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**A LUTHERAN EVALUATION OF ARGUMENTS  
AGAINST THE USE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS  
IN PUBLIC WORSHIP**

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**A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Practical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology**

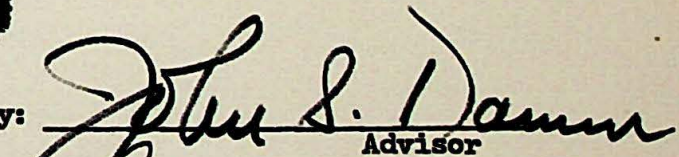
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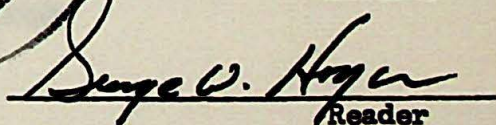
by

**Mark Paul Bangert**

**May 1969**

  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Most Lutheran worshipers of the twentieth century are accustomed to hearing the sounds of organ, trumpets, and other instruments in public worship. Instrumental music has become so much a part of Lutheran liturgical practice that some parishes have considered it appropriate to include tympani, cymbals, and handbells as part of the worship equipment.<sup>1</sup>

The Lutheran is not always aware that in the past there have been respected Christian theologians who were convinced of the impropriety of instrumental music in public worship, and that church councils and synods have legislated against its use in public worship. Ecclesiastical sentiment against instrumental music cannot be attributed simply to the whimsical tastes of bygone leaders of the church. The exclusion of musical instruments from worship was frequently supported with arguments thought to be decisive because of their theological premises. Because many of these arguments are derived from theological views compatible with only certain Christian traditions, some may feel that they deserve little attention. But a failure to reckon with the arguments could easily lead to gnostic pride and to a lack of sympathy for views held by other Christians. A Lutheran confrontation with a polemic against instrumental music might be advocated if for no other reason than to test the validity of the Lutheran acceptance of instrumental music in worship.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Bethel Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Missouri, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Luke in Chicago, Illinois.



Recent developments in the shape and style of church music have yielded additional reasons for a contemporary encounter with the arguments against instrumental music. In the past Lutheran confrontations with these arguments have tended to be wholly academic. The Lutheran appreciation for instrumental music in worship made any possibility of extensive prohibition of trumpets, flutes, and organs in worship quite improbable. A few scholars might have been moved to examine the polemic in order to gain a better understanding of the historical development of church music. A few others might have found a study of the arguments helpful for understanding the significance of the Lutheran acceptance of instrumental music. But the appearance of Geoffrey Beaumont's 20th Century Folk Mass in 1955<sup>2</sup> precipitated a revival of arguments against instruments. His setting of the liturgy was the first in a continually expanding list of musical settings of the liturgy employing the idioms of folk music and jazz. Its appearance evoked great discussion about the basic question as to the propriety of the use of instruments in addition to a discussion of the musical idiom employed.

Many Christians do not respond favorably to the sounds of a pizzicato string bass, guitar, or rhythm section. They are convinced that these instruments do not belong in the context of Christian worship. In their struggles to deal with the new sounds and their personal disapproval, they have begun to itemize reasons for their dislikes and for their contention that these instruments and idioms should not be utilized for public worship. Whether their views will influence the practice of

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<sup>2</sup>See Erik Routley, Twentieth Century Church Music (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 151-162.



church music remains to be determined. The process of evaluation may have to be lengthy and perhaps never completed. Any evaluation may have to be tentative, but it can at least be an enlightened evaluation if it is made with an understanding of the manner in which similar problems were handled by Christians of previous ages.

When the Lutheran is asked to react to the liturgical use of folk music, of jazz, and of popular instruments such as saxophones and guitars, he is not forced to respond merely on the basis of his taste; neither is he compelled to make decisions which simply accommodate the purported needs of a younger generation. He can be informed by the historic Lutheran approach to music and by the musical permissiveness which characterizes it. He can be enlightened by the attitudes which are mirrored by Lutheran composers in the sizable body of Lutheran church music. He may react favorably to these contemporary forms of church music. He should also be prepared to confront those arguments which have been advanced against instrumental music of all sorts, and, if necessary, he should be willing to alter his definitions of the function and nature of church music.

The purpose of this study is to present those arguments which have been advanced against the use of musical instruments in public worship, to analyze them for purposes of clarification and categorization, and to evaluate them from a Lutheran point of view.

John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli were convinced that some of these arguments appear in the New Testament. Contemporary studies of the musical aspects of the New Testament reveal that the question of



instrumental music was probably not a concern of the canonical writers.<sup>3</sup> No attempt was made in this study to repeat the exegetical investigations reported by William Smith in his dissertation on the Musical Aspects of the New Testament.<sup>4</sup> The approach of this study was instead to examine the works of ecclesiastical writers, after the composition of the New Testament.

The research does not claim to be exhaustive. Those arguments which reflect an interest in the theological aspects of the problem were considered to be most important, for it was assumed that they also mirror a concern for the nature and essence of music and for the character and purpose of public worship.

Because the liturgical development of the Western Church differs from that of the Eastern Church, and because the Lutheran claims the former as his inheritance, only those arguments have been presented which have evolved from the major confessional traditions of Western Christendom.

The question concerning the place of the organ in worship was excluded from this discussion. The organ's historical function in worship has been previously examined in detail,<sup>5</sup> and the inclusion of that material in this study would make the paper unwieldy.

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<sup>3</sup>See William Sheppard Smith, Musical Aspects of the New Testament (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij W. Ten Have N. V., 1962), p. 53.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>See the comprehensive bibliography with the article by Walter Supper and others, "Orgel," Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik, edited by Friedrich Blume (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1962), X, 228-331.



Finally, for the formulation of a Lutheran approach, Luther's views on music were assumed to be central. His views, however, were supplemented when possible by opinions expressed by his contemporaries, and by approaches of Lutheran composers and authors since his day who have struggled to apply Lutheran principles to the practice of church music in this century.

After a brief sketch of instrumental music in Judaism and in the pagan cults, Chapter II proceeds to a presentation of the arguments proposed by the church fathers, and concludes with an investigation of the use of instrumental music in the Roman Catholic Church.

Chapter III deals with the arguments advanced by John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli, and with the influence these two reformers have had on the practice of church music in the Reformed branch of Christianity.

Chapter IV provides a Lutheran approach to music against which the arguments presented in Chapters II and III can be evaluated.

Chapter V contains the Lutheran evaluation of the arguments presented in Chapters II and III, along with some specific suggestions for a contemporary practice of Lutheran church music.

Although there have been various studies made on specific aspects of the problem of instrumental music in worship, no prior study has brought together the negative arguments for the purpose of a Lutheran evaluation. Of those works concerned with the church fathers and their criticisms of music, most helpful have been the discussions by William



Smith,<sup>6</sup> Joseph Gelineau,<sup>7</sup> Johannes Quasten,<sup>8</sup> Franz Leitner,<sup>9</sup> and Erik Routley.<sup>10</sup> Zwingli's view of music has recently been investigated by Charles Garside<sup>11</sup> and Oskar Söhngen,<sup>12</sup> both working independently but arriving at identical conclusions. Söhngen was also helpful for insights into Calvin's views of music. The Lutheran approach to music was largely informed by the works of Söhngen, Christhard Mahrenholz,<sup>13</sup> Walter Buszin,<sup>14</sup> and by many monographs appearing in the periodical Musik und Kirche.

The secondary sources covering the patristic views of music were particularly helpful in discovering those passages in which the pertinent material actually appears. These citations were compared with their contexts, when possible also in translation, and were evaluated on their

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<sup>6</sup>Smith, Musical Aspects of the New Testament.

<sup>7</sup>Joseph Gelineau, Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship, translated from the French by Clifford Howell (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1964).

<sup>8</sup>Johannes Quasten, Musik und Gesang in den Kulturen der heidnischen Antike und christlichen Frühzeit (Münster in Westfalen: Achendorff, 1930).

<sup>9</sup>Franz Leitner, Der gottesdienstliche Volksgesang im jüdischen und christlichen Altertum (Freiburg in Breisgau: Herder, 1906).

<sup>10</sup>Erik Routley, The Church and Music (2nd revised edition; London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1967).

<sup>11</sup>Charles Garside, Zwingli and the Arts (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966).

<sup>12</sup>Oskar Söhngen, "Theologische Grundlagen der Kirchenmusik," Die Musik des evangelischen Gottesdienstes, vol. IV of Leiturgia. Handbuch des evangelischen Gottesdienstes, edited by Karl Ferdinand Müller and Walter Blankenburg (Kassel: Johannes Stauda, 1961), pp. 1-266.

<sup>13</sup>Christhard Mahrenholz, Luther und die Kirchenmusik (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1937).

<sup>14</sup>Walter Buszin, "Luther on Music," The Musical Quarterly, XXXII (January 1946), 80-97.



own merits and on the basis of studies made by others. In some cases it was possible to secure translations of the passages taken from the works of the church fathers and of Calvin and Zwingli. Those translations are acknowledged in the notes. The author bears responsibility for all other translations. These are indicated by the inclusion of the original text in the notes.

An approach to a problem of church music from the negative point of view may be somewhat unusual, but it does contribute to a better understanding of the musical latitude which is characteristic of a Lutheran view of music. Through an awareness of this Lutheran inclusiveness, and through contemplation of the concerns posed by the historic arguments against instruments, Lutherans should be better prepared to confront the musical and liturgical issues of the present day, fully conscious of the past which has shaped them and confident of the future which they are in the process of shaping.



## CHAPTER II

### THE PATRISTIC AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC POLEMIC AGAINST THE USE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

The theological arguments advanced by the Roman Catholic branch of Western Christendom against instrumental music in public worship originated in the first four centuries of the Christian era.<sup>1</sup> After the fifth century the polemic either recedes into the background as being relatively unimportant, or it is revived, developed, and expanded because of various pressures brought to bear upon the church's worship. The relaxation of the polemic is due to that acclimitization which the church experienced after the Edict of Constantine, or to what Gregory Dix describes as the lessening of an eschatological consciousness and the church's reconciliation to time and space.<sup>2</sup> That reconciliation implied as well a reconciliation to music and its modes of performance. The expansion of the polemic is particularly evident in the history of Roman Catholic church music after the Council of Trent. Because that history is shaped by the Tridentine restatement of an earlier patristic argument, the patristic and Roman Catholic argumentation are considered together in this chapter.

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<sup>1</sup>Egon Wellesz, A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography (2nd revised edition; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 79.

<sup>2</sup>Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (2nd edition; London: Dacre Press, 1960), pp. 304-319.



### The Context for the Patristic Polemic

The polemic did not develop in a vacuum. The church fathers wrote and spoke in the midst of a theological and philosophical thought world which exerted a yet undetermined influence upon their literary productions. They were further influenced by the musical practices of the day, both those in everyday life and those in the pagan religious cults. An evaluation of the patristic polemic must take this context into account.

The writings of the New Testament are a part of this context, although what force these documents exerted upon the early church fathers or what precise knowledge of them they possessed cannot always be determined. Appeals to musical references within the New Testament rarely occur in the works of the fathers. The reasons for this may be both the scarcity of musical references and the difficulties encountered in interpreting the few references that do occur. At least these are some of the circumstances which hamper some contemporary exegetes in their attempts to discuss the musical aspects of the New Testament. For instance, William Smith argues that the New Testament cannot be made to speak to the specific problem of instrumental musical performance and the criticism of that practice.<sup>3</sup> According to him the most that can be said

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<sup>3</sup>William Sheppard Smith, Musical Aspects of the New Testament (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij W. Ten Have N. V., 1962), p. 48. His statement is advanced against those who maintain that Paul's inferences in 1 Corinthians 13 and 14 must be interpreted as condemnatory of musical instruments. To this Smith says, "it must be conceded that 1 Cor. 13 and 14 does not in itself establish the case for or against instrumental usage. Especially must 1 Cor. 13:1 not be understood as a condemnation of all instruments per se." The rather extensive documentation for his conclusions can be located throughout the book. For other detailed discussions and bibliographies of instrumental music and music in general in the New Testament see: Gerhard Dellling, Worship in the New Testament,



about instrumental music on the basis of the New Testament is that it is neither approved nor disapproved by the Scriptures.<sup>4</sup> The New Testament usually regards music as a vocal phenomenon.

A survey of the Biblical references to musical performance leads to the conclusion that in Biblical thought it is not instrumental music, but rather song that is the significant musical form. References to musical instruments occur chiefly in connection with secular usage, the Levitical musical service of the Temple, and--borrowed from this latter--the imagery of the Apocalypse.<sup>5</sup>

Although some references to instruments do occur, the nature of their use especially within the church will probably never be known because of the paucity of evidence available to musicologists.

To what extent the organ, kithara, and other instruments were used during the earlier centuries in the performance of church music is a point on which no conclusive answers can be reached.<sup>6</sup>

Another aspect of the context from which the fathers spoke is the Jewish thought and practice of the time. The fathers were obviously aware of the many Old Testament references to musical instruments, particularly those references in the Psalms, but they were also aware of

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translated from the German by Percy Scott (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962); Franz Leitner, Der gottesdienstliche Volkgesang im jüdischen und christlichen Altertum (Freiburg in Breisgau: Herder, 1906); Johannes Quasten, Musik und Gesang in den Kulturen der heidnischen Antike und christlichen Frühzeit (Münster: Achendorff, 1930); and Bruno Stäblein, "Frühchristliche Musik," Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik, edited by Friedrich Blume (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1955), IV, 1035-1063. Hereafter this encyclopedia will be referred to as MGG.

<sup>4</sup>Smith, p. 53.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>6</sup>Gustave Reese, Music in the Middle Ages (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1940), p. 123. But cf. Charles Etherington who in his book Protestant Worship Music (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), p. 22, seems convinced that there was no instrumental music at all in New Testament worship and liturgy.



the attendant use of instruments by Israel both in its sacrificial practice<sup>7</sup> and in its recurring attempts to secure God's attention.

On at least certain occasions, the instrument's (trumpet) blast was directed to God himself, to get his attention as it were, that He might remember Israel, favoring His people and perhaps delivering them from their enemies. This may have been the primary reason for the association of the instrument with prayer and sacrifice.<sup>8</sup>

There was a reaction against this kind of thinking and practice within Judaism itself, particularly within the sect of Qumran.<sup>9</sup>

This Jewish antagonism toward instrumental music was given wider scope when the destructions of the two temples precipitated new attitudes towards music. A short time after the destruction of the first temple the entire art of Levitical instrumental music fell into oblivion. According to Abraham Idelsohn, all technical knowledge regarding this music was lost after two generations, and the religious wise men thereafter exerted much energy either in praising the non-existent music of the Levites or in homilizing on the existent musical terminology.<sup>10</sup> What occurred by default in the worship practices after the first destruction became more or less a rule with the destruction of the second temple:

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<sup>7</sup>Smith, pp. 48-49; see also Eric Werner, The Sacred Bridge (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 332-333.

<sup>8</sup>Smith, p. 142. Cf. also Max Thurian, The Eucharistic Memorial, Part I--The Old Testament, No. 7 of Ecumenical Studies in Worship (London: Lutterworth Press, 1960), pp. 70-84. The author discusses these concepts in full with biblical citations.

<sup>9</sup>Smith, pp. 43, and 48-49. It is possible that the Christian negativism grew out of this earlier Jewish animadversion.

<sup>10</sup>Abraham Z. Idelsohn, Jewish Music in Its Historical Development (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1948), p. 19.



But after the Destruction, all instrumental music, even for religious purposes, was prohibited, as a sign of national mourning over the Temple. The attitude, "Rejoice not, O Israel, unto exultation, like the people" (Hos. 9:1), became prevalent. Hence national mourning strengthened that antagonism to secular music which existed already before the Destruction.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, instrumental music was never permitted in the synagogues, and even singing was severely restricted.<sup>12</sup>

This non-musical approach to worship was advocated in particular by Philo, who, according to Johannes Quasten, had no use for instrumental music or singing in worship, viewing any kind of indulgence in music as being similar to overeating or overdrinking.<sup>13</sup> Summing up Philo's thoughts in this regard Quasten says:

Here also is evident a rejection of heathen instrumental music for religious festivals . . . People seek in music only their own pleasure and enjoyment. According to Philo, the idols of the heathen exploit this weakness of man and for the sake of a greater influence they have therefore joined their lies to melodies, rhythms, and meters with the intention of being able in this way to lure their audience more easily.<sup>14</sup>

Apparently, as a lure to man's sensual weaknesses, instrumental and vocal music served well for the pagan cults.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 93. Cf. also Smith, p. 15.

<sup>12</sup>F. Bösken, "Musikinstrumente," Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche, edited by Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner (2nd edition; Freiburg: Herder, 1962), VII, 702.

<sup>13</sup>Quasten, p. 71.

<sup>14</sup>"Auch hier zeigt sich eine Ablehnung der heidnischen Instrumentalmusik für religiöse Feste . . . Die Menschen suchen in der Musik nur ihre eigene Lust und Sinnenfreude. Diese Schwäche des Menschen nutzen die Götzen der Heiden nach Philo aus und der besseren Wirkung zuliebe haben sie (deshalb) ihre Lügen in Melodien, Rhythmen und Versmasze gefügt, in der Meinung, auf diese Weise leichter ihr Publikum betücken zu können," in Quasten, pp. 71-72. Quasten presents evidence for Philo's position on pp. 71-73.



Eric Werner reports that many Jews were won over to those syncretistic sects which featured instrumental music.<sup>15</sup> In fact, Werner sees this as the chief reason for Jewish aversion to instrumental music, and, for that matter, as a reason for similar Christian aversion to instrumental music.<sup>16</sup> Judaism, according to him, had to take a stand against those syncretistic cults which threatened its very existence, and it consequently had to take a stand against the worship practices of these cults, especially when they emphasized the sensual over the spiritual.<sup>17</sup> A direct result of this polemical position was the subsequent Jewish disdain for certain instruments, among which were the aulos, tympanon, and cymbals, because they were linked to the goddess Kybele:

The later antagonism toward these instruments probably had the following reason: all three instruments were sacred attributes of Kybele. The Greek and Latin sources are full of allusions to these instruments as the originally Asiatic accessories of the orgiastic cults of the Magna Mater. If such applications made the instruments suspicious to the Jewish authorities, it must have been their use in the Jewish syncretistic ceremonies of Zeus Sabazios.<sup>18</sup>

The Jewish polemic against instrumental music was extensive, and serves as evidence that the negative statements of the church fathers were not unique in cultic history and criticism.

The criticism of music and modes of musical performance was not simply a Jewish characteristic. Musical performance was discussed also

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<sup>15</sup>Werner, p. 368, n. 30.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 335. A description of how the instruments were used in these cults is given by Werner on p. 332.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 334.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 335. Quasten reports that in this particular cult, "fehlt deshalb die Flöte nie," p. 52.



by many of the philosophers of the era.<sup>19</sup> Behind this philosophic interest in music was no mere love or fascination with beauty but a conviction, fundamental to almost all primitive consideration music, that sound governs matter.<sup>20</sup>

The philosophical doctrine of ethos, probably first developed by the Pythagoreans and later explicated in full by Plato, is crucial to the understanding of the patristic arguments. The doctrine of ethos is a direct result of the axiom that sound governs matter. When matter happens to be a human being, sound, according to the doctrine of ethos, can directly influence the actions and thoughts of the individual. Because these actions and thoughts can be either beneficial or detrimental, sound and its effects must be evaluated according to a system of ethics. The doctrine of ethos is defined as the schema of powers inherent in music and musical forms, as they ethically influence humans. A simplified explanation of the doctrine is provided by Erik Routley:

We may accept the fact that some kinds of literature are liable to conduce to good morals and others to bad morals; if some of even our most treasured classics fall into the latter category, they must go. Very well. The same must apply to music. Some modes of music conduce to the martial virtues, and some to the contemplative virtues; others are depressing and enervating. We find, indeed, that only one mode is of value for the martial virtues and one for the contemplative. Then the rest must go. And we must keep a strict watch to ensure that the prohibited modes do not find their way in.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1941), p. 40.

<sup>20</sup>Curt Sachs, The History of Musical Instruments (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1940), p. 112.

<sup>21</sup>Erik Routley, The Church and Music (revised edition; London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1967), p. 22.



Ethical qualities were ascribed to modes or scales, but they can be ascribed also to manners of performance. For Plato vocal music is more important for the education of the ideal man than instrumental music, "because music 'without words' has no more spirit in it than the voice of an animal."<sup>22</sup> Hans Hoffmann says in addition:

In Plato's teaching on education music plays an important role. Yet at the same time it is significant that for education he rejects the absolute, therefore the pure, instrumental music, whose charm he acknowledges to be sure. His words are: "With all honor we want to request these artists to seek out a different city; we need reserved and less gay creators."<sup>23</sup>

Although by the time of the Christian era much of Plato's philosophy had been altered or replaced, the doctrine of ethos did not vanish, but, after going through various metamorphoses, continued to influence the practice of music well into the second and third centuries after Christ.<sup>24</sup>

Egon Wellesz mentions a treatise called Eisagoge harmonike written by Cleonides (circa second century A.D.) in which the author carefully describes the ethos of various kinds of music and then proceeds to restrict the function of each according to its ethos.<sup>25</sup>

The connecting link between Platonic philosophy and Christian theology, however, is Neoplatonism. Wellesz describes the nature of this link:

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<sup>22</sup>"weil eine Musik 'ohne Worte' nicht mehr Geist in sich berge als die Stimme des Tieres," in Quasten, p. 69.

<sup>23</sup>"In Platons Erziehungslehre spielt die Musik eine wichtige Rolle. Bedeutungsvoll ist dabei, dass er die absolute, also die reine Instr.-Musik, deren Reize er zwar anerkennt, für die Erziehung ablehnt mit den Worten: 'Mit allen Ehren wollen wir diese Künstler bitten, eine andere Stadt aufzusuchen; wir brauchen spröde und weniger vergnügliche Schöpfer.'" in Hans Hoffmann, "Aufführungspraxis," MGG, I, 785.

<sup>24</sup>Lang, p. 36.

<sup>25</sup>Wellesz, pp. 52-53.



The connexion between Greek philosophy and the Christian ideal of music becomes even closer under the influence of Neoplatonism, which had absorbed elements of the Pythagorean and Gnostic systems. In both these systems emphasis is laid on the task which music must fulfill of producing harmony between soul and body, tempering passions, giving grace and dignity to manners, elevating the soul.<sup>26</sup>

If the Christians, therefore, found it necessary to pass judgment on certain kinds of music and on certain modes of performance, they made their criticism on the basis of a three hundred year old tradition, a tradition which acknowledged a moral power in music, and a tradition which was prepared to eliminate a particular kind of music because of its innate ability to work what were considered by some to be negative results.

Despite the fact that the documents from the first four centuries of the Christian era afford almost nothing for a study of actual music from the period, some things can be discovered regarding the actual instrumental practice and the results of this practice upon the people. Werner is convinced, first of all, that the church fathers, when they condemned instrumental music, were addressing themselves to a very real problem, and that the violations of the patristic injunctions were manifold.<sup>27</sup>

From the second to the fourth centuries the members of Christian communities lived in the midst of a highly developed pagan civilization and were tempted to take part in the theatrical performances, dances, and processions they were constantly witnessing.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>27</sup>Werner, pp. 317-318.

<sup>28</sup>Wellesz, p. 79.



The fathers and the faithful were not oblivious to the apparent results of instrumental music, particularly in the pagan cults. Under the influence of instrumental sound those who attended the orgies often passed into a state of holy frenzy. Lucian in "The Goddess of Surrye" describes how the crowds gathered around the temples where the orgiastic rites were held. The crowd participated in the singing of ecstatic songs, some beating drums, others playing the flute. Many went into a trance. One frenzied youth tore off his clothes, jumped forward, seized one of the swords prepared for that purpose and castrated himself.<sup>29</sup> Because of their participation in such ecstatic orgies, instrumentalists were held in great contempt by those who kept watch over the public morals.<sup>30</sup>

In Rome musical instruments were used and recognized chiefly as means to stir up the passions of the citizenry.<sup>31</sup> Brass instruments served the military as tools for signaling the troops in battle. So important were the trumpets that a special ceremony was observed each spring to purify the instruments for the coming season:

Twice a year, on 23 March and 23 May, the sacred trumpets were symbolically purified at a ceremony called Tubilustrium. There is reason to believe that this originally had to do with the opening of the new campaigning season. It shows the intimate connexion that existed between the instrument and military life.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Lucian, "The Goddess of Surrye," Lucian, translated by A. M. Harmon in The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1925), IV, 338-411. The author was alerted to this description by a reference in Wellesz, p. 92.

<sup>30</sup>Wellesz, p. 91.

<sup>31</sup>Routley, p. 39.

<sup>32</sup>J. E. Scott, "Roman Music," Ancient and Oriental Music in New Oxford History of Music, edited by Egon Wellesz (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 412.



Musical instruments were also used at the games held in Rome, and it is possible that many of the Christian martyrdoms were accompanied with instrumental music.<sup>33</sup> The hydraulis, a primitive form of the organ, with its loud, penetrating tone, was particularly appropriate to such boisterous entertainment.<sup>34</sup>

By the fourth century many people outside of the church were deploring the narcotic-like hold which instrumental music had upon the common people. Ammianus Marcellinus relates how Christians and pagans alike became disinterested in serious educational pursuits and passed the time in singing and cithara playing. He deplores a culture in which singers replaced philosophers, libraries were closed, and the only flourishing industry was the production of musical instruments.<sup>35</sup>

The interpretation and evaluation of the patristic polemic against instrumental music will be benefited by a recognition of the context just outlined. The context indicates that the polemic proceeds from a thought world which includes a belief in the moral power in music, and out of a history of the criticism of music and musical performance. It occurs in the midst of an actual instrumental practice which reportedly had powerful results.

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 414.

<sup>34</sup>Sachs, p. 143-144.

<sup>35</sup>Ammianus Marcellinus, translated by John C. Rolfe in The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1935), I, 47. The author was alerted to this citation by a reference in Lang, p. 40.



## The Patristic Polemic Against the Use of Musical Instruments

### Fear of Association

The arguments against instruments can be grouped together for purposes of clarification. The first category would include those arguments which show a disdain for various customs and characteristics of the everyday pagan life. They reflect an attempt by the church fathers to secure Christian identity by declaring many of these customs and characteristics unfit for Christian imitation. One of these rejected customs was the use of musical instruments. While there is no specific mention of their use in pagan cults as a reason for condemnation, it is probable that this was a basic reason for the attitude of the fathers.

Typical of these diatribes is a comment of St. Ambrose from "De Elia et Jejunio":

And so it is justly said, "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning and follow strong drink," when they ought to be rendering praises to God; for this should they rise before the dawn and run to meet the Sun of Righteousness, who visits his own and arises upon us if we have bestirred ourselves for the sake of Christ and not of wine and luxury. They are singing hymns--will you cling to your harp? They are singing psalms; what business have you with a psaltery and a drum? Woe indeed to you for abandoning your salvation and choosing death.<sup>36</sup>

St. Clement of Alexandria displays disgust with some Christians who were attracted to these evil musical practices as soon as they left the place of worship:

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<sup>36</sup>Ambrose, "De Elia et Jejunio, 55," Patrologiae: Patrum Latinorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: n.p., 1882), XIV, 717. Hereafter Migne's edition will be referred to as MPL. The English translation is from Routley, p. 238.



After paying homage to the word of God, they leave inside what they have heard; once outside, they roam about with the ungodly, taking their fill of erotic pieces played on or sung to the accompaniment of the lyre, dancing and drinking and trifling in every way. Those who now sing and join in the refrains of such pieces are the same men who but a while before were chanting the praises of immortality.<sup>37</sup>

He insists that instrumental music is really better suited for baser kinds of life:

Leave the pipe to the shepherd, the flute to the men who are in fear of gods and are intent on their idol-worshiping. Such musical instruments must be excluded from our wineless feasts, for they are more suited for beasts and for the class of men that is least capable of reason than for men. We are told that deer are called by horns and hunted by huntsmen to traps, there to be captured by the playing of some melody; that, when mares are being foaled, a tune is played on a flute as a sort of hymneal which musicians call a hippothorus.<sup>38</sup>

For St. Clement instrumental music is better suited for war and military life than for anything else, and this would make its use among Christians highly suspect since they were to be lovers of peace:

The Etruscans, for example, use the trumpet for war; the Arcadians, the horn; the Sicels, the flute; the Cretans, the lyre; the Lacedemonians, the pipe; the Thracians, the bugle; the Egyptians, the drum; and the Arabs, the cymbal. But as for us, we make use of one instrument alone: only the Word of peace, by whom we pay homage to God, no longer with ancient harp or trumpet or drum or flute which those trained for war employ.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Clement of Alexandria, "Paedagogus, III, 11," Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: n.p., 1857), VIII, 660. Hereafter Migne's edition will be referred to as MPG. The English translation is from Christ the Educator, translated from the Greek by Simon P. Wood; vol. XXIII of The Fathers of the Church, edited by Roy Joseph Deferrari (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1954), p. 260.

<sup>38</sup>Clement, "Paedagogus, II, 4," MPG, VIII, 440-441. The English translation is from Christ the Educator, p. 130. The hippothorus, according to Wood, is the mating song of the horse.

<sup>39</sup>Clement, "Paedagogus, II, 4," MPG, VIII, 441-444. The English translation is from Christ the Educator, p. 131.



Perhaps this is one of the reasons why St. Jerome advised a certain Laeta to rear her daughter by keeping from her even the sound of the organ, pipe, lyre, and cithara.<sup>40</sup>

The evil effect of pagan life upon the Christians was increased when they came into contact with instrumental music in what St. John Chrysostom calls "the habitation of pestilence, the gymnasium of license, the school of profligacy,"<sup>41</sup> namely, the theater. Its popularity among the Christians was great enough to constitute a problem for him. Elsewhere he had this to say of it:

How many words have we spent in admonishing this idle multitude and advising them to avoid the theatres and the license that they generate? But they have not abstained; on the contrary, up to this very day they have continued to run after dancing-shows, choosing the devil's conversation rather than that which stands in the fulness of God's church. So the clamour of the theatres has drowned the psalmody of the Church. . . .<sup>42</sup>

Despite its popularity, what transpired there, according to St. John Chrysostom, was plainly the work of evil:

But keep silent, and listen attentively. In the theatre, when the chorus sings its devilish ditties, there is great silence, in order that these pernicious tunes may make their impression. That chorus consists of mimics and dancers, led by some player of the cithara; they sing some devilish and damnable song, and he who sings is the spirit of wickedness and damnation. Here on the other hand, where the chorus consists of pious men and the chorusmaster is the Prophet, and the tune is not of satanic agency, but of the Grace of the Spirit, and he who is praised is not the devil, but God--surely here it is our duty to keep a great silence, and to listen with great trembling.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Jerome, "Ad Laetam," MPL, XXII, 875.

<sup>41</sup>Chrysostom, "De Poenitentia, VI," MPG, II, 314. The English translation is from Routley, p. 238.

<sup>42</sup>Chrysostom, "Ad Antiochenos Homilia, 15, 1," MPG, II, 152-153. The English translation is from Routley, p. 239.

<sup>43</sup>Chrysostom, "Expositio in Psalmum VIII," MPG, IV, 106. The English translation is from Routley, p. 240.



The role which instruments play in this devilish work in the theater is emphasized in this passage by contrasting the two leaders of these opposite activities, the players of the cithara, and the prophet. The devilish ditties are led by the player of the cithara, while the graceful tunes of the Spirit are led by the prophet.

The threat which the theater posed for the church was not taken lightly. By the end of the second and the beginning of the third century at least two Christian writers were so convinced of the effects of the theater upon Christians that they were moved to write pamphlets in which they issued warnings concerning the activities which took place there.<sup>44</sup> In the opinion of the fathers, the theater was to be condemned not because it consisted of an innocent distraction for the faithful with the result that they were no longer concerned for things spiritual, but because it represented a very real stronghold for those powers capable of winning the faithful back to the realm of darkness. Whether this threat was due to the medium itself or to the material presented through the medium was not a point of contention. The theater was condemned as a totality because of the effect it had on the lives of the Christians.

Music was no mean partner in this threat of the theater. St. Basil in one of his homilies on the Hexameron said:

They do not know that a theatre, flourishing with impure sights, is a common and public school of licentiousness for those who sit there, and that the elaborate melodies of the flutes and the lewd songs, sinking into the souls of the listeners, do nothing else than move them all to

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<sup>44</sup>See in this regard Tertullian, "De Spectaculis," MPG, I, 702-738, and Pseudo-Cyprian, "De Spectaculis," S. Thrasci Caecili Cypriani, Opera Omnia, edited by Guillelmus Hartel, vol. III. 3 of Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna: C. Geroldi and Sons, 1871), Appendix I, pp. 3-31.



unseemly behavior, as they imitate the notes of the lyre or flute players.<sup>45</sup>

The significant point in this last quotation is that St. Basil viewed music, also instrumental music, as a power or a means which does "nothing else than move them all to unseemly behavior." Instrumental music both within the theater and without is condemned not because it serves as a harmless substitution for the more spiritual activities of meditating on Christ and his wishes for the church, but because in its contemporary usage it was viewed as a power or a force capable of moving people to actions not consonant with the Christian faith or practice. St. Basil was not alone in such an analysis; he was joined by St. Chrysostom, and the latter intensified the criticism by adding that the immoral power of instrumental music was a practical tool of the devil:

Thus does the devil stealthily set fire to the city. It is not a matter of running up ladders and using petroleum or pitch or tow; he uses things far more pernicious — lewd sights, base speech, degraded music, and songs full of all kinds of wickedness.<sup>46</sup>

The theological stance of the fathers is misconceived if it is understood as a recognition of an inherent infallible immoral power in instrumental music. The fathers were not prepared to attribute an immoral essence to instrumental music which without fail would lead to non-Christian ends. Such a position would lead to a negation of a part of creation. Rather, they admitted the essential "goodness" of instrumental

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<sup>45</sup>Basil, "Homilia IV in Hexameron," MPG, XXIX, 81. The English translation is from Exegetical Homilies, translated from the Greek by Agnes Clare Way, vol. XLVI of The Fathers of the Church, edited by Roy Joseph Deferrari (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University Press, 1963), p. 55.

<sup>46</sup>Chrysostom, "De Poenitentia VI," MPG, II, 315. The English translation is from Routley, pp. 239-240.



music, but a goodness which was turned to evil ends by the devil and his co-workers. Thus Pseudo-Cyprian:

The fact that David danced before God, is no excuse for those Christians who sit in the Theatre . . . for then Harps, cymbals, flutes, tympana, and others sounded for the glory of God, not of idols. Through the scheme of the devil, holy instruments have become illicit. . . .<sup>47</sup>

If, at least according to Pseudo-Cyprian, instrumental music in one instance can be used to the "glory of God," and in another instance illicitly, then it is qualified for use in functions either Christian or non-Christian. If it is used quite consistently in a non-Christian function, it will come to be associated with that function, and its meaning will be a meaning derived from that function. It is the meaning by association which the fathers detested. As a matter of principle they were against the use of instruments in worship, because of the attendant association with the pagan cults, with profane music and with the sects.<sup>48</sup>

The fathers believed that the associative meaning in the case of instrumental music was immoral or anti-Christian. Therefore it was inconceivable for Christians to use instrumental music, because its associative meaning was predominant. Equally inconceivable was any attempt to separate the medium from its meaning. In an established culture such a separation is a prolonged undertaking with many difficulties, as Joseph Gelineau suggests.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Pseudo-Cyprian, Appendix V, 8. The English translation is from Werner, p. 317.

<sup>48</sup>Stäblein, IV, 1047.

<sup>49</sup>Joseph Gelineau, Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship, translated from the French by Clifford Howell (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1964), p. 47.



Consequently instrumental music was to have no part in the Christian liturgical observances. Even though the use of instruments was assumed for the pagan marriage ceremonies of the age, St. John Chrysostom would not allow them to be used at Christian marriages:

Where flute-players are, there Christ never is; should he however appear, he would first drive them out and then only would he work miracles.<sup>50</sup>

The prohibitions exercised for joyous occasions, such as marriages, held as well for the more sombre occasions, such as vigils held at the gravesights of martyrs. St. Augustine commends Bishop Aurelius for prohibiting the use of the cithara at the nighttime commemoration rites held at the memorial chapel of St. Cyprian.<sup>51</sup> But most typical of the negative attitude towards the use of instruments in public Christian worship is the Response to Question 107 of the early fifth century Pseudo-Justinian<sup>52</sup> Quaestiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos. The question asks why Christians sing in worship if the heathen do it and the Jews do it. The answer given was:

Unaccompanied singing is not [to be rejected as] appropriate only for minors, but singing with accompaniment by lifeless instruments and dancing and dance-clappers. Therefore in the churches the use of such instruments with singing is avoided just as everything else which is proper only for fools, and only the song without accompaniment remains.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>"Entha aulētai, oudamou ho Christos; alla kan eiselthēi, to prōton ekballei toutous, kai tote thaumatorgei," in Chrysostom, "In Epistola ad Colossam 4, Homilia 12, 6," MPG, LXII, 389.

<sup>51</sup>Augustine, "Emartio II in Psalmum 32," MPG, LXXXIII, 425.

<sup>52</sup>This is the date submitted by Quasten, p. 107.

<sup>53</sup>"Ou to aisai hoplōs esti tois nēpiois harmodion, alla to meta tōn apsuchōn organōn aisai, kai meta orchēseōs kai krotalōn; dio en tais ekklēsiāis proairetai ek tōn asmatōn hē chresis tōn toioutōn organōn, kai tōn allōn tōn nēpiois ontōn harmodiōn, kai hupoleleiptai to aisai hoplōs. Hēdunei gar tēn psuchēn . . ." in Pseudo-Justin, "Quaestiones et



In this first category of arguments the fathers recognized a power in music which could lead to unchristian or immoral ends. On all sides they observed instrumental music being used for such purposes. Acknowledging the associative meaning of their contemporary instrumental music and its ability to lead individuals to unchristian ends, they were convinced of its necessary exclusion from Christian activities, especially public worship. The theological principle involved was that a thing originally created good can be turned by the evil powers into something which will, by its consistent service to evil, tend to tempt the Christian towards evil. It is therefore to be avoided.

#### Fear of Manipulation

The church fathers maintained this strong stand against the use of instruments in the face of an old Israelitic practice, frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, of employing musical instruments both within the cult and in everyday life. The many Old Testament references to instrumental music had to be accepted by the fathers and interpreted, especially if they were to maintain some consistency between Israel and the New Testament church. The "how" of this interpretation is important for the present discussion. This treatment of the Old Testament references serves as the basis for the second category of denunciations from the church fathers.

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Responsiones ad Orthodoxos, 107," MFG, VI, 1354. See also Canon 74 of the fourth century Canons of Basilius: "Wenn ein Anagnost die Gitarre schlagen lernt, so soll er gelehrt werden, es zu beichten. Kehrt er dann nicht wieder dazu zurück, so soll seine Strafe sieben Wochen betragen. Will er dabei bleiben, so soll er abgesetzt werden und aus der Kirche ausgeschlossen werden," as quoted in Quasten, p. 109.



A key biblical passage which sheds light on this particular hermeneutical approach of the fathers is the fifth chapter of 2

Chronicles:

Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' houses of the people of Israel, in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion. . . . And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who had assembled before him, were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered. So the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place . . . . Now when the priests came out of the holy place . . . and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments in praise to the Lord, the house of the Lord was filled with a cloud. . . .<sup>54</sup>

In this passage sacrifice and the use of musical instruments are combined as part of the one act of worship. In fact, in another locus the use of instruments is commanded along with sacrifice.<sup>55</sup> Both practices are sometimes viewed by the fathers as allowances made by God for a people really naive and immature. In his commentary on Psalm 149

St. John Chrysostom said:

However, in this respect I would say that they were once led by these instruments on account of the dullness of their natural character, and because they had been pulled away from idols just a short time before. So in the same way that He allowed the use of sacrifices, accommodating Himself to their natural character, so He also permitted the use of these instruments. Therefore He required of them in this passage that they sing with joy.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>2 Chron. 5:2,6,7,11,13.

<sup>55</sup>2 Chron. 29:25-30.

<sup>56</sup>"Egō de ekeino an heipoimi, hoti to palaion houtōs ēgonto dia tōn organōn toutōn, dia tēn pachutēta tēs dianoiās autōn, kai to arti apespasthai apo tōn eidōlōn. Hōsper oun tas thusias sunechōpēsen, outō kai tauta epetrepse, sugkatabainon autōn tēi astheneiai. Apaitēi toinun entautha to meth' hēdonēs aidein," in Chrysostom, "In Psalmum CXLIX, v. 2," MPG, LV, 494.



And in his commentary on Psalm 150 he recorded a similar reaction:

These instruments however had been allowed them at that time both because of their weakness and because the instruments would civilize them by love and concord and stir up their minds to do what was useful more cheerfully; also, by such delight of their spirit He could lead them to greater devotion.<sup>57</sup>

St. John Chrysostom implies that the contemporary worshipers of God have progressed beyond the stage of employing sacrifices and musical instruments to a form of worship not quite so mechanical. Gelineau describes the process as a movement from carnal worship to a more spiritual worship.<sup>58</sup> Spiritual worship required forms which would give vent to the whole spirit of man; it could not be accomplished through mere actions or sounds designed to obtain God's attention. It was this carnal or mechanical kind of worship which the prophets frequently disdained and rejected.<sup>59</sup> Instead, they advised, what is needed by Israel is a deeply involved concern with morality and justice. The church fathers re-echoed the argument:

For nobody would fail to call a gathering a church, where there are psalms, and prayers and dances of the prophets, and God-loving thoughts in the singers. . . . No charge will be made against anybody for the way he sings, whether he be old or young, hoarse, or even lacking rhythm. What is required here is an uplifted soul, a watchful mind, a contrite heart, a powerful reasoning, a purified conscience. If you enter the holy choir of God possessing these, you will be able to stand next to David. There is no need of

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<sup>57</sup>"Kai ta organa de ekeina dia touto epetetrpto tote, dia te tēn astheneian autōn kai dia to kirnain autous eis agapēn kai sumphōnian, kai egeirein autōn tēn dianōian meth' hēdonēs poiein ta tēn ōpheleian parechomena, kai eis pollēn boulesthai autous agein spoudēn dia tēs toiautēs psuchagōgias," in Chrysostom, "In Psalmum CL," MPG, LV, 497-498. See also Theodoret, "In Isaiaē, I, 11," MPG, LXXXI, 225, and Isidore of Pelusium, "Epistola II, 176," MPG, LXXVIII, 628.

<sup>58</sup>Gelineau, p. 149.

<sup>59</sup>Cf. Amos 5:21-24.



zithers, nor of taut strings, nor of a plectrum, nor skill, nor any instruments. But if you will, you can make yourself into a zither, mortifying the limbs of the flesh, and forming a great concord between body and soul.<sup>60</sup>

This concern for the total involvement of man in his worship actions and the consequent rejection by the fathers of any action which tends to be mechanical (ex opere operato) led to the rejection of any aesthetic or pleasurable fascination with the form of the action to the exclusion of spiritual and moral involvement. It is here that the well-known statement of St. Augustine finds its place:

Thus I fluctuate between the peril of indulgence and the profit I have found: and on the whole I am inclined--though I am not propounding any irrevocable opinion--to approve the custom of singing in church, that by the pleasure of the ear the weaker minds may be roused to a feeling of devotion. Yet whenever it happens that I am more moved by the singing than by the thing that is sung, I admit that I have grievously sinned, and then I should wish rather not to have heard the singing.<sup>61</sup>

St. Augustine accepts the possibility of separating the action of music-making and a rational spiritual involvement and the resultant comfortable hypocrisy. That condition, however, leads to moral inaction and to an approach to worship which is once more mechanical and automatic. Such an attitude, according to a modern commentator on St. Augustine, had to be rejected by St. Augustine as being inconsistent with his whole outlook on music and its place in worship:

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<sup>60</sup>Chrysostom, "Expositio in Psalmum 41," MPG, LV, 157. The English translation is from Wellesz, p. 95.

<sup>61</sup>Augustine, "Confessionum, X, 33," MPL, XXXII, 799-800. The English translation is from Augustine of Hippo, The Confessions, translated by F. J. Sheed (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1943), pp. 243-244.



This musical activity to the praise of God will be nothing if its roots do not lie in the inner being of a person. Augustine resolutely rejects mechanical, machine-like musical production.<sup>62</sup>

The liturgy and diaconate of the church form a living unity for Augustine. Musical activity in worship and diaconic action out of love are not assigned to people who exercise different functions, but rather rest on the shoulders of every individual Christian person. In each man who is a new person liturgy and service must arrive at a consonance: only that is music to the praise of God. To take making liturgical music or diaconic works of love always by themselves is in the eyes of Augustine to have a truncated creature. The fusion of the church's music and diaconate is probably the most effective protection against an aesthetic misunderstanding of music-playing; for music must in this case be understood ethically, i.e., as an encounter between an "I" and a "thou." The act of playing music in which the ethical impulse is missing can never be to the praise of God, for the personal element is missing from such music-making.<sup>63</sup>

What Christoph Wetzel says about St. Augustine here can be used to describe the entire patristic polemic directed against Old Testament instrumental practice. Music, insofar as it turns out to be an empty, mechanical sacrifice without intending to involve the whole rational

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<sup>62</sup>"Ein Nichts wird dieses psallere zum Lobe Gottes sein, wenn seine Wurzeln nicht im Innern des Menschen liegen. Mechanisch-maschinelles psallere lehnt Augustin entschieden ab," in Christoph Wetzel, "Musik, und Diakonie der Kirche nach Augustin," Musik und Kirche, XXV (January-February 1955), 36.

<sup>63</sup>"Liturgie und Diakonie der Kirche bilden für Augustin eine lebendige Einheit. Gottesdienstliches Musizieren und diakonische Liebestätigkeit sind nicht auf verschiedene Funktionsträger verteilt, sondern ruhen auf den Schultern eines jeden Christermenschen. In jedem Menschen, der ein neuer Mensch ist, müssen Liturgie und Diakonie zur Konsonanz kommen: erst dar ist Musik zum Lobe Gottes. Liturgisches Musizieren und diakonische Liebesarbeit je für sich genommen sind in den Augen Augustins torschafte Gebilde. Die Zusammenschau der Musik und Diakonie der Kirche ist wohl der wirksamste Schutz gegen ein ästhetisches Missverständnis des Musizierens; denn die Musik muss in diesem Falle ethisch verstanden werden, d.h. als ein Vorgang zwischen einem Ich und einem Du. Ein Musizieren, in dem das ethische Moment fehlt, kann nie zum Lobe Gottes geschehen; denn solchem Musizieren fehlt der personhafte Bezug," in Wetzel, XXV, 37.



spiritual man, is to be rejected; the Old Testament instrumental practice, divinely condoned and in some instances commanded, is simply a reflection of God's patience with the worship of a naive and immature people.

An argument of this nature would be particularly applicable to instrumental music, since it, in contrast to vocal music, is presented without the benefit of a word of power or challenge, anticipating no moral reaction on the part of man. The fathers emphasized the inner involvement of man in worship, including moral commitment, and vocal music conformed to that demand more than instrumental music.<sup>64</sup>

As the possibility for meaning in the musical medium is reduced, so the possibility of a reasonable total sacrifice is reduced. Quasten and Smith both find a correlation between this anti-mechanical polemic and the New Testament ideal of logikee thusia.<sup>65</sup> According to Smith, the concept is not original with St. Paul,<sup>66</sup> but has a long Jewish history including its use by Philo,<sup>67</sup> and, despite its variations in Judaic and Christian usage, it provided for some continuity of argument between the fathers and the New Testament. Basically the concept calls for total participation in any worship action:

The significance of the concept of logikee thusia for the musical praise of the church is not that praise should be silent, internal. It is rather that the musical part of the worship service, instead of being a mere rendition or

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<sup>64</sup>Leitner, p. 258. See also Friedrich Buchholz, Von Bindung und Freiheit der Musik und des Musikers in der Gemeinde (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1955), p. 39.

<sup>65</sup>Rom. 12:1.

<sup>66</sup>Cf. the evidence in Smith, pp. 163-166.

<sup>67</sup>Cf. the evidence in Quasten, pp. 69-77.



performance, is to be conceived in terms of sacrifice, an offering, and that not of some mere thing, but of self, in the praise of, and thanksgiving to, God.<sup>68</sup>

The logikee thusia concept states in a positive fashion what the anti-mechanical polemic states negatively. The essence of sacrificial worship lies not only in the execution of a particular form, but also in the execution of the moral manifestations and extensions of that form. Such sacrifice becomes reasonable sacrifice.

Summarizing the second series of negative patristic reactions, it can be said that the church fathers found it necessary to disdain the Old Testament employment of musical instruments especially as a model for New Testament practice, not because the Christians would thereby display a Judaizing tendency, as Werner rightly points out,<sup>69</sup> but because instrumental music, like sacrifice, led to an attempted mechanical manipulation of God without concern for a total moral response on the part of man. The time and energy expended on what might easily turn out to be

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<sup>68</sup>Smith, p. 166.

<sup>69</sup>Werner, p. 318 and passim. On the other hand, Werner admits that it is possible (p. 317) that some of the fathers (St. Theodoret and St. Chrysostom) may have had a fear of becoming Judaized through the use of instruments. This fear probably motivated St. Thomas Aquinas in his own denunciation of instruments; cf. his "Summa Theologica," part II, question 91, article 2, objection 4: "But the church does not make use of musical instruments, such as harps and psalteries, in the divine praises, for fear of seeming to imitate the Jews. Therefore in like manner neither should song be used in the divine praises;" and reply 4: "For suchlike musical instruments move the soul to pleasure rather than create a good disposition within it. In the Old Testament instruments of this description were employed, both because the people were more coarse and carnal--so that they needed to be aroused by such instruments as also by earthly promises--and because these material instruments were figures of something else;" in The "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (2nd edition, London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, 1935), XI, 166-168.



an empty sacrifice would be much better spent on the moral obligations one has toward his neighbor.

As a direct result<sup>70</sup> of this attitude towards the Old Testament and of the tendency to view musical instruments as a dangerous invitation to empty sacrifice the church fathers attempted to "spiritualize" the Old Testament references to musical instruments. The use of allegory as an exegetical method was of course applied to other facets of Old Testament history, geography, and practice, but it seemed to be particularly useful in this area. Here the purpose was twofold: to draw attention away from the actual employment of instruments in the cult, and to encourage the faithful to their proper moral activities. Typical of the allegorical method is this statement from St. Clement of Alexandria:

The Spirit, to purify the divine liturgy from any such unrestrained revelry, chants: "Praise Him with sound of trumpet," for, in fact, at the sound of the trumpet the dead will rise again; "praise Him with harp," for the tongue is a harp of the Lord; "and with the lute, praise Him," understanding the mouth as a lute moved by the Spirit as the lute is by the plectrum; "praise Him with timbral and choir," that is, the Church awaiting the resurrection of the body in the flesh which is its echo; "praise Him with strings and organ," calling our bodies an organ and its sinews strings, for from them the body derives its coordinated movement, and when touched by the Spirit, gives forth human sounds; "praise Him on high-sounding cymbals," which mean the tongue of the mouth, which, with the movement of the lips, produces words.<sup>71</sup>

Origen offered a similar interpretation of the same text:

The harp (cithara) is the active soul, which is moved by Christ's commands. The timbrel (tympanum) is the mortification of natural desire by moral rectitude. The dance (chorus) is

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<sup>70</sup>Cf. Quasten, p. 87, and Gelineau, p. 151.

<sup>71</sup>Clement of Alexandria, "Paedagogus, II, 4," MPG, VIII, 439-446. The English translation is from Christ the Educator, p. 131.



the unison of rational souls speaking the same words together, forgetting their differences. The stringed instruments (chordae) represent the agreement between the music of instruments and the music of virtue. The organ (organum) is the Church of God, consisting of souls contemplative and active. The "loud" cymbal (benesonans) is the active soul made prisoner by the desire for Christ; the "high-sounding" cymbal (jubilationis) is the pure mind informed by Christ's salvation.<sup>72</sup>

While allegory was used by many of the church fathers to supplement their arguments against the use of instruments, it also had the distinct advantage of by-passing the issue, since attention was drawn rather to the moral obligations of the Christians. The use of allegory does not constitute a separate theological argument in defense of a non-instrumental practice, but it does help to demonstrate the pervasiveness of the anti-mechanical position, while also suggesting the magnitude of the anti-instrumental polemic.

#### Fear of Multiplicity

The third and final theological consideration which calls for some attention in regard to instrumental practice is the persistent patristic emphasis upon unity and oneness in the church. This concept of unity was

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<sup>72</sup>Origen, "Selecta in Psalmos, Psalmus CL," MPG, XII, 1683. The English translation is from Routley, p. 232. To gain an idea of the extent of this method see: Augustine, "Ennartio in Psalmum CL," MPL, XXXVII, 1965-1966; "Ennartio in Psalmum LVII, 8," MPL, XXXVI, 671-72; Hesychius of Jerusalem, "Fragmenta in Psalmos, Psalmus XCVII, 5," MPG, XCIII, 1267; Eusebius, "Commentaria in Psalmos, XCI, 2, 3," MPG, XXIII, 1171; Hippolytus, "Fragmenta Dubia—In Psalmos, VI, VII," MPG, X, 715-719; Athanasius, "Epistola ad Marcellinum, 29," MPG, XXVII, 42; Basil of Caesarea, "Homilia in Psalmum I," MPG, XXIX, 209-213; Luther did not consider himself above this type of exegesis; he employed it in his commentary on Psalm 150: "Per ista instrumenta significantur diversa genera predicationum in ecclesiam. Sonus enim tube est predicatio de credibilibus et fide, que est speculativorum, sicut tuba sine articulatione manuum sonat." See Martin Luther, "Dictata super Psalterium. 1513-1516. Psalmus CL," D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1886), IV, 462.



a fundamental motif in many of the fathers' discussions of the nature of the church; it was basic also to the New Testament analysis of the Christian community.<sup>73</sup> In the church fathers the unity of the church was frequently pictured in terms of the unison effects which are possible in a choir:

Wherefore it is fitting that ye should run together in accordance with the will of your bishop, which thing also ye do. For your justly renowned presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the bishop as the strings are to the harp. Therefore in your concord and harmonious love, Jesus Christ is sung. And do ye, man by man become a choir, that being harmonious in love, and taking up the song of God in unison, ye may with one voice sing to the Father through Jesus Christ, so that He may both hear you, and perceive by your works that you are indeed the members of His Son. It is profitable, therefore, that you should live in an unblameable unity, that thus ye may always enjoy communion with God.<sup>74</sup>

Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, also insisted on having such unified harmony for Christian people: "For more pleasant and dear to God than any instrument is the harmony of the whole Christian people."<sup>75</sup>

Any unity or oneness which is given to the church in its Lord is to be exhibited in the relationships which the church actually has. Whether this is to be construed as pertaining also to performance practices, even as far as music is concerned, is debated by Smith.<sup>76</sup> There is one instance in the fathers where the harmony or unity of the church seems to

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<sup>73</sup>Cf. Acts 4:24; Rom. 15:6; and Rev. 5:13. See also Delling, pp. 172-182.

<sup>74</sup>Ignatius, "Epistola ad Ephesios, IV," MPG, V, 647. The English translation is from Smith, p. 49.

<sup>75</sup>Eusebius, "Commentaria in Psalmos, XCI, 2," MPG, XXIII, 1171. The English translation is from Reese, p. 62. For other patristic evidence see Quasten, pp. 91-99, Smith, pp. 27-37, and Werner, pp. 134, 344.

<sup>76</sup>Smith, p. 29, n. 30.



be applied also to musical performance. Methodius of Olympus, considered by Quasten to be influenced by Pythagorean thought,<sup>77</sup> draws together a series of opposites which he considers essential to an understanding of Christian thought and practice. Among these are life-death, incorruption-corruption, equality-disparity, wisdom-foolishness, and harmony-disharmony.<sup>78</sup> What is described in this writing as "disharmony" may be considered a primitive kind of polyphony in which an instrumentalist ornaments a given melody being performed by a vocalist.<sup>79</sup> The resultant disharmony or heterophony according to Methodius was not compatible with the ideal of unity or harmony, or with the una voce dicentes, as the Canon of the Roman Catholic Mass describes it.<sup>80</sup> Quasten then concludes on the basis of this and similar evidence that the strong emphasis on unity and harmony provided the early church with a defense against the use of instruments:

In accord with the whole spirit of Christian antiquity and of the whole idea of the ancient Christian worship service, which still had the purpose of making "a unity out of the multiplicity of members" (Chrysostom)--for that reason only could unison singing without instrumental accompaniment come into question.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Quasten, p. 93.

<sup>78</sup>Methodius, "Convivium Decem Virginum, Oratio III, VII," MPG, XVIII, 70-71.

<sup>79</sup>"Heterophony," Harvard Dictionary of Music, edited by Willi Apel (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 330. See also Donald Jay Grout, A History of Western Music (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1960), p. 6.

<sup>80</sup>Bard Thompson, Liturgies of the Western Church (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1961), p. 70.

<sup>81</sup>"Nach dem ganzen Geiste des christlichen Altertums und nach der ganzen Idee des altchristlichen Gottesdienstes, der doch den Zweck hatte, 'aus der Vielheit der Teilnehmer eine Einheit' (Chrysostom) zu machen, konnte deshalb nur der einstimmige Gesang ohne Instrumentalbegleitung in Frage kommen," in Quasten, p. 100. See a similar conclusion in



The use of musical instruments, particularly in public worship, negated this pervasive feeling of oneness and harmony; consequently instruments were rejected. Any medium which tended to isolate the individual from the rest of the body failed to take full recognition of the needs and essence of the whole body of Christ, and for this reason it was disruptive and basically foreign to the nature of the church.

#### The Polemic Developed and Extended--the Sixth Century Through the Sixteenth Century

It has been mentioned before that this particular period of church history was not especially productive in developing new arguments against the use of instruments. What can be found during this time, however, are treatises concerning the theory of music. They are so numerous that Routley calls the period an age of technical works rather than an age of criticism.<sup>82</sup> The negative criticism that does occur is usually a repetition or variation of what had already been said. The criticism appears in pronouncements of the church councils and in statements of some individual theologians. The cause for the criticism is usually attributed to theatrical practices both within and without the church building, to indiscriminate importation of extra-liturgical melodies or instruments, or to musical practices associated with polyphony, which after the tenth century becomes more and more a part of the music of the church.

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Leitner, p. 260. The argument was used again by Carlstadt in his "De Cantu Gregoriano Disputatio" in thesis 53: "Si ergo cantum in ecclesia permanere volueris, hunc non nisi unisonum velis, ut sit unus deus, unum baptisma, una fides, unus cantus;" see Hermann Barge, Karlstadt und die Anfänge der Reformation, Vol. I of Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (Leipzig: Friedrich Brandstetter, 1905), p. 493.

<sup>82</sup>Routley, pp. 80-81.



Instrumentalists were not held in the highest regard in the middle ages,<sup>83</sup> at least not by the church and its clergy. Perhaps the instrumentalists brought this disdain upon themselves by being willing to play and accompany obscene songs at religious ceremonies, at dedications of churches, and at feasts honoring the martyrs.<sup>84</sup> Apparently the practice of using worldly melodies within public worship was so widespread, that its continuation could not be checked even by canonic condemnation of church councils such as that from Cavillon (650).

The effect of conciliar pronouncements for such matters was neither decisive nor extensive, for a sixteenth-century writer complained that the organists of his day also performed obscene and passionate melodies within the mass:

Many organists too frequently cause profane organ melodies to resound in the churches, nay, even frivolous and sometimes wicked melodies; of this sort are those which they call Baxae and Altae and other ditties which the mob knows are base, obscene, and passionate. This is manifestly sinful, especially when they do this thing when the divine offices are in progress, both on account of the irreverence which thus occurs in a sacred place and because of the occasion that is given for turning minds away from attention to divine and spiritual matters and directing them to frivolous and wicked temporal matters.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Cf. Canon XX, Synod of Cloveshoe (747) in Giovanni Domenico Mansi, Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio (Florence: n.p., 1766), facsimile reproduction by C. Reinecke of Berlin for Hubert Welter in Paris (1901), XII, 401. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Mansi.

<sup>84</sup>Cf. paragraph 19, Council of Cavillon (650) in A. C. Peltier, Dictionnaire Universel et Complet Des Conciles, vol. XIII of Encyclopedie Theologique, edited by Jacques Paul Migne (Paris: Chez L'Editeur, 1847), pp. 539-541.

<sup>85</sup>Karl Fellerer in "Church Music and the Council of Trent," The Musical Quarterly, XXXIX (October 1953), 579 simply identifies the writer as Navarrus; it is impossible to determine on this meager evidence which Navarrus is meant. Fellerer, however, further lists as the source for his reference Martin Gerbert, De cantu et musica sacra a prima ecclesiae aetate usque ad praesens tempus (Saint Blaise: n.p., 1774), II, 194; this



It is possible that instruments were also condemned in connection with the abuses accompanying the theatrical arts. At the Council of Trullo (692) the clergy were warned against taking part in the activities of the theater.<sup>86</sup> Wellesz interprets this to mean that the clergy were not only to absent themselves from the extra-ecclesiastical theatrical performances, but they were to do all in their power to discourage theatrical productions within the church.<sup>87</sup> Since musical instruments played an important part in the contemporary theater,<sup>88</sup> it is likely that these conciliar pronouncements implicitly disapproved of musical instruments.

The condemnation of musical instruments in conjunction with the theater is also evident in conciliar evaluations of burial rites. Stäblein has found that musical instruments and various dramatic groups were used in the burial rites of the pagans during the Middle Ages.<sup>89</sup> It is probably an adaptation of such a pagan practice which is condemned by Canon VII of the Council of Trier (1227): "Again the solemn dance and the dramatic dance and secular amusements of this sort are not permitted to be performed in cemeteries."<sup>90</sup> An earlier reference from the

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work was not available to the author. The English translation is from Fellerer, XXXIX, 579.

<sup>86</sup>Canon XXIV, Council of Trullo (692), Mansi, XI, 954.

<sup>87</sup>Wellesz, p. 85.

<sup>88</sup>Edmund A. Bowles, "The Role of Musical Instruments in Medieval Sacred Drama," The Musical Quarterly, XLV (January 1959), 67-84.

<sup>89</sup>Stäblein, IV, 1048.

<sup>90</sup>"item tripudia & choreas & hujusmodi ludos saeculares in cimiteriis & Ecclesiis fieri non permittant," in Canon VII, Council of Trier (1227), Mansi, XXIII, 32.



Synod of Toledo (589) is more specific. It limits the use of music to the singing of psalms, especially at the funerals of the religious.<sup>91</sup>

Despite the fact that the pictorial evidence from the later Middle Ages points to ecclesiastical utilization of some instruments,<sup>92</sup> there appears in these assorted statements a strong anti-instrumental sentiment. The cause for this reaction evinces itself as a fear of enforced association with non-christian practices in the theater, in everyday life, and in the burial rites. This type of argument is not significantly new; it was advanced by St. John Chrysostom and others many years before.

It was also during this period from the sixth to the sixteenth century that the church was confronted with the advent of polyphony. Polyphony is the musical practice of sounding more than one melody at the same time. The origin of the practice has been attributed to experiments with parallel organum, that is, the singing of chant melodies simultaneously by two voices at different intervals. Polyphony within church music not only produced new and interesting sonorities, but it developed into a vast art accompanied with many experiments, some of which were of short duration. These experiments were executed by the

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<sup>91</sup>"Religiosorum omnium corpora, qui divina vocatione ab hac vita recedunt, cum psalmis tantummodo, psallentium vocibus debere ad sepulcra deferri. Nam funebre carmen quod vulgo defunctis cantari solet, vel pectoribus se, proximos, aut familias caedere, omnino prohibemus," in Canon XXII, Synod of Toledo (589), Mansi, IX, 998-999.

<sup>92</sup>Alexander Buchner, Musical Instruments Through the Ages (London: Spring Books, n.d.), p. 23. The pictorial evidence helps to establish that the church's negative criticism over the years was directed against a widespread practice of using instruments in worship.



musicians often with unguarded excitement and with less than ample concern for the activities of people at worship.

In the thirteenth century, for example, the motet was a popular form for church music. It consisted of an existing chant melody which was altered to fit extant rhythmic patterns, with the result that the melody was often curtailed beyond recognition. Above this melody, or cantus firmus, were added two or three other parts, each part with its own text. The texts along with the melodies for these additional parts were sometimes borrowed from popular songs of the day. The cantus firmus was in Latin; the additional parts were in the vernacular.

The melodies were treated with rhythmic devices such as the *hocket*, a short rest within the melody, so that the singers started and stopped many times within one phrase. Since the chant cantus firmus of these thirteenth century motets was truncated so as to provide little or no opportunity for perception, the cantus firmus was occasionally played on an instrument.

Other early polyphonic practices include the fifteenth-century custom of composing "parody masses," that is, fitting the sacred mass text to an existing tune and setting of a secular motet. Considering the popularity of parody masses, it is possible that the musicians took great delight in being able to perform disguised or undisguised extra-liturgical tunes within the mass.<sup>93</sup>

The experiments and innovations did not develop unnoticed by the clergy. While they were busy trying to perform their duties in the

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<sup>93</sup>For further information on the developments described here, see Grout, pp. 68-184.



mass, they were forced to put up with the curtailment of ancient liturgical texts, with vernacular non-churchly songs, with instrumentalists playing tunes the clergy were accustomed to hearing in places other than the church building, and with compositions so filled with devices that the texts were no longer understandable.<sup>94</sup> The clergy and theologians, individually and in council, reacted. In the twelfth century St. John of Salisbury was disturbed with the musical performances occurring during worship services:

Music defiles the services of religion; for the admiring simple souls of the congregation are of necessity depraved--in the very presence of the Lord, in the sacred recesses of the Sanctuary itself--by the riot of wantoning voice, by its eager ostentation, and by its womanish affectations in the mincing of notes and sentences.<sup>95</sup>

St. John's disdain for music, at least the music of his surroundings, is a denunciation of the polyphonic practices just described, particularly the use of the hoquet. Possibly it also represents a distaste for instruments, since instruments were utilized for polyphonic music from its very beginning.<sup>96</sup>

The church of the first centuries rejected the use of musical instruments in the worship service as heathen and worldly. With polyphonic music, also instrumental accompaniment gradually came along into the church. The struggle of the former allied itself also with the opposition against instruments.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>See the many complaints catalogued by Fellerer, XXXIX, 577-582.

<sup>95</sup>St. John of Salisbury, "Polycraticus I, 6," MPL, CXCIX, 401-403. The English translation is from Routley, p. 101.

<sup>96</sup>Cf. Hoffmann, I, 783-810.

<sup>97</sup>"Die Kirche der ersten Jahrhunderte verwarf den Gebrauch der musikalischen Instrumente im Gottesdienst als heidnisch und weltlich. Mit der polyphonen Musik kam allmählich auch die Begleitung durch Instrumente in die Kirche. Die Bekämpfung jener vereinte sich auch mit der Gegnerschaft gegen diese," in Georg Rietschel, Die Lehre vom Gottesdienst, vol. I of Lehrbuch der Liturgik (2nd revised edition by Paul Graff; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1951), p. 413.



Instruments were also criticized outside of their relationship to polyphony. A contemporary of St. John of Salisbury, Aelred, Abbot of Rievaulx in Yorkshire (1109-1166) said:

Whence hath the Church so many Organs and Musicall Instruments? To what purpose, I pray you, is that terrible blowing of Belloes, expressing rather the crakes of Thunder, than the sweetness of a voyce? To what purpose serves that contraction and inflection of the voyce?<sup>98</sup>

The previous denunciations are mild compared to the edict of Pope John XXII issued several centuries later in 1325. The following excerpt summarizes much of the antagonism felt by the clergy towards polyphonic practices:

But there is a new school, whose disciples, observing with care the regularity of musical time-values, concern themselves with new devices, preferring their new inventions to the ancient songs of the church; by their practices the music of the liturgies is disordered with semi-breves, minims, and even shorter notes. They break up the melodies with hockets, they embellish them with discants; sometimes they so force them out of shape with "triples" and other music proper to profane occasions that the principles of the antiphonary and the gradual are wholly neglected. They forget on what they are building; they so disguise the melody that it becomes indistinguishable; indeed the multitude of notes is so confusing that the seemly rise and decorous fall of the plainsong melody, which should be the distinguishing feature of the music, is entirely obscured. They run and will not rest, they inebriate the ears without soothing them; the conduct of the singers is so appropriate to their matter that decent devotion is held in contempt and a reprehensible frivolity is paraded for admiration. Boethius is right when he says that the frivolous mind is either delighted by hearing frivolous music or by the habit of attending to it is emasculated and corrupted.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>Aelred of Rievaulx, "Speculum Charitatis, II, 13," MPL, CXCIV, 557. The English translation is from Percy Scholes, The Puritans and Music in England and New England (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), p. 215; Scholes lists as his source William Prynee, Histriomastix (1633).

<sup>99</sup>Pope John XXII, "De Vita et Honestate Clericorum," Decretalium Collectiones, vol. II of Corpus Juris canonici, a photostatic copy edited and annotated from the 2nd Leipzig edition (1879) by Emil Albert Friedberg (Graz: Akademische Druck- U. Verlagsanstalt, 1955), 1256-1257. The English translation is from Routley, pp. 249-250.



This edict with its complaints against music and musicians is the most complete ecclesiastical denunciation of polyphony at its time. Yet it did not effect a lasting curb against the abuses which the church claimed she was suffering. The edict of Pope John along with the previous conciliar pronouncements were mere distant rumblings compared with the thunder heard at the Council of Trent.<sup>100</sup>

At the twenty-second session of the Council of Trent, held on September 17, 1562, the mass in all of its aspects was considered. One of the decrees resulting from this session deals with the abuses of the mass. In that decree a specific section deals with the musical abuses:

They shall also banish from the churches all such music which, whether by the organ or in the singing, contains things that are lascivious or impure; likewise all worldly conduct, vain and profane conversations, wandering around, noise and clamor, so that the house of God may be seen to be and may be truly called a house of prayer.<sup>101</sup>

This decree does not contain detailed criticisms of prevailing musical practices, although there is in it a clear reference to the custom of importing texts and music from extra-liturgical sources. The Council made itself clear that when musical importations conveyed to the worshipers a sense of the "lascivious or impure," such extraneous materials could not be admitted to the church's worship services. The Council argued against

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<sup>100</sup>See Fellerer for specific references to the many complaints issued by the church both before and during the Council of Trent.

<sup>101</sup>"Sessio Vigesima Secunda quae est sexta sub Pio IV Pont. Max. celebrata die XVII Septembris, MDLXII; Decretum de observandis et evitandis in celebratione missae," Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, the original text and translation by H. Schroeder (St. Louis: Herder Book Co., 1941), p. 424; the English is from the same volume, p. 151.



music and musical forms which by association brought worldly values and meaning into public worship.<sup>102</sup>

Besides having a distaste for texts and tunes not commonly viewed as churchly, the Council, according to Fellerer, also advocated a return to the clear delivery of accepted liturgical texts, and a reconsideration of the niceties of accents and of the beauty of the voice. Fellerer understands all of this as a manifestation of churchly humanism and of an attempt to recapture the principles of the ancients.<sup>103</sup>

According to Fellerer, the principles enunciated by the Council were quickly supported with practical examples:

The ideal of musical expression for the Church comprised an amalgam of the new principles of style with traditional polyphonic-homophonic compromise of the texture with correct humanistic declamation. In Kerle's Council Prayers and Palestrina's Mass for Pope Marcellus this compromise was attained in exemplary fashion. Hence these works became the ideal of the Council's desires in matters of church music and were woven about with legends.<sup>104</sup>

It was in Palestrina and some of his contemporaries that the reforms proposed by the Council took concrete form. While such immediate consequences might be envisioned, unexpected and more extensive effects are to be observed in a great part of the subsequent history and development of Roman Catholic church music.

The Council's emphasis on text influenced the development of a homophonic style with the melody prominently placed in the top voice.

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<sup>102</sup>Cf. Alec Robertson, Christian Music, vol. CXXV of Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1961), p. 94.

<sup>103</sup>Fellerer, XXXIX, 593.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., XXXIX, 588.



At the same time some of the new principles proposed by the contemporary composers associated with the baroque style coincided with the ideals of the Council, although the baroque style was basically at odds with the later Palestrinian type of composition.<sup>105</sup>

The two styles, though in some respects showing affinities, produced two streams of church music: on the one hand the old style, being basically homophonic with an emphasis on the text and without demands for instrumental accompaniment; on the other the declamatory style of the early baroque, requiring some instrumental accompaniment. The former led to the tradition of the Sistine Chapel, where no instrument has been heard to this day,<sup>106</sup> and the latter led to the eighteenth-century church sonata<sup>107</sup> and the oratorios of Lodovico Viadana, Filippo Neri, and Giacomo Carissimi.<sup>108</sup>

The two styles coexisted through the Baroque period; then the baroque style was dropped in favor of Classicism, and later still Classicism was dropped in favor of Romanticism. The old style persisted until the present century. It was bolstered by several theoretical treatises fostering the techniques of Palestrina,<sup>109</sup> and it was given semi-official

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<sup>105</sup>Cf. Otto Ursprung, Die Katholische Kirchenmusik, vol. IX of Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft, edited by Ernst Bucken (New York: Musurgia, 1931), p. 188.

<sup>106</sup>Karl Fellerer, The History of Catholic Church Music, translated from the German by Francis A. Brunner (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), p. 100.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>108</sup>Grout, pp. 290-297.

<sup>109</sup>Pietro Cerone, El Melopeo y Maestro (Naples: Gargano and Nucci, 1613) and Johann Fux, Gradus ad Parnassum (Vienna: J. P. van Ghelen, 1725).



sanction as again and again ecclesiastical decisions related it to the decree from the Council of Trent.<sup>110</sup>

The movement to preserve the old style and its rationale was given its final far-reaching impetus in the Palestrina revival, which was inaugurated by the biography of the composer authored by Giuseppe Baini in 1828.<sup>111</sup> The revival, which was closely connected to Romanticism, had many proponents, chief among whom were Justus Thibaut<sup>112</sup> and Karl Proske,<sup>113</sup> both of Germany.

It is significant that the movement fostered a style of church music associated with Palestrina, thereby causing a sharp separation of the church style from the general development of music.<sup>114</sup> More significant is the fact that the style advocated by the revival movement was a style devoid of instruments. Consequently the revival is also known as the a cappella movement,<sup>115</sup> a movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which not only helped to shape subsequent Roman Catholic church music but also exerted influence upon the contemporary performances of

<sup>110</sup>Fellerer, The Musical Quarterly, XXIX, 590.

<sup>111</sup>Giuseppe Baini, Memorie storico-critiche della vita e delle opere di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (Rome: Dalla Society, 1828).

<sup>112</sup>Lang, p. 233.

<sup>113</sup>Fellerer, History, p. 184.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>115</sup>For additional information on the a cappella movement see Karl Fellerer, "Caecilianismus," MGG, III, 621-628, and Hermann Zenck, "a cappella," MGG, I, 69-75.



the music of Johann Sebastian Bach<sup>116</sup> and upon the musical philosophy of Lutheranism.<sup>117</sup>

What began at Trent as a suggested deterrent to the practice of importing extra-liturgical material without due caution turned into a canonization of a style, significantly a style without instruments.<sup>118</sup>

The complex history of Roman Catholic church music, especially that stream which propagated the Palestrina style, is reflected in the official pronouncements subsequent to the Council of Trent. For instance, paragraph 53 of the encyclical Annus Qui Hunc, issued by Pope Benedict XIV on February 19, 1749, contains the following warning regarding instruments:

The third thing of which we wish to warn you, is that "musical" chant which modern usage has commonly introduced into churches, and is accompanied by organs and other instruments, should be executed in such a way that it does not convey a profane, worldly or theatrical impression. The use of organs and of other instruments is not yet admitted throughout the Christian world.<sup>119</sup>

Almost two hundred years later Pope Pius X, in the Motu Proprio, issued on November 22, 1903, excluded the piano, drums, cymbals, and

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<sup>116</sup>Gerhard Herz, Johann Sebastian Bach im Zeitalter der Rationalismus und der Fruhromantik (Leipzig: Paul Haupt, 1936), p. 79.

<sup>117</sup>Christhard Mahrenholz, "Über Posaunenmusik," Musik und Kirche, I (May-June 1929), 134-135, mentions Carl von Winterfeldt and Ludwig Schoeberlein as two who operated under the influence of the a cappella movement.

<sup>118</sup>Fellerer, The Musical Quarterly, XXXIX, 593.

<sup>119</sup>Pope Benedict XIV, "Annus Qui Hunc," The Papal Encyclicals in their Historical Context, edited and translated by Anne Fremantle (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1956), p. 109.



bells from public worship,<sup>120</sup> and he warned against "modern" music containing secular characteristics.<sup>121</sup>

The emphasis upon text is supported in paragraph 7 of the apostolic constitution Divini Cultus Sanctitatem, issued by Pope Pius XI on December 20, 1928:

We hereby declare that singing with orchestral accompaniment is not regarded by the Church as a more perfect form of music or as more suitable for sacred purposes. Voices, rather than instruments, ought to be heard in the church: the voices of the clergy, the choir and the congregation. Nor should it be deemed that the church, in preferring the human voice to any musical instrument, is obstructing the progress of music; for no instrument, however perfect, however excellent, can surpass the human voice in expressing thought, especially when it is used by the mind to offer up prayer to Almighty God.<sup>122</sup>

More recently, article 120 of the Sacrosanctum Concilium, promulgated on December 4, 1963, contains a warning against secularism occasioned by musical instruments:

In the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, for it is the traditional musical instrument, and one that adds a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up man's mind to God and to heavenly things.

But other instruments also may be admitted for use in divine worship, with the knowledge and consent of competent territorial authority, as laid down in Articles 22, par. 2; 37; and 40. This may be done, however, only on condition that the instruments are suitable for sacred use, or can be

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<sup>120</sup>Pope Pius X, The Motu Proprio on Church Music, translated from the Latin by the monks and seminarians of St. Meinrad's Abbey (St. Meinrad, Ind.: Grail Publications, 1951), p. 16.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>122</sup>Pope Pius XI, "Divini Cultus Sanctitatem," in George Fredmore, Sacred Music and The Catholic Church (Boston: McLaughlin & Reilly Co., 1936), p. 18.



made so, that they accord with the dignity of the temple, and truly contribute to the edification of the faithful.<sup>123</sup>

The most recent official document which maintains the thought of the Council of Trent is the Instruction of the Congregation of Rites on Music in the Liturgy, promulgated on March 5, 1967; paragraph 63 includes the following statement regarding instruments:

In permitting and using musical instruments, the culture and traditions of individual peoples must be taken into account. However, those instruments which are, by common opinion and use, suitable for secular music only, are to be altogether prohibited from every liturgical celebration and from popular devotions.<sup>124</sup>

What originated at the Council of Trent as a warning against using extra-liturgical musical sources, especially those sources which bring along associations with previous surroundings, gradually turned into the establishment of a line between what is sacred and what is secular. Though the terms were not used at Trent, the concepts were incipient, and some authors have used them with specific reference to music and musical instruments:

Account must also be taken of the difference between sacred and profane music. There are some instruments, such as the classical organ, which by their nature and origin are directly ordained for sacred music; others, such as certain stringed instruments played with a bow, are easily adapted to liturgical

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<sup>123</sup>"Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," The Documents of Vatican II, edited by Walter Abbot, and translation editor, Joseph Gallagher (New York: The American Press, 1966), p. 173.

<sup>124</sup>Instruction of the Congregation of Rites on Music in the Liturgy, with a commentary by Frederick McManus (Published by United States Catholic Conference, 1967), p. 19. The current widespread use of folk idioms and instruments in Roman Catholic worship services, though seemingly incongruous with the most recent pronouncements, is permitted probably because of the "consent of competent territorial authority," and because it represents the "culture and traditions of individual peoples."



use; while on the contrary, there are other instruments which, in common estimation, are considered so associated with profane music that they are entirely unfit for sacred use.<sup>125</sup>

Just what is meant with these terms, as used by O'Connell and others, is not always clear. It is evident that the terms do not always refer to an intrinsic holiness in a particular non-instrumental or, for that matter, instrumental style. It is more likely that the terms refer to the values and meaning carried by a given instrument through the process of association.

Post-tridentine musical history indicates not only how the persistent use of the argument of association can result in a continuous banning of certain musical instruments from worship but also how a particular musical style can become canonized because it is assumed that other musical styles will carry undesirable associative meanings. At the root of both developments is the argument of association.

The anti-instrumental polemic in the catholic and Roman Catholic church of the second through the sixteenth century can be reduced to the following three arguments:

#### 1. Fear of Association

It was assumed by the church fathers that music carries meaning by association and that music does have innate powers which influence a man morally. Since in their experience instrumental music was associated with evil activities, the church fathers banned it from Christian

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<sup>125</sup>John O'Connell, Sacred Music and Liturgy (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1959), p. 67; O'Connell also states on p. 71 that the guitar, mandolin and banjo are obviously unsuitable for church use. See also Franz Krieg, Katholische Kirchenmusik, Geist und Praxis, vol. V of Bücher der Weltmusik, edited by Kurt Blaukopf (Teufen: Arthur Niggli and Willy Verkauf, 1954), p. 14.



gatherings on the assumption that it might needlessly tempt Christians toward evil. The argument was further developed to include a distinction between what is proper within worship and what is proper outside of worship, with the implication that musical instruments, with some exceptions, are proper only outside of public worship.

## 2. Fear of Manipulation

Musical offerings, particularly those which do not offer opportunities for rational perception through verbal concepts, tend to provide for empty sacrifice, the attempt to please God or manipulate Him through sacrificial acts devoid of moral intent or obligation. The Old Testament produces evidence that instrumental music was and can be the means through which one can make such empty sacrifice. The argument is meant to effect the removal of the means of temptation by prohibiting the use of musical instruments within Christian worship activities.

## 3. Fear of Multiplicity

The use of musical instruments, according to the church fathers, encourages separatism, for it creates multiplicity through such musical effects as melodic embellishments and harmony. Unity is fundamental to the Church's understanding of itself, and it needs to be emphasized and protected. Thus instruments were to be avoided.



## CHAPTER III

### THE ARGUMENTS OF CALVIN AND ZWINGLI

The Roman Catholic argumentation against the use of instruments in public worship was motivated both by theories concerning the moral and psychological effects of music and by various convictions regarding the requirements which the liturgy imposed on music. Protestant leaders associated with the reform movements of the sixteenth century produced a new sort of argumentation. It developed from their interest in the Scriptures, and it unfolded alongside their scrupulous examination of former worship practices. The standard of judgment for this evaluation of both worship and music was their understanding of the Scriptures and its demands upon formal worship. The evaluation yielded varying degrees of polemical argumentation directed against music and its place in worship. Of those who argued against the use of instrumental music worship, the greatest influence was exerted by two major reformers, John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli.

#### The Context of the Arguments

Early Renaissance musical style, which gained increasing popularity after the middle of the fifteenth century, did not totally replace earlier musical styles from the Middle Ages. The grandiose splendor of Gothic music was still heard in the fifteenth century, amid the intimate four-part writing of the Renaissance composers with their penchant for textual and musical intricacies and for sometimes esoteric techniques. Paul Henry Lang reports on some of the festivities which took place at the



occasion of the marriage of Costanzo Sforza with Camilla de Aragona in 1475: the guests at the wedding witnessed a performance of a drama after which they went to hear a triumphal mass, "celebrated with organs, pipes, trumpets and untold number of drums, together with two choirs and many singers."<sup>1</sup> According to Lang, such ceremonious pomp was typical of the era.

Not everyone was willing to give hearty endorsement to the use of these instruments. Sebastian Virdung, a German priest, in his Musica getutscht (1511) wrote of the kettledrums:

These are enormous rumbling barrels. They trouble honest old people, the ill and the sick, the devotees in monasteries who study, read and pray, and I think and believe that the devil has invented and made them . . . .<sup>2</sup>

Judging by the mainstream of Renaissance music, such protest went unnoticed, for the Renaissance musical style continued to be one of interchangeability of voices and instruments. The demands of each individual ensemble dictated the performance practice. Sometimes a given part was sung, and at other times it was played on an instrument. The occasions, either secular<sup>3</sup> or religious,<sup>4</sup> when music was performed without instruments were rare.

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1941), pp. 306-307.

<sup>2</sup>As quoted in Curt Sachs, The History of Musical Instruments (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1940), p. 329.

<sup>3</sup>Warren D. Allen, Music in Society Before 1600, a syllabus outline with musical examples (n.p., 1949), p. 65.

<sup>4</sup>Otto Ursprung, Die Katholische Kirchenmusik, vol. IX of Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft, edited by Ernst Bücken (New York: Musurgia, 1931), p. 166.



Further developments were inevitable. It was during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries that ensembles consisting only of instruments were used to perform dancing songs, madrigals, and religious motets,<sup>5</sup> all of which were done previously with voices or with a mixture of voices and instruments. Curt Sachs describes this period as the emancipation of the instrument,<sup>6</sup> since the instrument was given more and more consideration quite apart from its vocal connections.

Performance practices which allowed the free interchange of voices and instruments contributed to the development of "choirs" of instruments, which meant that each kind of instrument appeared in various sizes corresponding to voice ranges. The great variety and range of instruments provided for very colorful performances.

The extent of this rich instrumental practice can be approximated from the collection of instruments which belonged to Henry VIII of England, and which were cataloged after his death. It included: seventy-eight cross flutes, seventy-seven recorders, thirty shawms, twenty-eight organs, twenty-five cromornes, twenty-one horns, five cornets, five bagpipes, thirty-two virginals, twenty-six lutes, twenty-five viols, twenty-one guitars, and two clavichords.<sup>7</sup> Such collections were not unusual. They reflect a rich instrumental practice both outside the church and within.

Church musicians during this time were unaware of involved distinctions between the sacred and secular,<sup>8</sup> and they freely employed all the musical

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<sup>5</sup>Sachs, p. 297.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Sachs, pp. 302-303.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Erik Routley, The Church and Music (2nd revised edition; London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1967), pp. 134-135.



media at hand. Their practice of church music was also subject to abuses. Vagabond clerics roamed the countryside singing parodies on the texts from the mass, and many of the religious, both male and female, no longer understood the Latin texts of church music. The longer compositions, many involving instrumental accompaniment, disrupted the normal flow of the liturgy, and the faithful gave these musical amplifications more attention than the mass itself.<sup>9</sup> Instruments were regularly used in processions to, from, and about the church building. Those processions in which the Sacrament of the altar was carried about were especially favorite opportunities to employ the services of the lutist and guitarist.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps some of these excesses and abuses prompted Erasmus to speak with hostility against the church music of his day. In his annotations to 1 Corinthians 14 he registers this complaint:

We have introduced into churches a type of laborious and theatrical music, a confused chattering of diverse voices, such as I do not think was ever heard in the theatres of the Greeks or the Romans. They perform everything with slide-trumpets, trombones, cornetts, and little flutes, and with these the voices of men contend. Amorous and foul songs are heard, songs to which prostitutes and actors caper. People assemble in the sacred edifice as in a theatre, for the sake of degrading their ears.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Fritz Schmidt-Clausing, Zwingli als Liturgiker (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952), p. 81. The place in the mass which music was given prior to the Reformation is described by Joseph Jungmann, The Mass of the Roman Rite, translated from the German by Francis A. Brunner (New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1951), I, 103-127.

<sup>10</sup>Edmund A. Bowles, "Musical Instruments in Civic Processions during the Middle Ages," Acta Musicologica, XXXIII (1961), 157-160.

<sup>11</sup>Desiderius Erasmus, Opera Omnia, edited by J. LeClerc (Leyden: Peter Vander, 1705; reproduced by the Gregg Press, London, 1962), VI, 731-732. The English translation is from Charles Garside, Zwingli and the Arts (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 32.



Charles Garside points out that Erasmus was a humanist and that his criticism of church music, particularly of musical instruments, was motivated not so much from a theological argument as from an analysis of a church which had departed radically from its early motivations and practices.<sup>12</sup>

With this outburst against musical practices in the church Erasmus became a herald<sup>13</sup> of the strong polemic which was soon to be released by Andreas Karlstadt, John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli.

Of the three, Karlstadt perpetuates arguments from previous centuries and anticipates the fuller work of Calvin and Zwingli. Karlstadt was the first to launch an attack. His "De Cantu Gregoriano Disputatio," written in 1521, is the earliest Reformed critique of worship music to come from that branch of the Reformation,<sup>14</sup> and yet it precedes the important works of Zwingli by only a little more than a year. In this disputation Karlstadt attempts to demonstrate the disparity between the apostolic church and the church of his day. Garside says of the work: "Beneath the various and seemingly chaotic theses against music in worship lies in fact a single premise, one superintending point of view--namely, the fall of the Church."<sup>15</sup>

Typical in this respect is the eighteenth thesis in which Karlstadt argues that since non-instrumental monody is the ideal of the early church,

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<sup>12</sup>Garside, p. 35.

<sup>13</sup>The humanistic writings of Erasmus are part of the context from which Calvin and Zwingli spoke. See Garside, pp. 33-39.

<sup>14</sup>Thus Garside, p. 28.

<sup>15</sup>Garside, pp. 29-30.



instrumental music must be removed from the church and returned to the theater; "Thus along with polyphonic music we relegate the organ, brass, and flutes to the theater and to the courts of the princes."<sup>16</sup>

Such argumentation is mild compared to the subsequent onslaughts of Calvin and Zwingli. Consequently Karlstadt has been considered as transitional between the patristic arguments of the medieval church and the theological arguments of Calvin and Zwingli.<sup>17</sup> Some of the peripheral arguments used in the disputation help prepare for what is to come later from the pen of Zwingli. Typical of these is the seventh thesis: "The chant which we call Gregorian puts a distance between the mind and God."<sup>18</sup> If the singer is to do justice to the chant, he must concentrate so intently on the music that he will turn out to be a musician first and a man at prayer second.<sup>19</sup> The same reasoning would hold true for an instrumentalist. Karlstadt questions instrumental music, and for that matter all music, on the grounds that it detracts the musician from his

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<sup>16</sup>"Sic cum illo et organo, tubas et tibus in theatra chorearum et ad principum aulas relegamus," in Hermann Barge, Karlstadt und die Anfänge der Reformation, vol. I of Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (Leipzig: Friedrich Brandstetter, 1905), p. 492. This desire to separate churchly practice from worldly practice is characteristic of certain groups of Mennonites. C. F. Klassen in his "Musical Instruments," The Mennonite Encyclopedia, edited by Harold Bender and C. Henry Smith (Scottsdale, Penn.: The Mennonite Publishing House, 1957), III, 794-795, comments: "The Old Colony Mennonites still forbid instruments entirely . . . . It was taken for granted that the musical instrument was to be used only for worldly entertainment; the introduction of musical instruments in the church would mean the opening of the gates of the church to secular and sinful influences." This is reminiscent of St. John Chrysostom and other church fathers.

<sup>17</sup>Garside, p. 32.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>See Garside, p. 28.



prayer life. The argument is not fully developed. His chief complaint is that his contemporary church has departed from its founding principles.

Karlstadt sought a return to the fundamental tenets of Christian worship. By implication Erasmus desired the same. Both reflected older arguments, and both prepared for more sophisticated treatment of the same principle as it was fully explored in the polemics of Calvin and Zwingli. While Erasmus and Karlstadt pointed out the need for a rediscovery of fundamental principles, Calvin and Zwingli established the ultimate source of these principles, the Scriptures. Although the authority of the Scriptures unifies their approaches, diversity is apparent in methodology, interpretation, and emphasis. This diversity in development requires examination.

#### Calvin<sup>20</sup>

In a search for motivations which prompted Calvin's prohibition of instruments from worship, one detects, first of all, a distinctly anti-Roman Catholic bias, a fear of apeing the papacy. Typical of this attitude would be the following excerpt from sermon 66 on 1 Samuel 18:

It would be a too ridiculous and inept imitation of the papistry to decorate the churches and to believe oneself to be offering God a more noble service in using organs and the many other amusements of that kind.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Chronologically, Zwingli should be considered before Calvin. The present arrangement is partial to the severity of argumentation, in that Zwingli's position is far more adverse to instrumental music in worship than Calvin's.

<sup>21</sup>John Calvin, "Homiliae in Primum Librum Samuelis. XIII-XXXI," Corpus Reformatorum, edited by Edward Cunitz, Edward Reuss, and Paul Lobstein (Brunswick: Wiegandt and Appelhans, 1886), LVIII, 259. Hereafter this collection will be referred to as CR. The English translation is from Percy Scholes, The Puritans and Music in England and New England



A fear of imitating the papacy does not in itself constitute a strong theological argument. It did result in appeals to a radical, protestant way of thinking, and it is no surprise to find this fear as a motivating force for the aversion to instrumental worship music found both among the Puritans<sup>22</sup> and within the Society of Friends.<sup>23</sup> It also appears in some of the later Calvinistic polemical works directed against instrumental practice. John Girardeau, an author with an intensely hostile attitude toward instruments in worship, says that they were "ejected . . . from . . . the services as an element of Popery."<sup>24</sup>

As a matter of principle Calvin and his followers exclude blind imitation of the papacy in this matter, for in their minds it would place them on the same level as Roman Catholics who perpetuate Old Testament musical practices without ever raising the question of the propriety of such imitation.<sup>25</sup>

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(New York: Russel and Russel, 1962), p. 336. Emilie Schild in the article "Calvins Vermächtnis an die evangelische Kirchemusik," Musik und Kirche, XIV (March-April 1942), 40-41, goes so far as to claim that Calvin took this position against instruments simply because he had great dislike for the overuse of instruments with polyphonic choral works in the Roman church. Oskar Söhngen takes Schild to task on this point in "Theologische Grundlagen der Kirchemusik," Die Musik des evangelischen Gottesdienstes, vol. IV of Leiturgia. Handbuch des evangelischen Gottesdienstes (Kassel: Johannes Stauda, 1961), p. 49. He states that Calvin probably never had that much experience with the Roman practice, and that Calvin's position must be traced to more theological reasons.

<sup>22</sup>See Edward Dickinson, Music in the History of the Western Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), p. 366.

<sup>23</sup>See Scholes, pp. 52, 381, passim. Scholes speaks of two books of homilies to be read in the Episcopal church when there is no sermon; one of the books (1563) speaks of organs as belonging to "superstitious and idolatrous manners," pp. 220-221.

<sup>24</sup>John L. Girardeau, Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1888), p. 179.

<sup>25</sup>So Calvin, "Psalmus LXXXI," CR, LIX, 760.



According to Calvin, the problem with the medieval church was that it failed to discover the real reason for instrumental music in the worship of the Old Testament. He was convinced that the reason was very apparent, and that, once discovered, it could not serve as a basis for such practice in the New Testament church.

In his explanation of instrumental music in Old Testament worship, he made no attempt to question the validity of the accounts:<sup>26</sup>

I have no doubt that playing upon cymbals, touching the harp and viol, and all that kind of music, which is so frequently mentioned in the Psalms, was part of the education--that is to say, the puerile instruction of the Law.<sup>27</sup>

Instrumental music was useful only for the people under the Old Covenant:

The musical instruments he [the psalmist] mentions were peculiar to this infancy of the Church, nor should we foolishly imitate a practice which was intended only for God's ancient people.<sup>28</sup>

Such an Old Testament worship practice was rendered invalid by the coming of Christ:

the Levites, under the law, were justified in making use of instrumental music in the worship of God; it having been

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<sup>26</sup>To call Calvin inconsistent, as Friedrich Kalb does in Theology of Worship in 17th-Century Lutheranism, translated by Henry P. A. Hamann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), p. 146, is by no means accurate; Kalb faults him for applying allegorical techniques (the number of which is minimal) as well as literal techniques to the Old Testament. There is no inconsistency in this if the former are taken as pastoral and the latter as exegetical. Calvin accepts the practice of instrumental music as outdated, and then applies the references allegorically.

<sup>27</sup>Calvin, "Psalmus XXXIII," CR, LIX, 324-325. The English translation is from Girardeau, p. 163.

<sup>28</sup>Calvin, "Psalmus CXLIX," CR, LX, 438. The English translation is from John Calvin, Commentary on the Book of Psalms, translated from the Original Latin and Collated with the Author's French Version by James Anderson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), V, 312.



his will to train his people, while they were as yet tender and like children, by such rudiments, until the coming of Christ.<sup>29</sup>

The use of instruments in the Old Testament cultus was acknowledged by Calvin, but he insisted that their use was outdated for the New Testament church. Instruments were used formerly for the education of the people under the Law. They belonged to the ceremonial law which was no longer applicable to Christians.<sup>30</sup>

The manner in which the instruments served to educate was described by Calvin in his comments on Psalm 92.

In the fourth verse, he more immediately addresses the Levites, who were appointed to the office of singers, and calls upon them to employ their instruments of music--not as if this were in itself necessary, only it was useful as an elementary aid to the people of God in these ancient times. We are not to conceive that God enjoined the harp as feeling a delight like ourselves in mere melody of sounds; but the Jews, who were yet under age, were astricted to the use of such childish elements. The intention of them was to stimulate the worshippers, and stir them up more actively to the celebration of the praise of God with the heart. We are to remember that the worship of God was never understood to consist in such outward services which were only necessary to help forward a people, as yet weak and rude in knowledge, in the spiritual worship of God. A difference is to be observed in this respect between his people under the Old and under the New Testament; for now that Christ has appeared, and the Church has reached full age, it were only to bury the light of the Gospel, should we introduce the shadows of a departed dispensation. From this, it appears that the Papists, as I shall have occasion to show elsewhere, in employing instrumental music, cannot be said so much to imitate the practice of God's ancient people, as to ape it in

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<sup>29</sup>Calvin, "Psalmus LXXXI," CR, LIX, 760. The English translation is from Robert M. Stevenson, Patterns of Protestant Church Music (Durham, North Carolina: Seeman Printery, 1953), p. 15.

<sup>30</sup>See the discussion of this by Walter Blankenburg, "Calvin" Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik, edited by Friedrich Blume (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1954), III, 658.



a senseless and absurd manner, exhibiting a silly delight in that worship of the Old Testament which was figurative, and terminated with the Gospel.<sup>31</sup>

The musical instruments served as external stimulants in exciting the Old Testament worshipers to the praise of God. From the vantage point of the New Testament that kind of worship is primitive and weak, according to Calvin. It cannot be described as "spiritual." Calvin's point becomes more explicit in a passage from his commentary on Isaiah:

And thus we are reminded to cry aloud in the present day with the greatest earnestness when we proclaim the praises of God, that we ourselves may be inflamed, and may excite others by our example to act in the same manner; for to be lukewarm, or to mutter, or to sing, as the saying is, to themselves and to the muses, is impossible for those who have actually tasted the grace of God.<sup>32</sup>

According to this passage singing does have the characteristic of moving both the performers and the listeners to even greater praise-making. But singing itself is not responsible for this expansion of praise. By itself it can too easily become self-centered or self-directed. Singing must always be motivated by the grace of God. For Calvin the significance of the New Testament era is that this grace of God is present for and in the believer. "The ceremonies might be said to shadow out an absent Christ, but to us he is represented as actually present, and thus while they had the mirror, we have the substance."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Calvin, "Psalmus XCII," CR, LX, 10-11. The English translation is from Calvin, Commentary on Psalms, III, 494-495.

<sup>32</sup>Calvin, "Commentarii in Isaiam Prophetam," CR, LXV, 68. The English translation is from John Calvin, Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, translated from the Latin and Collated with the latest French version by William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), III, 300.

<sup>33</sup>Calvin, "Commentarius in Epistolam ad Galatas," CR, LXXVIII, 220. The English translation is from John Calvin, Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians, translated from the Latin by



The Presence of Christ, which brings about what Calvin calls "spiritual" worship, negates the Old Testament reliance on external musical stimulants.<sup>34</sup> Instrumental music is outdated because the people of the New Testament are motivated internally to praise God, that is, they are moved by the presence of Christ and thus worship "spiritually." Spiritual worship is not dependent upon external stimulants such as instrumental music.

This argument was repeated frequently in the Calvinist tradition. Girardeau employed it extensively in his work.

Now there is no need to approach God by the old way of the temple-worship. We are at liberty to approach him by a new and living way, which Christ hath consecrated for us through the veil; that is to say, his flesh. His atoning death has cancelled the necessity for the temple and all its ceremonial and typical observances.<sup>35</sup>

Along with this de-emphasis on the external manifestations of worship one might expect of Calvin an argument against singing in worship. But he did not take that position. He was inclined to favor the use of singing.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, he recognized that it is possible to sing to oneself or to the "muses." According to Arnold Geering, Calvin's understanding of the psychological effect of music is represented in these two divergent points of view.

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William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), p. 107.

<sup>34</sup>So also Söhngen, pp. 43-44.

<sup>35</sup>Girardeau, pp. 92-93, *passim*. Another example is Cotton Mather who says in his Magnalia Christi Americana (1703) that instrumental music "appears to have been part of the ceremonial Pedagogy which is now abolished," as quoted in Scholes, pp. 246-247.

<sup>36</sup>See n. 32, p. 63.



In order to understand Calvin correctly, we have to imagine that music has two aspects--an external and an internal. The external, its form, we can control and regulate. We are handed over powerless, however, to the other aspect, the internal, that mysterious, so-called incredible power of arousing a person's heart in one direction or another. It leads a person to good as well as to evil.<sup>37</sup>

Calvin was bothered with this inner aspect of music which he found capable of leading a man to good as well as to evil ends. Music can "be composed only to please and delight the ear . . ." <sup>38</sup> and then it is "unbecoming the majesty of the church, and cannot but be highly displeasing to God." <sup>39</sup> "What was appointed by God as a means and a help to spiritual joy can become at the hand of sinful man a means of corruption." <sup>40</sup>

Calvin viewed these ethical problems not only as products of the sinfulness of man, but he was convinced that in music itself there are

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<sup>37</sup>"Um Calvin recht zu verstehen, müssen wir uns vergegenwärtigen, dass die Musik zwei Seiten hat, eine äuszere und eine innere. Die äuszere, ihre Form, können wir kontrollieren und regeln. Der inneren aber, jener geheimen, sozusagen ungläublichen Kraft, das Herz des Menschen in der einen oder anderen Richtung zu erregen, dieser anderen Seite sind wir machtlos ausgeliefert. Sie führt den Menschen zum Guten wie zum Bösen," in Arnold Geering, "Calvin und die Musik," Calvin-Studien 1959, edited by J. Moltmann (Duisburg: Johann Brendow & Son, 1960), pp. 16-17.

<sup>38</sup>Calvin, "Institutio Christianae Religionis," CR, XXX, 659. The English translation is from John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, translated from the Latin and collated with author's last edition in French by John Allen, in the eighth revised edition (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), II, 143.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>"Was von Gott als ein Mittel und eine Hilfe zu geistlicher Freude bestimmt war, kann unter der Hand des sündigen Menschen zu einem Mittel des Verderbens werden," in Söhngen, p. 57.



dangerous powers which will lead to the demoralization of man.<sup>41</sup> This is true especially of instrumental music. Instrumental music almost always leads people to corrupt ends,<sup>42</sup> or it drives them into passionate fits.<sup>43</sup> Ultimately these psychological forces in music separate a man from God, because they force him to delight not in God but in his own art. Because music makes it possible for a man to lose sight of God, Calvin and his followers considered its place in worship with a great deal of suspicion. Walter Blankenburg maintains that Calvin's ethical suspicions of music comprise the "musical puritanism" of the Reformed church.<sup>44</sup>

Calvin also recognized characteristics in music which he valued as very useful for public worship. He liked singing:

And certainly if singing be attempered to that gravity which becomes the presence of God and of angels, it adds a dignity and grace to sacred actions, and is very efficacious in exciting the mind to a true concern and adour of devotion.<sup>45</sup>

Music and religion go together well, according to Calvin, although one must always be alert to music's dangers.

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid. Söhngen mentions (p. 60) that Calvin's preoccupation with these ethical dangers in music prevented him from considering music in the theological or ontological dimensions; he finds this is a significant difference between Calvin and Luther.

<sup>42</sup>Calvin, "Sermons sur le Livre de Job," CR, LXII, 227, as referred to by Söhngen, p. 60.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., LXII, 226-227.

<sup>44</sup>Blankenburg, III, 658. Erik Routley in Music, Sacred and Profane (London: Independent Press, 1960), p. 106, says that the Puritans were opposed to the practice of applauding those who made music because of their artistry and performance; they were not opposed to music as such.

<sup>45</sup>Calvin, "Institutio Christianae Religionis," CR, XXX, 659. The English translation is from Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, II, 142.



But such is the nature of music, that it can be adapted to the offices of religion, and made profitable to men; if only it be free from vicious attractions, and from that foolish delight, by which it seduces men from better employments, and occupies them in vanity.<sup>46</sup>

This comment succinctly emphasizes Calvin's mixed feelings about music in worship. He was attracted to the art on the basis of its usefulness for his conception of worship, but he also recognized, and wanted to avoid, the dangers of music in a worship situation. The dilemma was solved for him in a biblical passage which, according to Blankenburg,<sup>47</sup> is the key passage for an understanding of Calvin's entire evaluation of music in worship. The text is 1 Cor. 14:15: "I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also."

Calvin formulated his interpretation of this text from the word "mind" or "understanding." It was apparent to him that St. Paul:

teaches, that it is lawful, indeed, to pray with the spirit, provided the mind be at the same time employed, that is, the understanding. He allows, therefore, and sanctions the use of a spiritual gift in prayer, but requires, what is the main thing, that the mind be not unemployed.<sup>48</sup>

Understanding with the mind can be taken to mean the mandatory use of word with music. Then vocal music is given priority by St. Paul. The

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<sup>46</sup>Calvin, "Commentarius in Genesin," CR, LI, 100. The English translation is from John Calvin, Commentaries on The First Book of Moses called Genesis, translated from the original Latin and compared with the French edition by John King (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), I, 218.

<sup>47</sup>Blankenburg, III, 659.

<sup>48</sup>Calvin, "Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli ad Corinthios I," CR, LXXI, 522. The English translation is from John Calvin, Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to The Corinthians, translated from the Latin and collated with the author's French version by John Pringle (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), I, 447.



passage also can be used as a basis for totally excluding instrumental music from public worship. Calvin himself made this conclusion:

In speaking of employing the psaltery and the harp in this exercise, he alludes to the generally prevailing custom of that time. To sing the praises of God upon the harp and psaltery unquestionably formed a part of the training of the law, and of the service of God under that dispensation of shadows and figures; but they are not now to be used in public thanksgiving. We are not, indeed, forbidden to use, in private, musical instruments, but they are banished out of the churches by the plain command of the Holy Spirit, when Paul, in I Cor. xiv. 13, lays it down as an invariable rule, that we must praise God, and pray to him only in a known tongue.<sup>49</sup>

In a sermon on a portion of 1 Samuel Calvin disparaged the contemporary use of instruments in public worship, and once more he referred to the Corinthian passage as the basis of his argument.

Furthermore, we know that when something is not intelligible, neither is it edifying. The Apostle Paul taught the same thing when he asked how it is possible to interpret an unknown testimony of faith or how it is possible to speak an Amen to a deed of grace unless it is understood.<sup>50</sup>

For Calvin, music in worship must be of the sort which can be understood and which employs the mind.

Consequently, singing is always bound up with a rational factor; only then does it fulfill its task in worship, whereby the hearer is led to understanding, to intelligentia. According to I Cor. 14:16 . . . the hearing congregation can speak the amen of acknowledgement only to something which they have understood.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Calvin, "Psalmus LXXI," CR, LIX, 662. The English translation is from Calvin, Commentary on Psalms, III, 98.

<sup>50</sup>"Scimus autem ubi nulla est intelligentia, nullam etiam aedificationem esse; quemadmodum Paulus apostolus docet, quum ait, quo modo potest idiota reddere fidei testimonium, aut quomodo dicturus est Amen ad gratiarum actionem, nisi intelligat?" in Calvin, "Homilia LXVI in I Libro Samuel. Caput XVIII," CR, LVIII, 259.

<sup>51</sup>"Singens ist somit stets mit einem rationalen Moment verbunden; es erfüllt nur dort seine gottesdienstliche Aufgabe, wo der Hörer zum Verstehen, zur intelligentia geführt wird. Nach 1. Kor. 14,16 . . .



Calvin desired that the texts for this mind-involving music come from the Scriptures. Söhngen points out that for Calvin a piece of church music obtains a legitimate place in worship only through its biblically-based text.

Music as such, therefore, does not have an official claim to position in the meetings of the congregation of Jesus Christ, but music only as a prop and pinion for the Word. Indeed, rightly seen, it is alone the underlying word of the Bible which legitimatizes music in the worship service.<sup>52</sup>

Regarding texts for church music Calvin made an additional suggestion. He felt that such texts should be taken only from the Psalms,<sup>53</sup> for in the Psalms we have a creation of the Holy Spirit himself.

Of course, on principle only psalms should be sung in the worship services of the congregation, for they alone are God's word. The psalms of King David were inspired by the Holy Spirit himself. Thus we can be sure when singing

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kann die hörende Gemeinde das bestätigende Amen nur zu etwas sagen, was sie begriffen hat," in Blankenburg, III, 659. See also Söhngen, p. 51. J. Ritter, a Swiss pastor of the Prussian Union in Der protestantische Gottesdienst und die Kunst in ihrem gegenseitiger Verhältnis (St. Gall and Bern: Huber, 1840) attempted to conciliate the Reformed and Lutheran approaches to music by perpetuating the same line of argument. He says on p. 85 that instrumental music is permissible "wenn sie nämlich hernach zu Worte kömmt. . . . Ohne die Einheit im Worte ist sie catholisch."

<sup>52</sup>Söhngen, p. 52. Söhngen makes his conclusion on the basis of Calvin's argument in "Epistre au Lecteur," the introduction to "La Forme des prières et chantz ecclésiastiques," CR, VI, 170-171, where Calvin says: "Or ce que dit S. Augustin est vray, que nul ne peut chanter choses dignes de Dieu, sinon qu'il ait receu d'iceluy. . . ." I am indebted to Arthur Carl Piepkorn for deciphering the medieval French and for providing the sense of the text.

<sup>53</sup>Calvin, "Epistre au Lecteur," CR, VI, 170-171. The French is as follows: "Or ce que dit S. Augustin est vray, que nul ne peut chanter choses dignes de Dieu, sinon qu'il ait receu d'iceluy: parquoy quand nous aurons bien circuy par tout pour chercher ça et 'la, nous ne trouverons meilleures chansons ne plus propres pour ce faire, que les Pseaumes de David: lesquelz le saint Esprit luy a dictz et faitz." I am indebted to Arthur Carl Piepkorn for deciphering the medieval French and for providing the sense of the text.



psalms that God puts the words in our mouth as if he himself were singing inside us to exalt his glory.<sup>54</sup>

One of the results of using the Psalms as a basis for church music is that God's words are used by man for his praise of God. This arrangement provides for the repeated use of the Word of God, and it indicates a function of church music to which Calvin ascribed. Not only does the repeated use of God's Word reinforce the divine message to man, but it also forms the basis of man's response to God. This response from man was considered by Calvin to be prayer, and it included both spoken and sung forms.<sup>55</sup>

The evaluation of church music within the categories of prayer or response would seem to have forced Calvin to reconsider pure instrumental music in worship on the basis that it can be a response prompted by the Gospel. His insistence on "understanding" in church music rendered such a reconsideration unnecessary.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Es sollen in den Gottesdiensten der Gemeinde nämlich grundsätzlich nur Psalmen gesungen werden. Denn sie allein sind Gottes Wort. Die Psalmen sind dem König David vom Heiligen Geist selbst eingegeben worden, so können wir denn beim Psalmengesang sicher sein, dass Gott uns die Worte in den Mund legt, als wenn er selber in uns sänge, um seinen Ruhm zu erhöhen," in Söhngen, p. 54.

<sup>55</sup>Calvin, "Epistre au Lecteur," CR, VI, 168-169. The French is as follows: "Quant est des prieres publiques, il y en a deux especes. Les unes se font par simple parole: les autres avecque chant." I am indebted to Arthur Carl Piepkorn for deciphering the medieval French and for providing the sense of the text.

<sup>56</sup>Söhngen uses this relationship of prayer and music as an illustration of a fundamental difference between the Lutheran and Reformed views of church music. The Lutherans, he claims, regard music as a means of both proclamation and response, while the Reformed tend to regard it only as a means of response: "Der Gedanke, dass es Gott selbst ist, der durch den Heiligen Geist unmittelbar im Worte des Predigers redet, fehlt bei Calvin zwar nicht ganz, aber er hat nicht die zentrale Stellung wie bei Luther, der die Schrift, die Predigt, die biblische Vorlesung, das brüderliche Gespräch--und die musikalische Exegese in der Einheit der



Calvin also recommended musical guidelines for the composers of worship music. According to these suggestions church music must be monophonic, or on rare occasions homophonic, but never polyphonic, because polyphonic music tends to draw the worshiper's attention away from the word, and thus away from understanding.<sup>57</sup> Sufficient for the worship song is a "pure and simple expression of divine praise, with our hearts and minds, in the language of each one . . . ." <sup>58</sup>

Indirectly this desire for a monophonic style militates against the use of instruments in worship, for it rules out instrumental accompaniment of polyphonic choral music along with the music itself.

Calvin's additional directions indicate that worship music is to have certain stylistic characteristics. The melodies should express the weightiness of the text they are bearing, and they should communicate a certain gravity and majesty to the hearer or participant.<sup>59</sup>

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viva vox zusammenschauen vermag" (p. 186). Söhngen (p. 186) also faults Karl Barth for perpetuating this position of Calvin, and in "Kirchenmusik und Theologie," Festschrift Max Schneider, edited by Walther Vetter (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1955), p. 339 he sees in Calvin's linking of music and prayer a key to Barth's love of Mozart in preference to Bach. Adolf Brunner, a contemporary Reformed author, holds to a view more typically Lutheran in Wesen, Funktion und Ort der Musik im Gottesdienst (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1960), p. 72: "Wir haben schon im ersten Teil unseres Buches erkannt, dass Liturgie in ihrer Gesamtheit zwar als Verkündigung Gottes und Antwort der Gemeinde verstanden werden muss, dass ihre einzelnen Stücke aber nicht einfach in verkündende und antwortende auseinanderfallen. Alle Stücke leben zugleich von einem anrufenden, lobpreisenden, verkündenden und antwortenden Tun."

<sup>57</sup>See Söhngen, "Grundlagen," pp. 52-53.

<sup>58</sup>"pura et simplex divinarum laudum modulatio, corde et ore nostro singuli idiomate . . ." in Calvin, "Homilia LXVI In I Libro Samuel. Caput XVIII," CR, LVIII, 259.

<sup>59</sup>Calvin, "Epistre au Lecteur," CR, VI, 171. The French is as follows: "Touchant de la melodie, il a semblé advis le meilleur qu'elle fust modérée, en la sorte que nous l'avons mise pour emporter poidz et maiesté convenable au subiect, et mesme pour estre propre à chanter en



Calvin was convinced that church music composed according to these restrictions would have salutary effects in public worship. The melody would aid in driving the word into men's hearts, and it would do this in a way impossible for the medium of word alone. Calvin described this process with an unusual analogy, showing what strength music has in enforcing texts which are fundamentally anti-religious:

It is true that each evil word, as Paul says, corrupts good morals. But when the melody is added, it zeroes much deeper into the heart and penetrates it, just as wine is poured into a vessel through a funnel. Indeed, the poison and the corruption are poured drop by drop into the innermost part of the soul by means of the melody.<sup>60</sup>

It was necessary to traverse Calvin's total proposal for music in worship in order to understand his second chief argument against instruments in worship. He was convinced that instrumental music had the innate capability of detracting a man from God by forcing him to delight in musical art for its own sake. The only way that music could be an aid for worship was to have it connected to a biblical text. Calvin argued for vocal music alone. He was convinced that the Scriptures demanded that church music be subject to understanding and presumably he interpreted this to mean verbal understanding. For him the New

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l'Eglise selon qu'il a esté dict." I am indebted to Arthur Carl Piepkorn for deciphering the medieval French and for providing the sense of the text. Calvin is here responsible for suggesting a separation between sacred and secular musical styles. Söhngen in "Grundlagen," p. 46, remarks: "Calvin lehnte also die musikalische Einheit zwischen geistlichem und weltlichem Lied bewusst ab und forderte statt dessen einen eigenen kirchlichen, sakralen Still . . . ." See also Blankenburg, III, 660 and 665.

<sup>60</sup>"Es ist wahr, dass jedes schlechte Wort, wie Paulus sagt, gute Sitten verdirbt. Aber wenn die Melodie dazukommt, so dringt es noch viel tiefer ins Herz und geht ein, wie durch einen Trichter der Wein in ein Gefäss gegossen wird. Ja, das Gift und die Verderbnis wird ins Innerste der Seele eingeträufelt durch die Melodie," in Söhngen, "Grundlagen," p. 58. Calvin used the analogy in "Epistre au Lecteur," CR, VI, 169-170.



Testament was a source of guidelines and restrictions for Christian public worship. It demanded understanding in worship and by implication eliminated instruments from worship. On the basis of this apparent Scriptural rejection of musical instruments, Calvin was sure that they could not be played and listened to in worship with the end of glorifying God, although he never offered proof for such a view.

Calvin's principles for church music have continued to influence the practice of sacred music within the Reformed persuasion,<sup>61</sup> but there has been growing dissatisfaction with his attitude towards instruments in public worship. Shortly before the close of the last century an unknown author of an article on music in a Reformed encyclopedia disparaged the usual arguments against instruments:

Finally, therefore, to interdict these concomitants of congregational worship is a mistake savoring of asceticism and iconoclasm. It is moreover, a scientific blunder, as well as an aesthetic degeneration. If the O.-T. saint could profitably employ instrumental music as a means of grace, why should it be denied the Christian?<sup>62</sup>

Another author from within the Reformed ranks suggests the following reevaluation:

Leading Presbyterian churches advertise with great gusto performances of the Verdi Requiem, Mozart Masses, the Faure Requiem, the Palestrina Stabat Mater, and so on. Since these musical masterpieces are performed in church, the basic implication for the auditor is authorization by the church which of all churches is most alien in its tradition to this kind of thing . . . Perhaps Calvin was wrong. Perhaps music is one of the needful matters. If it is, why does not the conscience of the grandchildren of Calvin move them to foster

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<sup>61</sup>See Söhngen, "Grundlagen," p. 54, passim.

<sup>62</sup>"Music," Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, edited by John McClintock and James Strong (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1894), IV, 763.



creative enterprise amongst themselves, rather than feasting now on the honey of the beast whom Samson slew?<sup>63</sup>

Neither of these Reformed self-criticisms challenge the issues as Calvin originally advanced them; meaningful confrontation must reckon directly with his assertions that instruments are not needed because the Christian man is motivated inwardly through the Spirit for his worship of God, and that instruments are not compatible with the New Testament emphasis on understanding in worship.

### Zwingli

Of the three Reformers, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, and Martin Luther, Zwingli was the most accomplished musician.

According to the contemporary chronicle of Bernhard Wyss, Zwingli could play eleven instruments: lute, hand harp, pipes, bagpipe, trumpet, marine, dulcimer, violin, small violin, French horn, cornet, and tabor-pipe. Zwingli appears to have achieved great mastery above all on the lute and flute--whence the nickname of lute-player and evangelical piper.<sup>64</sup>

Zwingli's diversified musical abilities might have led him to a high opinion of music within worship had it not been for the conclusions he made from his theological studies, which led him to an anti-musical outlook more radical than that of Calvin. Although his dislike for music

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<sup>63</sup>Robert Stevenson, "Reformed Church Music," Crozer Quarterly, XXVI (January 1949), 44. See also Henry Bruinsma, "Problems in Reformed Church Music," The Westminster Theological Journal, XVII (May 1955), 158-167, and Isham Reynolds, Music and the Scriptures (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1942), passim.

<sup>64</sup>Nach der zeitgenössischen Chronik des Bernhard Wyss konnte Zwingli elf Instrumente spielen: Laute, Handharfe, Pfeife, Sackpfeife, Trumscheit, Hackbrett, Geige, Rabögli, Waldhorn, Zinken und Schwäglen. Zu grosser Meisterschaft scheint Zwingli es vor allem auf der Laute und Flöte gebracht zu haben; daher der Spottname eines luthenschlagers und evangelischen pfyffers," in Hannes Reimann, "Huldrych Zwingli--der Musiker," Archiv für Musikwissenschaft, XVII (1960), 130.



within worship is not attributed to his musicianship,<sup>65</sup> Söhnngen conjectures that Zwingli's great technical abilities may have caused him to detest congregational music that was characteristically unartistic.<sup>66</sup>

The practice of church music immediately prior to Zwingli's time was not always conducive to pious and intelligent worship.

At all times, naturally also before the Reformation, the ecclesiastical authorities had to intervene again and again to delineate unsuitable elements and customs in the practice of church music which had sneaked in and were disturbing devotion. In this respect the sixteenth century produced an especially difficult crisis also in the pale of the Roman church, because through the grand accomplishments of the Netherlands and later on especially the Italian composers, polyphonic music reached such a high and difficult technical stage that regard for the easily understood presentation of the liturgical text increasingly receded in favor of the accumulation of technical difficulties. On the other hand the attention of the performers as well as the listeners was more and more directed to the musical-technical aspect of church music. A diminution of the solemn devotional aura of the cult was the inevitable result of this.<sup>67</sup>

According to contemporary reports, musical conditions in the parishes of Zürich had been deteriorating before Zwingli arrived there, and they

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<sup>65</sup>See Garside, p. 47.

<sup>66</sup>Söhnngen, "Grundlagen," p. 37.

<sup>67</sup>"Zu allen Zeiten, natürlich auch vor der Reformation, hat immer wieder die kirchliche Aufsichtsbehörde einschreiten müssen, um ungeeignete stilistische Elemente und andachtstörende eingeschlichene Gewohnheiten aus der kirchlichen Musikpraxis zu entwerfen. Das sechzehnte Jahrhundert zeitigte in dieser Hinsicht eine besonders schwere Krise auch im Schoss der römischen Kirche, weil durch die grossartigen Leistungen der niederländischen und späterhin besonders italienischen Tonmeister der mehrstimmige kirchliche Gesang auf eine so hohe und schwierige technische Stufe gelangt war, dass die Rücksicht auf die leichtverständliche Darbietung des liturgischen Textes zugunsten der Häufung technischer Schwierigkeiten immer mehr zurücktrat, und andererseits die Aufmerksamkeit der Ausführenden wie der Zuhörenden immer mehr auf die musikalisch-technische Seite der Kirchenmusik gelenkt wurde. Eine Verminderung der andachtvollen Weihe des Kults war die unvermeidliche Folge hiervon," in Antoine Cherbuliez, "Zwingli, Zwick, und der Kirchengesang," Zwingliana, IV (1926), 364-365.



continued to decline until Zwingli's influence forced the practice to a halt. The church choirs had attempted polyphonic compositions much too involved for their capabilities. Charles Garside describes some of the difficulties encountered in the securing of capable cantors.

Choral polyphony is infinitely more taxing than Gregorian chant; consistently satisfactory performance demands not only an expert choir but also an exceptionally talented musician to train and direct it. Felix Hemmerlin and his gifted pupil Nikolaus von Wyl were just such musicians, but their successors in the Cantorate of the Great Minster clearly were not so able. The Fraumünster, on the other hand, had never attained quite to the musical excellence of its rival across the Limmat, and by the last quarter of the century [fifteenth] the standards of musical performance in both churches had begun to decline markedly, a deterioration to be observed as well in the cloisters and convents that took their lead from the two minsters.<sup>68</sup>

Ultimately, these factors were not determinative in Zwingli's decision against music in worship. Others, like Karlstadt,<sup>69</sup> had questioned quality or quantity of music in worship, but Zwingli asked and answered the more basic question: Should there be any music in worship.

It should now be apparent that Zwingli is not at all objecting to music per se. That he should reject it from worship because he did not understand it or was insensitive to it or because he was ignorant of its technicalities is, as has been shown, simply not true. Equally false is the assertion that he rejected singing and instrumental music "because they profane the Church through their worldly character." Such thinking is characteristic of Karlstadt but alien to Zwingli.<sup>70</sup>

The structure of his [Zwingli's] thought is wholly different; its foundation is at a deeper level, in which music is conceived virtually as an abstraction. He is being directed by what are for him inescapable facts--namely, that God has not

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<sup>68</sup>Garside, p. 20.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 46.



commanded a musical worship and that the principle of freedom from liturgy was proclaimed by Christ. Music, choral or instrumental, no matter how religiously inspired, artistically beautiful, or superlatively performed, must be prohibited from worship because the Scripture has made its existence there impossible.<sup>71</sup>

There can be no understanding of Zwingli's argument against the use of musical instruments without a prior understanding of his hermeneutical principles for interpreting the Scriptures. His aversion to music in worship resulted from a view of the Bible as the prescriptive authority for all liturgical practice.<sup>72</sup>

In January of 1523 Zwingli published sixty-seven articles intended for discussion at Zurich with the vicar-general, Johann Faber.<sup>73</sup> The minutes of that meeting indicate that the discussion frequently departed from the proposed subjects. At one point Faber wanted to know if Zwingli agreed to the proposition that the Holy Spirit spoke to the fathers of the church and taught them concerning fasts, the consecration of Sunday, and other church practices. Zwingli's reply, besides providing an answer for Faber, reveals his sola scriptura hermeneutical principle:

The Holy Spirit himself, whom the Father sends in my name, will teach you--suppose the twelve apostles here--all things and will inspire you by, advise you of, or remind you of all things which I will say to you, as he speaks without

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>72</sup>Zwingli never formulated a doctrine of singing or of music. Reimann, XVII, 136 and 141, and in Die Einführung des Kirchengesangs in der Züricher Kirche nach der Reformation (Zürich: Paul Gehring, 1959), pp. 12 and 18, has suggested that if Zwingli had not died so suddenly, he would have developed a doctrine of singing. Reimann implies that such a doctrine would be less severe than that which is usually put together from the scattered statements. Garside (p. 65) and Söhngen ("Grundlagen," p. 22) discount this on the basis that the very nature of Zwingli's position will allow for no music whatever in worship.

<sup>73</sup>See Garside, pp. 27 and 96-97.



a doubt: Not what seems good to you, but what the Spirit teaches you in my name, according to the truth, not according to human opinions. Now the holy apostles have never taught, added, commanded, or ordered anything except what Christ commended to them in the Gospel. Then Christ spoke to them: You are my friends, if you do the things which I have commanded or ordered. The dear disciples also observed them earnestly and taught us nothing other than how the master sent them out to teach and instruct. . . . For I may truthfully say that--beyond the sixty of my lords in this room--I could take any of the lay people, who are not learned in the Scriptures, but who could upset all your arguments hitherto advanced and invalidate or defeat them with the Gospel.<sup>74</sup>

Zwingli was convinced that it required no specialist to determine doctrine and practice in the church; even the simplest of men could establish such teachings on the basis of the "Gospel."

In July of 1523 Zwingli published his defense of the articles discussed in January of the same year. In it he attacked all sorts of ecclesiastical practices, invariably comparing them with the Scriptures. The exposition of articles 45 and 46 from the January discussions treated music in detail. In the explanation of article 45 he insisted that the Scriptures nowhere permit worship music:

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<sup>74</sup>"Der heilig geist, welchen der vatter sendt in minem namen, derselb wirt üch--vermeint die zwölfboten--alle ding leeren und würt üch ingeben, raten oder erinnern alle ding, die ich üch wird sagen, als ob er sprech on zweifel: Nitt was üch gut dunckt, sunder was der geist üch leert in minem namen, nach der warheit, nit nach menschlichem geduncken. Nun haben ye die heiligen aposteln nüts anders gelert, uffgesetzt, geheissen unnd gebotten, denn was ynen Christus im euangelio hat empfolhen. Dann Christus sprach zu inen: Ir sind mine fründ, wenn ir thund die ding, die ich hab geheissen oder gebotten. Dasselb haben ouch die lieben junger ernstlich gehalten und nüt anders uns geleert, denn wie sy der recht meister zu leeren ussgesant hatt unnd underwysen . . . . dann ich darff das mit der warheit sagen, das ich deren ob die sechtzig wüsst zu nemmen in diser stuben von meinen herren, leyen, der geschriff nit gelert, die all üwer argument, bissar fürgwendt, könden umbstossen unnd mitt dem euangelio niderlegen oder solvieren," Ulrich Zwingli, "Handlung der Versammlung in Zürich 29 Januar 1523," CR, LXXXVIII, 551-552.



But should it not be good, they say, for one to sing the praise of God before all men. Answer: Show me that it is good and I will believe it to be good. God alone is good and the sole source of all good things. If the mumbling of psalms is good, then it must come from God. Show me where God has commanded such moaning, mumbling, and murmuring.<sup>75</sup>

For Zwingli, music, as well as anything which occurs within worship, must come under the exclusive authority of the Bible. By subjecting music to this authority he remained consistent with his core theological principle which, according to Schmidt-Clausing, is sola scriptura.

If one wanted to find a key-word analogous to the Lutheran sola fide for the reformation work of Zwingli, it could be: sola scriptura. That is above all also the heartbeat for his new creation.<sup>76</sup>

The sola scriptura principle and its application to worship music was perpetuated with almost identical results by one of Zwingli's best students, Conrad Grebel. In a letter written to Thomas Müntzer, Grebel inquired about the possibilities of fellowship, but had some reservations regarding Müntzer's use of music:

We understand and have seen that thou hast translated the Mass into German and hast introduced new German hymns. That cannot be for the good, since we find nothing taught in the New Testament about singing, no example of it . . . . Whatever we are not taught by clear passages or examples must be regarded as forbidden, just as if it were written: "This do not; sing not."<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Ulrich Zwingli, "Usslegen und gründ der schlussreden oder articklen durch Huldrychen Zuingli, Zürich uff den 29. tag jenners im 1523. jar ussgangen," CR, LXXXIX, 349. The English translation is from Garside, p. 44.

<sup>76</sup>"Wollte man analog dem lutherischen 'sola fide' für das Reformationswerk Zwinglis ein Kernwort finden, so kann es nur lauten: 'sola scriptura.' Das ist vorzüglich auch das metron für seine Neuschöpfung," in Schmidt-Clausing, p. 46.

<sup>77</sup>Conrad Grebel, "Brief vom 5. September 1524," Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz, I, Zürich, edited by Leonard von Muralt and Walter Schmid (Zürich: S. Hirzel, 1952), pp. 14-15. The English translation is from Conrad Grebel, "Letter to Thomas Müntzer, dated 5 September



The sharp rejection of worship music was frequently prompted by the conviction that the Scriptures contained the patterns of true worship and that those patterns were devoid of musical prescriptions. Such an approach to the Scriptures pervades the writings of John Girardeau, the nineteenth-century commentator on instrumental music in worship:

The question now being, Did Christ command the use of instrumental music in his church? the answer must be, He did not. There is certainly no such command on record. Nor can it be presumed. The Lord Jesus knew the divine decree by which the temporary services of the temple were destined to be abolished. He himself predicted the utter destruction of the temple. He knew perfectly that instrumental music was an attachment to the peculiar and distinctive services of the temple, and therefore He knew that it must share the wreck to which the temple with all those services was doomed. Did he authorize his church to save instrumental music from the ruins, and employ it in her worship? He did not. Is she then warranted to do it? Assuredly not.<sup>78</sup>

The crux of the problem for both Girardeau and Zwingli was whether or not there had been a command from Christ to use instruments in worship. The answer from Zwingli, as well as from Girardeau, was negative. Both anticipated a further question: How could such a conclusion be reconciled with the reported use of instruments in Old Testament worship? Girardeau replied that it was part of the temple cultus, which was later

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1524," Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers, edited by George Williams, vol. XXV of Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 75.

<sup>78</sup>Girardeau, pp. 111-112. The same argument appears in Marshall Clement Kurfees, Instrumental Music in Worship or the Greek Verb Psallo Philologically and Historically Examined Together with a Full Discussion of Kindred Matters Relating to Music in Christian Worship (Nashville: McQuiddy Printing Company, 1911), p. 98. Reimann (Die Einführung, pp. 40-41) mentions that similar opinions were expressed by Ludwig Lavater, archdeacon and canon at the Gross Münster in Zürich shortly after Zwingli's death; in a commentary on the Chronicles Lavater deplored the use of instruments in worship on the grounds that such a practice had not been satisfactorily proven from the Scriptures.



destroyed in perfect accordance with Christ's predictions. Zwingli had similar opinions. For him the Law was not completely overruled by the advent of Christ; it is always "eternally right and good,"<sup>79</sup> but aspects of it have been abolished, such as the ceremonial law.<sup>80</sup> To determine what is abolished and what is valid for the Christian is simply a matter of attending to what is advised through the words of Christ and the rest of the New Testament.<sup>81</sup>

Zwingli made this clear in his exegetical treatment of Col. 3:16.<sup>82</sup> The passage appears to be a strong argument against Zwingli's position. It speaks of music, especially singing, and it could serve as apostolic approval for instrumental music. What appears as strong evidence against Zwingli was used by him to advance his arguments:

Here Paul does not teach us mumbling and murmuring in the churches, but shows us the true song that is pleasing to God, that we sing the praise and glory of God not with our voices, like the Jewish singers, but with our hearts.<sup>83</sup>

Zwingli understood Col. 3:16 as a slur against the outward type of singing practiced in Old Testament times because the Apostle Paul advocated the kind of singing which is done in the heart only. On that basis

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<sup>79</sup>"Dann das gesatzet heisst nüt anderst, dann das ewiglich recht und gut ist; denn das gesatzet ist gut, gerecht und heilig Ro. 7," in Zwingli, CR, LXXXIX, 232.

<sup>80</sup>So Gottfried Locher, "Zwingli," Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, edited by Kurt Galling (3rd edition; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1962), VI, 1965.

<sup>81</sup>See Zwingli's reply to Faber in the minutes of the disputation at Zürich, 29 January 1523, supra, n. 74, p. 78.

<sup>82</sup>"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

<sup>83</sup>Zwingli, CR, LXXXIX, p. 350. The English translation is from Garside, p. 45.



the Zürich reformer became convinced that the entire musical practice described in the Old Testament, including the use of instruments was invalid.<sup>84</sup>

Zwingli's comment on the Colossian passage also indicates his idea of the shape worship should take in the New Testament era.<sup>85</sup> The "true song" is that which is in the heart. Zwingli desired an absolutely private type of worship, which consisted in inward prayer as a means of communion with God.<sup>86</sup> "Therefore do not bellow the prayer in public as the dumb harlots do; but go and do it in private,"<sup>87</sup> advised Zwingli. For him the inward disposition of prayer was the sole legitimate shape of worship, because outward forms of piety, especially choral or instrumental music were irrevocably abolished through the commands of Christ and the apostles. Obedience to these commands could lead only to the cessation of worship as Zwingli knew it:

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<sup>84</sup>Although he found fault with the outward form of Israelite worship, Zwingli also sought to find support in the Old Testament for his ideal of inward prayer; cf. CR, LXXXIX, 348: "No prayer is more pleasing to God than that which recognizes Him truly and calls on God truly with heart free from doubt, not with hypocrisy, but with right, true acknowledgement and recognition. Thus (Ex. 14:15) Moses calls earnestly on God within his heart and does not move his lips. So also Hannah did not cry aloud (1 Sam. 1:13). So, too, Christ (Matt. 6:7) prohibited much babbling and has taught that we should pray in spirit and in truth (John 4:24) where He frees us also from particular localities; that not in one locality better than another may God be well and correctly called upon, but in all localities where God is called upon in spirit and in truth, there does He say: Here am I." The English translation is from Garside, p. 40.

<sup>85</sup>For a Lutheran exegesis of this passage, see Söhngen, "Grundlagen," 2-15.

<sup>86</sup>Garside, p. 42.

<sup>87</sup>Zwingli, CR, LXXXIX, 351. The English translation is from Garside, p. 48.



Farewell, my temple-murmurings! I am not sorry for you. I know that you are not good for me. But welcome, O pious, private prayer that is awakened in the hearts of believing men through the Word of God. Yes, a small sigh, which does not last long, realizes itself and goes away again quickly. Greetings to you, too, common prayer that all Christians do together, be it in church or in their chambers, but free and unpaid; I know that you are the sort of prayer to which God will give that which He has promised.<sup>88</sup>

With this Zwingli dealt music a severe blow. Silence became the ideal for worship, and the reason was simply that the New Testament permitted no other way.

Garside and Söhngen maintain that Zwingli's ideal for worship is perfectly congruous with the rest of his theology. They view the emphasis upon internal prayer as a manifestation of his tendency to separate the spiritual from the material. The medieval church had in many ways sought to bring the two together; Zwingli made an attempt to separate them.<sup>89</sup> The same tendency is to be observed in his treatment of the person of Christ, "for he always tended to stress the distinction of the two natures as against their unity, especially as the controversy with Luther over the Real Presence deepened."<sup>90</sup> Garside suggests that the spiritual-material dichotomy is a characteristic of most humanistic theology, and that Zwingli, as a trained humanist, was true to his type, especially in his blueprint for worship.<sup>91</sup>

Zwingli's relegation of worship to the realm of the spirit is also in line with his view of the means of grace, since for him "faith does

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid., LXXXIX, 353-354. The English translation is from Garside, p. 51.

<sup>89</sup>Garside, p. 178.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 171.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 36.



not come 'with' the word and 'through' the word, but alone through the Spirit."<sup>92</sup> Söhngen further sees this emphasis on spiritual worship as a logical extension of Zwingli's doctrine of predestination.<sup>93</sup> Söhngen argues that for Zwingli each man ultimately stands alone in his relationship with God, and worship must be an image of that relationship. Even in this respect Zwingli was consistent, just as his view of worship was a natural outcome of his entire theology.

When his view of worship was put into action, it understandably produced some radical results.<sup>94</sup> True stillness in worship was achieved by Zwingli for Zürich in the year 1525.<sup>95</sup> It was not until 1598 that vocal music was permitted again in that city.<sup>96</sup> In the year 1527 the pipe organs in Zürich were destroyed,<sup>97</sup> and several other parishes outside the city followed the Zürich example; not until 1809 in areas of Zwinglian influence was an organ again installed specifically for use in the services of

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<sup>92</sup>"der Glaube kommt nicht 'mit' dem Wort und 'durch' das Wort, sondern allein durch den Geist," in Söhngen, "Grundlagen," p. 32.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>The history of these results is broad enough to require a separate study. A few of the facts are mentioned here to furnish an idea of the impact which Zwingli's theology made on public worship.

<sup>95</sup>Garside, pp. 37-38.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 61. Friedrich Blume in Geschichte der evangelischen Kirchenmusik (2nd revised edition; Kassel: Barenreiter, 1965), p. 84 mentions that in Bern in 1581 the congregation was accompanied by a brass choir. The reason for this rather atypical Zwinglian practice was that the outlying areas were not heavily influenced by Zwingli's pronouncements. For more information on music reintroduced to parishes under Zwinglian influence see Reimann, Die Einführung.



worship.<sup>98</sup> In the late sixteenth-century pope organs were also destroyed in England by the Puritans. Motivation for these destructive acts was supplied in part through the Zwinglian theology of worship, although the total Puritan way of life was a complexity of both theological and political factors.<sup>99</sup>

The demolition of organs and the development of an almost silent form of worship were instigated by Zwingli through his insistence that the Scriptures allowed for only inward types of worship. Though the argument was sufficient in itself, it did not prevent him from adducing other supports for his position. As others had before him, Zwingli realized that music had a strong force which touched almost every man.

The ratio of no other discipline is so profoundly rooted and innate in the souls of all men as that of music. For no men are so stupid that they are not captivated by it, even though they are entirely ignorant of its technique. There are none, on the other hand, who are not offended by the confusion and discord of voices, even those who cannot explain what is dissonant and what is unsuitable. So powerful is the native talent of everyone to judge what is harmonious; on the other hand, in judging ratio and technique, such native talent is the property of the very few.<sup>100</sup>

That men are "captivated" by music indicated to Zwingli that they are at the same time distracted from other activities. Those who are unmusical are distracted by the mechanics of simply following the notes, while those who are musical are overtaken by the niceties of composition and performance.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>Garside, p. 62.

<sup>99</sup>Scholes, pp. 229-252. Scholes demonstrates in his book that the reports of organ destruction by the Puritans were grossly exaggerated, although many organs were dismantled and some thoroughly demolished.

<sup>100</sup>Ulrich Zwingli, "Apologia complanationis Isaiae," CR, CI, 163-164. The English translation is from Garside, p. 74.

<sup>101</sup>Garside, p. 49.



For Zwingli this created a problem. He was sure that worship music, like all other music, was bound to detract from an individual's disposition of prayer:

That one can be pious or reverent in the face of great tumult and noise is against all human reason. Hence the fact that man's reverence is short and quick, that he is not reverent with words and heart for a long period of time.<sup>102</sup>

Zwingli could not understand those who permitted music within worship; they were apparently unaware of music's inherent disruptive power.

Those who approve of choral song so strongly are either childish or foolish. Foolish: because they have never learned the right and true prayer, for had they learned it rightly, they would then never allow anyone to interrupt them with mumbling. Childish: because they, like children, like to sing and hear singing, although they do not understand what they are singing.<sup>103</sup>

Zwingli buttressed his understanding of music's power with a passage from the New Testament, 1 Cor. 14:15.<sup>104</sup> Using what appears to be a text in favor of worship music, Zwingli concluded that in this passage the Apostle Paul was demanding intellectual understanding and comprehension in the performance of liturgical music, a demand rendered impotent by the distracting powers inherent in music itself.

For as long as the mind is in understanding with the words, I have no doubt that you will never sing again. For he himself says 1 Cor. 14:15: "If I sing a psalm in the spirit, it should be that I sing it with the mind also;" that is, if you sing a psalm with the mouth, see to it that mouth and

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<sup>102</sup>Zwingli, CR, XXXIX, 351. The English translation is from Garside, pp. 48-49.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid. The English translation is from Garside, p. 49.

<sup>104</sup>"I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with understanding also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with understanding also."



mind are in agreement. Now when one prays, mouth and mind are not long on the same track, much less so mind and song.<sup>105</sup>

If an interpretation were to be constructed for the purpose of illustrating Zwingli's understanding of the passage, it would more forcefully reflect what Zwingli thought to be the Apostle's teaching that singing in worship is ultimately anti-Christian: Proceed to sing in worship as long as you can do it with the mind and with understanding; but I (Paul) can warn you beforehand that such singing is impossible, so you will better achieve true prayer without the hindrance of song.

Zwingli found the evils of singing compounded by his observation that church musicians, unaware of the meaning of the music they performed, turned instead to selfish pursuits:

Likewise has Amos in the Old Testament also rejected singing. Do away with the murmuring of your songs and I do not want the sound of your lyres. What would the farmer-prophet say to our time if he should see so many kinds of music-making in our churches and so many other kinds of notes, dances, trillers, etc. and in the middle of all this the choristers with their silken shirtings going to the altar for reward. Truly he would cry out so that the whole world could not endure the sound of his noise. See . . . the silly games in the churches cost so much sweat and work and . . . one has to keep up with this hypocrisy . . . and all this does not happen without noticeable sinning, for there is seen either lustful wish for honor or lustfulness.<sup>106</sup>

The Zürich reformer knew that sincere undiverted prayer could not coexist with selfish motives and outward activities devoid of meaning. The only solution for Zwingli was to dismiss all music from the service of worship, including that played on instruments, for instrumental music did not provide a single possibility for intellectual understanding.

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<sup>105</sup>Zwingli, CR, XXXIX, 352. The English translation is from Garside, pp. 49-50.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., XXXIX, 352-353. The English translation is from Garside, pp. 48 and 50.



Outside of the worship situation Zwingli maintained his personal interest and skill in music. Many evenings in his home were spent in playing the clavichord, violin, and cornet.<sup>107</sup> His circle of close friends included many performing musicians, including organists.<sup>108</sup> He saw great educational values in music, and encouraged the children of Zürich to sing hymns and spiritual songs at the end of the school day.<sup>109</sup> In spite of these extra-liturgical values Zwingli found in music, he never made an effort to tear down the wall which he had erected between music and worship.<sup>110</sup> Above all, he was never inclined to give music a theological dimension as did Calvin and Luther.<sup>111</sup>

Zwingli's theology rather led him to a complete rejection of music in worship. He denied it a place because Christ and the apostles had never issued commands for its employment, and because music's inherent powers invariably detracted worshipers from the words which they were mouthing in song. Neither argument provided exceptions for instrumental music.

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<sup>107</sup>Söhngen, "Grundlagen," p. 28.

<sup>108</sup>Garside, p. 68.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., p. 183. The pedagogical value of music was a conviction which Zwingli shared with Johann Zwick, the reformer at Constance; see Bernd Moeller, Johannes Zwick und die Reformation in Konstanz, vol. XXVIII of Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1961), pp. 161-164.

<sup>110</sup>Cherbuliez, IV, 358.

<sup>111</sup>Garside, p. 67.



## CHAPTER IV

### A REVIEW OF THE LUTHERAN APPROACH TO MUSIC

If the arguments against musical instruments in public worship are to be evaluated for their pertinence over against the contemporary practice of Lutheran church music, they must be measured against a standard which can be said to represent the historic Lutheran consensus regarding music. For the purposes of this study a Lutheran approach to the place of music in the service will be based first of all on statements of Martin Luther himself. His writings are obviously the most basic resources available; but other studies that have considered this subject will also be cited. Martin Luther's unique insights into the relationship between theology and music have had a profound effect upon those who have subsequently discussed the subject.

Luther may not have been quite the musician Ulrich Zwingli was, but he practiced the art with a high degree of knowledge and skill.<sup>1</sup> Luther not only understood the theory of music, including the modal system of the church, but he was capable of composing in the polyphonic style of his age. His approach to music depended on the musical opinions expressed by St. Augustine and on the technical foundations established by medieval theorists.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Christhard Mahrenholz, Luther und die Kirchenmusik (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1937), pp. 3-4 and Hans Preuss, Martin Luther der Künstler (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1931), passim.

<sup>2</sup>Walter Blankenburg, "Luther," Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, edited by Friedrich Blume (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1960), VIII, 1338. Hereafter this work will be referred to as MGG.



In his evaluation of music Luther did not merely repeat what had been said before by St. Augustine and others. His own personal opinions did not simply reflect the fact that he was a friend of music, nor did his high evaluation of music result from his personal competence as singer, flutist, or poet. His standards were uniquely his own because he placed music within the realm of theology, and because he appraised it as a theologian.<sup>3</sup>

This theological appraisal of music has won for him a place of honor whenever the relationship of theology and music is investigated. Within Lutheran circles his views are particularly respected, of course, because he is the founder of the denomination. While this is obviously of secondary importance, it remains one of the reasons his outlook must be given special attention if a standard is to be established and guidelines suggested as proposed in this chapter.

The material analyzing Luther's position and constituting a basis for guidelines will be arranged in five categories: The Miracle of Sound, Music as a Creature of God, The Power of Music, The Function of Music as Service to the Gospel, and The Place of Instrumental Music.

#### The Miracle of Sound

Luther placed great emphasis on the fact that music and the preaching of the Gospel have something of a conjugal relationship because both need to rely on the phenomenon of sound. While Luther considered all the senses of man to be wonderful gifts of God, he singled out the ability to hear and to communicate through the mystery

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<sup>3</sup>Mahrenholz, p. 4.



of sound as the greatest sense.] He was convinced that "visual miracles are far less important than oral."<sup>4</sup> The oral miracles were significant for Luther because through them the Gospel was preached and heard, and because through them one was able to experience joy in music. Because both shared in the miraculous mystery of sound, Luther was moved to see binding relationships between the Gospel and music, especially singing: "For 'gospel' is a Greek word and means in German 'a good message,' 'good tidings,' 'good news,' 'a good proclamation,' about which one sings and speaks and is happy. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

[Luther was personally sensitive to the tremendous joy which the good news occasions, and for him it was almost inevitable that a musical reaction must follow a proclamation of the Gospel.]

The inner relationship between the Gospel and singing was also asserted by many of the men who authored the sixteenth-century Lutheran church orders. The 1569 order of Pommerania, for instance, maintained that where God's word was preached, sung, or prayed, there God with his angels was present enabling true praise.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>"ocularia miracula longe minora sunt quam auricularia," in Martin Luther, "Enarratio in I. Cap. Genesis per reverendum Patrem dominum D. Mart. Lutherum in Schola Wittenbergensi" [Chapter 39:5,6], D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1915), XLIV, 352. Hereafter this work will be referred to as WA. See also the remarks of Preuss, p. 130.

<sup>5</sup>"Denn Euangelion ist eyn kriechisch wortt, und heyst auff deutsch, gute botschafft, gute meher, gutte newzeytung, gutt geschrey, davon man singet, saget und frolich ist . . .," in Luther, "Das Neue Testament Deutzsch. Vorrhede" [1522], WA, VI, 2.

<sup>6</sup>"Wor also das gödtlike wort geprediget, gesungen, gelesen, gebedet wert, dar ist godt de herre mit sinen hiligen engeln jegenwerdich unde krefftich, dat wi mit allen engeln unde unterwelden gades, dem namen des herrn loffsingen." See "Agende, dat is ordninge der hiligen kerckenemter



Just as the good news intrinsically implies musical expression, and just as the proclamation of the good news gives rise to singing and music, so for Luther the relationship could be inverted. He could say that all music ultimately implies the Gospel. For Luther all the musical sounds of God's creation were particular indications of creation's joy at the goodness of the Creator, and man could interpret these sounds as a sign pointing to the basic inclination of God to love man and to act for him.

[All music, he felt, whether composed or natural, is indicative of the Gospel.] Even nature's sounds point to the good news, for "All the little flowers and birds have the gospel written in their throats, and they teach [us]: You who are a slave of Mammon are just like an idolatrous wretch."<sup>7</sup> For Luther "Music in its natural form is already an organ of divine revelation."<sup>8</sup>

Because of its participation in the mystery of sound, composed music too is closely allied to the Gospel. This aspect of the relationship of music and theology has reappeared in more recent Lutheran discussions of music. While struggling to find some justification for performing larger organ works within the Lutheran worship service, the contemporary organist,

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unde ceremonien, wo sick de parrherren, seelsorgere unde kerckendenere in erem amte holden schölen, gestellet vor de kercken in Pamern, etc. Anno M.D.LXIX," Die Evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts, edited by Emil Sehling (Leipzig: O. R. Reisland, 1911), IV, 434. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Sehling, Kirchenordnungen.

<sup>7</sup>"All blumlein und voglein haben das Euangelium am hals geschrieben et illa docent: wie ein abgottischer tropff bistu qui servis Mammonae," in Luther, "Predigt am 15. Sonntag nach Trinitatis. 5. September 1529," WA XXIX, 551.

<sup>8</sup>"die Musik schon in ihren Naturformen Organ der göttlichen Offenbarung," in Alfred Dedo Müller, Musik als Problem lutherischer Gottesdienstgestaltung (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1947), p. 11.



Helmut Walcha, became convinced of the preparatory function of music when it is used with preaching of the Gospel:

Here in its service to the Word music is indeed a supportive power. It works to deepen the rational, comprehensive understanding of the Word and loosens up in us, as it were, the spiritual ground into which the Word is to fall. But finally it is only a means to an end; the Word can by all means exist alone and is not dependent on the existence of music.<sup>9</sup>

Likewise Alfred Stier claimed "that because of music many [people] have experienced a new hearing of the Christian message."<sup>10</sup>

At face value, Luther's position and its development by Walcha and Stier appear to be principles characteristic of a natural theology, since music is viewed as a means through which the initial shaping of faith is accomplished.<sup>11</sup>

Such principles seem to contradict the classical Lutheran position of natural man's religious capabilities. Werner Elert, after reviewing the Lutheran symbolical material on natural theology, concluded:

"natural" man's knowledge of God leads to doubt about God, thus to unbelief, and therefore makes penitence necessary, and that in all circumstances faith presupposes a break with the natural knowledge.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>"Hier, beim Dienst am Wort, ist die Musik zwar tragende Kraft, wirkt vertiefend für den rational fassbaren Begriff des Wortes, lockert gewissermassen den seelischen Boden in uns auf, in den das Wort fallen soll, aber letztlich ist sie eben nur Mittel zum Zweck, das Wort allein kann durchaus bestehen, und ist auf die Existenz der Musik nicht angewiesen," in Helmut Walcha, "Kirchenmusik ohne Wort?," Musik und Kirche, VIII (May-June 1936), 100.

<sup>10</sup>"dass viele von der Musik aus gerade zu neuem Hören der christlichen Botschaft gekommen sind," in Alfred Stier, "Zur Kultmusikfrage," Musik und Kirche, VIII (November-December 1936), 242. For similar statements, see Wilhelm Ehmann, Tibilustrum. Das Geistliche Blasen. Formen und Reformen (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1950), p. 139, and Müller, p. 23.

<sup>11</sup>Walcha, VIII, 99 placed music within the category of revelatio generalis.

<sup>12</sup>Werner Elert, The Structure of Lutheranism, translated from the



But it can be argued that Luther's statements regarding music proceed from the same presuppositions which governed his explanation of the First Article of the Creed.<sup>13</sup> There he described the relationship existing between man and creation as it is understood by a believing child of God. In his statements regarding music he should also be understood as having spoken about the man of faith. His comment that music is indicative of the Gospel should then be interpreted: the man of faith recognizes that all flowers and birds have the Gospel inscribed in their necks.<sup>14</sup>

Edmund Schlink expressed the wish that Luther would have exercised more care in his elaboration of this music-Gospel relationship.<sup>15</sup> A clear version of Luther's intentions and of their development by Walcha and Stier has been suggested by the reformed theologian, Adolf Brunner:

Instrumental playing (especially organ music) can both prepare for the proclamation and help dissipate it. The believer will perceive and recognize an image of the divine order or creation in the formal, wordless inner depths of absolute music.<sup>16</sup>

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German by Walter Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), I, 50-51.

<sup>13</sup>Elert says on p. 51: "For it is self-evident that what Luther teaches in the First Article of the Creed concerning the relationship of the creatures to the Creator does not belong here, because it is spoken from the position of faith."

<sup>14</sup>Luther, "Enarratio in I. Cap. Genesis per reverendum Patrem dominum D. Mart. Lutherum in Schola Wittembergensi," WA XLIV, 352.

<sup>15</sup>Edmund Schlink, Zum theologischen Problem der Musik (2nd edition; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1950), p. 29.

<sup>16</sup>"Instrumentales Spiel (insbesondere Orgelmusik) kann die Verkündigung vorbereiten und sie wieder ausklingen lassen. Der Glaubende wird in der wortlosen, formalen Innerlichkeit der absoluten Musik ein Abbild göttlicher Schöpfungsordnungen vernehmen und erkennen," in Adolf Brunner, Wesen, Funktion und Ort der Musik im Gottesdienst (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1960), p. 74.



For the Christian, wordless music points to the created order, prepares for the transmission of the Gospel, and reflects the beauty of the proclaimed Gospel.

Luther gave preference to the oral miracles (miracula auricula) above the other senses, because the Gospel itself takes form through the mystery of sound. Thus music has received preferential treatment within the Lutheran scheme of things.

Contemporary authors, working from Luther's initial insight, have suggested additional reasons for giving music a place of supremacy within the arts employed for worship. Alfred Muller emphasized the compatibility music shares with the cult because of the existential characteristics common to both:

With regard to the anthropological content, the personal encounter-character of the worship service, music is able--more distinctly than every other means of expression--to make the realistic character of encounter with God evident. Music and song are especially suitable to be taken into the cultus ahead of the other artistic spheres, first because they appear directly as activity while the other arts can appear only with their already completed works, and furthermore because music exhibits a becoming, a "Geschichte," and is thus able to produce a profound expression of the inner story of spiritual life.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Was aber den anthropologischen Gehalt, den menschlichen Begegnungscharakter des Gottesdienstes betrifft, so vermag die Musik deutlicher als jedes andere Ausdrucksmittel den Aktualitätscharakter der Begegnung mit Gott spürbar zu machen. Gesang und Musik vor den übrigen Kunstgebieten sind besonders geeignet, in den Kultus aufgenommen zu werden, schon weil sie unmittelbar als Tätigkeit erscheinen, während die andern Künste nur mit ihren schon fertigen Werken auftreten können, und weil ferner die Musik ein Werden, eine Geschichte darstellt und so einen tief sinnigen Ausdruck der inneren Geschichte des geistlichen Lebens zu liefern vermag," in Müller, p. 22. See also Heinz Henche, Die gottesdienstliche Aufgabe der Kirchenmusik (Gütersloh: Rufer, 1951), pp. 13-18.



Wilhelm Ehmann maintained that these energetic properties of music are what prevent language from being reduced to a shallow shorthand for human communication, for the use of music with text leads to dynamic communicative relationships. According to Ehmann, music can safeguard the Gospel from becoming crystalized in mere intellectual formulas. Because of music's ability to convey the depths of language, he has found in it a liberating force which frees linguistic communication from a single dimension of expression.<sup>18</sup> An example of this liberating power in music has been suggested by Oskar Söhngen:

The discussion in II Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 4, is about the inexpressible words . . . which the apostle heard in ecstasy. Naturally, music also cannot express these words--that continues to be denied to the human mouth altogether--but it [music] is able in connection with the text to fill up the negative concept of "inexpressible" with a content which gives an idea of the positive meaning of that which is expressed by means of negation. Indeed, thanks to its God-given capability, [music is able] to make evident the depths of things.<sup>19</sup>

[In an attempt to be faithful to its tradition, a Lutheran approach to music recognizes the dynamic characteristics of sound which permeate

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<sup>18</sup>"Die Musik ist das nötige und hilfreiche Gegengewicht gegen die immer drohende Gefahr einer intellektuellen Austrocknung und Entleerung der Sprache, gegen eine Sprechweise, die sich geradezu etwas darauf zugute tut, keine 'magische Tiefe' zu haben, sondern an der Oberfläche des bloss Gekanklichen zu bleiben," in Wilhelm Stählin and Wilhelm Ehmann, Kirchenmusik und Gemeinde (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1955), p. 15.

<sup>19</sup>"Wenn im 2. Korintherbrief, Kapitel 12, Vers 4, von den unaussprechlichen Worten . . . die Rede ist, die der Apostel in der Verzückerung gehört hat, so kann natürlich auch die Musik diese Worte nicht aussprechen--das bleibt dem Menschenmund überhaupt versagt--, aber sie vermag doch in der Verbindung mit dem Text den negativen Begriff des "Unaussprechlichen" mit einem Inhalt aufzufüllen, der den positiven Gehalt dessen, was via negationis . . . ausgedrückt wird, ahnbar macht, und zwar dank der ihr von Gott verliehenen Fähigkeit, die Tiefe der Dinge auszusagen," in Oskar Söhngen, "Theologische Grundlagen der Kirchenmusik," Die Musik des evangelischen Gottesdienstes, vol. IV of Leiturgia. Handbuch des evangelischen Gottesdienstes (Kassel: Johannes Stauda, 1961), p. 255.



speech and music. It sees in music a potential for activating dimensions of communication not possible in pure speech, and it appreciates the fact that music and the Gospel are inseparable entities, one giving evidence of the other.<sup>20</sup> ]

#### Music as a Creature of God

[In his own life Luther guaranteed music's relationship to theology by his assertions that it is part of creation and should be appreciated as a gracious gift of God.] In his preface to Symphoniae iucundae, published by Georg Rhau in 1538, he commented on the magnificence of this divine gift:

Greetings in Christ! I would certainly like to praise music with all my heart as the excellent gift of God which it is and to commend it to everyone. But I am so overwhelmed by the diversity and magnitude of its virtue and benefits that I can find neither beginning nor end or method for my discourse. As much as I want to commend it, my praise is bound to be wanting and inadequate. For who can comprehend it all?<sup>21</sup>

With this as his basic attitude Luther could not understand why St. Augustine was bothered by his conscience whenever he enjoyed music.

Music is the best gift of God. Frequently it has so excited and stimulated me that I got the desire to preach. Yet St. Augustine had such a conscience that he thought music, because

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<sup>20</sup>Johann Kuhlo, an evangelical preacher-brass player from the early part of this century, reportedly took his flugel horn into the pulpit, and closed many of his sermons by leading and accompanying the congregation in song; see Wilhelm Ehmann, Johannes Kuhlo. Ein Spielmann Gottes (3rd edition; Witten: Luther Verlag, 1959), p. 211.

<sup>21</sup>Luther, "Martinus Luther Musicae Studiosus," WA L, 368. The English translation is from Martin Luther, Liturgy and Hymns, edited by Ulrich Leupold; vol. LIII of Luther's Works (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 321-332. Hereafter this work will be referred to as AE.



of its delight, sin for himself. He was a sensitive person. If he had lived in this century, he would share our opinion.<sup>22</sup>

Johann Bugenhagen, preacher in the City Church in Wittenberg during the sixteenth century, also viewed music's pleasures with favor, and he believed one did not reach manhood until he came to appreciate the congeniality which music offered.<sup>23</sup> Melancthon concurred with Luther and Bugenhagen, and, along with Luther, emphasized the divine bestowal of music upon mankind. In a preface which he wrote for a collection of church music prepared by Lucas Lossius in 1579, he said: "We revere music itself as a work and gift of God."<sup>24</sup> Not many years later the faculty at Wittenberg issued a statement on the pipe organ. In it these theologians emphasized that instrumental music should be considered as a gift of God, because it is endowed with the power to move the feelings of men.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>"Musica optimum Dei donum. Saepius ita me incitavit et acuit, das ich lust zu predigen gewonne habe. Sed S. Augustinus illius conscientiae fuit, quod ex delectatione musices sibi peccatum finxisset. Es ist ein feiner man gewesen. Si Hoc saeculo viveret, nobiscum sentiret," in Luther, "Tischrede auf 25. März 1539," WA, Ser. 2, I, No. 4441, 313.

<sup>23</sup>"Qui vero Musicis cantibus non delectantur, ne homines quidem esse crediderim, Musica enim hominibus congenita est," in Johann Bugenhagen, "Studiosis Adolescentibus Doctor Johannes Bugenhagius Pomeranus S. P. D.," foreword to Responsoriorum Numero Octoginta De Tempore et Festis (1543) by Balthasar Resinarius, vol. I of Georg Rhau Musikdrucke aus den Jahren 1538 Bis 1545 in Praktischer Neuausgabe, edited by Hans Albrecht (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), XVII.

<sup>24</sup>"ipsam Musicen, ut Dei opus ac donum, veneremur," in Philipp Melancthon, "Praefationis loco praemissa libro: Psalmodia, h. e. cantica sacra veteris Ecclesiae selecta cum melodiis etc. per Lucam Lossium," Corpus Reformatorum, edited by Carl Gottlieb Bretschneider (Halle: C. A. Schwetschke and Sons, 1840), VII, 530. The Lossius collection was first issued in 1553, but the edition used by the editors of CR is that published in 1579; all the editions came with Melancthon's preface.

<sup>25</sup>"Es ist die instrumentalis musica . . . eine solche Gabe Gottes / dass sie die Gemüter der Menschen zu bewegen kräftig / wenngleich mit



For Luther music was a gift simply because it is part of God's good creation. In the preface to Symphoniae iucundae Luther made this clear:

But the subject is much too great for me briefly to describe all its benefits. And you, my young friend, let this noble, wholesome, and cheerful creation of God be commended to you. By it you may escape shameful desires and bad company. At the same time you may by this creation accustom yourself to recognize and praise the Creator.<sup>26</sup>

[ For Lutherans music is both creature (creatura) and gift (donum). Those who fail to comprehend this "can no longer say what music really is."<sup>27</sup> Music is more than an art or a science.<sup>28</sup> It is always creature of God (creatura dei), and through such a designation of essence Luther in particular perceived every kind of music to be a gracious gift, and never established categories with the intent of excluding certain styles or performance modes from worship.<sup>29</sup> ]

Such an understanding did not always permeate the Lutheran view of music.<sup>30</sup> Christhard Mahrenholz attributes the dearth of brass music among

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menschlicher Stimme darunter nicht gesungen wird." The statement from the year 1597 is quoted in Johann Mehl, Die Aufgabe der Orgel im Gottesdienst der lutherischen Kirche (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1938), p. 28.

<sup>26</sup>Luther, "Martinus Luther Musicae Studiosus," WA L, 373. The English translation is from Luther, AE LIII, 324.

<sup>27</sup>"kann nicht mehr sagen, was Musik eigentlich ist," in Müller, p. 13.

<sup>28</sup>Söhngen, p. 67.

<sup>29</sup>"Weil Luther ganzen Ernst damit macht, dass die Musik Kreatur Gottes ist, reflektiert er auch nicht über ihre Eignung für den Gottesdienst; ihm ist selbstverständlich, dass wir die Musica, die uns Gott geschenkt hat, auch in Gottes Dienst stellen dürfen und müssen, den einstimmigen Gesang sowohl als die Figuralmusik und das Orgelspiel," in Söhngen, p. 69.

<sup>30</sup>For a description of an era when Lutherans failed to recognize this insight see George Feder, "Verfall und Restauration," Geschichte der Evangelischen Kirchenmusik, edited by Friedrich Blume (revised edition; Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1965), p. 221.



Lutherans in the early twentieth century partly to their failure to acknowledge this aspect of Luther's theology.

The Christian was no longer, as in the view of an earlier century, the lord of all things, who could employ all the riches of the artistic life for cultic affairs and for whom specifically "worldly" art only represented a deviation from, a decline of, or a degradation of spiritual art. On the contrary, the "world" has the riches which one must renounce in order to save his soul!<sup>31</sup>

For Luther instrumental music could never be evaluated apart from its nature as creature and gift. It is a portion of the total created gift of music,<sup>32</sup> and special vindication of it is unnecessary. ] Moved

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<sup>31</sup>Nicht war mehr, wie in der Anschauung eines früheren Jahrhunderts, der Christ der Herr aller Dinge, der den ganzen Reichtum des künstlerischen Lebens für kultische Angelegenheiten benutzen durfte und für den sich die spezifisch 'weltliche' Kunst nur als Abirrung, Verflachung, Erniedrigung der geistlichen Kunst darstellt; sondern umgekehrt: die 'Welt' hat den Reichtum, dem man entsagen muss, um seine Seele zu retten," in Christhard Mahrenholz, "Über Posaunenmusik," Musik und Kirche, I (May-June 1929), 134. Sometimes others reminded Lutherans of this creatureliness of music. It is reported that when Justus Falckner was ordained to the Lutheran ministry, Johann Kelpius, an Enthusiast, provided the music for the occasion. According to some sources he used drums and oboes. See Leonard Ellinwood, The History of American Church Music (New York: Morehouse-Gorham, 1953), pp. 31-32. The accuracy of the report mentioned by Ellinwood has been questioned; see Arthur Carl Piepkorn, The Survival of the Historic Vestments in the Lutheran Church after 1555 (2nd edition; St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1958), pp. 59-62, and p. 77, n. 13.

<sup>32</sup>Justification for instrumental music through its creatureliness was also suggested in the early eighteenth century by Johann Dannhauer in Theologia casualis, quam e msto publicae luciasseruit et in Academia Regia Pomeranorum Dissertationum Acad. argumentum, statuit D. IO. Fridericus Mayer (Greifswald: Johann Wolfgang Fickweiler, 1706), pp. 333-334: "Let every spirit praise the Lord, hence also the spirit of inanimate things. Indeed, there ought to be no creature which we do not use to the glory of God. Doubtless Adam in the state of innocence also used musical instruments; hence it is not sin to use them." The English translation is from Friedrich Kalb, Theology of Worship in 17th-Century Lutheranism, translated from the German by Henry P. A. Hamann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), p. 145.



by this analysis of all music as creature of God, some contemporary authors have sought to give additional support to instrumental music. They point out that music is a creature, but that man also is a creature. Part of man's created nature is his innate desire and ability to be in motion, to act, to perform, to work, to play games, to play musical instruments. Much attention is drawn to the word "spielen" which in German describes all the actions mentioned above. Since man is created to "play" (spielen), God also intended for him to play musical instruments.

In their thinking about the place of music in the worship service the fathers of orthodoxy also included instrumental playing. They thought that if a justified person has become a child of God, then he may not only sing like a child, but also play. According to their idea, homo ludens, the man who plays, also has a right [to play] in the worship service, since his playing there is also to the glorification of God. Thereby all the joyous compositions for organ and other instruments, with which the older era was so rich, are affirmed for playing in worship services.<sup>33</sup>

If Lutheran theology recognizes this propensity in created man to "play," it also recognizes that this inclination of man has been corrupted through the fall. Walter Kiefner, one of the authors who has written about this concept of "spielen," explains how the restoration of man through Jesus Christ implies a restoration also of his ability to "play."

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<sup>33</sup>"Die Väter der Orthodoxie haben in ihren Gedanken über die Stellung der Musik im Gottesdienst auch das Spielen mit einbezogen. Sie meinten, wenn der gerechtfertigte Mensch ein Kind Gottes geworden ist, so darf er wie ein Kind nicht nur singen, sondern auch spielen. Der homo ludens, der spielenden Mensch, hat nach ihrer Auffassung gleichfalls ein Recht im Gottesdienst, auch sein Spiel ist zur Verherrlichung Gottes da. Damit werden all die fröhlichen Spielstücke für Orgel und andere Instrumente für das gottesdienstliche Musizieren bejaht, an den die ältere Zeit so reich ist," in Alfred Stier, Das Heilige in der Musik (2nd edition; Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1931), p. 47.



He asserts that the one who plays for the glorification of God bears the mark of one who has been freed from service to evil and to himself; the liberated "player" lives in the freedom and in the joy which come from being in Christ as the first fruit of the new creation.<sup>34</sup> The activity of playing, especially on musical instruments, is a characteristic both of the original creature and of the restored creature. For the restored creature, playing should be considered as an eschatological function already carried out in the present time by those who have been made part of the future time.<sup>35</sup>

Kiefner points out that this human trait of playing is a link between the original creation of God and the new creation. The perpetuation of the link is dependent on Christ and His complete atoning work.

Such reflections are fundamentally in agreement with Luther's theology. Apparently, the conviction that man is a redeemed "player" motivated the production of much of Lutheran music, for it is traceable in the sheer amount of pure instrumental music written by Lutheran composers, and it is sometimes verbalized by the composers themselves.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Walter Kiefner, "Singen und Spielen im Gottesdienst," Musik und Kirche, VIII (September-October 1936), 204.

<sup>35</sup>Walter Kiefner, "Unsere Stellung zum konzertierenden Element in der älteren liturgischen Orgelmusik," Musik und Kirche, III (September-October 1931), 211.

<sup>36</sup>"And may the gracious Lord look compassionately down on us as our coarse voices and wagging tongues intone the canticles of praise and prayer of the holy patriarchs, prophets and apostles in this our transitory life; and in the eternal divine life now approaching, . . . singing and playing the Canticum Agni--the Song of the Lamb--with the Elders of the Revelation of Saint John, with harps and cymbals: . . . and thus praise and glorify the Kingdom and the Power and the Salvation and the Might of Christ our God for ever and ever," in Michael Praetorius,



Lutherans view music, as well as the urge to compose and perform music, as created gifts of God. Never is it possible for them to set aside any one of these gifts, such as instrumental music or the desire to play instrumental music, and to designate it as intrinsically not good. Rather, music's origin in creation implies an innate goodness, and its origin dictates that music's proper end or function is its use in praise of the creator. Thus Luther's insistence on music as creature simultaneously provides music with its true function.

### The Power of Music

Luther was convinced that music, because of its physical properties, was capable of causing certain effects in man. He discovered from his own experience that music frequently helped to alter his moods and behavior. He did not view such reactions as abnormal. In a letter to Matthew Weller he advised the following:

Therefore, when you are sad and want to prevail, then say: Up! I have to play a song to our Lord Christ on the Regal (whether it be the Te Deum Laudamus or the Benedictus, etc.). For Scripture teaches me that He gladly listens to happy singing and playing of the lyre. And then strike the keys vigorously and sing until the thoughts go away, as David and Elisha did. If the devil comes again and causes you worry or sad thoughts, then resist vigorously and say: Get out, devil; I now have to sing and play for my Lord Christ.<sup>37</sup>

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De Organographia, vol. II of The Syntagma Musicum, translated from the Latin by Harold Blumenfeld (2nd edition; New York: Bärenreiter, 1962), p. w.

<sup>37</sup>"Darumb, wenn Ihr traurig seid, und will uberhand nehmen, so sprecht: Auf! ich muss unserm Herrn Christo ein Lied schlagen auf dem Regal (es sei Te Deum laudamus oder Benedictus etc.); denn die Schrift lehret mich, er höre gern fröhlichen Gesang und Saitenspiel. Und greift frisch in die Claves und singet drein, bis die Gedanken vergehen, wie David und Elisäus taten. Kommet der Teufel wieder und gibt Euch ein Sorge oder traurige Gedanken ein, so wehret Euch frisch und sprecht:



According to Luther, music, and here specifically instrumental music, will drive away the devil and help to dissipate evil thoughts and moods. To the extent that Luther in this letter admits to a power in music which can move and influence people, he is in agreement with St. Augustine. He differs with St. Augustine because he is convinced that such a power in music is a positive quality which need not be feared.]

Music is the best gift of God. Frequently it has so excited and stimulated me that I got the desire to preach. Yet St. Augustine had such a conscience that he thought music, because of its delight, sin for himself. He was a sensitive person. If he had lived in this century, he would share our opinion.<sup>38</sup>

In Luther's view St. Augustine had groundless fears; music's forceful influence need not be dreaded, but it should be welcomed:

Because it makes spirits glad,  
Because it makes the devil flee,  
Because, without injury, it produces joy,  
In the meantime angers, lusts, and pride perish.<sup>39</sup>

His favorable experiences with music's effects prompted Luther to accord music the honor of being "master and governor of human feelings."<sup>40</sup> Its cathartic qualities made it deserving of this honor, and because in

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Aus, Teufel, ich muss itzt meinem Herrn Christo singen und spielen," in Luther, "Luther an Matthias Weller. 7 Oktober 1534," WA, Ser. 4, VII, No. 2139, 105.

<sup>38</sup>Musica optimum Dei donum. Saepius ita me incitavit et acuit, das ich lust zu predigen gewonne habe. Sed S. Augustinus illius conscientiae fuit, quod ex delectatione musices sibi peccatum finxisset. Es ist ein feiner man gewesen. Si hoc saeculo viveret, nobiscum sentiret," in Luther, "Tischrede auf 25. März 1539," WA, Ser. 2, I, No. 4441, 313.

<sup>39</sup>Quia facit letos animos / Quia fugat diabolum / Quia innocens gaudium facit, / Intermim pereunt irae / libidines / Superbia," in Luther, "Peri tēs musikēs," WA XXX.2, 696.

<sup>40</sup>domina et gubernatrix affectuum humanorum . . ." in Luther, "Martinus Luther Musicae Studiosis," WA L, 371.



this way it contributed to the maintenance of human stability, Luther ranked music within the theological order of preservation.<sup>41</sup> }

Others have concurred with Luther in this assessment. A seventeenth century Lutheran orthodox theologian, Balthasar Meisner, provided a basis for music within worship by attributing to it the powers for increasing devotion, restraining the evil spirit, and recalling the human heart from sadness and sorrow.<sup>42</sup>

These exalted views of music's capabilities have been tempered within Lutheranism by the corresponding belief that music, like any other created gift, can be misused or prostituted by fallen man. A prostitution or misuse of music's power can occur, for instance, when music is employed in such a way that its power is intended to influence people toward evil ends. Luther himself was convinced that the effects of music normally will be positive, that is, it will move people to desirable ends, although he also admitted, without supplying specific examples, that music does work negatively. In his preface to Symphoniae iucundae he issued a warning in this regard:

Take special care to shun perverted minds who prostitute this lovely gift of nature and of art with their erotic rantings; and be quite assured that none but the devil goads them on to defy their very nature which would and should praise God its Maker with this gift, so that these bastards purloin the gift

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<sup>41</sup>"Grammatica et musica sunt conservatores rerum," in Luther, "Tischrede vom Viet Dietrichs und Nicolaus Medlers Sammlung," WA, Ser. 2, I, No. 1096, 550.

<sup>42</sup>Balthasar Meisner, Collegium adiaphoristicum, in quo controversiae circa adiaphora inter nos & Calvinianos agitate, perspicue tractantur, veritasque orthodoxa defenditur (Wittenberg: D. Tobias Mevius & Elerd Schumacher, 1663), p. 220.



of God and use it to worship the foe of God, the enemy of nature and of this lovely art.<sup>43</sup>

In the preface to the Wittenberg hymnal of 1524 Luther praised the contents of the book as a useful antidote to the love ballads and carnal songs of his era, music in which he found no positive value:

And these songs were arranged in four parts to give the young--who should at any rate be trained in music and other fine arts--something to wean them away from love ballades and carnal songs and to teach them something of value in their place, thus combining the good with the pleasing, as is proper for youth.<sup>44</sup>

Luther recognized in some music the attempt to use the "master of human emotions" for disgraceful purposes. Continuity with this insight of Luther's is recognizable in some contemporary Lutheran views of music's misuse. Rene Wallau admits to the possibility for the demonic to wrench music from its proper place of serving God and preserving man in order

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<sup>43</sup>Luther, "Martinus Luther Musicae Studiosis," WA L, 373-374. The English translation is from AE 53, 324. Friedrich Blume in Geschichte der evangelischen Kirchenmusik (revised edition; Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1965), p. 9, takes this comment to be atypical of Luther; it is atypical in the sense that Luther rarely speaks negatively about music. At the same time there is no reason to suspect that Luther would have later retracted it.

<sup>44</sup>Luther, "Vorrhede Martini Luther," WA XXXV, 475. The English translation is from AE LIII, 316. Similar warnings against music which encourages man's lower nature appear in some of the evangelical church orders from the sixteenth century. The Hamburg order of 1556 cautions: "De organisten schollen sick entholden, werltike, schimplike unde untüchtige lede in den karken to spelende," in "Hamburg. Kirchenordnung. Vom 28. April 1556," Sehling, Kirchenordnungen, V, 547. Additional examples are provided in Christoph Wetzel, "Die Träger des liturgischen Amtes," Die Musik des evangelischen Gottesdienstes, vol. IV of Leiturgia. Handbuch des evangelischen Gottesdienstes, edited by Karl Ferdinand Müller and Walter Blankenburg (Kassel: Johannes Stauda, 1961), pp. 317-322.



to commandeer it for unvirtuous duty.<sup>45</sup> Müller concurs by suggesting that some music is devilish from its very origins.<sup>46</sup>

Because the Lutheran tradition acknowledges possibilities for the misuse of music, and because it allows for diverse purposes in music, Söhnngen has concluded that the Lutheran approach to music, especially as it develops from the views of its mentor, includes a recognition of music's ethical ramifications.<sup>47</sup> If some music is demonically controlled, every act of music making needs to be morally analyzed if not morally judged. Judgments of this kind need not be solely individual. Where public worship music is concerned Schlink is convinced that the worshipers sometimes have to be protected from demonic music through a unilateral ecclesiastical polemic.<sup>48</sup>

While the necessity for ethical evaluations of music naturally develops from the Lutheran outlook on music, the establishment of a methodology for such moral analysis has constituted a problem.

To overcome the difficulty of determining whether something as elusive as a piece of instrumental music is demonic or divine, Wallau

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<sup>45</sup>Rene Wallau, Die Musik in ihrer Gottesbeziehung (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1948), p. 79; see also a similar view in Robert Mendl, The Divine Quest in Music (New York: Philosophical Library, 1957), p. 3.

<sup>46</sup>"Die Ursprünglichkeit der Musik ist zweideutig. Nicht alle Musik ist göttlich. Es gibt nach Form und Inhalt auch teuflische Musik," in Müller, p. 8.

<sup>47</sup>"Luther steht ganz in der antik-mittelalterlichen Tradition, die aber auch gerade der Humanismus betont aufgegriffen hat, wenn er in der Musik ein Phänomen sieht, dessen Wirkungen in das Kapitel der Ethik gehören," in Söhnngen, p. 71. For a contemporary Roman Catholic interpretation of music and ethics see Alfred Pike, A Theology of Music (Toledo, Ohio: Gregorian Institute of America, 1953), pp. 69-73.

<sup>48</sup>Schlink, pp. 29-30.



has suggested that an attempt be made to analyze the will and intent of the composer.<sup>49</sup> Söhnngen submits that moral analysis should be accomplished through the Pauline principle of separating the good spirits from the evil. He illustrates his suggestion with an analysis of organ music from the nineteenth century:

A composition can adhere to the underlying text completely and yet fail to display an ecclesiastical-liturgical character. As proof one need only recall most of the 19th century literature used in worship services, the chorale-preludes by Rinck, Hesse, Becker, et al. Just so, an organ work can completely do without an immediate reference to a spiritual substratum in a text and yet in a deeper sense be branded "spiritual-cultic." Here one needs those presuppositions which are discussed in the second chapter of I Corinthians in order to recognize the spiritual-cultic language of music: "We have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God, that we might be able to know what has been given to us by God" (verse 12); beyond that one needs also the charisma of discerning the spirits (I. Cor. 12:10), in order to perceive whether the spirit of this music is from God or from the demons.<sup>50</sup>

Consensus on the intent and purpose of any piece of music may be impossible, and the suggested methodologies may be inadequate. In spite of the difficulties involved, the Lutheran approach to music will acknowledge the power within music to influence people either positively or

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<sup>49</sup>Wallau, p. 112.

<sup>50</sup>"Es kann sich eine Komposition ganz an den zugrundeliegenden Text halten und gleichwohl den kirchlich-liturgischen Charakter verfehlen; zum Beweis sei nur an die meiste gottesdienstliche Gebrauchsliteratur des 19. Jahrhunderts, die Choralvorspiele von Rinck, Hesse, Becker u.a. erinnert. Und ebenso kann ein Orgelwerk des unmittelbaren Bezuges auf ein geistliches Textsubstrat völlig entraten und gleichwohl im tieferen Sinne geistlich-kultisch geprägt sein. Hier bedarf es jener Voraussetzungen, von denen im 2. Kapitel des 1. Korintherbriefes die Rede ist, um die geistlich-kultische Sprache der Musik zu erkennen: 'Wir aber haben nicht empfangen den Geist der Welt, sondern den Geist aus Gott, dass wir wissen können, was uns von Gott gegeben ist' (Vers 12); hier bedarf es darüber hinaus aber auch des Charismas der Unterscheidung der Geister (1. Kor. 12,10), um dessen inne zu werden, ob der Geist dieser Musik von Gott oder von den Dämonen ist," in Söhnngen, p. 166; see also p. 263.



negatively and it will acknowledge the ethical consequences resulting from this characteristic.

#### The Function of Music as Service to the Gospel

Luther maintained that music fulfills its created function when it is interacting with the Gospel understood by him as the proclamation of Jesus Christ who is the fulfillment of all things. He was led to this assertion through his belief that music and the Gospel are drawn together in the shared medium of sound, and through his conviction that music is a created gift of God. He argued that as the flowers and birds in one way or another point to God's love for mankind, so music, as a part of creation, points to the good news that God has manifested His love for the world in Jesus Christ. When the Gospel proclamation is intimately served by music, the pristine function of music is evident.

For Luther this interaction of music and the Gospel was perceptible in two modes. Music serves both as a carrying medium for the Gospel and as an inevitable outcome of faith after the Gospel makes its impact on an individual. He related these two functions in the preface to the Bapst hymnal of 1545:

Thus there is now in the New Testament a better service of God, of which the Psalm here says: "Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the earth." For God has cheered our hearts and minds through his dear Son, whom he gave for us to redeem us from sin, death, and the devil. He who believes this earnestly cannot be quiet about it. But he must gladly and willingly sing and speak about it so that others also may come and hear it. And whoever does not want to sing and speak of it shows that he does not believe and that he does not belong under the new and joyful testament, but under the old, lazy, and tedious testament.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Luther, "Vorrhede D. Mart. Luth.," WA XXXV, 477. The English translation is from AE LIII, 333.



Because both the Gospel and music are experienced through sound, it was natural for Luther to be conscious of the form which the Gospel takes through the musical medium "so that others also may come and hear it." For him music, particularly singing, is an aid to the cultic function of proclamation (Verkündigung). Luther further contended that whoever hears the Gospel in faith will spontaneously react with song and word as a sign that he "belongs under the new and joyful testament." In his view music, particularly singing, is also a means of cultic response (Antwort).

Other Lutheran reformers from the sixteenth century described singing as cultic proclamation. Philipp Melanchthon was convinced that music was given to man for religious reasons, so that the divine oracles might be conserved and propagated.<sup>52</sup> Johann Brenz in a sermon on penance proposed that oral proclamation of the word occurs in three ways, one of which is ecclesiastical song. Brenz held that through such song the Holy Spirit worked repentance and faith in Christ, "wherefore the Holy Spirit himself works in us through ecclesiastical song."<sup>53</sup>

For Luther and Brenz the cultic activities of response and proclamation can be mediated through music, particularly the hymn. Söhnngen has pointed out the importance of this insight for the Lutheran view of music. He

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<sup>52</sup>"Non dubium est, Musicam generi humano praecipue datam esse sacrorum causa; primum ut cantu, tanquam literis, conservarentur et propagarentur oracula divinitus tradita, durabilior est enim numerorum et carminum memoria," in Philipp Melanchthon, "Praefatio in librum: Harmon. de passione Christ, edit. a Georg. Rhaw (1545)," CR, V, 918.

<sup>53</sup>"Quare eadem operatur in nobis spiritus sanctus per cantum ecclesiasticum," in Pezold and Günther, "Eine Predigt von Brenz über den Kirchengesang," Monatschrift für Gottesdienst und kirchliche Kunst, V (December 1900), 360. Söhnngen on p. 259 quotes the Limburg church order of 1666 to illustrate how Lutherans have regarded organ settings, string playing, and other instrumental music as viable means of proclamation.



claims that too often the function of church music has been described solely in terms of response, revealing a misunderstanding of music's full potential.<sup>54</sup> Such descriptions, he contends, reflect a tendency in some to perceive a polarization between proclamation and response, whereas it is more cogent to comprehend them as two aspects of the same activity:

Proclamation is also an offering of praise, and it is just as true to say that an offering of praise can become proclamation. In any case, church music exercises its full responsibility in its mission only when both of these aspects are understood and earnestly used.<sup>55</sup>

[For Lutherans the ultimate function of music is to serve the Gospel, whether this be by implication as through the music of little birds, or by furnishing a medium through which proclamation effectively occurs, or by supplying a means through which the faithful respond to divine activity. In any case, the Gospel represents the nucleus from which all musical sound derives energy and meaning.]

Luther drew further implications from this intimate relationship. As the Gospel is an instrument of the Holy Spirit, so music too is a tool which the Holy Spirit uses to accomplish His purposes:

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<sup>54</sup>Söhnngen, pp. 185-188.

<sup>55</sup>"Auch die Verkündigung ist Lobopfer, wie umgekehrt auch das Lobopfer zur Verkündigung werden kann. Jedenfalls ist die Kirchenmusik erst dort in die volle Verantwortung ihres Auftrages gerufen, wo beide Seiten der Sache gesehen und ernst genommen werden," in Söhnngen, p. 188. The validity of understanding church music as a form of proclamation has been debated in recent years. The discussion developed from three questions: (a) Can proclamation be operative within an art form? (b) Can an art form itself have proclamatory characteristics? (c) Can the combination of proclamation and art form produce a third proclamatory entity? See the following pertinent articles: Hans-Rudolf Müller-Schwefe, "Kunst-Religion-christlicher Glaube," Musik und Kirche, XXIV (March-April 1954), 97-98; Walter Blankenburg, "Kann Singen Verkündigung sein?" Musik und Kirche, XXIII (July-August 1953), 177-194; Friedrich Hofmann, "Gottes Wort-Verkündigung-Musik," Musik und Kirche, XXXIV (May-June 1964), 111-115.



The Holy Ghost himself honors her as an instrument for his proper work when in his Holy Scriptures he asserts that through her his gifts were instilled in the prophets, namely, the inclination to all virtues, as can be seen in Elisha. On the other hand, she serves to cast out Satan, the instigator of all sins, as is shown in Saul, the king of Israel.

Thus it was not without reason that the fathers and prophets wanted nothing else to be associated as closely with the Word of God as music. Therefore, we have so many hymns and Psalms where message and music join to move the listener's soul, while in other living beings and bodies music remains a language without words. After all, the gift of language combined with the gift of song was only given to man to let him know that he should praise God with both word and music, namely by proclaiming the Word of God through music and by providing sweet melodies with words.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Luther, "Martinus Luther Musicae Studiosis," WA L, 371-372. The English translation is from AE LIII, 323-324. Johann Walther, Luther's musical friend, provided a German translation of Luther's Latin in 1564. The German translation, though slightly expanded, contains more direct reference to musical instruments; the following is Walther's version of the last paragraph of the quote: "Darumb haben die heiligen Veter und die Propheten nicht vergebens das wort Gottes in mancherley Gesenge, Seitenspiel gebracht, davon wir denn so mancherley Köstliche Gesenge und Psalm haben, welche beide mit Worten und auch mit dem Gesang und Klang die hertzen der Menschen bewegen. In den unvernünfftigen Thieren aber, Seitenspielen und andern Instrumenten, da höret man allein den Gesang, laut and Klang, one Rede und Wort, Dem Menschen aber ist allein vor den andern Creaturen die Stimme mit der Rede gegeben, das er solt können und wissen, Gott mit Gesengen und Worten zugleich zu loben, Nemlich mit dem hellen, klingenden predigen und rhümen von Gottes güte und gnade, darinnen schöne Wort und lieblicher Klang zugleich würde gehöret," see Johann Walther, "Vorrede des Heiligen tewren Man Gottes, Doctoris Martini Lutheri, von der Himlischen Kunst Musica, vormals nie Deusch im Druck ausgegangen," WA L, 371-372. The Augsburg Confession contains this statement regarding the nature of the means which the Spirit uses to generate faith: "Nam per verbum et sacramenta tamquam per instrumenta donatur spiritus sanctus qui fidem efficit." See "Confessio fidei exhibitā invictissimo Imperatori Carolo V. Caesari Augusto in comitiis Augustae Anno MDXXX, V, 2," Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche (4th edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), p. 58; concerning this citation Söhngen says on p. 258: "Wie also das Wort der Predigt und die Sakramente Instrumente für den Heiligen Geist mit seiner Hauptgabe, dem Glauben, sind, so kann auch die Musik als Instrument für die Gaben des Heiligen Geistes dienen." The sheer bulk of Gospel oriented music within the total corpus of Lutheran church music indicates that Lutheran composers have conceived of church music as closely related to Gospel. One from their midst, Michael Praetorius, says of his work: "Demnach nun zur vollkommenheit und bestand des Kirchen Regiments/auch völligem Gottes Dienst/nicht allein



According to Luther it should not be alarming to discover that music has been elected by the Holy Spirit as one of the tools for His proper work of bestowing gifts upon mankind. The intimate relationship between Gospel and music suggests such an honor for music. At the same time, because the Gospel and music both are tools of the Spirit, their combination is natural, desirable, and effective for the Spirit's work. Without specifically slighting wordless music, Luther here reveals his preference for vocal music, appraising it as that unique gift to man through which both proclamation and praise are mediated in a distinctive fashion. Wordless music is not less a gift of God, but it cannot be accorded the same rank as vocal music.

Attempting to justify Luther's preferences, Müller points out that there is in vocal music a potential for enabling more extensive encounters with the multilateral presence of Christ:

With concern above all for the theological content of the worship service, the possibility is connected to music in a unique way of bringing to expression both the holiness which surpasses all human understanding and the logos-character of the revelation of God in Christ. Connected with that is [the fact] that in human music word and tone are bound up with one another.<sup>57</sup>

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gehörig ist CONCIO, Eine gute Predigt: Sondern auch dazu erforderlich, CANTIO, Eine gute Musik und Gesang," in Michael Praetorius, "Weltliche Regierung und Gottes Dienst," foreward to Polyhymnia Caduceatrix et Panegyrica (1614), vol. XVII.1 of Gesamtausgabe der Musikalischen Werke von Michael Praetorius, edited by Friedrich Blume, Arnold Mendelssohn, and Willibald Gurlitt (Berlin: Georg Kallmeyer, 1930), VII.

<sup>57</sup>"Was zunächst den theologischen Gehalt des Gottesdienstes betrifft, so verbindet sich in der Musik in einzigartiger Weise die Möglichkeit, zugleich die allem menschlichen Begreifen entnommene Heiligkeit und den Logoscharakter der Gottesoffenbarung in Christus zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Das hängt damit zusammen, dass in menschlicher Musik Wort und Ton miteinander verbunden sind," in Müller, p. 21.



The preferential treatment of vocal music within Lutheranism has prompted some Lutheran authors to qualify the use of instrumental music within cultic functions.

So also choral music, music without instruments, must always remain the heart of all church music. We say nothing against instrumental music, but it has a right to be in the church only insofar as it, too is "sung."<sup>58</sup>

Stier does not wish to place a ban on instrumental music for worship. But because vocal music is the ultimate means of expression for the intimate relationship of Gospel and music, it will be the heart of all church music, and it will serve as the impulse for all cultic instrumental music. He argues that instrumental music must be "sung." Its place in worship is legitimate only when it has the characteristics of vocal music. Wallau is more specific about this "sung" instrumental music. For him vocal music and instrumental music are equally justified in worship provided both are "bound to the Word."<sup>59</sup>

Both are contending for cultic instrumental music which, elusive as it may be, provides for some communication related to the Gospel. Just how this can occur has not been made clear, although the Lutheran tradition of chorale preludes for the organ seems to assume that such communication is possible through the process of association.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>"So wird auch immer die Gesangsmusik, die Musik ohne Instrument, das Herz aller Kirchenmusik bleiben müssen. Wir sagen nichts gegen die Instrumentalmusik, aber sie hat in der Kirche nur insoweit Recht, als auch sie 'gesungen' wird," in Stier, Das Heilige in der Musik, p. 33.

<sup>59</sup>"Ich vermag auch keinen grundsätzlichen Unterschied zwischen gesungener Musik und gespielter Musik, zwischen dem worthaften Gesang und der wortlosen Instrumentalmusik zu machen, denn es gibt nur eine Musik, wenn sie der einen Voraussetzung entspricht, dass sie wortverbunden ist," in Wallau, p. 111.

<sup>60</sup>For a short history of this form see Donald Jay Grout, A History of Western Music (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1960), pp. 345-346.



It has also been suggested that an entire style, such as that of Johann Sebastian Bach, can communicate a general religious meaning because of its accumulated associative values.<sup>61</sup> The process of association, that is, the communication of meaning by suggestion, is helpful for determining what is "sung" instrumental music "bound to the Word." But the process is not reliable. It is possible that a given piece will have no associative meaning, and it is possible that a given piece or style will have non-religious, sometimes anti-religious, associations. For this reason Peter Brunner does not consider it appropriate within the Lutheran cult to use wordless music which is in its design or outcome completely devoid of associative values.<sup>62</sup>

To protect the cult from music which has anti-religious associations or none at all, the categories of "sacred" and "profane" have been employed. The sacred-profane terminology reflects an attempt to stabilize associative meaning for larger groups of people. Occasionally, the terminology has entered Lutheran discussions of church music, as in the case of Ludwig Schoeberlein, a Lutheran liturgician from the nineteenth century. When considering musical instruments for public worship he comments:

Therefore at best they will also remain confined. They have taken on so much of the character of the worldly, that even when they are restrained in liturgical usage by the canons of

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<sup>61</sup>So Thrasybulos Georgiades, "Music and Religion," New Catholic Encyclopedia, edited by William J. McDonald and others (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), X, 134.

<sup>62</sup>Peter Brunner, Worship in the Name of Jesus, translated from the German by Martin Bertram (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), p. 276.



a churchly style, the congregation invariably will still be reminded of their profane usage.<sup>63</sup>

Some feel compelled to function with the sacred-profane terminology, although it frequently leads them to a definition of those stylistic elements which they feel constitute sacred or profane music. This in turn leads them to a canonization of style or styles, all reminiscent of the a cappella movement and the Council of Trent.<sup>64</sup> Such a canonization, whether within Roman Catholic circles or within evangelical circles, has been assessed by Lutherans as unsound both on musical grounds<sup>65</sup> and on theological grounds.<sup>66</sup>

The sacred-profane terminology is not congenial to a Lutheran approach to music. If categories are necessary for the control of wordless music, Manfred Mezger suggests some which are more compatible with Lutheran theology. According to him music is recognizably "spiritual" because of its text and because of the influence the text has exerted upon the music and its composer. Other music is recognizably "fleshly":<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>"Und darauf wird sie auch am besten beschränkt bleiben. Sie hat so sehr den Typus des Weltlichen angenommen, dass selbst wenn sie im gottesdienstlichen Gebrauche die Schranken des kirchlichen Styles einhält, die Gemeinde doch immer wieder an ihren Profangebrauch wird erinnert werden," in Ludwig Schoeberlein, Über den liturgischen Ausbau des Gemeindegottesdienstes in der deutschen evangelischen Kirche (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1859), p. 286.

<sup>64</sup>See the discussion of this in Chapter II.

<sup>65</sup>Cf. Georgiades, X, 134, where he maintains that "sacred" styles make the principle of contrafaction an impossibility.

<sup>66</sup>Cf. the earlier discussion of music as part of God's creation.

<sup>67</sup>Mezger's proposal is similar to the previous discussion of the ethical aspects of music.



That which is recognizable is what proceeds from the text of church music, not what proceeds from a special churchly style. "Spiritual" is that which comes from the Spirit and which happens in faith; "fleshly" is that which comes from earthly humanity.<sup>68</sup>

Both Schoeberlein and Mezger reflect a struggle to define the criteria which will assist in excluding unhelpful and undesirable wordless music from public worship. The Lutheran preference for vocal music forces restrictions on wordless music simply because vocal music will be given more attention. Further limitations evolve from the Lutheran concern for "sung" wordless music. When wordless music is used, especially within worship, Lutherans favor music which is somehow bound to the Gospel. The attempts to develop these preferences into a more detailed scheme have not always been successful, although they appear to be necessary. Frequently they reflect interests which conflict with other facets of the Lutheran approach to music, such as the basic tenet that all music is a created gift and fit for use in worship. While all these endeavors contribute to an understanding of the practical phases of the Lutheran preference for vocal music, the intent of this Lutheran emphasis is to preserve the fundamental relationship between Gospel and music and to maintain the basic function of worship music as service to and interaction with the Gospel.

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<sup>68</sup>"Erkennbar wird das aus dem Text der Kirchenmusik, nicht etwas aus einem besonderen kirchlichen Stil. Geistlich ist, was aus dem Pneuma kommt und in Glauben geschiet; fleishlich ist, was aus dem Irdisch-menschlichen kommt . . ." in Manfred Mezger, "Geistliche Musik--in theologischer Sicht," Musik und Kirche, XXXVII (May-June 1967), 104-105.



### The Place of Instrumental Music

While Luther expressed a distinct preference for vocal music, he never disparaged wordless music or its usefulness in public worship. He could not accord it the same honor as music connected to word, although he proposed several useful functions both for instrumental music and for vocal music without words.

[His evaluation of instrumental music is reflected in the letter which he wrote to Matthew Weller:

Therefore, when you are sad and want to prevail, then say: Up! I have to play a song to our Lord Christ on the Regal (whether it be the Te Deum Laudamus or the Benedictus, etc.). For Scripture teaches me that he gladly listens to happy singing and playing of the lyre. And then strike the keys vigorously and sing until the thoughts go away, as David and Elisha did. If the devil comes again and causes you worry or sad thoughts, then resist vigorously and say: Get out, devil; I now have to sing and play for my Lord Christ.<sup>69</sup>

[In this letter Luther acknowledged instrumental music as a remedy for the spiritual doldrums experienced by Weller. This recognition coincides with his views of music as a created gift of God, and it indicates that Luther valued instrumental music for anthropological reasons. He believed it was capable of working cathartic effects upon the spiritual ailments of man.

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<sup>69</sup>"Darumb, wenn Ihr traurig seid, und will uberhand nehmen, so sprecht: Auf! ich muss unserm Herrn Christo ein Lied schlagen auf dem Regal (es sei Te Deum laudamus oder Benedictus etc); denn die Schrift lehret mich, er höre gern fröhlichen Gesang und Saitenspiel. Und greift frisch in die Claves und singet drein, bis die Gedanken vergehen, wie David and Elisäus taten. Kommet der Teufel wieder und gibt Euch ein Sorge oder traurige Gedanken ein, so wehret Euch frisch und sprecht: Aus, Teufel, ich muss itzt meinem Herrn Christo singen und spielen," in Luther, "Luther an Matthias Weller. 7 Oktober 1534," WA, Ser. 4, VII, No. 2139, 105.



He also saw theological values in wordless music. In his commentary on the second verse of the forty-seventh psalm he was moved by the use of the Latin word jubilare to speak about the ancient jubilus, a wordless vocal song:<sup>70</sup> "The jubilus is said to be a sound coming from the elevation of the mind to God, which it can express without oral or written word."<sup>71</sup>

The theological values of wordless music, Luther argued, stem from those characteristics<sup>72</sup> of pure musical sound which enable the kind of communicative expression not possible in verbal structures. These are the characteristics which aid in producing in a man a sense of the expanse of God's being.<sup>73</sup> In other contexts Luther provided justification for wordless music through his view of music as gift (donum) and creature of God (creatura dei), but here he gave wordless music the special task of representing those aspects of God's person beyond verbal expression or description. Söhngen believes these characteristics to be fundamental in the entire development of music.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>The jubilus within Christian practice goes back at least to St. Augustine. A good example of its use is the close of the medieval Alleluia verse; the last syllable "ia" was frequently used by the cantor as an opportunity for lengthy improvisation. See "Jubilus," Harvard Dictionary of Music, edited by Willi Apel (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 384.

<sup>71</sup>"Jubilus dicitur sonus ex elevatione mentis in deum, qui nec verbis nec literis exprimi potest," in Luther "Dictata super Psalterium. 1513-16. Psalmus XLVI. [XLVII.]," WA III, 267.

<sup>72</sup>Perhaps what Luther has in mind is the possibility of stating two musical ideas simultaneously through counterpoint, the tensions created through harmonic systems, and the ecstatic qualities of vocal or instrumental improvisation; cf. Leonard B. Meyer, Emotion and Meaning in Music (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956), passim.

<sup>73</sup>Also see note 18.

<sup>74</sup>"Die Freude am Instrument aber und an der Steigerung seiner Aussage- und Darstellungsmöglichkeiten ist eine der ältesten Entwicklungskräfte der Musik," in Söhngen, p. 108.



Luther's appreciation for wordless music, and thus for instrumental music, is also reflected in his comments concerning the origins of certain hymn tunes. He stated that the Holy Spirit himself composed the tune for Veni sancte Spiritus.<sup>75</sup> Likewise, he suggested the Holy Spirit as author for the tune for Christ ist erstanden.<sup>76</sup> In both instances Luther asserted that God's interest in tunes and melodies prompted His Holy Spirit to expand the church's treasury of hymns. While on the surface such statements reflect Luther's anthropomorphic view of God and provide a groundwork for a Lutheran evaluation of musical inspiration,<sup>77</sup> they also reveal Luther's delight in pure melody and what he thought to be God's favorable disposition towards wordless music.

He was therefore convinced that the Christian man ought to enjoy all wordless music and make use of it. He mentioned two possible uses: to drive away the devil and spiritual doldrums, and to express the depths of God's being. One contemporary author, in making a case for pure instrumental music within liturgical worship, has suggested a third use:

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<sup>75</sup>Luther, "Tischrede auf 26. und 30. Mai und 1. Juni 1539," WA, Ser. 2, I, No. 4627, 409. For a contemporary transcription of the hymn see Carl Pfatteicher, editor, Office Hymns of the Church (Boston: McLaughlin & Reilly Co., 1951), pp. 100-101.

<sup>76</sup>Luther, "Predigt am Ostertage, in der Schlosskirche gehalten. 21. April 1538," WA XLVI, 315; for the text and tune of this hymn see Evangelisches Kirchengesangbuch (Kassel: Bärenreiter, n.d.), p. 120.

<sup>77</sup>A viewpoint totally opposite from Luther's is posited by Joseph Gelineau, the contemporary Roman Catholic; he suggests that musical inspiration is unrelated to the Holy Spirit, in Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship, translated from the French by Clifford Howell (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1964), pp. 156-157. Alfred Stier, a contemporary Lutheran suggests that musical inspiration such as that which Luther mentions is occasioned by the Holy Spirit through the words of the text, in Musika, Eine Gnadengabe Gottes (Berlin: Merseburger, 1960), pp. 38-39. For a Roman Catholic view of the whole matter of musical inspiration see Pike, pp. 19-43.



Surely a way could be found by means of some other tightening of the worship service to gain a period of about 10-12 minutes after the Scripture-reading or after the sermon in which a great organ work could be centrally developed. Members of the congregation who cannot appreciate organ music have then an opportunity at this time to meditate on the reading or the proclamation. For many the organ work will be a great help for a meditative participation in the worship service. The work itself would surely have a better value in this setting where it is set off and at the same time surrounded than if it were strung in a long string of pearls of other equally important works.<sup>78</sup>

For Luther and others wordless music has beneficial values, and it is vindicated for Christian use both within and outside of worship because of its essence as a created gift of God. Some Lutherans have not shared this positive outlook on wordless music. Theophilus Grossgebauer, a theologian from the tradition of Lutheran orthodoxy in the seventeenth century, warned against the liturgical use of musical instruments in terms much stronger than a mere argument for the supremacy of vocal music. Though viewing all music as an adiaphoron,<sup>79</sup> he was convinced that the use of musical instruments was symbolic of a dying Christianity. Proof for this, he suggested, was to be found in the Roman Catholic Church:

And so that people had something to see and hear in their assemblies, the pope had pipes of wood, tin and lead foisted upon them instead of psalms, thus causing a great noise, and

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<sup>78</sup>"Dann liesse sich sicher ein Weg finden, durch sonstige Straffung des Gottesdienstes einen Zeitraum von etwa 10-12 Minuten nach der Schriftlesung oder nach der Predigt zu gewinnen, in welchem sich ein grosses Orgelwerk zentral entfalten kann. Gemeindeglieder, die mit Orgelmusik absolut nichts anfangen können, haben dann Gelegenheit, in dieser Zeit über die Lesung oder Verkündigung nachzudenken. Vielen aber wird gerade das Orgelwerk eine starke Hilfe sein für den meditativen Mitvollzug des Gottesdienstes, und das Werk selbst wird sicher in dieser herausgehobenen und zugleich eingebetteten Stellung besser zur Geltung kommen, als wenn es in eine lange Perlschnur gleichgewichtiger anderer Werke aufgereiht wäre," in Walter Lotz, "Konzertante Abendmusik," Musik und Kirche, XXVIII (January-February 1958), 14.

<sup>79</sup>Kalb, p. 139.



had them persuaded that God was being praised thereby. These organ pipes are nothing but living images of a dead Christianity, in that they indeed make plenty of noise but have neither heart nor spirit nor soul. Thus he made the people mute and deaf, so that they can neither praise God nor hear his Word; but that, deafened by the sound of the organ and the strange magnificent music, they might be moved to admiration and have their ears tickled.<sup>80</sup>

While Grossgebauer was prepared to permit instrumental accompaniment of congregational singing, he believed instrumental music by itself to be unacceptable as praise of God:

If one were to lead the congregation in singing psalms and spiritual songs by means of the organ and strings and use the instruments to encourage it, that would not be bad. It would be doing what is written in Ps. 150: "Praise the Lord with the sound of the trumpet, praise Him with the psaltery and harp." When the congregation praises God the Lord with mind and mouth, one may well use also trumpets and psaltery and harp. But if these instruments are to praise God, and the congregation of God is mute and deaf, that would be mere noise and reprehensible praise.<sup>81</sup>

By definition Grossgebauer fits within the Lutheran tradition of theology, although his views of music represent a minority opinion among the orthodox Lutheran theologians.<sup>82</sup> His evaluation of instrumental music as the cause for spiritual deficiency in a congregation is characteristic of the Pietists, for they frequently complained about expensive organs, instrumental music, and chanting as signs of defective worship.<sup>83</sup> On this particular point, however, Grossgebauer's influence on the practice of church music was minimal. The book containing his warnings

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<sup>80</sup>Theophilus Grossgebauer, Wächterstimme aus dem verwuesteten Zion. Sampt einen truen Unterricht von der Wiedergeburt (Frankfurt: Joachim Wildens, 1661), p. 223; the English translation is from Kalb, p. 144.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 237, the English translation is from Kalb, p. 146.

<sup>82</sup>Kalb, p. 143.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 148.



against instrumental music was published during the time Heinrich Schütz was producing great quantities of instrumental church music. Only sixty years later Johann Sebastian Bach was composing church cantatas, employing the forces of trumpets, strings, oboes, and flutes.<sup>84</sup> The mainstream of Lutheran church music was affected very little by allegations concerning the misuse of instrumental music.

Grossgebauer must be allowed his opinion concerning musical abuses in worship, but his evaluation of instrumental music represents a minority opinion which lacks consideration of the values other Lutherans have discovered in the use of musical instruments. Opinions like those of Grossgebauer have failed to alter seriously the strong Lutheran beliefs that wordless music has beneficial effects on spiritual doldrums, aids in expressing the mysteries of God's being, and serves to provide a background during which worshipers are able to meditate on Scriptural reading or proclamation.

The Lutheran approach to music is developed from a wide variety of theological and musical concerns. All are helpful for evaluating music, but five are essentially determinative: the conjugal relationships between music and Gospel, the recognition of music as a gracious created gift of God, the beneficial results guaranteed by the use of this gift, the ultimate function of music as serving the proclamation of the Gospel, and the cathartic and communicative benefits of wordless music.

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 150.



## CHAPTER V

### A LUTHERAN EVALUATION OF THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE USE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

The investigation of the church's polemic against musical instruments in public worship has revealed seven basic arguments.

Three of these originate with the church fathers of the pre-Reformation Western Church. They advocated the exclusion of instrumental music from worship because: (1) through the process of association it leads the Christian to evil thoughts or actions; (2) it provides an occasion for manipulating God through sacrifice devoid of moral intent and action; (3) it confuses the structural unity of the church through the experience of a polyphony of melodies brought about by instrumental ornamentation of the church's monodic song. The first of these arguments was expanded and perpetuated in the Roman Catholic Church.

The fourth and fifth arguments were advanced by John Calvin in the sixteenth century. He disparaged the use of instruments: (4) because he was convinced that the Christian needed no external stimulants for his faith since the inward motivation of Christ was sufficient; (5) because ideal Christian worship is dependent on intellectual understanding, and wordless music does not contribute to such understanding.

The remaining two arguments were proposed by Ulrich Zwingli. He concluded that instrumental music along with all music: (6) has no command for its use from the Scriptures and is therefore illicit in public worship; (7) detracts from the articulated word in worship and from the inward disposition of the heart.



All of these arguments (in varying degrees) conflict with the Lutheran approach to music. Some of the arguments suggest cautions which may well be pertinent for the practice of church music in the Lutheran church. The first part of the Lutheran evaluation of these arguments will consist in weighing the merits of each argument against the Lutheran approach to music. The second part of the evaluation will comprise a discussion of the suggested cautions for the practice of church music within Lutheranism.

### Evaluation of the Arguments

#### Fear of Association

The Lutheran approach to music includes an acknowledgement of musical communication through the process of association. Musical meaning through association is the motivation, for example, behind the Lutheran organ chorale prelude. The Lutheran position also recognizes that music has an innate power which can be used in service to good or evil. Because of music's power, and because of the process of association, the Lutheran position admits that some music in given situations will produce results not characteristic of Christian piety. For these reasons several methods of criticism have been submitted for Lutheran use, by which it was proposed that discussions could be made as to what music is unfit for cultic worship.

When these methods of criticism are given semi-permanent or permanent status for a parish or for an entire church body, Lutherans will want to object, because they customarily view any stylistic exclusion and consequent stylistic canonization as a denial of the principle



that music, all music, is in essence a creation of God and fit for use by His people. The exclusion of a style or of musical instruments is a created gift for service to God.

Lutherans oppose a forced defense against the argument that the association of meanings makes the use of musical instruments unacceptable. Lutherans have approached the question more positively through the doctrine of creation and through their appreciation of the good news of redemption. For Lutherans all music by virtue of its participation in the miracle of sound reflects the miracle of the Gospel proclamation. The Lutheran would hold that sound, pitch, melody, harmony, and timbre prepare for and also carry God's message of reconciliation. Concurrently, Lutherans recognize the possibility, and deplore the instances in which it occurs, that demonic forces can exert control over the miracle of music. But for them the reclamation of such control is achieved not through the exclusion of idioms, styles, or instruments but through the employment of these musical elements so that they might be purged of adverse power and association. It might be necessary in this process to formulate a method of criticism by which the church can clearly identify the demonic in music, but the method would serve only as a means to an end. Once the demonic is exposed in an instrument or in an instrumental style, Lutherans, following Luther in his replacement of carnal love ballads with worthy songs, would seek to reclaim the instrument or style by reshaping its use and purpose. In this effort Lutherans ultimately attempt to reclaim a piece of God's good creation for use in His service.



## Fear of Manipulation

The patristic fear that instrumental music might be used to manipulate God was based on the assumption that instrumental music is a cultic sacrifice or part of a sacrificial system. In the Lutheran analysis of the purpose of instrumental music the province of sacrifice is subsidiary to the primary function, which is service to the Gospel. In their view all wordless music supports the Gospel in counteracting man's spiritual doldrums and in making possible the expression of the mysterious depths of God's being.

Although priority is given to the conjunctive relationship between instrumental music and the Gospel, the subsidiary function of sacrifice is not disregarded. Because instrumental music is an adaptation of the jubilus, it is viewed from a Lutheran point of view as a joyful ecstatic response and a sacrifice of praise. Lutherans have no insurance against the deterioration of such a sacrifice through the influence of demonic forces. They admit to the possibility of sacrifice motivated by the intent to manipulate God and to force His hand of blessing.

The church fathers argued that instrumental music must be banned because it can lead to sacrificial manipulation. The weakness of this argument is that it derives a principle from a possibility. Lutherans have not taken this argument too seriously because they view man as a creature who has a natural desire to play (spielen) music on musical instruments. They know that this desire has been redeemed through the atoning work of Christ, and they perceive the desire as an eschatological phenomenon. For the Lutheran, instrumental music is a redeemed eschatological activity which can never be suppressed. It is a good activity,



and it can be given a place in public worship. Further, instrumental music, as well as singing and all music, is a sign of faith as a response to the Gospel. Whoever makes such music in worship as a sign of faith can rest secure in his faith that whatever demonic influence accompanies his playing is forgiven by virtue of the faith in which he plays and lives. The fear of manipulation is not ignored by Lutherans. They face it with the confidence of faith while freely implementing the even greater urge to play for the glory of God.

The instrumental sacrifice of praise does not excuse the Lutheran musician from the moral life or involvement in the diaconal functions of the church. While Lutherans do not emphasize the unity of music and diaconal service (diakonia), they welcome such an emphasis as compatible with their desire to avoid sacrifice devoid of moral intent and action. A more explicit development of the unified theme of music and morality would benefit the Lutheran approach to music, because it would aid instrumentalists and all church musicians in the perception that their musical activities are a portion of an entire life of Christian sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.<sup>1</sup>

#### Fear of Multiplicity

Some of the church fathers judged the use of musical instruments destructive to the experience of unity in the church, because in their

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<sup>1</sup>Luther provided a base for this ethical development in his allegorical exposition of Ps. 150, although this particular exegetical method did not gain popularity within Lutheran circles. He says: "Per ista instrumenta significantur diversa genera predicationum in ecclesiam. Sonus enim tube est predicatio de credibilibus et fide, que est speculativorum, sicut tuba sine articulatione manuum sonat," in Martin Luther, "Dictata super Psalterium. 1513-16. Psalmus CL," D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1886), IV, 462.



view instrumental music provides for the simultaneous hearing of several melodies. For them monody is the musical form faithful to the nature of the church.

At face value, this argument is incongruous with the Lutheran approach to music. A musical development such as embellishment through instrumental accompaniment is viewed by Lutherans as a portion of the total gift of music. Similarly, Lutherans have never considered it necessary to argue for polyphony since for them it is an inherent part of the created gift of music. They prefer to evaluate musical embellishment as a natural manifestation of the diversity in creation: just as God has provided a variety of birds, each with his own song, to form a great combination of songs in praise of the Creator, so He has provided men with the ability to create, hear, and perform several melodies at the same time also in praise of the Creator. As unity in diversity is characteristic of all creation, it will naturally be reflected in the created gift of music.<sup>2</sup>

Basic to this patristic argument is a concern that music not become the divisive means by which the church loses its experience of unity. That concern is expressed by Lutherans when they define music as servant to the Gospel. Whenever musical instruments are used to accompany congregational song, Lutherans insist that they be employed in such a way

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<sup>2</sup>William Sheppard Smith in Musical Aspects of the New Testament (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij W. Ten Have N. V., 1962), p. 29, n. 30 argues that musical diversity in the Old Testament didn't seem to offend the ears of Old Testament worshipers. The fear of multiplicity is also groundless on the basis of Gal. 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free; there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus;" the passage indicates that the unity of the church rests in Christ and not in the various symbols of the oneness.



so as not to disrupt the congregation's work. According to Lutheran principles, music serves to enable proclamation and response. When these activities are hindered, music has been misused.

#### Man at Worship has no Need of Outward Motivation

John Calvin was convinced that musical instruments were employed in Old Testament worship as external stimulants for the worshiper. The New Covenant, according to Calvin, rendered such stimulants obsolete, since Christ has made Himself available as the only necessary stimulant for worship. Calvin's understanding of the function of instrumental music in the Old Testament is congenial to the Lutheran view of instrumental music, because Lutherans also view instrumental music as motivational. Not so congenial is Calvin's insistence that musical instruments have been relieved of their function in the New Testament era because of the availability of Christ.

For Lutherans, Christ's presence does not alter the created purposes of instrumental music, especially as it functions to disperse spiritual doldrums and as it helps man to experience the depths of the mystery of God. The nearness of Christ subsequent to the incarnation does not make such gifts unnecessary for man.

There are further grounds for disagreement. If Calvin's concern for inward motivation means that he is pressing for the presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit, Lutherans concur, and some are quick to add that the Holy Spirit comes to man also through song and sometimes through instrumental music. Whereas Calvin finds the importance of the Spirit's coming as determinant for rejecting instrumental music more



fully. They disagree with Calvin because they contend that the Holy Spirit also uses music in his total work of motivating the worshiper.

Lutherans maintain that Calvin had an incomplete view of the methods which God uses to stimulate the Christian. In their view instrumental music prepares for the announcement and subsequent restatements of the New Covenant. Confrontation with the Gospel and response to it for Lutherans is not complete unless it is permeated with music, for the Gospel and music are conjunct miracles. They are not arguing for Gospel only in musical forms, but they oppose the unnecessary separation of Gospel from its musical dimensions.

#### Instrumental Music is not Compatible with the Principle of Understanding in Worship

The other argument which Calvin advanced against instrumental music in public worship was founded on St. Paul's admonition that Corinthian worshipers sing not only with the spirit but also with understanding.<sup>3</sup> In his interpretation of the passage, he maintains that the function of worship music is to contribute to the worshiper's understanding through verbal cognition. His demand for words and verbal cognition renders wordless music unuseable in worship.

Several reasons prompt Lutherans to distrust the accuracy of Calvin's exegesis of the text.<sup>4</sup> They believe that Calvin must be

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<sup>3</sup>1 Cor. 14:15: "I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with understanding also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with understanding also."

<sup>4</sup>An exegesis of this text must account for the meaning of "singing with the spirit," for the place of speaking in tongues in worship, and for the relationship between music and the speaking in tongues.



challenged when he states that worship activities are useful only when they enable verbal cognition or when they employ the intellect. They are willing to admit the absolute priority of textual church music, but they insist that wordless music too is beneficial for worship because it prepares for cognition and understanding. Its share in the miracle of sound reminds the Christian of the miraculous proclamation of the Gospel.

There are other values which Lutherans see in instrumental music. On the basis of the jubilus, Lutherans argue that the understanding which Calvin desires for worship is accessible also through wordless music. Wordless music, they claim, leads to understanding, but to the kind of understanding which consists of an insight into the depths of the mystery of God. This kind of experience wordless music can help to provide because it is not confined by verbal means of expression. Lutherans believe that Calvin unnecessarily reduced understanding to verbal cognition, while they insist that understandable experience is provided also through means such as wordless, vocal, or instrumental music.

Calvin is issued still another challenge. Even if a definition of worship is used which defines it as a process by which people are informed and motivated, Lutherans are persuaded that beneficial motivation is generated not only through sensible verbal communication but also through color, fabric, material, and artistic symbol. Particularly in music do they find motivational power which can affect people in such a way as to aid them in their liturgical activity. In the Lutheran view, Calvin has not reckoned with the edifying influence which music can exert upon man at worship.

The challenges which Lutherans direct to Calvin are accompanied by a recognition that he has stressed an important guideline for the practice



of church music. Without fail, music for the cult is primarily vocal, for music realizes its true function when joined to the Gospel proclamation. Lutherans object when this primary function of church music is turned into a principle meant to exclude other methods of musical expression.

From this insistence on the priority of vocal music develops another Lutheran concern which also concurs with Calvin's demand for understanding in worship music. Wordless music cannot guarantee meaning in every situation because some musical idioms fail to impress all people. Lutherans are aware that wordless music will not always provide edification for all. An abundance of such wordless music in any given worship situation not only militates against the Lutheran notion that church music is primarily vocal, but it also leads to a liturgical situation in which meaning and edification are diminished.<sup>5</sup> The concern for edification will prompt Lutherans to exercise restraint in regard to the quantity of wordless music used in worship. They agree that cognitive values in church music must not be minimized, but they also deplore a magnification of these values to the extent that the usefulness of instrumental music is denied.

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<sup>5</sup>The lack of clear meaning or purpose in music can lead to a worship of music for its own sake; cf. Oskar Söhngen's comments on this form of idolatry in "Theologische Grundlagen der Kirchenmusik," Die Musik des evangelischen Gottesdienstes, vol. IV of Leiturgia. Handbuch des evangelischen Gottesdienstes, edited by Karl Ferdinand Müller and Walter Blankenburg (Kassel: Johannes Stauda, 1961), pp. 240-243.



### Instrumental Music not Commanded by Christ

Ulrich Zwingli's adamant insistence that music is not commanded by Christ and therefore forbidden in Christian worship is so foreign to a Lutheran approach to music that it is impossible to evaluate such an argument simply on the basis of a Lutheran view of music.

The Lutheran conflict with Zwingli develops from his understanding of the purpose of the Scriptures and of their relationship to worship forms and liturgical music. Zwingli confronted the New Testament as the new dispensation of a divine pattern for the Christian life. Its silence on any matter must be interpreted as a tacit prohibition. Luther recognized in this hermeneutical principle an attempt to impose upon Christians a new law completely alien to the nature of the Gospel. In the Formula Missae et Communionis pro Ecclesia Vuittembergensi of 1523 he says:

And if any should ask that all these [forms] be proved from Scriptures and the examples of the fathers, they do not disturb us; for as we have said above, liberty must prevail in these matters and Christian consciences must not be bound by laws and ordinances.<sup>6</sup>

Vilmos Vajta maintains that Luther regarded the legalistic use of the New Testament a mark of one who is ignorant of the liberty implied in the Christian faith and demanded by Christian love.<sup>7</sup> The Formula of Concord rejects Zwingli's theology of worship as false and contrary to God's word, because legalism suggests that Christian people do not have

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<sup>6</sup>Martin Luther, "Formula Missae et Communionis. 1523," WA XII, 218-219. The English translation is from Martin Luther, Liturgy and Hymns, edited by Ulrich Leupold; vol. LIII of Luther's Works (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 37.

<sup>7</sup>Vilmos Vajta, Luther on Worship, translated from the German (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), p. 179.



liberty to choose those things which will prove beneficial to their worship.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, Werner Elert asserts, Lutherans understand the Scriptures as "normative only for what is to be weeded out."<sup>9</sup>

Any attempt to extract liturgical prescriptions from the New Testament is viewed by Lutherans as a threat to the freedom guaranteed to Christians by the Gospel. Instead, they are moved by the New Testament to eliminate only those materials which militate against the Gospel.

Zwingli was convinced on the basis of Col. 3:16<sup>10</sup> that external forms of singing or music were interdicted by the New Testament. Even if Zwingli's use of the New Testament were valid, Lutherans would find such an interpretation incongruous with Mark 14:26<sup>11</sup> and Acts 16:25.<sup>12</sup> Simply on the basis of these two citations Zwingli's exegesis of the Colossian passage<sup>13</sup> must be rejected, while his hermeneutical principles furnish even greater doubt as to the reliability of his conclusions.

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<sup>8</sup>"Konkordienformel, Solida Declaratio, X, 30," Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche (4th edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), p. 1063.

<sup>9</sup>Werner Elert, The Structure of Lutheranism, translated from the German by Walter Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), I, 327.

<sup>10</sup>"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

<sup>11</sup>"And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

<sup>12</sup>"But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them."

<sup>13</sup>For an exegesis of Col. 3:16 and for a history of interpretation of the passage, see Söhngen, pp. 2-15.



Zwingli's view of the Scriptures forced him to ban music from worship. In direct contrast, Lutherans have discovered no prohibition of music in the New Testament, but they are rather incited by it to a high evaluation of music in worship. They assume that as a created gift of God music is to be enjoyed and used by men. Its place in the cult is guaranteed by virtue of its intimate relationship with the Gospel through the miracle of sound. Music is a logical and beneficial development of spoken word and especially of the Gospel. It is one of the manifestations of joy which comes to him who believes in Christ, and it is regarded by God as a natural sign of faith. Not only is it a means of expression for the man of faith, but the Holy Spirit Himself honors music as a tool for His work.

Those who hold this exalted view of music have difficulty with an argument which demands music's abolition from worship because Christ has not commanded it.

#### Music Detracts the Mind from its Cultic Disposition

Zwingli's argument against music was conclusive for him. He did not find it necessary to provide additional evidence, although he adduced a supportive argument which for him demonstrated the validity of his position: when music is permitted in worship, the listener or participant is bound to discover that his mind is not concurrent with what the music purports to communicate, because music tends to detract the mind by drawing attention to performance, composition, and other musical techniques. Such an experience, Zwingli argues, is clearly contrary to the injunction



of St. Paul in 1 Cor. 14:15<sup>14</sup> where the Apostle exhorts Christians to sing with understanding.

Apparently such musical distractions created no problems for Zwingli outside of public worship; he freely performed music in his home, and he saw great educational benefits arising from its use in schools.<sup>15</sup> But in public worship, where unity of purpose in mind, heart, and mouth is required, he warned against the danger of employing cultic material which occasions the separation of cognitive intent and outward action. Zwingli was convinced that music causes disunity in the worshiper, and he therefore believed this to be another reason to abolish it from public worship. In its place he advocated increased use of the spoken word and of inward prayer.

Lutherans concur with Zwingli in his attempt to provide clear communicative elements for public worship. Their preference for vocal music as a means of proclamation and response induces such agreement.<sup>16</sup> However, they refuse to acknowledge Zwingli's view that it is impossible to obtain coincidence between music and the mind. In their view, music is a created gift of God, a gift which is charged with essential goodness. As it carries with it a power to influence people, so this power must be evaluated on the basis of its created goodness. Such an evaluation, they are convinced, reveals that music's effects are by design helpful and supportive. As a creature of God (creatura dei), music encourages understanding and clear communication.

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<sup>14</sup>See note 3.

<sup>15</sup>Söhngen, p. 28.

<sup>16</sup>Such a conclusion is reached apart from the exegetical method and conclusions employed by Zwingli.



If it is necessary to justify instrumental music in worship, Lutherans maintain that the use of musical instruments enables the expression of those depths of meaning, those mysteries of God which are impossible to communicate or ponder in strictly verbal forms. Instrumental music is an aid to the mind because it provides experiences through means other than the verbal.

The place of instrumental music is also sustained because it is a natural manifestation of man's created urge to "play" (spielen) before God. As God's chosen creature, the worshiping man displays his identity as a redeemed member of the eschatological community by playing in honor of his Creator and Redeemer. Lutherans fail to agree with the reasons Zwingli advanced for banning this sign of the church from its cultic activities.

Zwingli's proposal that inward prayer be the ideal for public worship reflects his desire to separate outward actions from the inner disposition of the participating individual. The bifurcation of the worshiping man militates against the Lutheran view of liturgical worship, especially as it is applied to music. The Gospel proclamation and its musical form are viewed by Lutherans as a single phenomenon. To separate them is to alter the basic nature of the Gospel. The spiritual nature of the Gospel and its outward forms in speech and music are a unit, and both the Gospel and its forms are honored by the Holy Spirit as His proper tools.

Zwingli's analysis of the distractive powers in music is given no credence by Lutherans because it betrays little confidence in the benefits of music as a created gift of God. His argument does clarify an incipient



demonic danger in the practice of church music, a danger of which also Lutherans are aware. He reminds them that it is possible for both performer and listener to become so involved with the processes of music making or with its intricacies that the music or the production of the music are worshiped as ends in themselves. The creature can become a god; church music can become an end in itself with the result that it loses its essential nature as servant to the Gospel. By means of this argument Zwingli has issued a warning to those involved in the Lutheran practice of church music by pointing out that it is precisely in the production of church music that the demonic can gain control over the created gift.

#### Implications for the Lutheran Practice of Church Music

##### Associative Values in Instruments and Idioms New to the Church's Worship

In recent years the development of experimental liturgical forms has been accompanied by a similar development of new musical settings both for the experimental forms and for existing historic liturgies. The musical side of the search for contemporary worship media has led to the employment of musical idioms and instruments previously unused within the confines of Lutheran worship. Although a Lutheran theology of music furnishes a sanction for such efforts on the basis of its view of music as a creature of God (creatura dei), it also provides cause for certain reservations in the welcoming of new idioms and instruments to public worship. The acceptance must be qualified because of the recognition that the use of musical idioms and instruments through the process of association can release within the participant a complex interplay



of meaning, value, presuppositions, attitudes, intent, and emotions, all accumulated through previous experience.<sup>17</sup> The nature of the process of association will not permit immediate separation of idiom or instrument from the reactions they release, nor can separation be achieved through declaration, sudden change of surroundings, or a simultaneous use of cultic textual material.

For these reasons new musical idioms, instruments, and the reactions they initiate must be examined before, as, and after they are employed for public worship. When the principle of association is applied to guitars, rhythm sections, to various electrified instruments, to popular idioms such as folk music, to jazz, or even to so-called classical idioms, it is conceivable that the resulting associative reactions may be useful to some people in their worship. To some the associative response may offer neither help nor hindrance, and to others it may arouse additional thought patterns and emotions which are not characteristic of Christian piety. The latter suggests itself as a possibility because certain idioms and instruments are regularly used as devices to accompany entertainment and activities considered by some Christians as below the level of acceptable piety. Because there are significant differences in participants and situations, the decision to adopt liturgical musical settings employing previously unused instruments and idioms also should not be reached without a prior discussion on the question of offense. This in itself is complicated by the question of whether offense is being given or taken.

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<sup>17</sup>See the patristic arguments regarding musical association in Chapter II.



Only a qualified acceptance of some contemporary musical settings is suggested by another aspect of a Lutheran theology of music. On principle Lutherans allow for demonic influence in certain musical situations, although they have been reticent to specify how the demonic is recognized. Such historic reticence should not prevent contemporary Lutherans from entertaining the possibility of discovering the demonic in connection with some contemporary idioms and instruments, especially since these musical media are employed in connection with sub-Christian activities. Explicitly required in a Lutheran evaluation of contemporary musical developments is an awareness of possible residual demonic influence; implicitly desired are guidelines by which the demonic is to be recognized. The whole problem of the demonic in music suggests the need for developing a satisfactory theological aesthetics by which all musical idioms and media can be measured and tested in this respect.

The associative meaning aroused by musical instruments is not a cause for Lutherans to ban instruments from worship, especially not on a permanent basis. It does caution Lutheran practitioners of church music by warning them against acceptance and use of musical idioms and instruments without first examining the values and meaning which are inseparable from the idioms and instruments. Employment of any previously unused musical media must also be preceded by careful investigation of possible inherent demonic influences. In the light of the conviction that all music is basically a creature of God, the caution suggests itself that ways be found to utilize any and all musical media in such a way that associative reactions will be unaroused or non-existent. This might become more feasible as various musical idioms are combined to produce



offspring which have not acquired the associative meaning characteristic of the parents.

### Excesses of Improvisatory Effects and of Ecstatic Instrumental Music

An improvisatory musical effect, such as the jubilus, was found by Luther to be a natural manifestation of man's ability to be joyful before God, and he placed great value on it as an aid for expressing the mysteries of God's being. Within the Lutheran scheme of things there is a place for ecstatic musical expression not only because of its practical value but also because it is a product of the created human urge to improvise with music. Redeemed man is the eschatological child who "plays" before his maker. This kind of theological outlook provides a basis for improvised organ preludes and postludes, for melismatic chant, for the typical ornamented Baroque melody, for descants on hymns, for improvised organ settings of hymns, for possible jazz improvisations of existing chants or hymns, and for contemporary developments such as aleatory music.<sup>18</sup>

Musical improvisation bears as one of its characteristics some point of reference from which the improvised musical energy departs to offer variation or contrast. The point of reference can take many shapes: established key, theme, existing harmonization, or text. The freedom implied in improvisation offers no guarantee that the point of reference will always be connected to the improvised production. The thread of relativity can be severed, resulting in a lost referent and the birth of

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<sup>18</sup>The "once-never-again" characteristic of improvisation suggests strong similarities to the eschatological nature of every eucharistic celebration.



a new musical entity related only to itself. Within the confines of public worship such an improvisatory development could produce unwanted effects, such as disruptive confusion or puzzlement at unrelated cultic activities.

The confusion created from improvisation is what causes some people to register complaints about hymn harmonizations with harmonic structures differing from the usual, although others may welcome the different harmonization as an improvisatory reflection of the joy of the moment. Still others are disturbed in their devotion by an improvised type of descant because the descant has confused their sense of the point of reference, in this case the existing hymn melody.

The use of jazz idioms or even of aleatory music might also lead to puzzlement and confusion on the part of the worshiper. The ecstatic improvisatory characteristics of these idioms could result in such a departure from the pre-arranged point of reference that sensible connections would no longer exist, and the piece of cultic material would ultimately lose its edifying effects.

The confusion described above contributes to a splintering of the worshiping community, because a piece of cultic material designed for the use of all has been altered to serve only some. This liturgical condition was deplored in principle by the church fathers when they questioned the cultic validity of instrumental music because it tended to disintegrate the liturgical unity of the church.

While some of the complaints made by worshipers about contemporary improvisatory manifestations have to be dismissed because of faulty motives, such as the refusal to attempt the use of new liturgical media, other complaints undoubtedly result from the worshiper's inability to maintain



a musical point of reference. The caution to Lutheran practitioners of church music is that these complaints be considered as expressions of those shut out from what is supposed to be common liturgical material, and that the servant role of music not be overshadowed by the less important desires to improvise and to produce ecstatic musical utterances.

#### Support of Cultic Instrumental Music through an Interpretive Word

John Calvin claimed that absolute instrumental music had to be banned from public worship because of its inability to express lucid communications decipherable for all who hear them. Lutherans fear that Calvin asked too much of instrumental music and that he thereby passed by its more important contributions of preparing the listener for the miracle of proclaimed Gospel and of expressing the depths of the mystery of God. These contributions guarantee it a place within the Lutheran cult, but its place there dare not go unchecked.

Restrictions on its use are required not only because of the Lutheran preference for vocal music but because of the inability of instrumental music to be a medium of precise communication. Because profitable reactions to components of a composition or to a composition as a whole cannot be guaranteed, the edificatory usefulness of absolute instrumental music is limited. An acknowledgement of its limitations need not lead to expulsion, as Calvin thought. Among Lutherans such awareness might better lead to making the necessary provisions so that instrumental music does not degenerate into an activity which is meaningless for the greater part of the worshiping community.

Several precautions suggest themselves. First, instrumental music for worship should be chosen after there has been an attempt to determine



what idioms and instruments are the most efficient media for the congregation's expression and edification. While this suggestion is not intended as an appeal for the total exclusion of unfamiliar instruments or idioms, it does speak to the necessity for educative preparation before the introduction of totally strange instrumental or idiomatic expressions. In the parish situation it would be advantageous to request the organist, for instance, to provide rationale and explanation for his choice of instrumental music in the worship services.

Second, within a congregation's worship life and growth, opportunities should be supplied for establishing an understanding of the function and benefits of cultic instrumental music. Parishioners who are encouraged to view instrumental music as a reminder of the miracles of sound and of evangelical proclamation, and who are urged to welcome it as a gift and tool of the Spirit, are less apt to view its presence in the cult as a meaningless activity. Such awareness should also lead to a reconsideration of the requirement imposed on many parish organists that there be background music during those moments in the liturgy when the congregation is not involved in the action. The continued use of background music tends to minimize the functions Lutherans customarily ascribe to instrumental music, because worshipers begin to expect of all instrumental music that it serve only as a bridge between consecutive liturgical activities or as a cover for disturbing noise. Gradually the potential usefulness of cultic instrumental music will be reduced.

### Piety of the Musician

Some of the arguments against musical instruments in public worship develop from a fear that the use of instrumental music encourages



sacrificial offerings without any intent whatever or with the intent to manipulate God. The Lutheran maintains that this concern should be applied not only to musical sacrifices but to every sacrifice, because it pertains more to the motives of the one who sacrifices than to the sacrifice itself.<sup>19</sup>

The concern for sacrificial manipulation is addressed to the giver, and by it the Lutheran who offers musical sacrifices is invited to ask of himself whether his motives are worthy of divine attention. A Lutheran reply to this request evolves from the assurance that the worthiness of all sacrifices of praise and their motives is based on the faith which originates and accompanies them. The intent of faith is an intent made pure by God, but it does not free the sacrificer from having to struggle with contiguous motives resulting from the demonic. Because the demonic can influence him, it is possible for the sacrificer to rely on those motives intended to force God's hand of blessing or to force God to look favorably upon the sacrifice. Since the Christian man has to reckon with the demonic in every aspect of life, there is in every Christian musician who sacrifices a mixture of motives and a potential for relapse to the old way of establishing divine-human relationships through his own efforts.

The fear of manipulative sacrifice and its related arguments against the use of instrumental music reveal the frightening option which is open even to Christian musicians: they can offer their music with the hope that the act itself will move divine reaction. Prevention of this false anticipation can be achieved partially through an application of Law and

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<sup>19</sup>See the discussion of this in Vajta, pp. 149-170.



Gospel in terms designed for the specific predicament of the sacrificing musician. The Law admonishes the Christian musician to repent of his notion that the sacrifice which he makes increases in value according to standards of musical judgment or according to levels of technical performance. The Law directs him to repent for his poor choices of music, for his faulty performances, and for his failure to acknowledge that all his sacrifices derive from mixed motives. The Gospel assures the Christian musician that all his sacrifices, regardless of musical quality or of technical proficiency, appear before the throne of God as spotless offerings made clean by the one perfect sacrifice on Calvary. The Gospel urges him to cleanse his motives repeatedly, and it simultaneously supplies the strength to do so. Because the church musician discharges his task as one who offers sacrifices not only for himself but often for the entire worshipping community, he must be exposed to the kind of pastoral care which applies Law and Gospel to his specific situation.

The church musician further devalues his sacrifices by the suppositions that service rendered through music is sufficient and that other Christian responsibilities are waived because of the magnificence of the musical sacrifice. Preclusion of such inclinations is implied in the concept of the totality of Christian responsibility, and it is supported through the exegetical method of allegory, when, for instance, the strings of the harp are interpreted to mean those Christian virtues which the harpist should be practicing in his life.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>See for example St. Clement of Alexandria who in "Paedagogus, II, 4," Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, edited by Jacques Paul Migne (Paris: n.p., 1857), VIII, 439, says: "'Praise Him . . . with the lute, praise Him,' understanding the mouth as a lute moved by the Spirit as the lute is by the plectrum. . . ." The English translation is from Clement of



If the church musician is occasionally reminded that the making of music is only a portion of his total life of service, and if he is encouraged to think of his musical activities also as a symbol of his responsibilities outside of worship, the danger of selective servanthood should be obviated.

For the Lutheran, the practice of music is a practice ordained by God, blessed by Him, and intended by Him for use in His service. But it is also a sacrifice, joyfully performed by man in praise of Him who first bestowed the created gift. As sacrifice, church music springs from the same motivating will which manifests itself also in love of family, love of neighbor, wise use of creation, and all other Christian virtues. The sacrifice of church music cannot be separated from the other sacrificial virtues.

In one way or another the arguments against instrumental music seek to furnish a purpose for instrumental music within the cult. A need is apparent to establish a Lutheran statement of purpose which subsumes the many concerns raised by the arguments and which provides for the principles proposed in a Lutheran view of music. Represented in that statement will be a concern for the listener as the liturgical participant. On the one hand, he needs to be protected from excesses of instrumental music and from needless exposure to undesirable values and meaning through musical association. On the other hand, he should be exposed to ample amounts of more meaningful vocal music. The statement will challenge the

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Alexandria, Christ the Educator, translated from the Greek by Simon P. Wood, vol. XXIII of The Fathers of the Church, edited by Roy Joseph Deferrari (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1954), p. 131. Cf. other examples of this allegorical method in Chapter II, n. 72.



musician to extend his service beyond the cult. It will encourage the use of instrumental music as a gracious gift of God, acknowledge the created urge to play and perform, provide for the use of instrumental music as an expression of the mysterious depths of divine being, and stimulate perpetual praise of Him who created all music. Briefly, it will compel the instrumentalist to glorify God and serve every man.

One such statement of ultimate purpose has been tendered by the Lutheran composer, Johann Sebastian Bach, significantly in the title of a collection of instrumental music, his Orgel-Büchlein. Because it is comprehensive and yet concise, it recommends itself as a serviceable statement of ultimate purpose for cultic instrumental music: "Inscribed in honor of the Lord Most High, and that my neighbor may be enlightened thereby."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>See Philipp Spitta, Johann Sebastian Bach, translated from the German by Clara Bell and J. A. Fuller-Maitland (New York: Dover Publications, 1951), I, 598, n. 329. The whole title reads: Orgel-Büchlein / Worinne einem anfahenden Organisten / Anleitung gegeben wird, auff allerhand / Arth einem Choral durchzuführen, an- / bey auch sich im Pedal studio zu habi- / litiren, indem in solchen darinne / befindlichen Choralen das Pedal / gantz obligat tractiret wird. Dem Höchsten Gott allein zu Ehren, / Dem Nechsten, draus sich zu belehren.



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