their days in prosperity and suddenly they go down to Sheol.” (Job 21:12-13)
- In the OT, we know that the Psalms were intended to be sung, but the music wasn’t written down, and tunes that aren’t known. They were handed down by word of mouth & tradition. They were likely simply melodies, probably accompanied by a harp (or, lyre). There were some markings that introduce many of the Psalms – possibly the tune, or the form, or who it would be performed by, such as “for the choir director”, which tells us that there would be a group of people singing or chanting the psalm. And we do know that the music of the time included antiphonal singing – groups tossing the melody back and forth. But I am not aware that any of the tunes remain.
- By the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th centuries after Christ division between what is **appropriate** for worship began. St. Jerome, in the late 4th / early 5th century wrote that ‘**a Christian maiden ought not to know what a lyre (a type of harp) or flute is like, or how to use it**’.
- There are also references in Paul’s letters to singing of hymns.

Chant

- As the church (RC) became established through the early centuries – in Rome, so Latin was the language of the church - **chant**, also called plainchant became the style of music used in worship in the Roman Catholic church and Monastic life for hundreds of years. It is monophonic, unaccompanied sacred song, and sung in Latin by the clergy. The average person didn’t read and there were no printing presses, so the Bible was not available to them and there were no hymn books. It was formalized by Pope Gregory in 9th and 10th centuries; hence it became known as “Gregorian Chant”.
- It is built on modes, or specific scales. There were **4** – Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, and Mixolydian – then **8** – adding Hypodorian, Hypophrygian, Hypolydian, and Hypomixolydian – and then **12** modes. Modes are simply a sequence of notes similar to our scales, but with different sequences of ½ tones and whole tones so music built on them sounds different to our ears, as we’ll hear in an example.
- They were meant to be **simple**, unadorned in style. **Single voice**, not instruments, etc. **No rhythmic** variation. **Only the voice was used to retain the purity of worship**.
- Chant is still in use in formal RC church services.
- Notation developed later.
- Style is unemotional, melismatic, **again, for purity**.
- There was no congregational participation. There were no hymnbooks to sing from.
- The main RC service was the Mass, and so chant was used to sing various standard parts of the Mass – Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei – called the Ordinary of the Mass.
- **Ex. of chant** – Kyrie eleison [<https://youtu.be/v6CRsw2gdcc?si=6EjpMkGu7pqw79K6>]



This is an example of the notation:

- Towards the end of this period – around 1600 – a composer named Rameau developed the idea of harmony based on what we now call major and minor scales (Ionian and Aeolian modes).

C Major Scale - Triads

Chord:	C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	Bdim
	IMa	IIIm	IIIIm	IVMa	VMa	VIIm	VIIIdim
Chord Type:	Major	Minor	Minor	Major	Major	Minor	Diminished

- At the same time, and having beginnings back to the 1200's, what we now call **carols** were sung. They were sung at yearly celebrations like Advent, Christmas, and Easter, though not in church until the 1600's and later.
- These became the **start of what we now call hymns**.
- So, what were some ways the church in this period tried to distance itself from the culture around it? As we came into the Reformation, a Catholic contemporary of Luther – Erasmus (1466-1536) – complained that the congregation couldn't hear the words (even though they didn't know the Latin anyway) because the **instrumental music was crowding out the text**. We can still have that problem today when instruments are too loud and/or the focus of the singing goes so much to the production of good sound without making sure that the words are clear and understood.
- Some years later, still in the Catholic church, Pope Benedict XIV declared that "ecclesiastical music must be composed in a **style which differs from that of the theatre**. The solo, the duet, the trio, are forbidden." And certain instruments like timpani, trumpets, oboes, and any instruments which are theatrical in character couldn't be used, though the organ was acceptable and string instruments could be tolerated.
- The church's goal was to **separate its worship from the influence of the culture around**, and eliminate anything that would cause people to associate the worship with activities of the world. And all during this period, a truly appropriate style of worship music to be considered had to be **grave** and **devout, devoid of passion and emotion**.

The Reformation

- Then came the **Reformation**.
- Where the RC church wanted to keep control of worship through the use of language the common people didn't read, the Reformers goal was to **bring worship to the understanding of the common person**. So not only was the Bible translated into local languages, they wanted the congregation to participate in the music used in worship. And **printing presses** meant that the Bible and hymnbooks were available.
- Since the common man's understanding of music was, well, common, and the Reformers wanted the music to be approachable, **hymns became the natural expression of worship** in music.
- **But (!)**, there were **competing views** of what that meant.
- Calvin, Zwingli, and others felt that **only text from the Bible** should be used for the words. Anything not expressly authorized by the Bible should be rejected, and considered "Catholic". Hymns that didn't quote the Bible were banned, and no instrumental accompaniment was allowed. Organs were removed from church buildings.
- Luther, on the other hand, used hymns to **teach the truths of the faith**. The result was a wealth of hymn writing and congregational singing. One of the most known is "A mighty fortress is our God". An example of an early Hymnbook:



Notice: only melody, no rhythm

- The melody is **simple, easy to sing, and the writers would often use tunes the common people might know**. Luther has been accused of using bar tunes for his hymns, but this is false, and originated because he used "bar" form (a common musical structure of AAB) for his tunes. His hymns were **not only direct statements or paraphrases** of Scripture.
- He explained them in this quote:
"I, too, with the help of others, have brought together some sacred songs, in order to make a good beginning and to give an incentive those who can better carry on the Gospel and bring it to the people. And these songs were arranged in four parts for no other reason than that I wanted to attract the youth (who should and must be trained in music and other fine arts) away from love songs and carnal pieces and to give them something wholesome to learn instead."
- Then, some decades later, Charles Wesley came on the scene, bridging this earlier period to the Baroque period of music. He was prolific, **writing over 6,500 hymns**. And we know and sing many, best known among them "And Can It Be".

- But what set him apart from the others was that he wanted to **express one's personal feelings in their relationship with God**, along with the theme of simple worship from the older hymns. This also resulted in a great number of hymns being written, continuing into the first half of the 1800's.
- This **"feelings-based" focus** was a departure from centuries of musical style, and had influence all the way to the present day, as we will see, in fact, giving rise eventually to the Pentecostal movement. And **in music**, this change has some **roots** in the present day music of **Hillsong and Bethel**.

So, some general ideas we can take away from these periods of music so far:

1. There was a tension between keeping church music pure from any influences of the secular
2. This included whether there would be instruments used, and if so, which instruments were "acceptable"
3. Whether to allow expression into the music, or keep it entirely pure and expressionless
4. Whether the music should be primarily a function of church leadership, or permitted to the congregation also. This was primarily, but not exclusively, a function of the RC church's practice
5. Lastly, was the music to be used only for worship, or would it also be a mechanism for teaching the congregation the truths of the church

Next, we come to the period some consider a pinnacle of worship music – the Baroque.

Baroque Music

- The word "Baroque" essentially means "exaggerated", or "elaborate", and comes from the Portuguese word for a "misshapen pearl"
- Roughly 1600 to 1750. Note: Bach died in 1750.
- **Music transitioned from simply melody, as in Gregorian chant and early hymns, to a well-developed practice of tonal harmony with the melody.** We can think of melody as a single line, horizontal direction. Harmony considers the vertical combination of notes together, and can be organized into keys based on a primary note – ex., the key of "C", or "A minor". This is called tonality.
- But it is more than simply melody and harmony. Chant was a restrained style of music; any sense of emotion was removed, attempting to reach holiness by separating completely from anything that implies the impurity of the world, to draw the worshipper into a holier state of purity. The music of the Baroque added aspects missing from earlier music in order to add a **greater degree of expression**, things like dynamics – loud and soft – and rhythm – beats, grouping of beats into measures, and changes in note values.
- And, as harmony and tonality developed, musicians associated **meaning to various keys**.
- So, for instance, the key of C expressed **purity, simplicity, happiness**. D was meant to portray **triumph and victory**. E^b was used for **cruelty and hardness**. A minor – **tender, pious** emotions. F[#] minor represented **gloomy, passionate resentment**. Performers, and I don't doubt audiences, could hear the different keys – they could certainly know the original key of a piece often from the title – and would therefore understand the meaning in the

music. Obviously, there were other aspects of composition and performance that would portray meaning, and we will look at some in an excerpt in just a bit.

- **Why was this important?** Because it conveyed additional meaning to the musical aspect of worship which the writer, the performer(s), and probably the listeners understood.
- And with the addition of harmony – more than one line – came the idea that a composer could write for more instruments or voices in a piece.
- Probably the most well-known and most representative composer of the Baroque period was **J. S. Bach**. But, in his day, he was only really known as a good organist – not the best, that was Dietrich Buxtehude – and a fairly decent composer. It wasn't until almost the middle of the 1800's that his music became "discovered", if my memory is correct, by Mendelssohn. Bach wrote a wealth of music. As a composer and music director for churches and courts, he regularly wrote **Cantatas** – typically a 6-movement work played in a single service, and he would do one each week, then write out the parts, then rehearse them, then lead the performance on Sunday. He is known to have written **over 300 of these** in his lifetime, and 200 still exist. He wrote full works for significant events in the church calendar – St. Matthew Passion, St. John Passion, Christmas Oratorio are 3 examples of these, for Easter and Christmas. And he wrote many, many other instrumental and vocal pieces, both sacred and secular.
- Along with writing a multitude of music, **he also fathered 20 children from his 2 wives** (the first died and he remarried).
- All his music, sacred or secular, was inscribed at the end with *Solo Deo Gloria* – Glory to God Alone.
- Bach took many of the **well-known hymn melodies**, developed marvelous harmonies for them, and used them in his works. O Sacred Head is a perfect example. The hymn tunes were generally simple, but the harmony was deeply expressive and beautiful, excellent examples of correct use of "voicing" – how parts move together – to create deep expression. Bach used this tune in various pieces, including his St. Matthew Passion, 5 Cantatas, and Christmas Oratorio. Some years later, Paul Simon borrowed it for his song "American Tune". [Acapeldridge example] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRjJ9nufa2c>
- Probably the best-known and most performed work of music of this period is **Handel's Messiah**. This was originally intended for the concert hall, but it is also performed in churches. Handel wrote the entire 3 hour+ piece in 26 days, including writing out the parts for its first performance, and took almost no food the entire time. So, we see here the **mixing of the (sacred) church environment with (normally the secular) concert hall**. The text is entirely Scripture; the musical language is rich.
- We'll listen to an excerpt from that work. Listen for how Handel contrasts the lost wandering aimlessly in darkness with those in the light. [The People That Walked in Darkness] <https://youtu.be/liLJC6p3sjM> (@2:05)
- Keep in mind, again, that this depth of musical understanding has been mostly lost to us, and so the complexity and richness of the music is not as appreciated by the listener.
- There were, as you might expect, **reactions against this ornate style** of Baroque music. As we will see, there is an overlap of the beginning of the period of Enlightenment with the end

of the Baroque, and an aspect of Enlightenment thinking was a **desire for simplicity** and (merely?) external piety, which plays out as music moves to the later periods discussed next. A quote by an orthodox pastor of the time, Hector Mithobius (1621-1681, of Ottendorf) is instructive:

“The wanton, frivolous, confused and overly ornate manner of singing and playing, with all too many startling coloraturas and strange runs where everything is fighting and simultaneously laughing and hopping in and through everything else as if one were in a pleasure house or worldly gambling house, has never been praised by honorable people, much less by upright Christians.”

- And **finally, we see another illustration** of why the Baroque period is such a rich period of music in worship – its depth, variety, wide range of styles, and practices are just some of the reasons.
- Much more could be said about this period, but time doesn’t allow.

Classical and Romantic Periods

- As mentioned, the **Enlightenment** overlapped with the later years of the Baroque, and took over just about every aspect of **European society**, also making its way to the New World – our country, affecting **philosophy, law, politics, culture, religion, and other areas**.
- The phrase, “cogito, ergo sum” (I think, therefore I am), expressed a central thought of the period – what we can reason in our minds determines our being. But it also changed the philosophical focus from a God-centered view to a Man-centered view.
- In religious terms, the period reacted against the religious wars of the previous ~100 years by **reforming faith to remove controversy**, maintaining a simple faith and returning to the basic Scriptures. But (!), because there was such an emphasis on reason, there was also a move towards natural ideas of God. **Miracles, angels, the Resurrection, were all removed in favor of a reason-based moral code.**
- **Deism** and **Atheism** began to be discussed, and the beginning of the breakdown of absolute truth had its start somewhat. **Man became to be the determiner of truth.**
- Much, much more could be said, and you can read a lot of material about the movement (Wikipedia is a good resource), but we won’t do that here.
- So how did this play out in music in general, and church music specifically? Two representatives of the Classical period of music as a result of the Enlightenment were **Mozart and Haydn**. Their music can be described as **pure music** – clarity of **form**, **rejection of extremes**, and **technical brilliance** were all characteristic of music of this period. These were all man-centric trends. But paradoxically, the Classical period of music gave way to Romanticism in the later 1800’s. A religious work from these years (bridging classical and romantic) is the Requiem, by Gabriel Faure’, a French composer. It is **simple in form and melody**, but **non-traditional in harmony**. It is church music, but meant for the **concert hall**. It is very reflective of the Enlightenment influence on music of the time, and church worship music as well.

Moving from a European view of church music, because this was what it was for centuries up to the early 1800's, I want to look at **American church music** from the 1800's on.

- In the early 1800's the **Handel and Haydn Society** was formed in Boston to “improve the style of Church Music” with 2 goals – provide Boston audiences with **performances of the masters**, and publish **collections of church choir and congregational music**.
- A number of major composers of church music rose during this time also.
 - **Thomas Hastings** (1784-1872) wrote nearly 1,000 sacred compositions and many hymn tunes. But his main contribution was his **writings about the state of music**.
 - In an 1822 dissertation to the Boston Society, he wrote that the style of singing a hymn should match the music so that **it should not hinder devotion** to worship. **Music should further religious “devotion” by not attracting attention to itself** or away from the religious themes. He did not like what he called “fuging-tunes” – a reference to polyphonic writing such as fugues.
 - **Lowell Mason** (1792-1872) was the most influential composer, publisher of church music collections, and educator. His main focus was that **worship, and not musicianship**, should be most important. He favored **simple, “correct”** (harmonic, most likely) rules, **singable and unadorned music**, where the music sets the text carefully. Instruments were allowed: “an organ was preferred, cello was acceptable, but the violin should be avoided because of its secular connotations as a popular dance instrument.” A particular contribution Mason made was to **establish singing-schools**. This would eventually lead to two specific schools of church music which were the best in the country at the time for church choral music and choir directors.
 - John Finlay Williamson (1887-1964) established the **Westminster Choir College** in Ohio in 1926, which moved to Princeton, NJ in 1932, eventually becoming part of Princeton for a period of time. Finlay Williamson was regarded as one of the most influential choral conductors of the 20th century. He coined the term “Ministers of Music”.
 - From the 30's on, WCC performed regularly with the NY Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra (Stokowski), toured, and also performed a number of times at the White House. In its beginnings WCC was heavily influenced by the work of St. Olaf Choir.
 - **St Olaf Choir** was founded in 1912 by Norwegian immigrant F. Melius Christiansen (1871-1955) in Northfield, MN. It is a part of St. Olaf College and is one of the finest choir ensembles in the country. Christiansen chose profound spiritual music for the choir, and developed a particular sound that was disciplined, controlled, and with minimal vibrato – a clear tone that was pure in pitch. The choir has maintained that tradition throughout its history. Along with performing in many premier halls around the world, the White House (Bush '45), the choir was the only non-professional group of the 5 that performed at the '88 Seoul Olympics.

- Why is this relevant to music as part of worship for us, now? These **hymn writers** and **ensembles** had a profound effect on the music that would be performed in church choirs across the country. They helped to **revive singing** in America's churches when it was in a period of decline. They **differed in their approaches** to what was proper and acceptable in music used for worship – professionalism vs. musicianship, for example – but each in their way drove significant **development in the music** that would be used for worship, and **worship leaders** in the churches.
- We can summarize church music of the Classical and Romantic periods, and the early 20th century with the following points:
 - **Hymnody** was the main focus of church worship music.
 - There was still the **struggle** between the “pure” and the culturally influenced
 - The **Enlightenment** drove a focus on the Arts and Culture in performance. The result was that sacred music of “the Masters” was **performed in concerts**.
 - By the beginning of the 20th century, choral singing and choirs developed a higher degree of **professionalism**, and the idea that the **choir** could be a “performance ensemble” as part of the worship service developed. We see that reflected today in the Special Music that is often a part of a service.

Contemporary Church Music

- In cultural terms, there has been a huge shift in the concept of truth in the last century or more: as Francis Schaeffer puts it, there is a line of despair which occurred in the US after ~1935, and from that point on “true truth” (absolutes) no longer applied. Truth has become what each of us “feels” is true.
- This reflected itself in the 50's and 60's as social mores broke down.
- The schools and hymn writers mentioned earlier brought about a great number of well-known hymn writers throughout these years of the 20th century.
- These include Fanny Crosby (1820-1915), George B Shea (singer with Billy Graham), (in the GR area) John Peterson (1921-2006), and Bill Pearce (jazz influence). And there was an explosion of Gospel music through artists such as the Vaughn Quartet (1910-1920) and Mahalia Jackson (in the 30's – 60's). The Vaughn Quartet was a prototype of a number of acapella groups in the latter part of the 20th century singing traditional hymn music with standard harmony – groups such as Glad and Take 6.
- Some hymns in the late 60's also took on a decidedly “topical” flavor. An example of this is “God of Earth and Outer Space”, written to the well-known and often referenced Welsh tune Aberystwyth (Jesus, Lover of my Soul). The lyrics are a bit less traditional:

God of Earth and outer space
 God of love and God of grace
 Bless the astronauts who fly
 As they soar beyond the sky
 God who flung the stars in space
 God who set the sun ablaze
 Fling the spacecraft thro the air
 Let man know your presence there

- By the 80's there was a movement towards bringing back "spirituality", though in a New Age way. This was evidenced by big works such as "Jesus Christ, Superstar" and "Godspell". And rockers such as Barry McGuire (from McGuinn and McGuire, a folk-rock group in LA; he became a Christian) and others brought the music style of pop rock into the Christian scene that was developing in the 80's. And there were others from a mainline rock genre who had impact – Eric Clapton, and Bob Dylan for a few years in the early 70's.
- Also, in the 60's a rocker named Larry Norman – described as "the poet laureate of Jesus music" – provided the foundation to what we have now as Contemporary Christian Music (CCM).
- Which lead to big names like Amy Grant, Michael Card, Michael W. Smith, Sandi Patti, Steven Curtis Chapman, and many others who became major artists in the CCM scene. Another group, that became big, starting with a kind of rap music background, was DC Talk. Their lead writer and singer broke off after some years and started his own band – TobyMac.
- The big-name female artists – Grant, Patti – launched a stream of other female Christian artists and groups coming from Nashville and LA predominantly: names like Nicole Nordmann, Jennifer Knapp, Michelle Tumes, Sara Grove, Point of Grace, and many others. Along with a softer sound, they were talented lyricists also.
 - Ex: Some Jennifer Knapp lyrics to "Say Won't You Say":
My eyes fear to close
This reckless letting go is hard to bear
On the edge of all I need
Still I cling to what I see, and what I have I there?
Bred my own disaster, who have I to blame?
When I all I need is waiting to be fanned to flame
- The result was a fusion of Christian message (generally) with soft or hard (as in DC Talk) rock music accompaniment. And because of the move away from absolute truth to "what I feel to be right" truth, which has impacted many churches' and denominations' theology, the lyrics reflected this change in the music.
- We had teaching last year on the heresies of Hillsong and Bethel, and why we don't use or support their music – feelings-based, the supernatural, modalism, to name a few.
- But there was a layer of artists and approaches that attempted to retain the purity of the Scriptures and simplicity of music style that has been a theme throughout church music history. Michael Card is an example: simple folk style, scrupulous adherence to Scripture and Protestant theology. He was, however, criticized in 2004 when he provided music for a Ravi Zacharias sermon at the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake.
- There are churches that keep to a traditional hymn-based style of worship music – Stonebriar was one we know well – because of Chuck Swindoll's love of hymns. Shepherd's Church in Cary, NC is another example.
- The music at MBC employs a light rock instrumental setting of traditional hymns and songs. In many churches today that's a common style that bridges the traditional text and melody with a sound that would appeal to a younger congregation.

- There are other groups that experiment with new styles. Poor Bishop Hooper – named for an Anglican Bishop reformer in the early 1500’s who was martyred in 1555 by burning at the stake, except that the fire went out a number of times and he suffered greatly, while not recanting. They write Scripture-based music, and record it in their home in Iowa using keyboards, other simple instruments, and synthesizers. The music is unique, and goes back to a “layered” style reminiscent of Ravel (Bolero) and African music (but not ethnomusicology-based; it doesn’t sound African, just employs the technique).
- Finally, in the choral tradition, there is also an amalgamation of various styles of classical music style that might be found in music of the Classical and Romantic period – tonal, lyrical, wide range of instrumentation – and that which utilizes a broad range of styles from chant to traditional classical music. Some writers who represent this traditional choral literature format include Tom Fettke, Mark Hayes, Camp Kirkland, Jay Rouse, and Egil Hovland. John Rutter is an English composer who writes church music on Scripture for church and performance hall. He has publicly stated that he is not a believer, but recognizes the beauty of the text and writes music appropriate to it.
- Here are some examples of music written by some of these artists:
 - The Glory of the Father, Egil Hovland
<https://youtu.be/y8RKGN3Yf5U?si=LTNciv3Q5D9yY9Le>
 - For the Beauty of the Earth, John Rutter
<https://youtu.be/1bDoMflYErE?si=bGXFD7c3R6vESFv5>
 - No More Night, Camp Kirkland
<https://youtu.be/JmZR3qhxtsc?si=HEYRN0oSrCQzRojD>
 - Christ, Poor Bishop Hooper <https://youtu.be/SXyrGGGIZSM>
 - In My Minds Eye, DC Talk <https://youtu.be/-aPxYCOoKl4>
- These are only some of the “out of the way” artists, which you may not be familiar with, writing and performing music for worship in and out of the church, which I chose because of their unique styles (though Camp Kirkland would definitely be considered “mainline”).

So, how can we summarize Contemporary Christian Music in performance and worship

- Church music in the 20th and 21st centuries blends many different styles; there is no one style characteristic of the period.
 - Light and heavier rock
 - Orchestral
 - Chant-based
 - Folk (Michael Card, etc.)
 - Electronic, synthesized (Poor Bishop Hooper)
 - Traditional hymns
 - Broad range of instruments
 - Generally tonal
- Influences for these styles come from rock music, jazz, folk, gospel, classical backgrounds, ethnomusicology (African, Asian, Latin).
- The music performed in churches often depends on the makeup of the congregation, the styles of music they prefer, and the various instruments are available, among other things.

- Finally, to generalize, I think church music reflects the nature of society – layers of generations such as Boomers, Millennials, Gen[whatever], etc. These layers of generations drive what we listen to and prefer in our worship. We may prefer one style over another; I don't think that it should be as important. The main idea, I believe, is whether the music is theologically sound for worship, whether the motives of the person(s) are appropriate for worship (which, most likely, only God knows), and whether the rendering does justice to the text and music – in other words, is it “quality” (subjective, and not necessarily meaning “professional”).
- At the highest level, church music through the ages has tried to define what is “sacred” and what is “secular”, and whether any of the things considered secular may be appropriate for worship. This will probably be true as long as music is employed and enjoyed as a function of the worship that is due for our Lord and Savior.