Harmonising
with
God
in our
music and practices

A biblical & scientific investigation

Dr Ross V. McKenzie

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Harmonising with God

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Dedicated to

My immediate family

My church family

All my brothers and sisters in Christ with
similar and differing views to my own

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Preface

As a young person, I was always attracted to practical Christianity. On my father's side of the family, Aunty Ruth, whom I admire, had worked for Sydney City Mission, a Christian welfare organisation. I saw myself doing that same kind of work one day. On my mother's side, grandma was brought up in the Salvation Army. Mum and her siblings tagged along as grandma played the tambourine downtown in the Salvation Army band - much to mum's embarrassment, as she was teased at school the next day. Grandma's Salvation Army background explains why grandpa was never allowed to bring alcohol into the house. It also explains why grandma always took an interest in the poor family down the road.

My immediate family was not particularly religious. My father was agnostic, but we did attend church at times – the Baptist Church. Mum was always playing music, especially country music, which included a lot of gospel – this was one of the biggest spiritual influences in my younger years. I vividly remember falling in love with Jesus as a five-year-old after overhearing my older brothers talk about how Jesus died for us, which they had learned at school. I have been fortunate to have retained that simple child-like faith throughout my life and have never doubted that God loves me and that I am saved. Unfortunately, however, I sometimes took God's grace for granted as a young person.

Growing up, I was sent to the only Protestant Christian school in our small country town – the Seventh-day Adventist primary school. Here I learned a different side of Christianity which was very Bible-focused. I was later baptised a Seventh-day Adventist and started studying theology but, drawn by a practical theology, I left my academic studies to go volunteer in war-ravaged Cambodia in the late 1990s. There I remained for the next decade. Though there was a lot I liked about the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I sometimes wondered if I would fit better in the Salvation Army.

Returning to Australia to study medicine, I found that church seemed different. The pews were half-empty, especially of young people and church leaders were trying new ways to attract the youth, including new music and worship styles. Many of the people I grew up with had grown sceptical of the Bible. After being immersed in the poverty and strife of Cambodia for ten years, church in Australia seemed indifferent to many of the problems of the world, unless it touched close to home. My experience in Cambodia challenged my understanding

of God and life. I wasn't sure if I even recognised who God was myself. When I read the Bible, which wasn't often enough, God's character didn't always seem to resonate with the songs we sing, and the songs often denied the reality of life. I was so busy in Cambodia 'working for God' and trying to live the practical gospel that I hadn't taken much time to study God's Word and get to know Him better. As a result, I didn't truly know Him and He was not able to mould me into His likeness. I suspected I wasn't the only church member with this problem but I wasn't convinced that changing the style of music was the answer. But what was the solution? When it came to music style, I wasn't sure what was appropriate for church – I was sitting on the fence – and accepted any style, really.

William Booth, co-founder of the Salvation Army, had some controversial opinions about music. When I read his biographies, I found myself relating to William Booth, including his practical theology. Also, I realised I had made many of the same mistakes that he made. Comparing him with Ellen White, co-founder and prophet of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I found that she also had a lot to say about music. But I hadn't read many of Ellen White's writings up to that point, so who should I believe? That eventually led me on a deep Biblical, scientific and historical investigation. I wanted to know what type of music is appropriate for church, and, more broadly, how we can get closer to God and better harmonise with Him and His character. I was prepared to change my beliefs and even denomination if I had to.

After failing my first interview for medicine at Monash University in Melbourne, I decided to travel and work. Eventually, I found myself in Cambodia where I did volunteer work for the next 10 years. Before heading to Cambodia, I bought a Maton guitar and taught myself to play so I could use music for outreach. I eventually started a small not-for-profit organisation with a mini food factory to provide work experience and income for students. Each morning at work, we sang praise songs and read from the Bible. Eventually, some of my staff gave their hearts to Jesus.

I have seen first-hand the devastating effect that corruption and genocide have had on family and friends in Cambodia but also the untold suffering caused by our poor lifestyle choices in Australia. The Bible talks much about the poor and suffering because God is not only interested in saving people's lives but also preventing and relieving suffering. The Salvation Army rocked the world in the late 1800s with its ambitious goal to help the poor and convert the world to God – music was a big part of their ministry. Did their method work? What can we learn from them? That's what I wanted to know. When Jesus walked on this earth, He not only brought salvation, but He relieved suffering. We are to copy His method. This book calls us back to harmony with God so that we can more effectively minister to the world.

As I did my research for this book, my findings surprised me and changed me, but not in the way I expected. It's a big book because I didn't want to gloss over this important topic. Before leaving Cambodia, I taught some young people in the

factory how to play the guitar, and I left my Maton with them so they could continue to sing praises. After writing this book, I feel inspired to buy another guitar and start singing and praising more than I have been. But I also feel inspired more than ever to be an instrument for God's service. I hope it has this effect on others also. As you read, my conclusions will become apparent as to where I believe the harmony lies. You may draw different conclusions, but the goal is that we each will learn to better harmonise with God and with each other for the glory of God.

Introduction

William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, was in favour of any style of music, as long as the lyrics were spiritual. He believed there was no such thing as sacred music, only sacred lyrics. This was radical for his time, but it was not the only radical practice of the Salvation Army. For example, General Booth believed we should avoid discussing distinctive doctrines. His wife, Catherine, who was a co-founder of the Salvation Army, believed there should be no distinction between the roles of women and men in the church. These practices were unorthodox and controversial at the time. This is significant for our time because the Booths were part of the Holiness movement from which Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement emerged, and which have greatly influenced our practices today, including worship music and style.

This book will explore the significance of the shift in distinctions in our beliefs and practices, including sacred music, doctrinal distinctions, male-female roles, and others. At the foundation of the world, God created many distinctions, including distinctions between good and evil, God and people, regular days and the Sabbath day, male and female, and animals and humans. This book explores how a shift in our understanding of these distinctions has gradually changed our practices and it discusses the part that music has played in that process. Scholar Peter Jones believes the removal of distinctions has partly come about due to the influence of mystical and Eastern philosophies which were introduced to the West by the New Age movement and have entered the church. Importantly, he believes that Progressive Spirituality has emerged as a new term for the New Age.

But are all changes in beliefs and practices bad? Is there really such a thing as sacred music apart from the lyrics? Though we were created as male and female, does this mean the genders must also have different roles in the church? We will spend much time exploring various views on these important questions, comparing them with Scripture.

In the 1800s, many influential Christians, including professed prophets, opposed orthodox practice, which led to much change, profoundly influencing our practices today. For example, Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Church of Christian Science, adapted New Thought philosophy, which is now widely practised throughout Christianity today. In his dissertation on New Age influence in the church, Professor Chris Berg said that Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations

are particularly vulnerable to New Age influence and that Holiness theology played a major role in the theological foundation of Pentecostalism from which the Charismatic movement also emerged. The Booths, who were part of the Holiness movement, were very influential in their time, significantly contributing to the changing religious and social culture and the emergence of Pentecostalism. Ellen White, believed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be a prophet, openly opposed the methods of the Salvation Army and her views will also be extensively examined in this book.

Interwoven in this discussion will be an ongoing exploration of William Booth's claim concerning music, and the views of his opponents and other influential Christians throughout the ages. There will be much discussion about the science of music as well as the views of music experts. Science, musicians and music professionals have repeatedly demonstrated just how powerfully music, apart from the lyrics, can influence us, even changing our characters and the structure of our brains.

The pattern of use of music in the Bible, as discussed in the book, provides much guidance for the selection of appropriate music choices for church and personal use to ensure that our practices harmonise with God. Almost certainly, the majority of readers will not agree with every conclusion in this book. The purpose is not to try to make everyone agree with every point, but to encourage every believer to think upon these important topics, to ensure that we are growing in our knowledge and understanding of God, becoming increasingly more harmonious with His character and desires.

How to Use This Book

Recommended: Start at Chapter 1 and read all the way through to Chapter 35.

Alternatively, it can be used as a reference book. Apart from the contents list, here are the main topics:

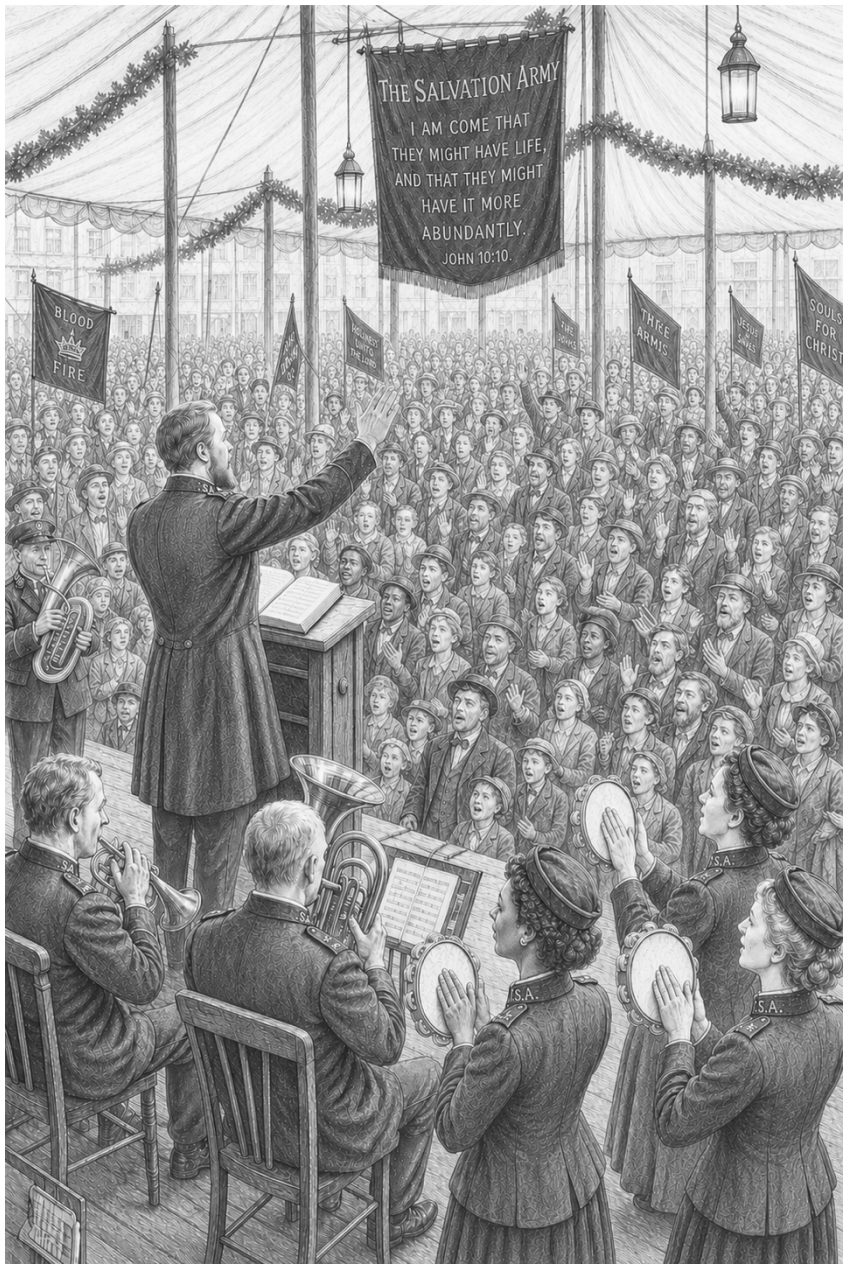
Topic	Chapters
Aggression in music & in Christianity	**18**, **19**
Antichrist	12, 19, 32
Bias: its influence on our beliefs	29
CCM (Contemporary Christian Music)	10, **27**, 28
Church organisation	8
Commercialisation of worship music	27
Congregational worship	21
Dance	**24**
Doctrinal deficiency in music	25, 26, **27**, **28**, 29
Drums	**18**
Ellen White: assessing her prophetic claim	**4**, 6, 11
Emotion & emotionalism in worship	1, 3, 4, 6, 8, **9**, 13
Gender roles & identity	**7**, **16**, 33-34
Healing ministry	**15**, 23
Hell: eternal torment vs annihilationism	**22**
Immorality/addictions	**33**
Indiana camp meeting, 1900	4, 13
Instruments in worship	**13**, **14**, **17**, **18**
Israelite music & dance	2, 11, **13**, **14**, 17, **20**, **24**, **25**
Law of God and His character rejected	**31**, **32**
Loud music: symbolism in the Bible	**14**, 15, 22, 23
Loud worship	**20**, 21

Low frequency/bass sounds: harms	**18**
Lyrics	**25**, **26**, **27**, **28**
Music's effect on us	**6**, 9, **10**, **18**, **21**
Ordination of women/women preachers	7, **16**
Pentecostal & Charismatic influence	4, 9, **27**, 34
Pentecostal & Charismatic roots	1, 3, 4, 26, 34
Perfection/holy living	3, **5**
Persecution of Christians	19, 29
Progressive Christianity	34
Religious liberty	19, 23, 29
Sabbath	**12**, 28, 29, 32
Secular & rock/pop music	**10**, **30**
Separation of Church and state	19
Spiritualism/New Age	**34**
True worship	**2**, **11**, 12, **35**
Vaccinations & modern medicine	15, **23**
Worldliness in the church	1, 3, 10, 17, **33**, 34

Note: Bold means that topic is the main subject of the chapter.

PART 1

THE ROOTS OF MODERN CHRISTIAN MUSIC


THE SALVATION ARMY
I AM COME THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE, AND THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY.
JOHN 10:10.
BLOOD AND FIRE
SOULS FOR CHRIST
S.A.

Chapter 1
The Salvation Army Method

The Salvation Army may seem like an unusual place to begin, however, in its early years it was a leading mover and shaker, bringing about much change, not just in music, but in other significant areas of church practice. To better understand our current practices in church, especially the use of music, it is helpful to consider how we got to where we are today. In the 1800s, with the rise of gospel music, evangelists in various denominations were making effective use of music in their ministry. Dwight L. Moody and his song leader, Ira D. Sankey, combined preaching and music to attract crowds numbering 10,000. Reports estimated a total of 900,000 visitors in a single evangelistic campaign alone in Philadelphia.[1]

During the Victorian era, there was a clear distinction between the secular and sacred. That all began to change with William and Catherine Booth, founders of the Salvation Army. According to Dr Pamela J. Walker, professor of history at Carleton University in Canada, the significant contribution of the Salvation Army to the changing religious and social culture of Victorian Britain is seldom appreciated.[2 (pp xiii-1)] It began as the East London Christian Mission in 1865 and adopted the name, Salvation Army, in 1878. William and Catherine were partners in the early evangelistic work of the church. They were serious about their Christianity, which influenced every aspect of their lives. Mrs Booth contributed significantly, both intellectually and practically, to the organisation. One of her most significant contributions was the unusual importance given to women in the organisation due to her influence. Pamela Walker said of Mrs Booth that "*She exemplified a new model of Christian womanhood, articulating a new approach to female ministry and creating an influential career as an evangelist*."[2 (p7)] She built on her Wesleyan experience, which encouraged women to sing and pray, share their testimony and lead Bible classes.[2 (p8)]

William Booth, later known as General Booth, was also a prominent preacher, and like other revivalists of his time, made much use of music in his ministry. The Salvation Army we have today, which is largely charity based and with a somewhat conventional worship style by today's standards, is not what it was in the early years. According to Pamela Walker:

> "*The tambourines, music-hall tunes, uniformed preachers and ecstatic services of the Salvation Army caused a sensation among believers and nonbelievers alike*."[2 (p7)]

The words of the music hall songs were sinful, but the popular tunes were easy to sing to, so General Booth played the same tunes and replaced the secular lyrics with sacred words.[2] He was in favour of any style of music, as long as it sounded good. It was simply a means to an end. **He felt that music, ranging from revivalist hymns to tavern-room ballads, in and of itself had no moral force**. The General believed that the spiritual power of the associated text, regardless of the tunes chosen, made all the difference. He is quoted to have said: "*You must sing good tunes. Let it be a good tune to begin with. I don't care much whether you call it secular or sacred*."[3] General Booth is also known to have said, "*Why should the devil have all the best tunes*?"[4]

Likewise, Christian rock music, later known as contemporary Christian music (CCM), which came into existence during the Jesus Movement of the late '60s and early '70s, has been regarded by church leaders as an effective means of capturing people's attention, especially young people. In fact, Mark Powell, theology professor at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, in his book Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Christian Music, even goes as far as to say:

> "*…rock and roll, and by that I mean the whole enterprise, not just Christian rock, has done a lot more for the good of humanity in the last thirty-plus years than all the theologians on the planet*."[5 (p7)]

Opposition to the Salvation Army Method

Not surprisingly, many prominent Christians prior to the 19th century were opposed to this attitude to music. What would Martin Luther think of General Booth's method and, further still, a professor of Trinity Lutheran Seminary praising the influence of rock music? Luther is another mighty Christian figurehead notably attributed with saying, "*Why should the devil have all the good tunes*?" However, according to Worship Leader Magazine and numerous scholarly sources, there is little evidence that Luther actually posed this question - it is a misconception of Luther.[6] In fact, speaking of young people, Luther said in his own words that he endeavoured "*to wean them away from love ballads and carnal songs and to teach them something of value in their place."*[7 (p316)] Jonathan Knight of Cedarville University, in his scholarly paper, Martin Luther's Influence on Congregational Singing, states:

> "*Luther is often either accused of (or venerated for) borrowing extensively from secular music (bar songs) for his hymns. In reality, while Luther employed secular song forms in his hymn texts and musical idioms in his melodies, he did not simply re-write secular songs as hymns*."

Knight concludes from his research that:

> "*While Luther's contemporaries, such as Hans Sachs, drew directly from secular music for melodic as well as textual material, Luther did not make this*

his practice, but rather made careful and creative use of many musical sources, which were mainly religious in origin."[8 (p40)]

Luther recognised power in music to influence the heart toward either good or evil:

"*For whether you wish to comfort the sad, to terrify the happy, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate, or to appease those full of hate - and who could number all these masters of the human heart, namely, the emotions, inclinations, and affections that impel men to evil or good? - what more effective means than music could you find*?"[7 (p323)]

Unlike General Booth, therefore, Luther recognised moral force in music. Many Christians since Luther's time have also been concerned about the influence of secular music.

Emerging at the time of the Salvation Army was another radical and controversial movement - the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It arose out of the Advent movement and was officially established in Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1863. Prominent founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church include Joseph Bates, James and Ellen White and John Andrews. This denomination provides a fascinating contrast for comparison with the Salvation Army. Like the Army, it departed from mainstream Christianity in some fundamental areas of practice, but the contention was centred mainly on doctrine rather than style of worship and evangelism. Thus, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was also viewed with suspicion and scepticism for its controversial practices but for very different reasons to the Salvation Army. It grew out of the Millerite movement, promoting the soon coming of Jesus, and abandoned several widely held Christian traditions, including Sunday keeping, and sought a fresh understanding of Scripture through earnest Bible study.

Like General Booth, James and Ellen White were also convinced of the power of music in their gospel ministry and were prepared to use it.[9 (pp31-32)] However, along with mainline denominations, the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were critical of the Salvation Army methods. In fact, Mrs White was often strongly opposed to their practices and was quite outspoken on this topic.

Despite this, Mrs Booth and Mrs White shared similar backgrounds. They were born within two years of each other and were raised in the Methodist tradition. Both had extended periods of illness or injury in childhood. They both had limited formal education and both came from relatively humble working-class backgrounds. They also both had strong religious convictions from an early age.[2,10,11] In adulthood, these two women continued to share much in common. Like Mrs Booth's influence in the Salvation Army, Mrs White had much influence on the foundation and direction of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Both were avid writers and preachers. They both promoted temperance.[10,11]

Also, like Mrs Booth, Mrs White was an advocate for women in gospel ministry and supported fair financial remuneration for their labour in the gospel work. However, the emphasis and prominence of their positions on the roles of women

in church and society were quite different. While Mrs White encouraged women's participation in personal ministry, Bible study and teaching, Mrs Booth was much more aggressive in her advocacy of women's rights. She strongly encouraged women to preach and pushed for women to have equal roles to men in all areas of ministry and work. In her writings and other public discourse, Mrs Booth challenged church leaders of mainline denominations who held to traditional roles of men and women. She was remarkably successful at bringing about equal opportunities for women in the Salvation Army. Mrs White, on the other hand, though supportive of female participation in gospel work, also encouraged many of the traditional roles of women, including homemaking, and distanced herself from women's rights movements. Her advocacy of women in ministry, though important, did not dominate her life and ministry as it did with Mrs Booth.

Another area of contention in the Seventh-day Adventist Church which persists today is their claim to the prophetic gift. Mrs White professed to have had divinely inspired visions – and many of them – which resulted in a vast number of books which Seventh-day Adventists refer to as the Spirit of Prophecy. Some of these writings concerned music and style of worship. For example, in 1900, she wrote:

> "*Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to use musical instruments to do the work which last January* ***was represented to me*** *would be brought into our camp meetings*."[12 (p36)]

She was addressing concerns over an influential Pentecostal-style movement which swept into the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in 1900. Mrs White's opposition to the Salvation Army style of worship used at this camp meeting helped to bring an end to Pentecostal influences in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, most Christians outside of Adventism, and even some from within, doubt the credibility of her visions. What type of music was she referring to and are her claims in harmony with the Bible? Was she right or was she misguided or even deceptive about the source of her visions or inspiration in general? A quick Google search will reveal just how much of a contentious figure she continues to be, even to this day, with many Seventh-day Adventists defending her writings, while many Christians, especially former members, oppose her.

Despite this, the opposition to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its prophet has probably never been quite as fierce as the hostility to the Salvation Army and its eccentric leader, General Booth, in its early days. However, there was general acknowledgement of the need to reach the poorer classes as the Salvation Army was doing. Until the arrival of the Jesus Movement in the 1960s, there remained a clear divide between the sacred and the secular[13] but the Salvation Army was blurring this divide, which attracted criticism from much of the rest of Christianity. For Christians today, it is hard to understand what all the fuss was about. The use of secular entertainment methods to retain the youth and attract new converts is common practice in the wider Christian community today. But in the

19th century, it was not so. Bringing secular music and theatrics into the church was widely considered sacrilegious.

Opposition surrounding the Salvation Army went both ways. The Booths were often highly critical of mainline Protestant denominations and their methods. Even Adventists (who awaited the second coming), General Booth opposed with the following statement:

> "*The Pharisees of that day wanted a Christ Oh, yes! But he must be a reigning Christ. And now there are thousands talking about His second coming who will neither see nor receive Him in the person of His humble and persecuted followers. Christ manifested in flesh, vulgar flesh, they cannot receive. No, they are looking for Him in the clouds. What a sensation there would be if He were to come again in a carpenter's coat. How many would recognise Him then, I wonder? I am afraid it would be the old story, 'Crucify Him!' 'Away with Him!' 'Whoever denieth that Jesus is come (not did come) in the flesh is anti-Christ*.'"[14 (ch16)]

Despite the backlash, the Salvation Army method proved to be a success in the first few decades, especially in spreading its message to working-class women and men who would rarely be found in traditional churches or chapels. Music, in particular, became Booth's best help in the growth of his movement.[3] Regardless, in the early years, opposition to the Salvation Army method was relentless, both in Christian and secular publications. Even the communities they were trying to reach and help often ridiculed the Army's unconventional ecstatic worship. John Read describes the opposition as follows:

> "*The Army aroused opposition from clergymen, magistrates, politicians, and publicans. A 'Skeleton Army' was raised with serious and violent intent. Salvationists were jailed for proclaiming their faith in public. There were riots and questions in parliament. The Army featured in daily newspapers and weekly journals, and was the butt of satirical humor*."[15 (p23)]

The frontline members of the Army are to be commended for their tenacity in spreading the gospel amongst such fierce ridicule.

The opposition from other church denominations was not so much against the work the Salvation Army was doing for the poor but against their worship and evangelistic methods. There was widespread acknowledgement that social reform was required at the time to help improve the situation for the poorer classes. Mrs White, for example, encouraged church members to minister to the poor:

> "*The world is in need of workers who will labor as Christ did for the suffering and the sinful. There is indeed a multitude to be reached. The world is full of sickness, suffering, distress, and sin. It is full of those who need to be ministered unto - the weak, the helpless, the ignorant, the degraded*."[16 (p254)]

Before the existence of the Salvation Army, other Christian denominations were already doing a work amongst the poorer classes but with limited success. The Salvation Army played a significant role in reaching the labouring classes and helping to improve their situation. Salvationists petitioned the government for legislation of prostitution laws.[17] They addressed domestic violence and marital relations[2] and they encouraged men to quit drinking and put aside the money to support their families.

The opposition to the Salvation Army did not lie with their welfare work. Rather, the opposition from many at the time was against the Salvation Army methods, particularly the ecstatic worship. Charitable work, while it is a requirement of God, does not make an individual or an organisation methodologically or theologically correct. Even secular organisations often do noble work to help the poor. Many believed the Salvation Army method was wrong, despite the good they were doing for the poor. Below are examples of the grievances that individuals from various church denominations and secular organisations were expressing over the Salvation Army method:

> Canon Farrar characterised some of the language of the Salvation Army as "*grotesque and irreverent phraseology, calculated quite needlessly to disgust and to repel… The banners and placards, the effusive familiarity and colloquial language of the Salvationists were not to be excused by the pretext that they are necessary… It is not a question of more noise at all… We are speaking of … words and parodies and songs which are beyond question irreverent and profane*."[18]

> Frances Power Cobbe, a prominent author, activist and women's suffrage campaigner at the time, believed that "*the part played by the Salvation Army in bringing the holiest things into the general carnival of equality and jocosity, is by no means trifling or innocuous*."[19 (p188)]

> Thomas Huxley, English biologist, evolutionist and agnostic, regularly wrote against General Booth in newspapers and letters. In one particular correspondence, he wrote, "*William Booth is a brazen-faced charlatan, a Pious Rogue, a tub-thumper and a masquerading hypocrite. He is sensual, dishonest, sanctimonious and a hypocritical scoundrel*."[20 (40:42)]

> A correspondent for The Evening News, published in Sydney in 1884, describes a Salvation Army procession in a suburb of Adelaide, Australia, as "*A monster demonstration… characterised by disgraceful blasphemy and buffoonery. The procession was headed by a brass band, and about 30 coryphées dancing and playing tambourines*." The newspaper describes how 'Captain' Gore, dressed in a red tunic, rode ahead of the procession mounted on a donkey in imitation of Christ's entry into Jerusalem. The donkey would not cooperate, which attracted the ridicule and amusement of a

gathering crowd numbering over 1000 people. He described the procession as being "*of a disgusting character*" at times, proceeding "*amid the chants and hallelujahs of the soldiers*" and "*cries of 'Amen' and 'Praise the Lord*.'"[21]

A newspaper report in the Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate stated, "*The climax was reached about 7 p.m., whilst the Salvation 'Armyists' were making their customary march down Hunter-street… Their musicians, as usual, poured forth incessant brain-distracting, bedlam-filling, blasts of discord…*"[22]

M. A. Lewis, a frequent contributor to Macmillan's Magazine, describes a typical Salvation Army service: *"[The service] commences with a hymn sung standing, at a pace that would frighten a good old Wesleyan or Baptist out of his senses, and there is a roaring chorus, which is repeated over and over again with the greatest enthusiasm.*"[23 (p406)]

Charles Waller in his 1882 pamphlet, The Salvation Army: How Should the Thoughtful Christian Judge This Movement, asserted that in the Army: "*sensationalism is too prominent… there is something coarse and irreverent in the appeals to the senses made by the Salvation Army. What devotion, it is asked, can be stirred by the confused noise of brass instruments, drums and tambourines?*"[24 (p213)]

Councillor Bannister of the Geelong West Borough Council raised the matter of Salvation Army disturbances in the community: "*For several Sundays lately hideous noises were created by a band of religionists. The sounds were a nuisance, and the Sabbath was desecrated*."[25]

Benjamin Newton commented: "*Surely no one will affirm that there is anything 'venerable' or of 'good report' in the screams, dancing and gesticulations that characterize the meetings of this body… To please and excite the flesh by stimulating its propensities and gratifying the cravings of the eye and ear, may and does, prepare the way for Satan.*"[26 (p213)]

In 1894, in a Seventh-day Adventist publication, The Signs of the Times, Mrs White wrote: "*Among the Salvation Army workers such methods as these have been employed; but it is more necessary that they should study and preach the word than act in a sensational way in order to draw the attention of the people.*"[27]

How do we respond to these criticisms? Were they justified? Was General Booth and his Army wrong in their method of worship? Or were their detractors wrong in their opposition? This book will compare the views and practices of Mrs White and other Seventh-day Adventist founders with those of the Booths and

other prominent Christians. The official statement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is that "*the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested*."[28] Yet, the Salvation Army also holds to the Bible as its creed. There is much instruction in the Bible regarding worship and music, yet there is inconsistency in its interpretation. How can this be so when the Spirit of Truth was sent to guide believers into all truth (Jn 16:13)?

We cannot place our confidence in human wisdom, but we can trust in God's Word. The Scriptures testify that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is the prophetic gift (Joel 2:28) and Adventists teach that this gift is an identifying mark of God's end time people (Rev 12:17; 19:10). What a great blessing it would be to have an end time prophet to keep Christians grounded in Scripture and to guide us through the tumultuous last days! One of the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is that the gift of prophecy was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White.[28] They believe that "*her writings speak with prophetic authority and provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction to the church,*"[28] guiding readers back to Scripture.[29] She had much to say about music and worship. But who was Ellen White? Out of the two billion Christians in the world, how many have even heard of Mrs White, let alone accept her as a prophet? Even amongst Adventists, a growing number question the legitimacy of her claims. Why should we listen to her or any of the other opposers of the Salvation Army method over General Booth? But then again, who was General Booth and why should we accept his advice?

As with Mrs Booth, General Booth was also born in 1829, two years after Mrs White in 1827. General Booth and Mrs White were both converted and began their ministries early in life and were very passionate in their service for God. They both came out of Methodism and were important co-founders of church denominations that still exist today, though the Seventh-day Adventist Church has grown to be much larger. Their church organisations were both very involved in public evangelism and promoting a temperate lifestyle in the 1800s. They both encouraged and practised a vegetarian diet, although General Booth was less consistent in this regard. They both died within three years of each other - General Booth in 1912 and Mrs White in 1915. However, they differed in many of their methods, including their use of music, and were both controversial figures, which makes for an intriguing discussion.

Defiance in the Face of Opposition

Salvation Army officers are to be commended for their tenacity in the face of opposition. The ridicule at times was fierce. The Salvation Army's enforcement of a stricter way of life for its members, including abstinence from the vices of drinking, gambling and salacious entertainment, was seen as a direct attack on social convention and threatened the profits of local businesses. Hoodlums formed semi-organised gangs, under the umbrella term Skeleton Army,[30] to attack the Sal-

vation Army. Army officers were pelted with food and old shoes. Gangs attacked outdoor events and processions. Salvationists became objects of ridicule in music halls, in popular theatre and in comic magazines.[2] Gangsters were often imprisoned for their actions but so were Salvation Army members for their part in attracting opposition that led to public upheaval.[30] David Earnshaw tells us that:

> "*The Salvation Army in 1882… reported 699 officers were assaulted, 251 of those were women and 23 were children. And in that year 85 salvationists were imprisoned for being a public nuisance, 15 were women. 60 of their buildings were totally trashed and were unusable and they had their first martyr, a young girl called Susanna Beatty, was kicked to death in London*."[31 (39:12)]

How many Christians today take their religion so seriously that they would be willing to share the gospel in the face of such ridicule and opposition?

If worship and revivalistic methods was a point of contention for the Salvation Army, the Advent message was cause of much ridicule for the early Advent movement. Adventists believed in the prophetic interpretation of the Bible as taught by Baptist preacher, William Miller, who believed that Jesus would return in 1844. James White describes an experience as a young itinerant preacher of an angry mob surrounding a schoolhouse where he was to preach. They threatened his life if he were to preach, but as he pressed forward through the angry crowd, he stated that his trust was in God. A universalist who disagreed with James' theology had rallied the crowd. Christian universalism had gained traction in the United States as a theological movement. It is the belief that God will ultimately save everyone, no matter which religion they follow. Adventists were opposed to universalist teachings.

As James White stood before the congregation in prayer, a snowball whistled by his head and as he began to preach, he could barely be heard over the shouting of the mob. Many snowballs began to be hurled at him through the open windows. He raised his voice above the noise of the mob, saying:

> "*Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, or you will drink of the wrath of God. Repent, and call on God for mercy and pardon. Turn to Christ and get ready for his coming, or in a little from this, on rocks and mountains you will call in vain. You scoff now, but you will pray then*."

This seemed to quiet the crowd. Just the previous night, a spike was thrown at James and hit him on the forehead, falling on his Bible. He had put it in his pocket. Now, as he faced this angry mob once again, he pulled the spike out of his pocket and, holding it in the air, he continued to address the congregation:

> "*Some poor sinner cast this spike at me last evening. God pity him. The worst wish I have for him is, that he was this moment as happy as I am. Why should I resent his insult when my Master had them driven through his hands*?"

He spoke of the love of God, the sacrifice of Christ and his undying pity for vile sinners. The shouting of the mob turned to silence and the room was filled with weeping.[32 (p68-70)]

Though this kind of opposition was not nearly as frequent as with the Salvation Army, the ridicule against Adventists was heightened when Jesus did not return in October 22, 1844 as predicted by William Miller – an event referred to as the Great Disappointment. Despite the ridicule, many Adventists, sure of the prophetic predictions of Scripture, turned to the Bible to see where they had got it wrong.

After further study and prayer, they concluded that the dating of the prophecy was correct but that they had got the event wrong. Rather than Jesus returning and the world ending, Seventh-day Adventists concluded that the 'cleansing of the temple' on October 22, 1844 was a fulfilment of the day of atonement and Jesus entered the sanctuary to begin a work of investigative judgement. They compared this experience with that of the disciples who accepted Jesus as Messiah at His first advent but, believing that He was to be crowned King, got the event wrong, leading to a great disappointment upon the crucifixion of Jesus.

These Adventists also came to believe in the perpetuity of the seventh-day Sabbath. It was out of this Advent group that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was formed. While Seventh-day Adventists do not believe that a date can be set for the coming of Christ, the doctrines of the sanctuary and the Sabbath have remained and have been controversial and widely rejected and even denounced by most other Christians.

Those belonging to the early Advent movement may not have always got their interpretation of Scripture correct, but one thing is certain: they were absolutely determined to throw off any tradition if they felt Scripture contradicted it. They studied and prayed, and prayed and studied, until they came to a unanimous decision. Even if the conclusion was an unpopular one, they stuck to it. Just as Salvationists were willing to have tomatoes hurled at them because of their style of worship, Adventists were willing to be ridiculed for keeping the seventh-day Sabbath because they believed it was scriptural. For Seventh-day Adventists, more important than the style of worship was the day that we worship on. Both denominations were striving to harmonise with God in their music and practices and, despite their unconventional practices, both have something to teach us about our own practices today. The goal of this book is to decide for ourselves where the harmony lies. Was General Booth correct in his belief that music in and of itself had no moral force? And what impact has this understanding of music and worship had on Christianity today?

Chapter 2
The Foundation of Worship

David and the Israelites sang and danced enthusiastically as they carried the ark from Kirjath Jearim to its new home in the new City of David. We should not despise people for the way they worship as David's wife did when David danced before the Lord as the ark was brought into Jerusalem. Instead of praising God with all of Israel, Michal looked on from her window with loathing (1 Chr 15:29). Was there something wrong with David's worship? Apparently, his wife did not approve. But only God knows the heart and motive of every individual (Jer 17:10).

Having said that, it is appropriate to lament if we see God's will being ignored (Ez 9:4). There is much that we do not know about David's dance and music style. What did it look and sound like? We do not know. It has been lost to antiquity.[33,34] This limits how much we can take away from the story to apply to our worship in our time. More importantly, this story is not so much a lesson about worship style as it is a lesson about obedience to God's will. God taught Abraham and David many lessons while ignoring some of their undesirable practices, such as polygamy. Sometimes we look to godly people, like David, as our example without considering God's will first. David hated His enemies with 'perfect hatred' (Ps 139:22), yet Jesus counselled us to love our enemies (Matt 5:44). Everything we read in the Bible must be viewed in light of God's will for us – which is determined by diligently studying everything He has taught us and not just bits and pieces.

In his first attempt to move the ark, David got it terribly wrong and, tragically, a joyful celebration ended in the death of Uzzah (1 Chr 13:9-10) and the postponement of the mission to move the ark. As they were carrying the ark, one of the oxen stumbled and Uzzah, one of the men driving the cart, impulsively put his arm out to steady the ark. For this seemingly innocent act, God instantly struck him dead. Immediately before this, the Israelites had been singing, dancing and praising God with all their might. Is sincerity not enough? What went wrong? David was in disbelief that God would do such a thing and was angry with Him (1 Chr 13:11). Upon reflection, however, he realised their mistake:

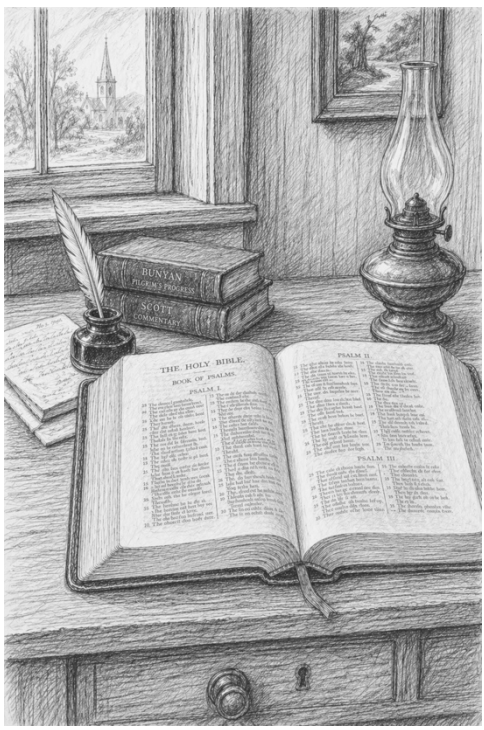
> *"…the Lord our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order.*" (1 Chr 15:13)

Though David was sincere in his desire to honour God, he was careless in the way he went about it. **David and the religious leaders failed to diligently search the Scriptures for divine leading.** We must follow divine commands rather than

human reasoning. Ignorance is no excuse if there has been no thorough inquiry of God. God is not looking for expediency but loving devotion and faithfulness. He desires us to be in harmony with Him and His law.

On his second attempt, David was careful to move the ark according to the law of Moses. He also made sure the music was conducted with care and orderliness, unlike the first time (1 Chr 15:1-24). The second time round, he got it as right as he knew how according to the light God had revealed to him and only then did God accept his worship.

Praise and worship has to be put into its proper perspective. Primarily, we praise and worship God by our cheerful submission to His will. "*Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord* (Gen 4:3)." But God "*did not respect Cain and his offering* (v5)" because it was not according to God's instruction. When God sent Saul to attack Amalek, He commanded him to utterly destroy all that they had, without sparing them, including all of their livestock (1 Sam 15:3). "*But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them* (v9)." When Samuel the prophet arrived, Saul said to him, "*I have performed the commandment of the Lord*." But Samuel said "*What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear… Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord* (v14&19)?" Saul argued:



> "*But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal*." (v20-21)

In reply, Samuel said:

> "*Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king*." (v22-23)

Saul reasoned in his own mind what made practical sense and, accordingly, decided to make some alterations to the prophet's instructions. However, God desires an attitude of complete surrender to Him and complete harmony with His will. We are to take heed to divine commands. In Eden, God gave the command not to eat of the tree in the midst of the Garden, but the serpent questioned Eve's understanding of this command. God understands our human weaknesses and makes provision for our failures, but when we neglect to make obedience a priority, or if our motive is not genuine, He is displeased.

Love should be our motive, "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life* (Jn 3:16)." Before we even needed saving, "*God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them* (Gen 1:27-28)." We obey God because He created us and He saved us. That is a double blessing! Therefore, we worship God out of joy. Jesus said that we have joy when we abide in His love and keep His commandments (Jn 15:9-11). We can sing songs of lament for our sins, as David did (Ps 51) and we can sing songs of joy when we are in harmony with our creator and saviour, but fervent singing and dancing does not prove our faithfulness to God, as David discovered. Our music is meaningless to God if we are out of harmony with Him:

> "***Take away from Me the noise of your songs**, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments. But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream*." (Amos 5:23-24)

Even our music must be in tune with God. But how do we know what music pleases Him? For the first two and a half thousand years of Bible history, God is silent on music. The foundation of many Biblical doctrines was laid down in Genesis, some of which appear even before the fall, such as: creation, the Trinity, marriage between man and woman, the nature of humanity and the Sabbath. However, there is no mention of the use of music in the Garden of Eden or by the patriarchs, though it is almost inconceivable to believe that music would not have been used by God's people during that time period.

It is not until after the Tabernacle is built in the wilderness that God introduces music to his people, namely, the trumpet (Num 10:1-10). Later on, during the time of David, we learn that God had allowed other instruments to be used along with the trumpet – also in the context of temple ritual (2 Chr 29:25). Again, throughout Jesus' ministry and the apostolic age, little reference is made to music other than several brief references to singing. There is no ecstatic worship, no trumpets, no tambourines, no shouting and no dancing in the ministry of Jesus and the apostles.

It is not until we get to the book of Revelation that music and instruments suddenly re-emerge as a significant part of the narrative. Why was music, especially the use of instruments, only emphasised in the context of the temple periods and not prior to this or during Jesus' ministry? How do we explain this apparent dichotomy between temple ritual and Jesus' ministry? If we are to understand

God's will in this matter, it must be thrashed out until we find a satisfactory answer – until we find harmony in Scripture. A half-hearted effort to know God's will is not good enough, as David discovered. God is not looking for expediency but obedience. What does God expect of us? Do we honour Him correctly? Is our praise and worship appropriate?

One of the most frequently and hotly debated questions in modern Christianity is whether the style of music is important or only the lyrics accompanying the music. Most Christians sit on one side of the fence or the other on this question. For many, the choice is based on 'gut feeling'. They may wrestle with the question for a while, eventually making up their mind one way or the other, maybe due to the persuasion of an influential figure and, more often than not, without a thorough searching of Scripture.

Despite the diversity in opinion, practically all Christians would draw the line at voodoo or black metal music being put to Christian lyrics. Voodoo music is traditionally used to bring on a trance state and invoke spirits. Black metal, well, it just sounds so evil. But is it possible for music to be evil? Can it truly invoke demons? Can music, apart from the lyrics, lead us either closer to God or further from him? Can music in itself be immoral or worldly and lead us into deception? We can try to determine the answers to these questions through science and human intuition, which will be discussed throughout the book, but far more important is to consider what God has told us about music.

So, how can we know if we are in harmony with God's will? There are many different interpretations of the Bible from theologians and Bible scholars. Who do we listen to? Is the predominant view the most accurate? How can we know what is correct? In the end, each of us must make up our own mind. However, we can have much more confidence in a teaching if it is a direct command from God or His prophets. Teachings based on plain language is also more reliable than those based on obscure or metaphorical language. Teachings repeated numerous times throughout the Bible, including the Old and New Testaments, and practised by godly Bible characters is also more reliable. Whereas, if we base our understanding of God's will on what feels right, on the opinion of others, on isolated verses or on the literal interpretation of poetic language, we are bound to misinterpret Scripture. We must study all of God's Word carefully, with much sincere prayer and with humility.

Kenneth H. Wood, editor of the Review and Herald from 1966 to 1982, reminds us that careful evaluations in music are as important as they are in doctrine. For every good thing from God, the devil has a counterfeit and right and wrong are not matters of personal taste, he argues. Regarding the issue of music, he advises:

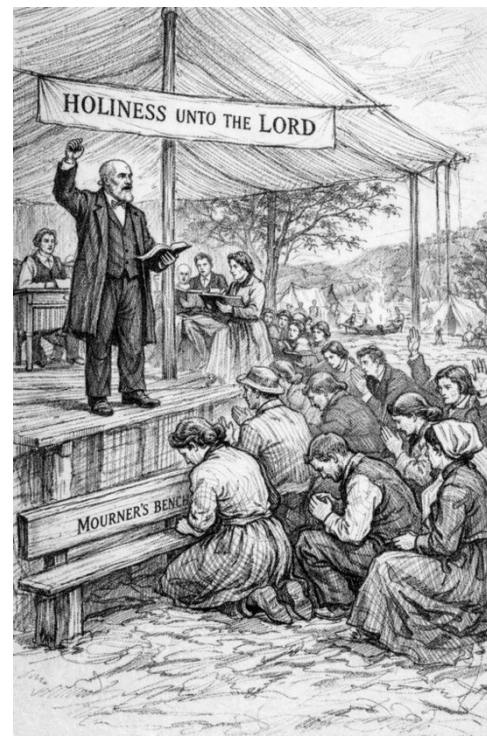
> "*Those who are truly concerned about pleasing God will not treat them lightly. They will endeavor to see things as God sees them, and hear things as God hears them*."[35]

Since early times, Christianity has been concerned about the purity of its music and it is one of the most difficult and sensitive tasks to deal with.[9] This is because music has powerful influence over our mind and body - the science of these effects is fascinating and we will cover some of the interesting facts throughout the book. But first, we need to continue with some groundwork.

Before we move on to the next chapter, it is important to point out that the purpose of this book is not to ridicule any particular individual for their particular practices or choice of music. Having said that, there will be occasions when certain individuals or organisations are said to be at fault. By doing so, it is not suggesting that they are any less important in the sight of God than was King David who had faults but was, nonetheless, loved by God. Likewise, just because faults are suggested in institutions does not mean that every individual in those institutions is at fault. The aim of this book is not to find fault in others, but to have an open and honest discussion so that we may find harmony with our Lord. None of us can claim to be in perfect harmony with God but we can help each other move closer to that aim.

Chapter 3
Holiness Theology

Does it really matter what type of music we play or listen to? As long as we have given our hearts to Jesus, isn't that all that matters? Well, according to John Wesley, giving our heart to Jesus should profoundly influence our behaviour and practices. John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement, was a great revivalist of the 18th century and an important figure in the First Great Awakening. In fact, John Wesley's Methodist movement, which began in England, so dominated Protestant Christianity in America that it was known as the Methodist Age. It became the largest religious group in the United States by the 1840s.[36] The Salvation Army and Adventism both have roots in Methodism. Many of the founding members, including the Booths and Mrs White, came out of the Methodist church.



Unlike mainline established churches with their staid formalities, Methodism was very much a religion of the heart. Methodist preachers would proclaim truths in a manner that would stir the feelings of the congregation. The grace of God moved on the heart to awaken them to their sinful and lost condition. Personal testimonies were frequently called on to add to the experience. During every service, those awakened or convicted by the preaching were called to come forward and kneel at the mourner's bench in front of the preacher's stand where they were prayed over. Conviction led to an emotional experience which often demonstrated itself as weeping and shouting. This idea of a personal relationship with God gradually influenced Protestants more broadly.

However, the Booths felt the Methodist Church had lost this emotional experience and had become dry and formal. They wanted to restore the feeling back into worship. Adventism was also a religion of the heart and adopted some of the Methodist practices. Mrs White encouraged heart-felt religion. There must be a

personal relationship with Jesus, and this should be reflected in worship. However, though formerly baptised a Methodist herself, Mrs White felt that the Salvation Army and some of the offshoot movements overemphasised emotional demonstrations. She encouraged emotion but discouraged emotionalism and, instead, put emphasis on the pursuit of truth.[37] A. Gregory Schneider, professor of Religion and Social Science at Pacific Union College, describes how this heartfelt revivalistic style of religion has remained a part of Seventh-day Adventist culture:

> "*The spread of the 'celebration' worship style, with its carefully engineered and staged 'spontaneity' of emotion is one bit of evidence that personal piety and corporate worship in Adventism are still under the sway of revivalistic tradition*."[37 (p34)]

Another area of similarity between Methodists and Seventh-day Adventists is their teachings on salvation. Both denominations believe in salvation by grace through faith, in line with Protestant tradition, and sanctification that comes about by a personal relationship with Jesus. Once a person had received the awakening and been convicted of sin, they were invited to become members of the Methodist society, which required regular attendance at meetings and adherence to strict rules, including giving up worldly practices, such as card-playing, drinking and dancing and adopting spiritual practices, such as private and family prayer, reading Scripture and attending preaching and prayer meetings. Though they were justified by faith, they were to 'go on to perfection'. It was a perfection of the heart, with love for God and others and 'perfect' motives and cleansing of impure motives, such as pride, vanity, envy, anger and lust. Perfection made them more useful for God's service, to convert the world and usher in the second coming of Jesus Christ.[37]

In the song book of the Bible, David sings about the reward of those who walk uprightly - they get to abide in God's Tabernacle where He dwells:

> "*Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle?*
> *Who may dwell in Your holy hill?*
> ***He who walks uprightly,***
> ***And works righteousness****,*
> *And speaks the truth in his heart;*
> *He who does not backbite with his tongue,*
> *Nor does evil to his neighbor,*
> *Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;*
> *In whose eyes a vile person is despised,*
> *But he honors those who fear the Lord;*
> *He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;*
> *He who does not put out his money at usury,*
> *Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.*
> *He who does these things shall never be moved*." (Ps 15)

Many 18th century evangelical revivalists were claiming that we need not be concerned with overcoming sin since Christ covered for our past and present sins. Luther believed that true faith naturally leads to good works, but he insisted that even the most righteous Christians will remain sinners - but justified by faith. For Wesley, justification by faith alone must be accompanied by sanctification by grace through faith. Phillip Cary, Professor of Philosophy at Eastern University, in a lecture on the Holiness movement, says that Wesley believed that:

> "*sanctification could go all the way to Perfection. The whole heart perfectly loving God and neighbour. That's Wesley's new contribution and it makes a big difference in people's Christian lives*." He went on to say, "*Never say that Wesley doesn't believe in grace. Oh yes, grace is what sanctifies us - with our cooperation - but it's the grace of the Holy Spirit that really cleanses your heart… Entire sanctification, this is what you should seek. It's obligatory to seek Christian perfection for Wesley, whereas, for Luther, it makes no sense at all. No one can seek Christian perfection; we don't have such a possibility*."[38 (3:51)]

Out of the Methodist teachings on holy living developed the Holiness movement in the 19th century. While John Wesley taught that sanctification was a gradual, ongoing process of transformation which could eventually lead to perfection, the Holiness movement emphasised a distinct, instantaneous experience of entire sanctification which eradicates original sin.

Phoebe Palmer is considered the mother of the Holiness movement. She was a Methodist who was looking for a 'shorter way' to holiness that did not require years of struggle with sin. She taught that anyone could receive entire sanctification by simply laying all on the altar - all of their hopes, desires and fears - and believing in God's promises. It was a simplified and modified version of Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection. There was an increased emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit to instantly perfect us. It was entire sanctification received passively and instantly.[38,39]

The Salvation Army was a branch of the Holiness movement and integrated Methodism, holiness theology and revivalism. According to historians, the movement the Booths founded was shaped by their own personal and religious concerns, including holiness theology. Their commitment to Methodism and their disenchantment with its rules and restrictions shaped the theology and practice of the Christian Mission and the Salvation Army.

In the Holiness tradition, when a person is born again, they consecrate themselves to God and seek baptism of the Holy Spirit. Many Holiness teachers associated baptism of the Holy Spirit with an instantaneous conversion experience in which the Holy Spirit cleanses the heart of original sin and empowers the believer to live a perfect life of holiness in service to God.[2,40–42] Music, powerful preaching and ardent prayer were used to create excitement and bring on the conversion experience, which was manifest in bodily expressions, such as prostration, groans

and shaking.[2,41,42] Holiness theology emphasises the experience of Pentecost and the Holiness movement had a significant influence on the emergence of Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions. Pentecostalism, which emerged in the early 1900s, built on Holiness theology by adding the gift of tongues as a manifestation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. With an estimated membership of 600 million strong, Pentecostalism is said to be the fastest growing religious movement on earth.[43]

In contrast with holiness theology, Mrs White did not teach that sanctification is an instantaneous experience but rather a work of a lifetime. She tended to speak in terms of gaining victory over sinful tendencies and habits rather than eradicating original sin.[40] The Holy Spirit gave some members of the early Church the gift of speaking in other languages so that they could spread the gospel (Acts 2:3-12). For Seventh-day Adventists, the gift of tongues was only ever for the practical purpose of sharing the gospel to people with foreign languages. The Corinthians were so earnest to manifest this gift that they were speaking these foreign languages in church, though nobody understood them (1 Cor 14:1-5). Paul cautioned that speaking should be for edifying others by revelation, knowledge, prophesying or teaching (v2-3). He said, "*in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue* (v19)."

Likewise, Paul said, "***I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding*** (v15)." This interpretation of Paul influenced Adventist understanding of singing. Speaking and singing should build each other up in knowledge and understanding, they would argue, and not simply for bringing on an ecstatic emotional experience. The Salvation Army used sensationalism to bring about instant public professions of faith without an emphasis on sustained Bible study. They used whatever means possible to achieve this end.

This is one area in which Mrs White disagreed with the Salvation Army method - they were worshipping more in spirit than they were in truth, she believed. The Holiness movement was making much of the music and excitement for the purpose of manifesting the Spirit without adequately building up believers in truth. The ritual of Holiness worship would often involve penitent believers coming forward during the service to be prayed over until they received a conversion experience. Once they received the Holy Spirit, they were then instantly equipped to begin evangelism,[42] especially sharing their testimony. For Mrs White, this emphasis on instant conversion by baptism of the Holy Spirit without the sanctifying effect of truth on the heart was cheap Christianity:

> "*There is the Salvation Army, the Holiness Band with their cheap Christianity, and yet it pleases because there is no warfare. They present all smooth sailing.*"[44 (p309)]

In other words, there is instantaneous superficial change instead of a deep struggle with sin over time brought about by the convicting power of the Word of

Truth conveyed through Bible study and preaching. That is not to say that all Salvationists promoted a so-called cheap grace as described by Mrs White. Mrs Booth herself said:

> "*I do not profess to preach an easy gospel, or to bring you salvation without suffering and cross-bearing. I don't believe that anybody has ever found such a salvation, and I fear those who think they have will find themselves to have been utterly deceived*."[45 (p161)]

Mrs White says that '*truth brings before the people heart religion*.'[44 (p309)] Christians need to be sure that zealousness for the moving of the spirit, as with the tongue speakers in the Corinthian church (1 Cor 14:12), does not cause them to elevate music above the plain preaching of the Word, as Paul cautioned. Otherwise, outsiders who come into church may think the worshippers are out of their minds! That is the impression that observers had when they witnessed revivalist meetings, such as that of the Salvation Army, and why the Army received such ridicule from the public. They were seen as fanatics.

Embracing Worldly Methods

Pamela Walker describes how, instead of opposing the amusements and leisure pursuits of the world, which Christianity had traditionally done, the Salvation Army embraced entertainment to attract the world. "*The Army borrowed the music-hall tunes, the language and gestures of theatrical performers, and the advertising style of the circus*" she states.[2 (p174)] They considered everything to be religious if it was not clearly irreligious, she said. Whatever elements of the larger culture could be used for the saving of souls should be employed, it was argued - "*no musical form, dress or style of address was categorically profane*."[2 (p211)] This approach is used by churches today and with the same level of criticism but by fewer people than in the 19th century.

Cristina Rocha, Professor of Anthropology and the Director of the Religion and Society Research Cluster at Western Sydney University, points out that "*cool churches*," like Hillsong:

> "*…blur the sacred and secular by adopting youth styles, marketing, business strategies, and new technologies - from fashion trends to pop music, social media, cool graphic design, creative industries, and services that resemble clubbing or a concert*."[46]

In other words, churches in the 21st Century, as with the Salvation Army in the 19th, are using worldly entertainment to attract the masses. This is not a modern phenomenon. After Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the state, pagan customs were brought into the church to attract the masses.

By contrast, Mrs White taught that true conviction and transformation does not require conformity with the world, as counselled by Paul: "*And do not be con-*

formed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom 12:2)." However, in Testimonies to the Church Volume 8, Mrs White cautioned against judging others harshly:

> "*The Lord has marked out our way of working. As a people we are not to imitate and fall in with Salvation Army methods. This is not the work that the Lord has given us to do.* ***Neither is it our work to condemn them and speak harsh words against them****. There are precious, self-sacrificing souls in the Salvation Army. We are to treat them kindly. There are in the Army honest souls, who are sincerely serving the Lord and who will see greater light, advancing to the acceptance of all truth. The Salvation Army workers are trying to save the neglected, downtrodden ones. Discourage them not. Let them do that class of work by their own methods and in their own way. But the Lord has plainly pointed out the work that Seventh-day Adventists are to do. Camp meetings and tent meetings are to be held. The truth for this time is to be proclaimed. A decided testimony is to be borne.*"[47 (p184)]

Since Charismatic churches, such as Hillsong, grew out of and adopted similar methods as the Holiness movement of which the Salvation Army belongs, Mrs White's quote would apply equally to Hillsong methods. Her advice to avoid judging harshly those from Pentecostal or Charismatic faiths would be sensible. Furthermore, Mrs White would equally advise fellow members to avoid adopting their methods but, rather, to proclaim the truth for this time.

The 19th century has conventionally been viewed by historians as a period of religious decline and increased secularism. However, a growing number of historians have challenged this notion, arguing that it is based on a distortion and oversimplification of the literature. For example, it was too readily assumed that non-churchgoers were irreligious.[2 (p4)] Early writings of the Salvation Army frequently make reference to the heathen masses of Britain; however, they never suggest in their writings that these working-class people lacked a fundamentally Christian perspective. The message of the Salvation Army was effective because of the population's existing religious conviction that they were sinners bound for hell unless they repented and gave up their drinking and gambling. The revivalist meetings of the Salvation Army simply brought this conviction to their attention.[2 (p87)]

Though secularism was a strong force in the wake of the French Revolution and also as a result of urbanisation and industrialisation, the 1800s was a period of great religious awakening, fervour and missionary zeal.[48] Christianity was the single most important belief that characterised the Victorian era. Religion pervaded social and political life to an extent almost unimaginable today.[49] Worldliness was shunned. Church attendance and Bible knowledge were at an all-time high and the Scriptures pervaded every aspect of life. Bible reading in the home was common practice, even amongst agnostics and atheists. The Bible was the primary text for schools, and it was not uncommon for children to have read the

entire Scriptures multiple times over before reaching adulthood. It was fashionable to attend sermons of celebrated preachers, much the same as it would be to attend a pop concert today. Sermons were even printed in full in the newspapers and extensively circulated in pamphlets and books.[48]

The mission of the church also flourished. Sunday schools were established.[48] The British and Foreign Bible Society came into existence in 1804 to translate the Scriptures into foreign languages and distribute it throughout the world.[50] Tracts were mass-produced to educate and convert youth to Christianity. Youths played an active role in evangelism through tract distribution. White, black, rich and poor were included in evangelistic efforts.[51] Many Christians became strong supporters of the abolitionist movement to end slavery.[52] Mass revival services vastly increased the number of Christian converts.[51] Health reform began and prohibition of alcohol grew in popularity during the late 19th century. Long before national prohibition came into effect, individual communities had already established themselves as 'dry' and banned alcohol.[53] Missionaries spread the gospel message far and wide.[48] Missionary societies and volunteer movements sprang up in various countries, including Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands and the United States.[50] The 19th century was the greatest century for missions in the history of the church. Importantly, the second great awakening of the 19th century gave birth to the Holiness movement, from which the Salvation Army emerged, and the Millerite movement, from which the Seventh-day Adventist Church emerged with its proclamation of the three angels' message.[54]

Perhaps this is the period referred to by the prophet Joel in the end time when the king of the north is driven out, abundant rain is received and God's Spirit is poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:18-32). This period also fits the description of the faithful Philadelphia church of Revelation:

> "*I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Indeed, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan… come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*" (Rev 3:8-10)

It is on this backdrop that the Salvation Army emerges and is widely opposed in the first two or three decades of its existence. The historicist interpretation of the seven churches of Revelation chapters 2 and 3 represent seven consecutive time periods from the time of Christ until the end of the world. If we are living in the last days, that would mean we are the Laodicean Church – the lukewarm church. The Laodicean church, incidentally, follows immediately after the faithful Philadelphia church quoted above. If that is the case, what caused the church to go from being the faithful Philadelphia church to the lukewarm Laodicean church

we are today? George Railton, first commissioner of The Salvation Army, described the opposition to their organisation as follows:

> "*Such expressions as 'blasphemy,' 'blasphemous performance,' 'mockery of religion,' have been repeatedly used by the most thoughtful and influential critics with respect to [The Salvation Army]… The greater part of the community… denounced the whole of the proceedings as an 'outrageous nuisance,' 'a farce,' etc., which 'ought to be put down' or got rid of if it were possible, and which it is to be hoped 'will not last long.'*"[55]

Was there any justification for the opposition to The Salvation Army's methods? This is the question we have already asked. General Booth was bringing worldly methods into the church to attract the world to the church and it was widely seen as blasphemous. Though sincere and well-intentioned in his desire to serve and praise God, as David was, did he inadvertently set a precedent that would later open the floodgates of worldliness into the church? Or is this just alarmism - just the murmurings of concerned brethren holding back progress? Some might contend that we have been too slow to embrace General Booth's ideas. Was Mrs White just a product of her time, swept along with this alarmism? Was she too focused on law and holiness and not enough on God's grace? Did she focus too much on truth and not enough on the Spirit?

This book will attempt to find answers to all of these questions through Biblical and scientific investigation. It will compare the Whites' theology and practice with that of the Booths. Why? Well, General Booth is a prominent figure who proposed that there is no moral force in music itself - it is only the lyrics that matter - while Mrs White objected to Salvation Army methods. Couple this with Mrs White's claim of inspiration and it makes for an interesting study. The aim is not to denigrate anyone but, through the process of investigation, to take an honest look at ourselves as a worldwide Christian body so that we can reflect on our current methods and seek harmony with God in our music and practices. This is what Luther attempted to do and it is what we must continue to do until Christ returns.

Decades before Pentecostalism emerged in the early 1900s, there were Christian denominations that were using all kinds of methods to create an emotionally charged worship service to bring people to repentance. This included copying secular entertainment methods and combining Christian lyrics with secular tunes to create excitement, as the Salvation Army was doing. Mrs White, along with numerous other Christians, cautioned against such methods, advising, as Paul did, they would argue, that our focus should be on preaching and teaching. The common modern-day reaction to Victorian people's concern about merging the sacred with the secular is that they were far too rigid and puritanical. On the other hand, almost everyone agrees that, today, we are living in the time of Laodicea:

> "*I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become*

wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked – I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich…" (Rev 3:15-18)

In our era, in contrast to the 19th century, church attendance is at an all-time low in the western world. Bible literacy is at a record low. Instead of pushing back against worldliness and secularism, we have embraced it. According to the historicist understanding of Revelation, because of their faithfulness, the Philadelphian church was kept from the hour of trial (Rev 3:10), but it is our era, the lukewarm church, which will face the great tribulation.

At the turn of the 20th century, a Pentecostal-style movement called Holy Flesh emerged in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Long before this movement arose, Mrs White was warning against excessive emotionalism in worship. In 1885 she wrote:

"*…the Salvation Army have a great deal of what Paul denominates 'bodily exercise,' that 'profiteth little.' They follow impressions and claim to be taught of the Spirit… they place these impressions above the written word of God, while they trample upon the divine law because their hearts are not in harmony with its precepts.*"[56 (p129)]

Mrs White is not here referring to every single Salvation Army officer, for elsewhere she said, "*There are in the Army honest souls, who are sincerely serving the Lord*."[47 (p184)] At times, she also had harsh words to speak against individuals in the Seventh-day Adventist Church if, as she claimed, she received a vision showing that they were acting contrary to Scripture. There is no doubt that General Booth was one of those who was sincerely serving the Lord. Even in old age, George Railton explains that the General threw himself into all his undertakings for Christ with zest and enjoyment.[57]

General Booth said that from the time of his conversion onward he was committed to God's law: "*I had no disposition to deny my instincts which told me that, if there was a God, His laws ought to have my obedience and His interests my service*."[57 (p10)] He was committed to obedience to the Scriptures in general. Speaking of His conversion, he said: "*Ever since that day it has led me to measure my own actions and judge my own character by the standard of truth set up in my soul by the Bible and the Holy Ghost*."[57 (p14)] General Booth was deeply committed to obedience to God and stamping out sin. In fact, one person describes General Booth's deep hatred of sin as follows:

"*…at the mention of real sin - his brows contract, his eyes flash, and his tongue hisses out such hatred and contempt and detestation*," and he cries out in no uncertain terms who the true culprit of suffering is: "*Sin! Sin is a real thing - a damnable thing! I don't care what science calls it, or what some of the pulpits are calling it. I know what it is. Sin is devilish. It is sin and only sin which is stopping progress. It is sin and only sin which prevents the*

world from being happy. Sin! Go into the slums of the great cities - pick up little girls of six years of age sold into infamy by their parents; look at the drunken mother murdering her child, the father strapping his cripple son - sin! - that's what I call sin."[57 (p204)]

Mrs White, in tune with General Booth, said:

"*Men and women and youth need to see the law of God with its far-reaching requirements. It is not hardship, toil, or poverty that degrades humanity; it is sin, the transgression of God's law. The efforts put forth to rescue the outcast and degraded will be of no avail unless the claims of the law of God and the need of loyalty to Him are impressed on mind and heart*."[16 (p280)]

Not all in the Salvation Army thought as General Booth did. Some were focused primarily on alleviating physical suffering but were not going the next step and convicting people of the root cause of their suffering. First Commissioner of the Salvation Army George Railton, General Booth's right-hand man, saw this as one of the shortcomings of the Army:

"*There has been a great lack of direct aim at the true goal of our Social Work on the part of some Officers who have been engaged in its direction. Some of our comrades have been content with a 'soup-and-blanket' régime. That is to say, they have too often been satisfied with the alleviation of the miseries of the hour, and have stopped short of the removal of the evils that have caused the poverty, vice, and agony from which the sufferings sprang. Consequently, the work, being superficial, has in some cases only had superficial and temporary results…*

Another cause of our shortcomings has been the lamentable fact that some of our Officers have been deficient in personal religion. Our Social Work is essentially a religious business. It can neither be contemplated, commenced, nor carried on, with any great success, without a heart full of pity, and love, and endued with the power of the Holy Ghost."[57 (p197)]

By the standards of more conservative Christians, these shortcomings are reflected in the Salvation Army's evolving position on social issues such as sexual identity and abortion which are more accommodating to the sociocultural environment than conservative evangelical denominations. Formerly, the Salvation Army's official statement held that homosexuality is clearly contrary to the teachings of the Bible and that it "*presents a serious threat to the integrity, quality and solidarity of society as a whole*." However, since the 1990s, the official position of the Salvation Army has evolved and reads as follows:

"*…homosexuality is not in itself blameworthy nor is the disposition seen as rectifiable at will… No person is excluded from membership, fellowship or service in the Army solely on the basis of sexual disposition*."

Consequently, if asked what to do if someone wrestling with their sexual identity wants prayer:

> "*Salvationists are encouraged to help people explore their identity – for instance, by praying that God will affirm their authentic identity and speak into their search for who they were made to be; or by pastorally exploring what it is that has led them to conclude that they need to change. Salvationists will not pray for a specific outcome with regards to someone's sexuality*."[58]

However, the official statement of the Salvation Army on sexuality is not the position of every member and only God knows the heart of every individual and their motive. Also, this statement was provided by one territory of the Salvation Army and may not represent the position of the whole organisation. A growing number of Christians today no longer consider homosexuality a sin. We will discuss this sensitive topic further in a later chapter, comparing the views of Progressive Christians with those of more conservative Christians.

Chapter 4
Ellen White's Prophetic Claims

1900 Pentecostal Indiana Camp Meeting

It was on the backdrop of the Holiness movement and the emerging Pentecostalism that the Holy Flesh movement arose in 1899-1900 in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Pentecostalism arose in the early 20th century, largely due to the influence of the Holiness movement of the 19th century.[59] Pentecostalism adopted and intensified Holiness emphasis on physical manifestations of the Spirit – for example, they introduced speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of baptism of the Holy Spirit. Though the Holy Flesh movement is an experience unique to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is an important lesson for all denominations.

S. S. Davis, an Indiana Seventh-day Adventist worker, came in contact with Pentecostal Christians and was convinced that if the 'spirit' of the Pentecostals could be combined with the truth of the Adventist movement, then great things could be achieved. He won the support of the conference president, R. S. Donnell. Soon the whole conference had converted.[60] Many new members were added to the church under their influence[9 (p47)] and the 'holy flesh' ideas were threatening to spread into adjoining conferences. They used musical instruments to heighten the emotional appeal.[60] Accounts of the Adventist camp meeting in Muncie, Indiana of 1900 describe frenzied physical manifestations similar to that of some other denominations. This camp meeting was well attended with the Muncie Daily Herald reporting attendance of 3500 people at one of the meetings. There was space behind the pulpit for a choir of 225 voices.[9 (p46)] S. N. Haskell and A. J. Breed, attended the 1900 Indiana camp meeting as Seventh-day Adventist General Conference representatives to observe the Holy Flesh movement. They were shocked by what they found, as S. N. Haskell reported:

> "*There is a great power that goes with the movement… They are as much trained in their musical line as any Salvation Army choir that you ever heard. In fact,* ***their revival effort is simply a complete copy of the Salvation Army method****, and when they get on a high key, you cannot hear a word from the congregation in their singing, nor hear anything, unless it be shrieks of those who are half insane. After an appeal to come forward for prayers, a few of the leading ones would always come forward, to lead others to come; and then they would begin to play on the musical instruments, until you could*

not hear yourself think; and under the excitement of this strain, they get a large proportion of the congregation forward over and over again."[61]

Haskell's wife wrote to Mrs White concerning the Holy Flesh movement as follows:

*"**They have 'Garden of Spices' as the songbook and play dance tunes to sacred words**. They have never used our own hymn books, except when Elders Breed or Haskell speak, then they open and close with a hymn from our book, but all the other songs are from the other book. They shout 'Amens', and 'Praise the Lord,' 'Glory to God,' **just like a Salvation Army service**. It is distressing to one's soul. The doctrines preached correspond to the rest. The poor sheep are truly confused."*[61]

Garden of Spices was a song book produced by Pentecost Band Publishing Company in 1899.

Another eyewitness describes how they "*worked themselves up to a high pitch of excitement by the use of musical instruments… They shouted and sang their lively songs with the aid of musical instruments until they became really hysterical*."[61] In response to these eyewitness accounts, Mrs White deals immediately with the styles of worship used by the Holy Flesh movement. She drew on inspiration that she received through vision, which she claimed was from God:

*"The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, **the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation**. Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be **shouting, with drums, music, and dancing**. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit.*

The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time. Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to use musical instruments to do the work which last January was represented to me would be brought into our camp meetings. The truth for this time needs nothing of this kind in its work of converting souls. A bedlam of noise shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing. The powers of satanic agencies blend with the din and noise, to have a carnival, and this is termed the Holy Spirit's working.

When the camp meeting is ended, the good which ought to have been done and which might have been done by the presentation of sacred truth is not accomplished. Those participating in the supposed revival receive impressions which lead them adrift. They cannot tell what they formerly knew regarding Bible principles.

No encouragement should be given to this kind of worship. The same kind of influence came in after the passing of the time in 1844. The same kind of representations were made. Men became excited, and were worked by a power thought to be the power of God"[12 (pp36-37)]

Despite these comments, Mrs White was not against praising God with music. She had much to say about what is good praise. Paul Hamel, a professional musician and music instructor, recognised that, though Mrs White lacked a formal education, she wrote authoritatively and professionally on the topic of music. He felt that in her writings there were inexhaustible treasures on the subject of church music,[9] which he was able to apply to his work as music department chair at Andrews University. Like Martin Luther, who severely criticised mediocre musical performance,[8] Mrs White spoke of the importance of quality music in worship:

"*Music can be a great power for good; yet we do not make the most of this branch of worship. The singing is generally done from impulse or to meet special cases, and at other times those who sing are left to blunder along, and the music loses its proper effect upon the minds of those present. Music should have beauty, pathos, and power. Let the voices be lifted in songs of praise and devotion. Call to your aid, if practicable, instrumental music, and let the glorious harmony ascend to God, an acceptable offering*."[62 (p71)]

Elsewhere she spoke of the motive of our praise:

"*Then as you meet from Sabbath to Sabbath, sing praises to Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light. 'Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood' let the heart's adoration be given. Let the love of Christ be the burden of the speaker's utterance. Let it be expressed in simple language in every song of praise*."[16 (p367)]

She also spoke of the importance of praise:

"*There would be much more power in our camp meetings if we had a true sense of the goodness, mercy, and long-suffering of God, and if more praise flowed forth from our lips to the honor and glory of His name. We need to cultivate more fervor of soul. The Lord says: 'Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me.'* Psalm 50:23."[16 (p62)]

Though she stressed the importance of singing, she also urged balance. Speaking of a camp meeting on another occasion in 1883, Mrs White wrote in the Review and Herald:

"*In some instances, much time was devoted to singing. There was a long hymn before prayer, a long hymn after prayer, and much singing interspersed all through the meeting. Thus, golden moments were used unwisely,*

and not one-half the good was done that might have been realized had these precious seasons been properly managed."[63]

Several months after the Indiana camp meeting, Mrs White addressed the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church concerning the false doctrines of the Holy Flesh movement. She declared that by accepting Christ's sacrifice and surrendering to Him, we could have 'holy hearts' but not 'holy flesh.' It wasn't only false doctrine and its peculiar manifestations of falling to the ground and shouting and clapping for the anointing of the Holy Spirit that Mrs White had a problem with. As outlined above, she first spoke out against the type of music that the Holy Flesh movement used to create the excitement that brought on such manifestations.

Assessing Mrs White's Claims

Church leaders had to decide if they would side with Mrs White and those who opposed the Holy Flesh movement or accept the Pentecostal-style Holy Flesh doctrine and practices. By this point in time, a majority of the Adventist Church leadership believed that Mrs White fit the Biblical criteria of a genuine prophet and that there was harmony between Scripture and her visions and teachings. The physical phenomena demonstrated during her visions, they argued, correlated with dreams and visions of Biblical prophets, as recorded in Daniel 10:16-19; Numbers 24:3,4; 2 Samuel 23:2 and 2 Corinthians 12:2-4. For example, like Daniel (Dan 10:17), Mrs White stopped breathing during her visions. There is an abundance of documented eyewitness accounts of her visions. J. N. Loughborough, a notable pioneer of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, claimed to have witnessed 50 of her visions.[64] Below is a description given in 1874 by George Butler, General Conference president, of the physical phenomena accompanying Mrs White's visions:

"*All we ask is that people shall be reasonable. We are prepared to support by hundreds of living truthful witnesses all that we shall claim, so far as facts are concerned, of the manifestation itself, for this thing has not been done in*

a corner. For nearly thirty years past these visions have been given with greater or less frequency, and have been witnessed by many, oftentimes by unbelievers as well as those believing them. They generally, but not always, occur in the midst of earnest seasons of religious interest while the Spirit of God is specially present, if those can tell who are in attendance. The time Mrs White is in this condition has varied from fifteen minutes to one hundred and eighty. During this time the heart and pulse continue to beat, the eyes are always wide open, and seem to be gazing at some far-distant object, and are never fixed on any person or thing in the room. They are always directed upward. They exhibit a pleasant expression. There is no ghastly look or any resemblance of fainting. The brightest light may be suddenly brought near her eyes, or feints made as if to thrust something into the eye, and there is never the slightest wink or change of expression on that account; and it is sometimes hours and even days after she comes out of this condition before she recovers her natural sight. She says it seems to her that she comes back into a dark world, yet her eyesight is in nowise injured by her visions.

While she is in vision, her breathing entirely ceases. No breath ever escapes her nostrils or lips when in this condition. This has been proved by many witnesses, among them physicians of skill, and themselves unbelievers in the visions, on some occasions being appointed by a public congregation for the purpose. It has been proved many times by tightly holding the nostrils and mouth with the hand, and by putting a looking-glass before them so close that any escape of the moisture of the breath would be detected. In this condition she often speaks words and short sentences, yet not the slightest breath escapes. When she goes into this condition, there is no appearance of swooning or faintness, her face retains its natural color, and the blood circulates as usual. Often, she loses her strength temporarily and reclines or sits; but at other times she stands up. She moves her arms gracefully, and often her face is lighted up with radiance as though the glory of Heaven rested upon her. She is utterly unconscious of everything going on around her, while she is in vision, having no knowledge whatever of what is said and done in her presence. A person may pinch her flesh, and do things which would cause great and sudden pain in her ordinary condition, and she will not notice it by the slightest tremor.

There are none of the disgusting grimaces or contortions which usually attend spiritualist mediums, but calm, dignified, and impressive, her very appearance strikes the beholder with reverence and solemnity. There is nothing fanatical in her appearance. When she comes out of this condition she speaks and writes from time to time what she has seen while in vision; and the supernatural character of these visions is seen even more clearly in what she thus reveals than in her appearance and condition while in vision, for

many things have thus been related which it was impossible for her to know in any other way."[65]

Apart from these physical phenomena, Seventh-day Adventists became convinced that Mrs White met other essential Biblical criteria for a true prophet. For example, they said that her words and actions were in harmony with the Bible, her predictions came true, they claim, she uplifted and strengthened the church, she always upheld Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour and she demonstrated good habits and character.[66] Based on these criteria, church leadership largely accepted that Mrs White had the gift of the spirit of prophecy.

In opposition to this claim, some have argued that Ellen White's head injury in her early childhood led to temporal lobe epilepsy, which can involve visual hallucinations as well as trigger religious or mystical experiences. It is a highly speculative claim since her manifestations are not easily attributable to seizures and there are no medical records to help substantiate the claims – such as electroencephalography, brain imaging or videorecordings. Head injury only leads to epilepsy in a small number of cases. Therefore, there is no substantial evidence that Mrs White's manifestations were due to seizures. Other neurological and mental disorders have also been proposed, but there is no way of proving or disproving that Mrs White suffered from a brain disorder.[67–70] In that sense, it is a moot point. Even if she did not have a head injury in her childhood, one could still make the argument that she was suffering seizures, since epilepsy often occurs without a history of head trauma. There are innumerable reasons that could be used to explain away Mrs White's visions, but no known medical condition can explain how Mrs White could have stopped breathing for the duration of her visions.

Jesus performed miracles so that we could believe in Him (Jn 20:30-31). However, Jesus also acknowledged that people would continue to disbelieve despite His miraculous works (Jn 10:25-26). He goes on to explain that His sheep know Him by His voice (v27). Though miracles can strengthen our belief, we ultimately recognise God's voice when it harmonises with His Word. Sceptics in Jesus' time tried to explain away His miracles. For example, when Jesus healed the blind man, those who knew him disputed amongst themselves whether it was really him: "*Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, 'Is not this he who sat and begged?' Some said, 'This is he.' Others said, 'He is like him'* (Jn 9:8-9)." Even after proving the blind man's identity by calling his parents in, the Pharisees still refused to believe that Jesus was of God (Jn 9:18-34). In fact, Jesus performed many miraculous signs throughout His life, but most Jews rejected Him. The manifestation of the gift of tongues at Pentecost was attributed to drunkenness by sceptical bystanders (Acts 2:13). Many witnesses attested to Mrs White's supernatural manifestations, but these can just as readily be reasoned away. Maybe Mrs White was lying or perhaps the witnesses were lying or were simply misguided. The same could be said of the witnesses of the resurrected Christ (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). Therefore, the most important proof of someone's prophetic gift is their fruits and their harmony with God's Word – we

recognise God's voice in their words. This requires that the observer is also in tune with God's voice.

Few of those who knew Mrs White, even her opponents, denied the sincerity of her convictions. In the communities where she lived, she was known as a godly woman who loved Jesus, and those who were close to her attested to her exemplary life of service to her church and community. Therefore, should we reject Mrs White based on speculative reasoning, such as the epilepsy claim? We owe it to God to seriously consider the words of any godly person who claims to have messages from God. Many arguments have been made against the Bible, but we must draw conclusions based on our own study of the Bible and history. This same principle should be applied when assessing the claims of professed prophets.

Critics of Mrs White produced other counterevidence to refute her prophetic gift. Pre-eminent amongst these counterarguments was the plagiarism charge. It must be noted that Mrs White and the copyright holders of her written materials have never been legally prosecuted, nor threatened with legal proceedings;[71] therefore, the plagiarism accusations were never legally proven. Copyright infringement and literary piracy are legal categories which change over time therefore, plagiarism accusations need to be viewed in the context of the law at the time of publishing. In 1981, the Seventh-day Adventist Church employed the services of attorney Vincent Ramik, a Roman Catholic and senior partner in a Washington, DC-based law firm specialising in patent, trademark, and copyright law. In his investigation, he studied her writings as well as more than 1000 cases in American literary law from 1790-1915. In conclusion, he flatly denied that there was any case for prosecuting a plagiarism charge, including copyright infringement and literary theft.[71] Therefore, from a legal standpoint, the accusations were not strong.

Some still contended that, from a practical, Biblical and moral standpoint, Mrs White was still guilty of dishonestly borrowing from other authors. Critics questioned why she would need to borrow from other authors if she was a prophet. If she was inspired, what was she doing copying from humans – should she not have been getting all of her content from the Holy Spirit? Seventh-day Adventists refer to forms of inspiration to explain why borrowing from other authors does not disqualify a prophet. Adventists believe in thought inspiration, in which the Holy Spirit transmits thoughts to the writer, who then chooses appropriate words to express those thoughts. The inspired writer may draw on other sources to help articulate what has been revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. For example, Biblical authors often quoted from Biblical and extra-Biblical sources, often without acknowledging the sources. For example, many of Solomon's wise sayings came from extra-Biblical sources. Even the golden rule, "*Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you* (Matt 7:12 NLT)," as given by Jesus, is not original. Its origin goes further back than Christianity and has been cited in the literature of other ancient cultures, including Egyptian and Chinese philosophy.[72,73]

Some also question Mrs White's honesty in borrowing from others without acknowledgement. Having only a primary school education, Mrs White was not a scholarly writer; therefore, her method of borrowing was not highly sophisticated from a scholarly standpoint. However, Adventists argue that she did borrow from other authors according to acceptable conventions of her day. Ethical and academic standards concerning plagiarism have changed with time. One of the primary reasons a writer might have quoted from other authors, it is reasoned, was to bolster the credibility of their own claims. However, if the author was merely looking for ways to edify the reader, they might have quoted from another author without adding quotes to avoid detracting from the impact of the statement. For example, the great revivalist, John Wesley, borrowed in a similar fashion to Mrs White. In the preface of his book, Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament, Wesley explains why he did not give credit to other authors in his book:

> "*It was a doubt with me for some time, whether I should not subjoin to every note I received from them the name of the author from whom it was taken especially considering I had transcribed some, and abridged many more, almost in the words of the author. But upon farther consideration, I resolved to name none, that nothing might divert the mind of the reader from keeping close to the point in view, and receiving what was spoken only according to its own intrinsic value*."[74]

Those who believe she is a prophet point out that Mrs White was open and honest about her use of other sources. For example, similar to Wesley, in the introduction to her book, The Great Controversy, she acknowledges using materials from other authors, sometimes without direct credit, because their statements afford "*a ready and forcible presentation on the subject*." She stated plainly that the historians she referenced were "*not quoted for the purpose of citing that writer as authority*."[75 (ph)]

Critics have often cited Mrs White's book, Acts of the Apostles, as heavily borrowing from The Life and Epistles of St. Paul by W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson. However, those defending Mrs White have pointed out that, leading up to the publishing of her book, she publicly endorsed and recommended The Life and Epistles of St. Paul as a good read for church members.[74] If she was trying to hide the fact that she borrowed from their book, why would she have recommended her readers also read the book that she borrowed from?

It is argued that much of Mrs White's inspiration was given by vision, and she then had to put this into writing in her own words. Defenders of Mrs White say that she relied on known historical and scientific facts of her time to put a coherent discourse together. She also had to find the words and structure to effectively communicate what she had seen in vision. Her extensive reading of other sources helped her to achieve this, but it did not detract from the unique message that she had to give. It is admitted that the scientific and historical details which she got from other authors were not always accurate in hindsight, but the spiritual

and instructive content of her writings remained consistent and reliable throughout.

What does this mean for Adventists? It is officially stated that Seventh-day Adventists "*believe that Scripture is the foundation of faith and the final authority in all matters of doctrine and practice*." They believe that scriptural references, such as Rev 19:10, 12:17, Eph 4:11 and 1 Cor 12:28, affirm that the gift of prophecy would continue to be manifest after New Testament times. Seventh-day Adventists:

> "…*believe that the purposes of Ellen White writings include guidance in understanding the teaching of Scripture and application of these teachings with prophetic urgency to the spiritual and moral life*" and "*that the acceptance of the prophetic gift of Ellen White, while not a requirement for continuing church membership, is important to the nurture and unity of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*."

While Seventh-day Adventists "*do not believe that the quality or degree of inspiration in the writings of Ellen White is different from that of Scripture*," they also "*do not believe that the writings of Ellen White serve the same purpose as does Scripture, which is the sole foundation and final authority of Christian faith*." They also officially state that they do not believe that her writings may be used for establishing doctrine or that Scripture can only be understood through her writings.[76]

Going by these official statements, Seventh-day Adventists are not to rely on Mrs White's writings to establish a doctrine on music, but her writings can help to highlight what Scripture says about music. She wrote extensively on music and, if she was a true prophet, her statements must harmonise with Scripture. Also, any predictions she made about the future must come true. Fascinatingly, Mrs White predicted that shouting, with drums, music and dancing would come into the church at the closing stages of earth's history.[12 (p36)] Certainly, this style of worship is becoming widespread today, coinciding with many signs that we are living in the end times. Outside the church, society is increasingly resembling Sodom and Gomorrah. Even many secular people are filled with the sense of impending doom on earth.

Partly due to the influence of Mrs White, who claimed Holy Flesh doctrine and methods were unbiblical, the general conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church discouraged support for the Holy Flesh movement. Church leaders involved in the Holy Flesh movement in Indiana accepted the reproof, and the entire Indiana executive committee resigned and was replaced by men who had not been involved in the movement. Emotionally driven worship in the Seventh-day Adventist Church abruptly came to an end. Music does not become a major issue in the Seventh-day Adventist Church again until the music wars, which began with the Jesus Movement in the 1960s.

Today, there is still widespread acceptance of Mrs White's prophet claims amongst Seventh-day Adventist leadership. A worldwide survey of Seventh-day Adventist pastors in 2013 revealed that 84-97% of pastors (varying by Division) wholeheartedly accept Mrs White as an inspired messenger. However, a small percentage (0-7%) do have questions or major doubts about her inspiration.[77]

Timeline:
From the Holiness Movement to Charismatic Megachurches

To summarise what has been discussed so far, there was much opposition to the Salvation Army in its early years in the late 19th century. The Salvation Army belonged to the Holiness movement, whose origin can be traced back to John Wesley, the founder of Methodism.[41] The Salvation Army grew rapidly with the help of exciting preaching and popular music and entertainment. Many opposed their methods and doctrinal teachings, including Mrs White, who referred to their doctrine as cheap Christianity. By the 1880s, Holiness was the most powerful doctrinal movement in America. It rapidly spread to other denominations transatlantically, significantly influencing the direction of theology and practice in Britain and the United States,[78] as highlighted by Chris Armstrong in Christian History Magazine:

> "*Thus the holiness movement absorbed and contributed to the ecumenism of the 19th-century revivals—culminating in the 'layman's revival' or 'prayer revival' of 1858—which drew together Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, some Lutherans, a few Episcopalians, and even the occasional Unitarian…*
>
> *In Europe, a series of visits by American evangelists helped the Alliance's ecumenical cause. Many of these American preachers brought some form of holiness teaching with them. Phoebe Palmer and her husband visited Britain several times, contributing to an evangelical awakening that by one estimate added a million members to British evangelical churches.*"[79]

The opposition to The Salvation Army was not only to their doctrine but to their style of worship. For example, Mrs White spoke out against the Salvation Army's Holiness band as well as the use of the drum to create a sensation, stating that excitement is not favourable to growth in grace. Commentators from other church denominations used terms such as, 'over excitement,' 'nonsensical rhymes,' 'confused noise of brass instruments, drums and tambourines' and 'screams, dancing and gesticulations… to please and excite the flesh.' In the late 1800s, the majority of Christendom was opposed to emotionalism in worship, but that changed with time.

Two decades after the founding of the Salvation Army, the Pentecostal movement emerged. Charles Parham, father of the Pentecostal movement, took the

Holiness teachings to another level. Pentecostalism combined Holiness theology with supernatural signs of the Spirit, such as tongue speaking.[80] The Holy Flesh movement was a Seventh-day Adventist movement influenced by emerging Pentecostal methods and theology. Eyewitnesses of Holy Flesh worship services stated that their music was an exact copy of the Salvation Army method. Mrs White had repeatedly spoken out against the Salvation Army style of worship and music and, likewise, the methods of the Holy Flesh movement. She stated that "*No encouragement should be given to this kind of worship*."[12 (p37)] She also stated that it is better never to have "*the worship of God blended with music*" than to use musical instruments to do the work of the Holy Flesh movement.[12 (p36)] The late Paul Hamel, former music department chair at Andrews University, recognised the significance of Mrs White's concern regarding music at the 1900 Indiana camp meeting and devoted much attention to this topic in his book, Ellen White and Music, Background and Principles.

During the 1940s and 50s a new emphasis on healing and miracles appeared in the Pentecostal movement which gave birth to the Charismatic movement. Pr. Gary Gilley of Think on These Things Ministries (TOTT), speaking of **Pentecostal, Charismatic, Word of Faith** and other similar movements, said:

> "*All of these 20th century movements can trace their ancestors to the Holiness Movement of the 1800s. They all have in common the desire for some form of instantaneous perfection, or power, that comes through a subsequent work of the Spirit in the lives of believers… rather than a lifetime process*."[80]

As with William Booth, who openly used music as a primary means to lead people to conviction, Pentecostal and Charismatic organisations have also heavily relied on music to create a sense of the presence of God and to bring about conviction and, what they believe to be, physical manifestations of the spirit.

From the inception of the Salvation Army to the Charismatic megachurches of our time with their rock and pop bands, there has always been opposition to sensational worship. The Charismatic movement has had a huge influence on us, including their method of reaching the youth.[46] As we will discuss later, they are one of the biggest producers of Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) and other producers of CCM have copied their methods. They have also flavoured our understanding of salvation.[81] Is that a bad thing? Is there anything wrong with loud and exciting music, drums and dancing in church? After all, didn't David and the Israelites shout, dance and blow the trumpet with all their might before the ark of God (2 Sam 6:14-15) and did not the Psalmist advise to praise God with loud instruments and dance (Ps 150)? Or is this type of music of the world? Have we joined Babylon? If you have not made up your mind about the answers to these questions, you likely will have by the end of this book. Or, if you have already decided one way or the other, this book may prompt you to think again.

Mrs White repeatedly opposed these methods. The prophetic gift is a big claim and, if true, would give her greater authority than others, including William and Catherine Booth. She was a contemporary of General Booth and also had widespread influence across society. Smithsonian Magazine named Mrs White among the 100 most significant Americans of all time.[82] As with the Booths, she also co-founded a church denomination. She is considered one of the most prolific female authors of all time. One of her books, The Desire of Ages, some Adventist sources have claimed, was endorsed by the Library of Congress as the best book on the life of Christ. She helped to establish a number of educational and medical institutions which are still operating today, including Andrews University in Michigan and Loma Linda University Medical Center in California.[83] Recently, Heritage Films released a movie called The Hopeful, featuring the early work and ministry of Mrs White and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

General Booth claimed to be led by the Holy Spirit, while Mrs White, who claimed to receive visions from God, opposed the method of music and worship used by the Salvation Army. Was it even necessary for God to send someone visions on this matter? Has He not given us the Bible to provide us with all of the guidance we need? Besides, Mrs White said herself that she was given no new light but that everything she was shown was in harmony with Scripture and points us back to Scripture. Why would she have even been needed?

Adventists have argued that even after being taught by Jesus throughout His ministry, His disciples still did not understand Jesus' role as Messiah. Even though they knew Scripture well, after His death and resurrection, Jesus still had to point His disciples back to Scripture to reveal how He had fulfilled all of Scripture. Because their understanding of Scripture had been distorted by human tradition, He had to make it plain to them before they could understand. Alberto R. Timm, a supporter of Ellen White's prophetic gift, provides the following explanation in a Ministry Magazine article:

> "*Some have asked, since we have the Bible, why do we need additional revelation in the writings of Ellen White? If contemporary Christianity manifested itself as a homogeneous whole, all its followers interpreting the Bible in much the same way, there would be more reason to doubt the necessity of such an additional revelation. But the fact of the matter is that Christianity has become more divided today in its interpretation of the Bible than ever before…*
>
> *… If the Bible is its own interpreter, why do we need additional aid in understanding the Bible? This specific need derives from the fact that Christianity is divided today into many conflicting schools of biblical interpretation, each of them claiming hermeneutical faithfulness to the Scriptures. God gave us a modern manifestation of the gift of prophecy through the writings of Ellen White to help us break away from the human traditions that conspire against the Word of God (see Matt. 15:6-9).*

Those writings are a divine prophetic filter that helps us to remove all the human rubble that tradition has artificially imposed on the Bible, so that the divine message of the Scriptures can flow pure and clean into our hearts."[84]

The remainder of this book will put the claims of Mrs White and other opponents of the Holiness movement and charismatic worship to the test. Why do they oppose ecstatic worship, loud music, drums and dance when Psalm 150 calls us to praise God with excitement, dance, tambourine and loud clashing cymbals? Are opponents biblical in their opposition to contemporary Christian music and worship, and does science support their views? This book will explore the effects of emotions, music, instruments, loud noise and dance on us, both physically and spiritually. Most importantly, we will look at what God teaches us in Scripture concerning music.

Chapter 5
Methodism & Perfectionism

Recognising the differences in theology between General Booth and Mrs White is important for understanding their different approaches to music and evangelism. Due to the extensive influence of Holiness and revivalist practice on Christianity more broadly, studying the history of these movements helps us to better understand current practice. The Booths' experience with revivalism and holiness theology influenced how they evangelised.[2] For example, they built on the emotional appeal of Methodism. The Seventh-day Adventists, while retaining heart religion, rejected emotionalism and adherence to holiness theology.

As with the Methodists, Seventh-day Adventists also emphasised the perfecting of the Christian believer, though Adventists tended to use more language concerning the believer's capacity, by grace, to keep the law of God.[37] By keeping the law we show love to God and to others (Rom 13:8-10). Woodrow Whidden, professor of systematic and historical theology at the Adventist International Institute for Advanced Studies, compares John Wesley's theology of salvation with Mrs White's. He wrote that the Methodist concept of salvation, while not entirely the same as Adventists, does resonate to a certain degree with the Christian classic, Steps to Christ, written by Mrs White.[40 (p50)] Adventist theology teaches that before Christ returns, His character will be perfectly reflected in His people, though not all Adventists agree with this theology.[37] In Christ's Object Lessons, Mrs White wrote, "*When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own*."[85 (p69)]

Some Seventh-day Adventist members have a hard time reconciling the church's teachings on salvation by grace through faith alone with the teachings on sanctification and perfection - they want to avoid anything that bears semblance to legalistic salvation by works. But is legalism synonymous with seeking perfection? Edsel Burdge of Elizabethtown College sarcastically described two types of legalists: someone who is stricter than you are and someone who disapproves of something you like to do![86]

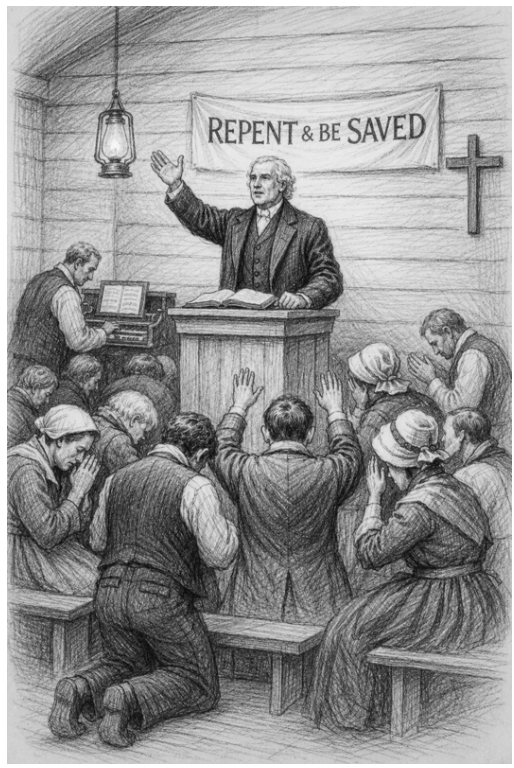
Wesley recognised in Scripture a high standard that Jesus expects of us: "*unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven* (Matt 5:20)." And the book of Hebrews says:

> "*For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation*

of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries." (Heb 10:26-27)

How do we synchronise this with the love and mercy of God and Martin Luther's emphasis on salvation by faith alone? Professor Whidden compares Mrs White's understanding of salvation with Wesley:

"*…for Wesley and White, salvation is understood to be by grace through faith alone (not by works). But the nature of true salvation (in Christ) is such that faith will never stop there. Participation in the grace of Christ always leads to the fruits of faith - loving obedience, service, joyous witness, and worship*."[40 (p52)]



Therefore, despite her emphasis on sanctification, Mrs White, as with Wesley, believed we are fully dependent on God's grace for salvation.

There are numerous examples in the Bible of people living holy lives, obedient to God. Enoch walked with God and was translated (Gen 5:24; Heb 11:5). Job was "*a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil* (Job 1:8)" Even after losing his property and children, "*Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong* (Job 1:22)." God said that Abraham would be a blessing to the world because he "*obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws* (Gen 26:5)." Zechariah and Elizabeth "*were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless* (Lk 1:6)."

What the Bible means by upright, blameless, righteous, or perfect is much disputed by Bible scholars and theologians. Regardless, it might be argued that the answer to this question is not really our concern. It is our responsibility to look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Heb 12:2). We strive to be Christlike in all that we do because He was perfect and pleased His Father. The Bible is filled with passages exhorting His people to aim for a higher standard. The following statement from Mrs White shows how she believed we can achieve a Christlike character:

"*He bids us to be like Him. 'Bless them that curse you,' said Jesus; 'do good to them that hate you, ... that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.' These are the principles of the law, and they are the well-springs of life.*

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.

The tempter's agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ making excuses for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. There is no excuse for sinning. A holy temper, a Christlike life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God."[87 (p311)]

Likewise, Wesley believed that:

"*While we cannot 'merit' final salvation, or assume that our works are a prerequisite to God's acceptance, the truly saved person will have the evidence of genuine faith in the inevitable fruits of his or her experience of sanctification*."[40 (p52)]

John said whoever abides in Jesus does not sin (1 Jn 3:6). But it is only by faith that sin is overcome. It was by faith that Abraham obeyed (Heb 11:8). The following statement from Mrs White helps to put her understanding of this subject into perspective:

"*What does God require? Perfection; nothing less than perfection. But if we would be perfect, we must put no confidence in self. Daily we must know and understand that self is not to be trusted. We need to grasp God's promises with firm faith. We need to ask for the Holy Spirit with a full realization of our own helplessness. Then when the Holy Spirit works, we shall not give self the glory. The Holy Spirit will graciously take the heart into His keeping, bringing to it all the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. We shall be kept by the power of God through faith*."[88 (p353)]

According to Scripture, God's desire is for us to be perfect through the workings of His Holy Spirit and not by our own merits - but we are not passive bystanders in the process. We flee from greed and lust, pursue righteousness and fight the good fight (1 Tim 6:9-11). We are to "*depart from iniquity*" and to "*flee also youthful lusts* (2 Tim 2:19,22)." We are temperate in all things and, like Paul, we discipline the body, bringing it into subjection, lest we become disqualified (1 Cor 9:25-27). We press on, that we may take hold of perfection (Phil 3:12). We seek

God's righteousness (Matt 6:33). We "*go on to perfection* (Heb 6:1)." We "*cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God* (2 Cor 7:1)." We are to "*awake to righteousness*" and not sin (1 Cor 15:34). We "*lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us*" and we "*run with endurance the race that is set before us* (Heb 12:1)." We are 'trained' by God's chastening which yields the fruit of righteousness (Heb 12:11). We are to pursue holiness, "*without which no one will see the Lord* (Heb 12:14)."

Wesley would also argue that these passages suggest that we are to be active participants in the pursuit of perfection. Barnes' Notes on the Bible, commenting on Hebrews 6:1, reads:

> "*…it is proper to exhort Christians to aim at entire perfection. Even if none have ever reached that point on earth, that fact does not make it any the less desirable or proper to aim at it*."[89]

Wesley would argue that when Paul said, "Flee sexual immorality," it implies we have to do something. When we walk past a shop with seductive advertising, we turn our eyes in the other direction. When a lustful thought comes into our mind, we suppress it immediately. We avoid watching movies with any suggestion of adultery. We 'flee' from it so that it does not get a hold of us and pull us into sin. But, because of our sinful flesh, the law cannot save us (Rom 8:3; Heb 7:19); therefore, 'we must put no confidence in self,' Mrs White writes. According to this theology, it is when we turn inward that we lose faith and doubt the power of Jesus to save us. Selfless devotion to Christ is at the heart of the issue.

Mrs White says elsewhere:

> "*There can be no growth or fruitfulness in the life that is centered in self. If you have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, you are to forget yourself, and try to help others. Talk of the love of Christ, tell of His goodness. Do every duty that presents itself. Carry the burden of souls upon your heart, and by every means in your power seek to save the lost. As you receive the Spirit of Christ - the Spirit of unselfish love and labor for others - you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely*."[85 (p67)]

Jesus showed the world that He loves His Father by obeying His commandments (Jn 14:31). Likewise, we show our love for God through obedience. Mrs White maintains that living a holy life is not to earn salvation but to glorify God. By abiding in Christ, we become like Him, bringing glory to Him:

> "'***Herein is My Father glorified**,' said Jesus, 'that ye bear much fruit.' God desires to manifest through you the holiness, the benevolence, the compassion, of His own character. Yet the Saviour does not bid the disciples labor to bear fruit. He tells them to abide in Him. 'If ye abide in Me,' He says, 'and*

My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' It is through the word that Christ abides in His followers. This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The words of Christ are spirit and life. Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine. You live 'by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' Matthew 4:4. The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ"[87 (p677)]

James White, Mrs White's husband, describes how there were quite a few people who were bringing perplexity into the Advent movement:

"*…by urging upon the flock extreme views of entire consecration, of Christian perfection, then taught by the Methodists… Many of them soon became self-righteous, and, notwithstanding their apparent humility, were proud of their spiritual attainments*."[32 (p142)]

Mrs White taught that this is the fruit of focusing on self. Doubting God or trying to earn salvation by perfection arises out of selfish motives. Self-centredness causes people to either reject holiness because they want to continue in sin, or it causes them to pursue perfection to win salvation. Those who strive for perfection out of selfish motive live in fear of God's wrath, Mrs White would argue, while a person motivated by selfless love for God will pursue perfection for the honour and glory of their Saviour.

John the apostle points out that obedience is not a burden when we love God, "*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome"* (1 Jn 5:3-4). It is only hard to be obedient to rules that we do not love. As with Martin Luther, both John Wesley and Mrs White believed that those with genuine faith recognise their own wretchedness and their need for Christ, but through faith, they rest in the assurance of their salvation. That is why 'we need to ask for the Holy Spirit with a full realisation of our own helplessness,' Mrs White said. We are 'to grasp God's promises with firm faith.' God promises to perfect us (1 Pet 5:10). Jesus promises "*My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness* (2 Cor 12:9)." "*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them*" (Eph 2:10).

According to this theology, we play a role in the process of sanctification because we are in the relationship and we love His 'perfect law of liberty' (Jas 1:25) and long to be perfect as our Lord is perfect. Whether we believe in Wesley's understanding of entire sanctification or not, the Bible says there are blessings for those who pursue righteousness. Jesus said, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled* (Matt 5:6)." Psalms says we are blessed when we walk in the law of the Lord (Ps 119:1).

What can we take from all this to help us harmonise with God? Firstly, we strive, we press on, we fight and run, because God asks us to. However, according

to Scripture, the outcome is not our concern, for we are the clay, and He is the potter; we are the work of His hands (Is 64:8). In light of this, let us do what He requires of us – to strive to be perfect – and let Him do what He promises to do – to make us perfect. He requires perfection, we pursue it and He achieves it. Whether He requires or achieves perfection of us before or after translation is not something to fear or concern ourselves with because, either way, He is the one who does the perfecting.

It is for His own purpose and glory that His people will be perfected and made holy (Eph 5:27; Phil 2:13; Zech 14:20-21). When He presents His redeemed people perfect and spotless before the universe, He will be praised and glorified because it will be His workmanship (Jn 15:8; Eph 2:10). It will be His love and sacrifice that made it happen. John sees a scene in heaven where the redeemed of the earth stand before the throne crying out, "*Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb* (Rev 7:10)!"

Paul says, "*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast* (Eph 2:8)." It is an honour and a joy to strive for perfection, knowing that He will give us victory whether in this world or the new. How blessed we are when we are obedient to God's law, for "*he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does* (Jas 1:25)."

Though we might desire to be like Jesus, Mrs White says that until we are transformed after Jesus' second coming, we cannot ever claim to be perfect: "*We cannot say, 'I am sinless,' till this vile body is changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body*."[90 (p355)] The apostle who said, "*Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him* (1 Jn 3:6)," also said, "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (1 Jn 1:8)." The one who said to pursue holiness, for no one will see the Lord without it (Heb 12:14), also admitted to being the chief of sinners (1 Tim 1:15). The Psalmist who said, "*Depart from evil and do good* (Ps 34:14)," also committed adultery with Bathsheba. Even the mightiest people have struggled with sin, yet they urged us to pursue holiness.

Likewise, Mrs White encouraged her readers to live holy lives, but she never claimed perfection in herself:

> "*I wish that self should be hid in Jesus. I wish self to be crucified. I do not claim infallibility, or even perfection of Christian character. I am not free from mistakes and errors in my life. Had I followed my Saviour more closely, I should not have to mourn so much my unlikeness to His dear image*."[91 (p34)]

Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, "*Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more* (Jn 8:11)." How can we continue in sin in the face of such mercy

and love? We must not dwell on how perfect or imperfect we are but on the perfect life of Christ, as described by Mrs White:

> "*Your hope is not in yourself; it is in Christ. Your weakness is united to His strength, your ignorance to His wisdom, your frailty to His enduring might. So you are not to look to yourself, not to let the mind dwell upon self, but look to Christ. Let the mind dwell upon His love, upon the beauty, the perfection, of His character. Christ in His self-denial, Christ in His humiliation, Christ in His purity and holiness, Christ in His matchless love – this is the subject for the soul's contemplation. It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness…*
>
> *… We should not make self the center and indulge anxiety and fear as to whether we shall be saved. All this turns the soul away from the Source of our strength. Commit the keeping of your soul to God, and trust in Him. Talk and think of Jesus. Let self be lost in Him. Put away all doubt; dismiss your fears. Say with the apostle Paul, 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me (Gal 2:20).'"*[92 (p70-71)]

Whether we lean more toward Luther's teachings or Wesley's teachings on grace and perfection, we are all dependent on God's loving mercy. The good news is that even though Jesus did set a high standard for His people, He Himself gave a beautiful example of a person who was not perfect prior to His death, yet he sincerely repented and was promised salvation – this was, of course, the penitent thief on the cross. Though Mrs White challenges believers to put aside their sins, she repeatedly brings her readers back to the cross and God's merciful love. James White sums it up well with the following admonition:

> "*Is your robe all washed clean in the blood of Christ? or have you been insulting him, by trying to patch up a robe out of the filthy rags of your own righteousness? Alas! I have thought that I could rest partly upon myself and partly on Christ. I now cast myself naked and helpless upon that mercy which saved the thief on the cross*."[32 (p158)]

PART 2

THE INFLUENCE OF MUSIC

SALVATION
ARMY

Chapter 6
Physical, Emotional & Mental Effects of Music

Science has demonstrated that music's effect on us can be profound, but the mechanisms behind this are complex. In the academic community, it is well recognised that music has great power over our physical and mental health. However, the science behind the harms and benefits of music on our mind and body is not clearly understood.

Sound is energy in the form of a mechanical vibration which can alter cell viability and movement. Music does not only influence us by its emotional effect via the ears, but sound can penetrate body tissue, directly affecting cells deep in the human body. Music has been found to affect cells in culture, including altering the cell cycle and binding of hormone.[93]

Music medicine is an emerging therapeutic technique which takes advantage of music's healing properties. For example, full body immersion in music (as opposed to listening to music with earphones) has been shown to enhance nitric oxide production, resulting in a broad range of health benefits. It also increases the availability of oxygen binding to haemoglobin molecules, aiding tissue repair and reducing pain.[94] Concetta Tomaino, internationally known for her research in the clinical applications of music and neurologic rehabilitation, stated:

> "*We now know from clinical case studies that music can affect - in very specific ways - human neurological, psychological and physical functioning in areas such as learning, processing language, expressing emotion, memory, and physiological and motor responses*."[95]

Dr Imogen Clark, Senior lecturer in Music Therapy, and her colleague, Associate Professor Jeanette Tamplin, Head of Music Therapy at The University of Melbourne, discuss the influence of music on the body. The body's response to music is both conscious and unconscious and our bodies respond automatically, they explain. Rhythm is particularly influential - we breathe and move in time with the rhythm and it:

> "*…mimics internal bodily rhythms and is therefore an external cue that our brains readily recognise and respond to. The automatic synchronisation of physical movement, heart rate, respiratory rate and neural activity with rhythmic cues in music is known as entrainment.*" Furthermore, they describe how "*Vibrations from music have a systemic impact on the entire body from single cells through to complex systems. Thus, music has a modulating influence on multiple physiological processes.*"[96]

These two music therapists also describe how music affects the neuroendocrine and limbic systems, releasing feel good hormones, such as dopamine, serotonin and endorphins, which make us feel better, reduce pain and give us intense feelings of pleasure and reward. Music can decrease the stress hormones, adrenaline and cortisol, helping to relax us and reduce anxiety; while music with fast tempo, wide pitch variation and syncopated rhythms can energise us. Therefore, they say:

> "*Musical tempo, harmony, melody, rhythm and volume in music can therefore be manipulated to regulate heart rate, blood pressure, sensory perception, cognitive function, neural activity and emotional response depending on the requirements for a given situation*."[95]

Due to multiple effects on the brain and body, music is excellent accompaniment for exercise and improving compliance with physical activity. Music is even banned from a number of competitive sports due to its performance-enhancing qualities. Owing to these beneficial features, music has been used successfully to rehabilitate patients with various health conditions, such as spinal injury, stroke, heart and respiratory disease, multiple sclerosis, dementia, learning disorders, cancer and numerous other ailments.[96]

Apart from these many health benefits, there are numerous other ways in which music can influence us both positively and negatively, such as our emotional state, behaviour, substance use, brain wave patterns, and even the structure of the brain. For example, some studies have shown harmful effects of frequent exposure to low-frequency sounds, such as the deep bass sounds of music.[97] Music Therapist, Dr Juanita McElwain, says:

> "*…there are many different ways music can affect you physically, emotionally and mentally. A good example is* ***entrainment****. When the rhythm of the music enters your body, the physiological functions start matching the rhythm of the music. When the rhythm of the music is syncopated (containing unnatural accents which do not match anything in the body or nature) many deleterious results may occur, because the parts of your body start producing these unnatural rhythms*."[98 (p25)]

As we all know, music has a powerful effect on our emotions. Neurologist, Dr Richard G. Pellegrino states: "*The same receptors that bind opium also bind endorphins, a class of natural opioids found in the brain that seem to play a pivotal role in the way we experience music*." These endorphins produce very intense changes in emotional state and *"what a powerful feeling it is:* ***Music talks to us****, and we talk back," he says, "like spoken and written language, music can impart information." "Take it from a brain guy,"* he goes on to say, *"In 25 years of working with the brain, I still cannot affect a person's state of mind the way that one simple song can."*[99]

Music also activates the entire limbic system – a set of structures in the brain which helps us experience emotions. When we listen to music, pressure from sound waves activates the eardrums which causes auditory cells to bend, converting sound energy into nerve impulses that travel to the brain. These impulses activate many neural networks, increasing blood flow to various parts of the brain, including the limbic system, igniting a surge of emotions which are often intertwined with personal memories. Hormones are also released, such as dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin, which make us feel good, improve social bonding and give us a sense of reward.[100,101]

Key components of the limbic system are the amygdala, which is the emotional processing centre of the brain, and the hippocampus, which is the memory centre of the brain. That is why music and memory share an intimate bond. Often, a song can trigger a cascade of vivid memories from years past. Information set to a catchy tune tends to stick.[100,101] God instructed Moses to write a song so that the Children of Israel would remember what He had told them. "*It will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants* (Deut 31:21)," He said.

So powerful is the effect of music on our emotions that it can overpower our frontal lobe – the part of the brain used to reason through things and logically process thoughts. Dr Michael Rich, Director of the Centre for Media and Child Health at Boston Children's Hospital, says, "*Music, particularly among adolescents, is a very powerful motivator of behaviour*." He said we should not underestimate the power of music because of its effect on the limbic system, which can overwhelm all of the other parts of the brain. He points out that we 'lose our minds' when we fall in love because of the power of emotion. In other words, he is saying that **emotions generated by the limbic system can overpower the reasoning ability of the frontal lobe**. He warns that we need to be aware that popular music does affect and change us and we should actively take measures to protect ourselves.[102] In the early 1980s, MTV knew the power of emotion to get young people to forget their logic and they mastered the art of using it to their advantage. Bob Pittman, one of the founders, said, "*At MTV, we don't shoot for the 14-year-olds - we own them*."[103]

That is why Paul said we should sing with the spirit and with understanding (1 Cor 14:15). Over-excitement triggers the limbic system so strongly it can overwhelm the frontal lobe's ability to think rationally. We lose the ability to analyse what we are singing or the words being preached to us. There may be false doctrines in the words of the song or in the sermon that go straight into our memories without any filtering. If it is secular music we are listening to, worldly values are locked into our long-term memories. If we are to sing with the spirit and with understanding, the lyrics must be spiritual and, according to Mrs White, the music and singing has to be modulated, softened, subdued and melodious, and use clear intonation, correct pronunciation and distinct utterance to facilitate understanding. Paul said:

> "*Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken* (1 Cor 14:7-9)?" - That would also apply to the lyrics of our songs.

Neuroscientists have studied the effect on viewers of playing a clip of film set to different styles of music. What they discovered is that the music is not just intensifying the mood. The music can: 1) create expectations about events that might be coming up next; 2) lead to associations that aren't necessarily on the screen; 3) indicate if the story is resolved or not; 4) change the way you interpret characters and their relationships; 5) influence what you remember from the scene; and, 6) it can influence our sense of being inside the world of film as opposed to being somebody watching a film from the outside. These messages can all be conveyed without a single word or lyric. Neuroscientist Dr Aniruddh Patel said that, when they started studying music and the brain using neuroimaging, they were surprised how much of the brain is activated by purely instrumental music without any lyrics. Though the listener is not processing semantic meanings at all, when scientists look at the brain listening to music, they see widespread activation, he said.[104]

Music can influence behaviour. By varying the quality, such as pitch, timbre and tempo, music has been shown to subconsciously influence mood and purchasing behaviour in both positive and negative ways. Research has found that the effects of music on consumers are not just due to impact on emotional behaviour.[105] High arousal induced by music may make people impatient when making choices, whereas slower and more relaxed music could increase carefulness.[106] Slow music may improve accuracy as it slows thinking speed, allowing for more careful consideration. Music can influence the places that customers go to, the amount they spend, the length of time they linger in a shop, the products they buy and their memory of advertising. In an experiment conducted at an on-campus cafeteria, for example, students spent more money when classical music was played compared with pop music. In another study, restaurant sales were slightly reduced when pop music was played compared to no music at all but significantly increased with classical music. Music may also have an impact on time perception. For example, "*louder music imposes a greater information-processing load, and this leads people to believe that more has happened, and therefore that more time has passed*."[105] In one study, slow music led to supermarket customers shopping 15% slower than when fast music was played, resulting in a 33% increase in spending. French music caused customers to buy more French wine and German music more German wine, even though customers denied the music had any effect on them.[106]

So, this raises the question of how music played in church might affect our behaviour in both positive and negative ways. For example, if we hear music in

church that sounds similar to club music, how would this affect our subconscious decision-making? Would classical Christian music give listeners a higher sense of value of the message compared to folk tunes? Would slow tempo music put the audience into a better frame of mind for listening to the message?

We do not have detailed answers to these complex questions, but if music makes a significant difference to the way people shop, what they purchase and how much they are willing to pay, it is also likely to make a difference to the way people relate to God. Mrs White said that Satan knows the organs to excite to charm the mind so that Christ is not desired. This makes sense, because if business owners have figured out how to use music to manipulate customers, surely the devil would also use music to manipulate people for his purpose. Fortunately, it is even more true that God would know which organs to excite to capture the mind for Christ. An important lesson to ponder from this research is that music that customers might like the most is not necessarily the music which will give a business the best outcome. Likewise, in church, the style of music that people like to play in their personal time may not necessarily be the most appropriate music to play in church to draw them closer to God and connect them with His Word.

A large meta-analysis of 136 studies with a total of over 330,000 participants shows that music has a significant effect on substance use. **Music plays an important role in the development of identity formation and social beliefs** in young people, they report. The more adolescents and young adults engage with music, the more likely they are to believe that what is portrayed in the music is real and link substance use with positive outcomes, such as success, wealth, glamour, partying, sexual activity and socialising. Music containing frequent references to substance use include: electronica, high-brow, reggae, rock, urban, Top Charts and pop. Music consumers are frequently exposed to marijuana references. The authors of the study report that the number of songs containing substance use content has drastically increased. References to MDMA have increased in pop music, hip-hop and rap. Between 1988 and 2008, the percentage of songs with references to substance use in the Top 100 Billboard increased from 12% to 30%. Images of alcohol exist in as much as 45% of popular music videos on YouTube. Several studies have shown that rap and hip-hop, rock and dance listeners are especially likely to use substances because drugs are tied to the music culture, which tends to be energetic.[107]

Music is also known to affect brain wave patterns. Alpha wave amplitudes tend to rise when we listen to music that we enjoy. Alpha appears to bridge the conscious to the subconscious. Alpha waves increase when our mind is in an alert state of relaxation – we are taking in information but not actively processing the information. Thinking, calculating and analysing reduces alpha waves. Alpha states help us remember things we learn because we subconsciously take in information effortlessly without the distraction of our own thoughts.[108–110] However, if we are not consciously analysing and filtering the information coming in, we can be influenced negatively by it.

We also know that electronic music has 'consciousness-changing' and 'trance-inducing' effects resembling the psychoactive effects induced by specific drugs. Furthermore, it has been shown that dancing to electronic music can induce states of transcendence and ecstatic trance without having taken psychoactive drugs.[111] Trance is a state of altered consciousness in which a person has reduced executive control and is highly receptive to suggestion.[112]

Music may even have a significant influence on the function and structure of the frontal lobe of the brain. Science has discovered that the frontal lobe is the seat of morality, judgement, reasoning, spirituality, intellect and the will. It is the control centre of our being. An impaired frontal lobe impairs our character or who we really are – our self-control, trustworthiness, reliability, reasoning and interpersonal relationship skills.[113]

Dr Neil Nedley, founder of Optimize Your Brain and Nedley Depression and Anxiety Recovery Program, has done extensive research into the effects of lifestyle on the frontal lobe. He says that substances and lifestyle practices that can impair and damage frontal lobe function include: drugs, such as illicit drugs, alcohol, nicotine and caffeine; hypnosis; television; syncopated music rhythms; refined sugar; and the dietary substances tyramine, tryptamine and trimethylamine, which are found in foods such as cheese, wine, fish, sausages, poultry and certain rich foods.[113] In a study by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, researchers found that greater television viewing in earlier adulthood was associated with lower grey matter volume in the frontal lobe of the brain in middle age.[114]

The Bible says that it is in our foreheads, where the frontal lobe is situated, that our knowledge of God is found: "*They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads* (Rev 22:4)." The frontal lobe provides elevated spiritual reasoning and superior learning ability. The effects of damage to the frontal lobe, as seen in people who suffer from traumatic injury or stroke, include: impaired moral principle, social impairment, lack of foresight, inability to perform abstract reasoning or to interpret proverbs, diminished mathematical understanding, loss of empathy and lack of restraint.[113] A healthy frontal lobe, therefore, is essential for studying the Bible, analysing its contents and understanding and knowing its author.

A well-known scientific study found that non-synchronised music altered the structure and function of the brains of mice. The non-synchronised music consisted of tones that were not aligned with the dominant beat. After two months of exposure, these mice had significant changes to their hippocampi and had impaired learning and memory. No such effects were observed in mice exposed to synchronised music or no music at all.[115,116] Schreckenberg and Bird's study into the effects of different music rhythms found that softly playing disharmonic drumbeats impaired the memory and learning ability of the mice. When their brains were examined, they discovered visible evidence of permanent damage to the major memory regions of the brain as well as shrinkage of the frontal lobe. Mice

exposed to classical music in the study retained their memory and learning abilities. The concern is that rock and pop music and other genres of modern dance music contain heavily syncopated rhythms, a type of disharmonic off-beat rhythm described by music professionals as "*a disturbance or interruption of the regular flow of rhythm*" or "*the placement of rhythmic stresses or accents where they wouldn't normally occur*."[117,118]

Though many health benefits have been discovered from listening to music, including rock and pop music, significant harms may have been overlooked in the research. Nikki S. Rickard and her colleagues at Monash University in Australia, have found important methodological weaknesses in studies that claim music exposure enhances human cognitive performance. They state:

> "…*the claim that music can have a significant impact on cognitive performance lacks stability on both empirical and theoretical grounds. To date, the data in support of the claim are sparse and, in many cases, unconvincing*."

These researchers make a case for more use of appropriate animal models, such as Schreckenberg and Bird's study discussed above, to avoid many of the confounding factors associated with human music research. However, they do point out that Schreckenberg and Bird's study does fail to explore other manipulations of the music apart from rhythm. For instance, it is not known if the effect was dependent on other music properties, such as loudness, accent, tempo, time of administration or duration.[116] Though their study does not prove that rock music damages the frontal lobe and memory of human brains, it is a red flag and should be taken into serious consideration given the implications. If frequent TV watching can adversely alter the grey matter of the brain, it is certainly possible that regularly listening to unhealthy styles of music could also adversely alter the structure of the brain.

In summary, by varying the characteristics of music, it is possible to manipulate its effect on the human mind and body. Music talks to us. Music affects our behaviour. Music alters our level of alertness. And music can even affect the function of the frontal lobe – the seat of morality, judgement, reasoning, spirituality and intellect – either by overpowering it with emotions or perhaps even by altering its structure. The evidence from science, therefore, is clear: music in and of itself, regardless of the lyrics, is a powerful force which can manipulate the mind, alter behaviour and potentially influence our judgement and reasoning ability.

Seemingly Harmless Things Can Prove Deadly

Though we have come a long way in science, there is an enormous amount that we do not know, including the science of music and its effects on us. Sometimes seemingly harmless things in our environment can prove to be detrimental to us. Without inspiration from God, we cannot know for certain the potential

harms and benefits of certain styles of music for our physical, mental and spiritual health. Long before modern day science, the Bible provided us with important health principles. For example, it discourages the use of alcohol. In the ceremonial laws, blood was to be drained from the meat and fat cut away before consumption. Also, mould was to be avoided and diseased individuals were to be strictly quarantined. It is only in relatively recent times that science has discovered that much disease is carried in blood, animal fat leads to heart disease and quarantining can prevent the spread of infectious organisms. In the Book of Daniel, we see highlighted the health benefits of a vegetable diet which is also increasingly supported by modern day science. The Bible does not teach us about the science behind these health principles - it just teaches us what to do and what not to do.

Apart from spreading the gospel, the early years of the Salvation Army had an emphasis on healthy lifestyle. This message mainly centred around temperance, especially abstinence from alcohol, tobacco and gambling. The Booths were also strong supporters of hydropathy and General Booth was partial to a vegetarian diet and encouraged Salvation Army officers to have a healthy diet.

From early in its history, the Seventh-day Adventist Church also had a strong health message, but it was more comprehensive than that of the Salvation Army. Joseph Bates, one of the co-founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is recognised as the first prominent figure in the movement to advocate for a vegetarian diet and abstinence from alcohol, tea, coffee and tobacco. Mrs White first describes having a health vision as early as 1848 and, in 1863, she relates having a major vision dealing with health concerns. Her first publication on health was a short booklet titled, An Appeal to Mothers, in 1864. This was followed by a chapter on health in volume four of Spiritual Gifts, the same year. The Ministry of Healing is a major publication on health by Mrs White which first came out in 1905.

One reason Seventh-day Adventists believe Mrs White was divinely inspired is because of the apparently extraordinary accuracy of her health claims, which were made long before science proved her right. Many of the health principles that we take for granted today were unknown and unproven in the 1800s. For example, until recently, doctors told patients to rest in bed when they had back pain, while Mrs White taught that people with joint pain should keep moving. It is now well recognised that patients with mechanical back pain should start moving as soon as possible to improve outcome. Don McMahon, a medical doctor, after extensive research into her health message, concludes that the lifestyle principles promoted by Mrs White are remarkably consistent with the World Health Organisation.[119 (p32,89)] Long before embarking on his research, it was becoming apparent in the medical community that there was accuracy to her claims. Dr McMahon says that her lifestyle statements are in close accord with modern thinking, making her more than 100 years ahead of her time.[119 (p142)] Just as we have discovered certain practices to be harmful which we once thought harmless or even healthy for us, it might be that with further scientific research, certain forms of music might eventually be proven to be harmful. Preliminary research is already revealing potential

profound harmful health effects from bass sounds in music. If Dr McMahon is right about the accuracy of Mrs White's health claims, then perhaps her advice on music will also be proven in time to be protective against physical and spiritual harm.

Many critics have rightly pointed out that Mrs White made numerous statements about health which have since been proven to be inconsistent with science. Dr McMahon says there is a satisfactory explanation for this. In his book, Acquired or Inspired, he makes an insightful observation about Mrs White's health claims. He divided all of her health claims into two categories: the ***whats***, or what health principles we are to follow, and the ***whys***, or the science behind the health principles. He concludes that Mrs White's *what* statements were highly accurate, while her *why* statements were no more accurate than any other author of her time. He argues that this is consistent with Biblical authors who were shown through inspiration ***what*** to do, but they were not given reasons ***why***. Dr McMahon argues that Mrs White was not shown in vision why certain health practices were important and was reliant on the known science of her day for an explanation.

Accordingly, it would be expected that Mrs White's *what* statements would be more reliable than the *why* statements if the *what* statements were inspired – and, according to his research, this is exactly what we find. Dr McMahon discovered that Mrs White was far more accurate in her health claims concerning the *whats* compared to other prominent health reformers and health professionals of her time, including renowned physician, Dr John Harvey Kellogg. For example, in Spiritual Gifts, she was found to be 96% verified and 87% of the *whats* in Ministry of Healing have been verified so far by science. This contrasts with the four contemporary health reformers studied whose accuracy ranged from only 35-42% verified. In other words, Mrs White had more than double the accuracy of her peers regarding her advice on healthy lifestyle choices. This is despite the fact that she only had a partial primary school education. On the other hand, when it came to the *whys*, or the scientific explanation, she was only 45% accurate in Ministry of Healing which is comparable with her contemporaries.[119 (p43-47)]

Adventists argue that opponents of Mrs White have focused on the relatively few unverified claims to discredit her. However, over time, science has verified increasingly more of her health claims. Unproven health claims often do seem hard to believe until proven. For example, Mrs White's claim that meat consumption can cause cancer seemed unlikely until reputable organisations, like the Australian Cancer Council, confirmed that red and processed meat do significantly increase the risk of colon cancer. Since the time when the scientific data was gathered for Dr McMahon's book, further scientific discoveries have been made. One of the unverified claims discussed in his book concerns decaying leaves.[119 (p105)] Mrs White advised that no "*heaps of fallen leaves should be allowed to remain near the house to decay*."[120 (p276)] A study in 2002 found that decaying leaves contain chemicals belonging to DDTs and PCBs, both classes of toxic pollutants.[121] Further research is required to verify the toxicity of the specific subclasses of chemicals, but it could well be that this claim will be verified in the future.

Why is all this important and what does it have to do with the effects of music on our physical and spiritual health? Well, Mrs White made numerous statements concerning the effects of music, especially on our spiritual health. For example, she claimed that the devil uses music to turn our minds away from Jesus and from spiritual things. She also gave detailed advice about desirable and undesirable forms of music. Given Mrs White's track record concerning health claims in general, it would be prudent to at least give careful consideration to her statements on music, since we now know from science that music does indeed also influence our health in profound and powerful ways.

Chapter 7
Women Revivalists: Home Duties

The Influence of Holiness Theology on Women Preaching

Any discussion about 19th century worship must include the issue of women preachers, a topic of much debate at that time, tied to religious revival. A church's attitude to style of evangelism and music was closely related to their attitude to women preachers. Neither Mrs Booth nor Mrs White were against women preaching and both were popular preachers themselves. In 1803, The Wesleyan Connexion prohibited preaching by women. This led to numerous Methodist subgroups which supported women preachers and emotional revival over the orderly practices of institutional religion. By the mid-1800s, most Methodists accepted that female preaching was unscriptural.[122–124]

Catherine felt the church had wrongly denied women's rightful place in the church, including the right to preach.[125] Holiness theology had a significant influence on the Booths' understanding of the role of women in the church and revival methods that they adopted. Understanding holiness theology and its influence on how the Booths related to Scripture is essential to understanding their approach to music and worship. The influences that shape how we interpret Scripture and how we understand God will determine what type of music we think is appropriate.

Holiness theologians and revivalists felt justified in deviating from traditional interpretations of the Bible, which were often quite literal in their application. They felt confident in their own commonsense interpretation of Scripture, which freed them from adherence to traditional rules and conventions, such as the silencing of women in church.[126 (p66,74)] These commonsense interpretations were made in light of their understanding of Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower the believer to overcome sin, interpret Scripture and achieve mighty works. Everything changed at Pentecost according to this understanding. It was a great leveller, for "*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* (Gal 3:28)."

They believed in what is termed a second working of the Holy Spirit which empowered individuals to live a life of perfection. If they felt compelled by the Holy Spirit to do something, they were inclined to act on that compulsion, even if it meant giving up everything for Jesus. It might mean abstaining from alcohol or giving up a bad temper. If a person felt that their jewellery separated them from God, off it would come. Nancy D. Hardesty describes how "*many women felt com-*

pelled to let go of their resistance to public speaking… So speak out they must."[126] (p64) Historian, Pamela J. Walker said:

> *"This willingness to reinterpret Scripture opened the way for reconsidering women's position… the presence of the Holy Spirit could be used to justify unconventional behavior. Advocates of holiness found they could not refuse the prompting of the Holy Spirit even when it moved a woman to kneel and pray for the souls of drunkards in the middle of a saloon or to speak and preach in church*."[2] (p23)

In the mind of the Booths, the dry formalism that had crept into the Methodist church was proof that it lacked the Holy Spirit. As Pamela Walker put it, "*the Booths regarded the formal practices and regulations, including the restrictions placed on women, as worldly brakes on the full exercise of the Holy Spirit*."[2] (p20) On this backdrop, Catherine published her article, Female Teaching, in London in 1859, outlining her theological arguments supporting women's right to teach and preach.[127] Her understanding of entire sanctification convinced her of the appropriateness of their revivalistic methods and of her defence of women preachers. As discussed previously, John Wesley taught that after conversion, in time and with much devotion to God and meditation on His Word, a person could obtain entire sanctification, which meant complete deliverance from sin. Phoebe Palmer, a prominent 19th century evangelist, took Wesley's theology of sanctification a step further and said that not only can we become entirely sanctified, but it can be achieved instantaneously. Salvationists, who were sympathetic to Palmer's views, taught that new converts should seek entire sanctification without delay. Entire sanctification could be obtained immediately by anyone who 1. is convicted of sin; 2. is prepared to renounce sin; 3. consecrates themselves to Jesus; and 4. has faith that the blood of Jesus Christ purifies from all inward sin.[128] It was believed to be a second baptism with subsequent empowerment by the Holy Spirit for more effective service. It thus enabled the convert to live an elevated spiritual life. As she began her own preaching career, Mrs Booth believed she had attained entire sanctification which gave her confidence in the righteousness of her work. How could she be wrong in her understanding of Scripture and her conviction to preach if the Holy Spirit was guiding her?

Wesley taught that perfection was desirable but not required for salvation; whereas the Booths believed that it was absolutely necessary for Christians to seek entire sanctification. Phoebe Palmer, who strongly influenced the Booths' theology, said, "*holiness is not the distinguishing doctrine of any sect, but the crowning doctrine of the Bible*."[126] (p73) In line with this, General Booth said:

> *"Holiness to the Lord is to us a fundamental truth; it stands in the forefront of our doctrines… any evangelist who did not hold and proclaim the ability of Jesus Christ to save His people to the uttermost from sin and sinning should be considered out of place amongst us*."[129] (p5)

This had a profound influence on the Booths' ministry. Entire sanctification was considered crucially important for men and women joining the Army.[2 (p53)] They were expected to demonstrate wholehearted commitment to God and service to the Salvation Army. There was no room for a lukewarm attitude. Holiness was the most important criterion for holding religious office.[2 (p129)] There was much emphasis on holiness and being moved by the Holy Spirit, which would impart wisdom and give them direct thoughts and messages, as described by Mrs Booth:

> "*Take the Bible with you on your knees before the Lord; show Him the words, and say, 'Now, Lord, show me the meaning of this.' Wait, and there will come a voice from the excellent glory. There will come as light from the Shekinah, which will reveal it in your spiritual consciousness, and you will thus know that thing forever. You will be wiser than your teachers with respect to that particular point*."[130 (p167)]

Because of this emphasis on the Holy Spirit for direct guidance, there was naturally less commitment to a literal interpretation of the plain teachings of the Word of God. Though Mrs Booth and Phoebe Palmer believed the Bible to be the standard for all doctrine and did recommend studying all that the Bible says on a topic,[45,126] experience was important for their understanding of Scripture. The deep conviction of the Salvationist, Pamela Walker says, is that "*experience was more significant than mere rational, intellectual knowledge. To encounter the Holy Spirit, to hear God's voice, to smell the fires of hell, or to fall to the floor was a far more meaningful way of knowing God than merely assenting to a creed or knowing a set of doctrines*."[2 (p90)]

Apart from regular Sunday services, members of the Army were expected to attend weekly believer's meetings, based on the traditional Methodist model. In these meetings, members shared their experiences and were given encouragement, instruction and reproof. They were trained in singing, speaking and sharing their testimony. Although these meetings included study of the Bible, leaders were encouraged to avoid lifeless formality and, instead, to engage the members in lively singing and brief speaking and prayer.[2 (p99)] Salvationists strongly believed that holiness, brought about by the Holy Spirit, gave a person spiritual insights more advanced than the most knowledgeable theologian. Not only that, but these extra revelations could be received instantaneously.[130,131] Therefore, before being taught theology in any depth, a new convert could begin sharing their faith in public evangelism. Any man or woman who was entirely sanctified was ready to speak.[2 (p59)]

The big question looming in the mind of Adventists and many other Christians on this topic was, how does one know when the Holy Spirit is working? Mrs White professed to have visions from God. Adventists demanded scriptural evidence that her manifestations and what she proclaimed were truly from God. James White spoke of men and women influenced by Methodist theology appearing:

> "*…in the Advent ranks who professed to be wonderfully led by the Holy Spirit… So wonderfully impressed to do this or that, and so directly taught by the Holy Spirit in relation to their entire duty, how could they err? The idea of mistakes on their part, in doctrine or in duty, was banished from them. Viewing themselves far in advance of their brethren, they were ready to teach even their teachers. And supposing themselves directly taught by the Holy Spirit, they were ready to reject the instructions and corrections of those who labored to help them*."[32 (p142)]

Members of the Holiness movement professed to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit, which they believed was evidenced in physical manifestations, including ecstatic worship, loud preaching, shaking, crying, shouting and falling prostrate. But, questions the sceptic of holiness tradition, how can we trust our feelings and emotions if "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked* (Jer 17:9)?" These sceptics want evidence that what we are thinking and feeling truly is from the Holy Spirit. How can anyone say they are perfectly holy if Scripture says that we deceive ourselves if we think we have no sin (1 Jn 1:8)? James White found fault with those who were teaching that holiness was necessary to enable people to stand when Jesus returns. He believed that because of "*their false notions of entire consecration, they were in readiness for the torch of fanaticism*."[32 (p143)]

Like Mrs Booth, Mrs White also strongly encouraged and supported women's active involvement in gospel ministry, however, her reasoning for this differed from Mrs Booth. She did not adhere to holiness theology and a second baptism of the Holy Spirit for immediate spiritual empowerment. Instead, she believed that all believers receive spiritual guidance primarily through prayerful and methodical study of Scripture as the Holy Spirit leads them. By comparing Mrs White's understanding of the role of women in ministry, we can better understand why she also differed from the Booths in her approach to music and worship. The strong association between women preachers and revivalistic methods in the 1800s is tied to the way Scripture was interpreted and applied. As she describes the different roles of men and women in the Bible, Mrs White remains firmly embedded in Scripture.

Traditionally, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has supported women preachers but has rejected the ordination of women. However, there is growing support for ordination of women, including amongst academic theologians. There are two passages in the Bible which, on their own, strongly suggest that women cannot preach or teach in church:

> "*I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.* ***Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have au-***

thority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. *Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control. This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach… Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus*." (1 Tim 2:8-3:2, 3:8-13)

"*How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God. Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.* ***Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church***." (1 Cor 14:26-35)

The Role of Women in the Home

In this chapter, we will compare Mrs Booth's understanding of the role of women in the home with that of Mrs White's and in a later chapter we will compare their understanding of the role of women in church. According to Mrs White, before the fall, man and woman were equal: "*When God created Eve, He designed that she should possess neither inferiority nor superiority to the man, but that in all things she should be his equal.*"[132 (p484)] Even after the fall, this did not change according to Mrs White – fallen men and women are still equal: "*The wife is to stand by the side of the husband as his equal, sharing all the responsibilities of life, rendering due respect to him who has selected her for his lifelong companion*."[44]

(p214) Therefore, both before the fall and after, Mrs White regarded men and women as equal.

Apparently, by equal, she did not mean identical. On many occasions, she describes the distinct roles of men and women. She explains the distinctness of man and woman prior to the fall: "*God made from the man a woman, to be a companion and helpmeet for him, to be one with him, to cheer, encourage, and bless him, he in his turn to be her strong helper*."[133 (p99)] The man had strength that exceeded that of the woman so that he could be her 'strong helper.' Pr. Jim Howard of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church describes characteristics that he believes signify the leadership role of Adam before the fall:

> "*Adam always seemed to be given the ultimate responsibility for the fall even though Eve sinned first. In the first few chapters of Genesis, we discover that God created Adam first, a point that Paul will later reference when he talks about leadership roles in the church in 1 Timothy 2. We discover that God came to Adam first after eating of the fruit even though Eve was the first to eat it. And also, the man is the one referenced as leaving father and mother and being joined to his wife. Then, in the New Testament, when you go to Romans chapter 5 and verse 12 Paul says that sin entered into the world through one man Adam which would be a very strange thing to say if Adam didn't have leadership responsibility in Eden since again it was Eve and not Adam who was the first to eat the fruit*."[134 (12:23)]

Mrs White describes how, before the fall, God designed in Eden for the father to be priest of the family:

> "*The Sabbath and the family were alike instituted in Eden, and in God's purpose they are indissolubly linked together. On this day more than on any other, it is possible for us to live the life of Eden. It was God's plan for the members of the family to be associated in work and study, in worship and recreation, the* ***father as priest*** *of his household, and both father and mother as teachers and companions of their children*."[135 (p250)]

Mrs White clearly saw a distinction between the role of men and women before the fall. She was to be a 'helpmeet' for him and he was to be her 'strong helper.' The father was to be the priest of the family and the father and mother were both to be teachers of their children. Paul also seems to affirm that there is a distinction in roles between men and women before the fall:

> "*Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.* ***For Adam was formed first, then Eve****. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control*." (1 Tim 2:11-15)

He appears to link the authority of men over women to the divine order at creation. However, Mrs Booth disagrees. She interprets Scripture a bit more loosely. She said of the Genesis narrative of pre-fall Adam and Eve that there "*is not the semblance of inferiority or subjection*."[136 (p5)] She did not believe that there was any significance in God creating Adam first or that God came to Adam first after eating the fruit. Neither did she think it was significant that Paul understood that sin entered into the world through one man, Adam (Rom 5:12). She denied the universal applicability of Paul's statement and, instead, concluded that "*Prior to the fall… the human pair were* ***equal in nature, position, and jurisdiction***."[136 (p5)] In other words, unlike Mrs White, Mrs Booth believed that men and women were equal in all areas, including roles, before the fall. Not all Seventh-day Adventists stick to the traditional Adventist view. Rather, some Adventist scholars and theologians agree with Mrs Booth on this point. Referring to the pre-fall narrative of Genesis, Richard M. Davidson, Senior Research Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at Andrews University argues similarly to Mrs Booth:

> "*This basic passage gives no hint of a divine creation order. Here man and woman are fully equal, with no subordination of one to the other. We find that this description of the relationship between man and woman holds throughout Scripture and beyond*."[137]

Interestingly, as illustrated in this example, Adventist scholars who are in favour of ordination of women, such as Richard Davidson, use many of the same arguments that Mrs Booth used in her article, Female Teaching. Not that Mrs White disagreed with every point either. After all, Mrs White was also in favour of women preachers. However, when their views are laid side by side, there is a clear distinction.

Though they disagree on roles of men and women prior to the fall, Mrs Booth and Mrs White both agree that, after the fall, the wife was subject to the husband. Likewise, Paul seems to indicate that the fall had something to do with the woman's submission to man:

> "*Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And* ***Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression****. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control*." (1 Tim 2:11-15)

Also, in Ephesians, Paul clearly sets out the divine order in marriage:

> "***Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.*** *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might*

sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband." (Eph 5:22-33)

Quoting from this passage (Eph 5:23), holding to a traditional interpretation of Scripture, Mrs White affirms the authority of husbands:

"'*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Saviour of the body,' or church. Christ's rule is one of wisdom and love, and when husbands fulfill their obligations to their wives, they will use their* ***authority*** *with the same tenderness as Christ uses toward the church. When the Spirit of Christ controls the husband, the wife's* ***subjection*** *will only result in rest and benefit, for he will require from her only that which will result in good, and in the same way that Christ requires submission from the church*."[138 (p207)]

Though the husband may be superior in physical strength and in authority as head of his wife, Mrs White affirms that the wife is superior in her peculiar roles. For example, she says: "*the* ***distinctive duties*** *of woman are more sacred, more holy, than those of man*." "*The king upon his throne*," she says, "*has no higher work than has the mother*." The wife is superior in her roles and the husband is superior in his. She said the wife should stand "*faithful at her post of duty and he at his*." She affirms that man is head of the wife and priest of the family, but also that "*The mother is the queen of the home, and the children are her subjects. She is to rule her household wisely, in the dignity of her motherhood. Her influence in the home is to be paramount; her word, law. If she is*

a Christian, under God's control, she will command the respect of her children."[133 (p231-232)]

What is more, Mrs White affirms that the wife is, ultimately, answerable to the Lord: "*The Lord would have the wife render respect unto her husband, but always as it is fit in the Lord*."[44 (p213)] There is no room for a domineering attitude in this relationship. The husband's authority is very much constrained by love and by the character of Christ living in Him and the wife has no duty to her husband when he is acting contrary to Christ. Mrs Booth agrees: "*Even in her present state of subjection as a wife, she is only allowed to submit to her own husband 'as it is fit in the Lord;' her own enlightened conscience being left arbiter of that fitness*."[136 (p6)]

As an illustration, Mrs White describes the story of Abigail and how she recognised the foolish course that her husband, Nabal, was following. She chose to act without the counsel of her husband (1 Sam 25:19) and God apparently approved of her actions. A husband can only faithfully 'stand at his post' when he is in Christ:

> "*But it was not the design of God that the husband should have control, as head of the house, when he himself does not submit to Christ. He must be under the rule of Christ that he may represent the relation of Christ to the church. If he is a coarse, rough, boisterous, egotistical, harsh and overbearing man, let him never utter the word that the husband is the head of the wife, and that she must submit to him in everything; for he is not the Lord, he is not the husband in the true significance of the term*."[133 (p117)]

By contrast, when a man and woman are in harmony with Christ, they will be at one with each other, accepting each one's unique roles. Men are not to have a Nabal-like spirit (1 Sam 25:17) but rather, referring to Ephesians 5:28-33, Mrs White describes how men ought to love their wives:

> "'*…Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.' How could there be unhappy families if all were doers of the Word and not hearers only? The Lord does not require that which is impossible, but all are to* ***live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God****, and those who do this will honor their Redeemer in their married life*."[44 (p217)]

Sadly, husbands and wives do not always recognise the godly wisdom and superior God-given abilities of the other and, therefore, they seek their own way, as described by Mrs White:

> "*In the married life, men and women sometimes act like undisciplined, perverse children. The husband wants his way, and the wife wants her way, and neither is willing to yield. Such a condition of things can bring only the greatest unhappiness. Both husband and wife should be willing to yield his or her way or opinion. There is no possibility of happiness while they both persist in doing as they please*."[133 (p118)]

The serpent promised Eve that she would be like God if she ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 3:5). Because she desired something that was not hers, she lost her equality with Adam and he ruled over her, as described by Mrs White: "*after Eve's sin, as she was first in the transgression, the Lord told her that Adam should rule over her. She was to be in subjection to her husband, and this was a part of the curse*."[132 (p484)] Therefore, Mrs White believed that it was because of sin that man came to dominate the woman. It was part of the curse. But it does not have to be this way in the life of the Christian. Just because man came to lord it over the woman because of sin, does not make it right. Even after the fall, Mrs White says, fallen men and women are equal: "*The wife is to stand by the side of the husband as his equal, sharing all the responsibilities of life*."[44 (p214)]

Ever since the fall, men and women have continued to covet things that do not belong to them:

> "*A neglect on the part of woman to follow God's plan in her creation, an effort to reach for important positions which He has not qualified her to fill, leaves vacant the position that she could fill to acceptance. In getting out of her sphere, she loses true womanly dignity and nobility*."

In other words, Mrs White is saying that when a woman attempts to be something she was not created by God to be, she fails to fulfil her God-given role. She went on to say that "*When God created Eve, He designed that she should possess neither inferiority nor superiority to the man, but that in all things she should be his equal. The holy pair were to have* ***no interest independent of each other****; and yet each had an* ***individuality in thinking and acting***."[132 (p484)] That is to say, they were to work united for the same purpose but each having a different way to achieve that purpose.

The Booths agree that the head of the home is the husband. In his chapter on Love, Marriage and Home, speaking of married couples, General Booth said:

> "*If, therefore, there is to be harmony between them they must agree, in such differences, to accept the decision of one as the decision of both. In this case, the law of Scripture and of usage, and of common instinct points to the husband as having that responsibility as the head of the household*."[139 (p120)]

Mrs Booth said, "*We believe also that the order of God ought to be strictly maintained*."[130 (p52)] However, for Mrs Booth, the distinction in roles between men and women was nominal – kind of emblematic only. In reality, she saw very little distinction in their roles. Norman H. Murdoch, Professor of History at the University of Cincinnati, says that for Catherine, "*A Christian husband's love for his wife… nullifies all but the 'outward semblance of her curse*.'"[140 (p351)]

In contrast to Mrs Booth, Mrs White still held firmly to the traditional Biblical view of the mother's role in the home, which she reiterated many times over in her writings. Paul seems to affirm that the primary role of the wife is in raising a family:

> "*Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless* ***she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control***." (1 Tim 2:11-15)

Mrs White said, "*Amid all the activities of life, the mother's most sacred duty is to her children*." Her writings greatly elevate the mother's role in raising children:

> "*Could the veil be withdrawn and father and mother see as God sees the work of the day, and see how His infinite eye compares the work of the one with that of the other, they would be astonished at the heavenly revelation. The father would view his labors in a more modest light, while the mother would have new courage and energy to pursue her labor with wisdom, perseverance, and patience*."[133 (p233-4)]

Of mothers, Mrs White says:

> "*The first work essential to be done is in the home circle. Those who do not have a disposition to deny self, to humble self, to be yielding and submissive, even as a little child, are not in sympathy with Christ and do not know Him by an experimental knowledge*."[44 (p217)]

Therefore, Mrs White sees the mother's role in her domestic duties as equally esteemed as the husband's role in his distinctive duties – in that sense, they are equal. Though their roles are different, they are of equal importance.

The Booths, on the other hand, depreciated the domestic role of women as unjustly restrictive while they elevated the traditional male role. For example, General Booth spoke out against 'injustice' to officer's wives, as follows:

> "*Many Officers have wives, who, before marriage, managed and captained Corps quite as effectively, or even more so, than their husbands have done, or even will do, and yet these Officers relegate their wives to little more than the discharge of their household duties*."[140 (p358)]

Likewise, the Adventist scholar, Richard Davidson of Andrews University, instead of elevating the domestic role of women as Mrs White did, he agrees with Mrs Booth in seeing the distinctive roles of women in the Bible as social inequalities which God is working to eliminate.[137 (p2-3)]

In summary, Mrs White sticks more tightly to a literal interpretation of Scripture and traditional roles. She believed that, though men and women were equal before the fall and after they fell, they have always had distinctive roles. For example, men were to be priests of the home prior to the fall and husbands head of the wife after the fall. Mrs White also highly esteems the domestic role of women as their most important duty to God. Mrs Booth, on the other hand, interprets

Scripture more loosely. She believed that men and women were equal in every aspect prior to the fall – including in 'nature, position, and jurisdiction,' though it is not stated in Scripture. Though she recognised that man is head of the wife after the fall, she saw it as a nominal role and she denigrated the domestic duties of women as inferior to men's traditional roles. However, the really big controversy lies, not so much with roles in the home but with roles in the church. We will compare their views on this topic in a later chapter.

William and Catherine's marriage is an inspirational love story and an example of what can be achieved when a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, becoming one flesh (Gen 2:24). Throughout their whole life together, they were one in mind and purpose, living in harmony in their mission to serve Christ. At the time of their engagement, Catherine wrote to William:

> "*The thought of walking through life perfectly united, together enjoying its sunshine and battling its storms, by softest sympathy sharing every smile and every tear, and with thorough unanimity performing all its momentous duties, is to me exquisite happiness; the highest earthly bliss I desire. And who can estimate the glory to God, and the benefit to man, accruing from a life spent in such harmonious effort to do His will? Such unions, alas, are so rare that we seldom see an exemplification of the divine idea of marriage*."[14 (p30)]

In hindsight, the Booths certainly did exemplify this ideal in their marriage.

Before going on to the next chapter, lest you feel discouraged about the imperfections in your own relationships, it is important to add here that neither the Booths nor the Whites had flawless marriages or families. Neither Mrs Booth nor Mrs White lived up perfectly to the ideals they espoused when it came to marriage and child rearing, as we will touch on throughout the book. Catherine and William Booths' frequent absence from the family due to ministry commitments, combined with character traits they exemplified and encouraged – independence, outspokenness, austerity, autocratic authority and control – eventually resulted in family division.[14 (ch14,20)] Despite the rift in their family, all of their children grew up to have a deep Christian faith and a commitment to mission, which their parents instilled in them from an early age.[14 (ch8)]

The Whites also experienced fragmentation in relationships at times. As an illustration of their humanness, the Whites' second son, Edson, was not always a good son. In fact, he was quite the problem child. Because of their similar temperament, he often clashed with his father. Edson married young against his parents' wishes. He had a good wife, but they felt he was not mature enough for marriage. Even into his thirties, piggybacking on his parents' reputation, he would talk church members into investing in a business venture that would invariably fail, at which point he would skip town. He became a source of embarrassment for his family.[141]

This led to conflict between James and Ellen because they had different parenting styles. Ellen was more inclined to take a motherly approach and bail him out with the intent to educate him and help him mend his ways. James had a hardline approach and felt Edson should feel the full force of his mistakes. Sadly, James died having never reconciled with his son. Mrs White, on the other hand, never gave up on Edson, spending many years praying for him. He was in his 40s before he was finally converted. After that, he went on to do a tremendous work as a missionary in the South. Mrs White's endurance and spiritual influence paid off in the end.[141]

Chapter 8
Disorder

Emotional revivals in the 1800s came to be associated with female preaching and disorderly practices, plaguing the Booths for much of the remainder of their lives.[2 (p25)] They were constantly having to defend their revivalistic methods. For example, Mrs Booth preached defensively:

> "*People contend that we must have quiet, proper, decorous services. Where is your authority for this? Not here. I defy any man to show it. I have a great deal more authority in this book for such a lively, gushing, spontaneous, and what you call disorderly service, as the Army services sometimes are, in this 14th of Corinthians, than you can find for yours*."[130 (p60)]

The Salvation Army used its uniforms and immensely popular brass bands to attract attention, rather than holding conventional worship services. One of the motives for this approach was the Booths' disillusionment with the cold formality and ritual which had set in at the Methodist New Connexion,[125] for whom General Booth had formerly worked as a preacher and evangelist. The debate between those who favoured orderly services to build a stable congregation and those who favoured zealous preaching had long divided Methodists.[2 (p20)]

Though she was shy and reluctant to preach, Mrs Booth found motherhood difficult and demanding, but on the platform, she said, she felt far more at home than in the kitchen. Financial struggles also influenced her move into a preaching career – she was buoyed by the possibility of earning income from her ministry, but this was dependent on the popularity of her preaching. She became highly critical of the Methodist New Connexion Conference which she considered to be authoritative and restrictive. A preaching career was only possible by separating from the mainline orthodoxy of the Methodist church.[2 (pp31-35)]

General Booth felt 'cribbed, cabined and confined' by the Methodist leadership – he was not content in ordinary pastoral work which he was often called to. Inexperienced ministers were expected to serve their time, to learn and mature in life and theology. But General Booth was young and impetuous. He desired freedom and liberty to do evangelistic work. He longed to do something great with his life and the sooner he could get on with it the better. He wanted to reach the 'lost,' not just those who went to church. So, he left his post with the Methodist New Connexion and branched out on his own.[14,57 (p30)] As described by Pamela Walker, apart from John Wesley, Booth modelled his ministry on the methods of popular revivalists who conducted highly emotional revival meetings, which

brought him into conflict with more 'respectable' members of the Methodist church in Britain:

> "*William's theology and preaching were deeply influenced by revivalists in the United States, particularly James Caughey and Charles G. Finney. These preachers proclaimed in* ***dramatic, emotional language*** *that sinners must find salvation or expect to suffer the eternal torments of hell*."[2 (p19)]

Catherine admired Caughey's freedom. He was not "*handcuffed or shackled by conferences or annual committees. He can go where he likes and stop as long as he likes*."[142 (p34)] The Methodist New Connexion, on the other hand, regarded the governance of the church as necessary discipline and order. The Booths longed for freedom, not only to go where they liked, but to conduct ministry in their own way without restriction.

Like the Booths, Mrs White's family, the Harmons, also had disagreement with the church which led to a separation from the Methodists. However, their separation was primarily over theology and not governance and revival style as it was with the Booths. The doctrine of the Booths' new organisation was essentially Methodist, whereas the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church diverged significantly from Methodist doctrine in some fundamental areas. Like the Harmons, Luther also separated from his church, the Catholic Church, over theology, and he believed in orderliness and opposed those that he perceived to be fanatical or troublemakers, such as the Anabaptists.[143 (p180)] He also believed there should be order in the divine service, especially for those new or weaker in the faith, to assist them to grow in their understanding of God's Word and to become skilful in sharing their faith.[144]

Unlike the Booths, though she was also against dry formalism, Mrs White believed in orderliness in the administration of the church and in the conduct of evangelistic meetings.[145,146 (p115)] Speaking out against formalism, Mrs White said, "*I tell you in the fear of God, our churches are altogether too formal. The love, the tenderness of Christ is not expressed in practice in their intercourse with one another*."[44] Despite this, she saw order in the Bible. For example, there is order in leadership: "*But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God* (1 Cor 11:3)." After studying Scripture, David recognised the importance of order in worship. It was not only the method of moving the ark that he had gotten wrong, but it was also the method of worship. The whole of Israel sang and played musical instruments as the ark was moved without any apparent organisation. However, on the second attempt to move the ark, he instructed the Levites to organise the worship according to the proper order and to appoint leaders to take charge of various components of the worship:

> "*You are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel to the place I have prepared for it. For because you did not do it the*

first time, the Lord our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about ***the proper order****… Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy*." (1 Chron 15:12-13&16)

We see many examples of order in the role distinctions given to individuals throughout the Bible, starting at the top:

"*Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men… Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name*." (Phil 2:5-7&9)

Lucifer, on the other hand, said in his heart, "*I will exalt my throne above the stars of God… I will be like the Most High* (Is 14:13-14)." Therefore, God said to him, "*you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit* (Is 14:15)." He tried to promote himself but was demoted and thrown out of heaven. Mrs White said:

"*Formality should be shunned; but, in so doing, order should not be neglected. There is order in heaven. There was order in the church when Christ was upon the earth, and after His departure order was strictly observed among His apostles. And now in these last days, while God is bringing His children into the unity of the faith, there is more real need of order than ever before; for, as God unites His children, Satan and his evil angels are very busy to prevent this unity and to destroy it. Therefore, men are hurried into the field who lack wisdom and judgment*."[147 (p97)]

Mrs White's understanding of the relation between the roles of men and women reflects her understanding of priority in the Church and in the home. In their early marriage, Mrs White spent much time travelling and preaching, but she felt more drawn to homely duties than she did to ministry outside the home. When the Whites' first child, Henry, was born, Mrs White was happy to have an excuse to make her little nest and to stop travelling. After a while, however, she decided that she should also continue the ministry God had given her to do, but it tore her heart to leave her little one behind in the care of friends. For Mrs White, home was where she belonged and where she wanted to be. The majority of travelling appointments were in winter when James was not able to work and travelling with a small child in the cold winter months was not practical. Mrs White regretted that better arrangements could not be made. This continued for several years until James began work in the printing house and the church developed more of an orderly structure with support and regular work hours.[141]

As with any newlywed, Mrs Booth also looked forward to setting up a home and having children. However, she was strongly drawn to a ministerial career and

felt it was her right to preach and she enjoyed being excused from domestic duties, when possible, to attend to ministry. As with most middle- and upper-class Victorians, Mrs Booth employed maids to help with housework and raising the children. She became increasingly reliant on domestic help over the years as she and William spent more and more time away from home doing ministry.[14 (ch9)]

In the home and in the church, Mrs White believed everything is to be done in an orderly manner according to the Word of God and she believed that **emotionalism leads to disorder**. When emotionalism sets in, there is a natural tendency to move away from God's order, including order in roles and responsibilities as well as rules and regulations. There is to be order and submission to authority according to the dictates of God. Though she claimed her writings were inspired, she recognised their subordinate position to Scripture and that her writings were given to point people to the Bible.

By the standards of most Christian organisations of the time, the Salvation Army meetings were very disorderly. They acquired theatres, music halls and pubs for conducting religious programs. The performances they carried out in these venues were as lively as the secular entertainment of the preceding occupants – people would talk and shout, eat and drink, move about, catch up with friends and come and go as they pleased throughout the meetings.[2] Mrs White shared an experience in Australia in which Salvation Army officers were able to witness the success of orderly Adventist evangelistic meetings over sensationalism:

> *"Quite a number of the Salvation Army were present on these occasions. They can learn that meetings can be held in the open air without the drum, without the jumping and the gesticulations that create a laugh and rob the service of God [of] its solemnity. Our meetings were very orderly, and we know that much prejudice was swept away. A different impression than had hitherto prevailed was left on minds in regards to Seventh-day Adventists."*[146 (p115)]

Appropriate Order in the Organisational Structure

Paradoxically, although the Booths left the Methodists primarily because of the restrictions imposed on them by committees and conferences, they eventually established their own organisation with a strict military style of control. Salvation Army members were expected to put their duty to God and the Army first. General Booth was so consistent in this requirement that, when his daughter Kate and his sons Ballington and Herbert left the Salvation Army, he refused all contact with them.[2] So severe was the rift between Herbert and his father when he resigned from the Salvation Army, that his father did not permit him to take part in his beloved sister Emma's funeral. This broke Herbert's heart.[148] In the home, General Booth raised his family with strict discipline. David Earnshaw explains:

> "*We have plenty of evidence from the letters that the children wrote to their mother and that she wrote to them… that they had a very hard time. Now we have to put it in the Victorian context but we have from the letters that William was very severe on his children… He was very keen at laying on the hands and many a time his children took a severe thrashing*."

He describes how the children did not feel that they were good enough for him. They felt they could not please their father, though they were trying their best.[149] These comments have to be balanced against the often affectionate and loving correspondence also seen between General Booth and his children. However, without trying to discredit him, but simply trying to give the basic facts, David Earnshaw says, there is no doubting that the man General Booth finished up being is not the man that he started out as.[149] Toward the end of his life, he suffered greatly in his own personal life. Into his 60s, he was often lonely, ill and demanding. Though he achieved great things, he was human. Harold Begbie, who wrote a two-volume biography on the life of General Booth, says that toward the end of his life, General Booth sometimes wondered, 'very sadly and pitifully', if he had asked too much of people. Those of his own household broke away from him. Officers forsook him.[57 (p263)] Cathy Le Feuvre, in her biography on the life of William and Catherine Booth, said:

> "*Catherine was still the only person who could be completely honest with and about William Booth, who even his most loyal supporters, friends, and colleagues recognized to be an autocratic leader and, particularly as he grew older, less patient and kind with those around him*."[14 (ch19)]

Initially, their organisation began as a democratic, participatory system which they found to be unwieldy and prone to division. Individual interference threatened the leadership. In order to procure more control, General Booth informed the membership that reorganisation was necessary because they were engaged in 'war.' A new Deed Poll was drawn up and those who could not abide by it were

asked to withdraw. From that point on, General Booth had oversight, direction and control of the organisation until his death.[2] David Earnshaw says that General Booth ran an incredibly tight ship. He did not like committees and he did not believe in democracy.[57,149] It had transformed into an autocratic and strictly hierarchical organisation. Every member was under the strict command of the General. First Commissioner of The Salvation Army, George Railton, argued that this autocratic structure was key to the success of their work, including giving women equality with men.[150 (p105)]

The Army was very much a product of the Booths. Their primary concern was to preach to as many people as possible - a message of salvation and warning of the eternal punishment of hell - using revivalistic methods. At all costs, they were determined to achieve this goal, even if it meant abandoning their church, living with financial hardship and adopting non-conventional outreach methods at the ridicule of others. As circumstances have it, while pursuing that goal, they found themselves in the East End of London working amongst the poor, delivering that message to them. In the 1850s, before the Booths arrived, there were around 144 charities at work in London, many of them Methodist. A lot of these charities combined religion with welfare. This part of London was notorious for its severe poverty, overcrowding, endemic disease and crime. When the Booths encountered the poverty and the enormous needs, they were moved and desired to become a part of the effort to make a change. After years of trying to find his place in ministry and evangelism with limited success, William finally found his calling. He said to his wife, "*Darling! I have found my destiny!*"[14 (ch13)] To his family he said, these people are our people and they shall have our God for their God.[151] From the outset, the Salvation Army was very much a church of action. In time, welfare to the poor evolved to eclipse the emphasis on evangelism.

Apart from Holiness theology and women in ministry, there is very little discussion of theology in the early writings of the Salvation Army. There was minimal thought expressed about the appropriateness of their methods from a Biblical standpoint. The Salvation Army had a very practical theology that was based on experience and observation rather than on systematic theology.[57] Early in the organisation, members received scarcely any formal training but acquired necessary skills through experience.

In 1880, the Salvation Army began to provide formal training of cadets, including basic training in Salvation Army religious beliefs, but it was mostly practical in nature, including account keeping and other practical skills, such as speaking and singing.[2 (p112)] There was no in-depth Biblical education or training in hermeneutics. There was a suspicion of academic theology amongst the early leadership of the Army and a deliberate effort to avoid training an educated clergy.[152 (p16)]

In a letter to William Booth in 1877, George Railton reinforced that there should be "*no college, no book but the Bible, nothing but living teaching*."[153 (p224)] General Booth feared that formal ministerial education would lead to loss of zeal and preferred, instead, to focus training on practical preparation for mission ra-

ther than academic training. Even in later years, when General Booth began to warm to the idea of formal education for his officers globally, he still envisaged the training to be practical in nature, including three main aims: "*teaching on practical godliness; detailed instruction in some form of Salvation Army work; and practical training in the given field*."[152 (p16-17)] In attempting to avoid an aloof clergy, detached from the congregation it was ministering to, General Booth discarded ministerial education. Interestingly, Jesus used simple uneducated, even illiterate fishermen, yet he also used academics such as Paul who could articulate sound doctrine and a physician, Luke, who methodically documented a chronological record of Jesus' life and ministry and the spread of the gospel in the early church.

If we rewind back to the story of Uzzah, King David, who was a mighty man of God with a sincere desire to serve Him, was also exercising a practical religion as the Booths were. He was getting the job done, with much enthusiasm and sincerity. However, he neglected to seek guidance from the Torah. God demonstrated His displeasure by abruptly ending the life of Uzzah. David believed that moving the ark on a cart was appropriate but without checking if it was in line with God's will.

General Booth, who made much of music in his ministry, believed there was no moral force in music, but without robust scriptural reasoning for this viewpoint. His rationale for this was based on loose interpretation of Scripture. The lack of theological discussion in the Salvation Army may be due, in part, to their holiness backgrounds. The Booths both believed that they had been instantaneously cleansed of original sin and imparted with the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit which empowered and guided them to be perfect in works of love and mercy. They desired to have in the Salvation Army what they perceived to be the Pentecost experience of the early church.

Many other church denominations, in contrast, were established primarily on theological grounds. The Lutheran Church, for example, was founded on the grounds of salvation by grace through faith alone (sola fide) which came about by Luther's methodical study of Scripture. The Protestant reformation, in general, came about because people studied Scripture and attempted to remove error and return to a purer Christianity based on the doctrine of the early church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church was founded by numerous Christians from various denominations who studied the Scriptures together with the primary goal of finding truth and discarding what they believed to be erroneous traditions and doctrines. Of those who are teachers, Mrs White wrote:

> "*…unless they become thoroughly familiar with the Word of God and their minds are absorbed in studying the glorious truths concerning the life of the Great Teacher - they will encourage the very errors the Lord is seeking to correct. Plans and opinions that should not be entertained will imprint themselves on the mind, and in all honesty, they will come to wrong and dangerous conclusions. Thus, seed will be sown that is not true grain*."[16 (p155)]

Humans are finite and prone to deception but when we come together in greater numbers, in an orderly manner, in prayer and earnest study of Scripture, we are less likely to make mistakes. This was the lesson that David learned after the death of Uzzah. He learned that, before jumping into action, we have to study Scripture and understand God's will. How can we discern which spirit is guiding us if we have not first thoroughly immersed ourselves in God's Word which was revealed by His Spirit? An autocratic style of governance which tells us what we must or must not believe does not encourage growth in our understanding of Scripture. Everyone must study for themselves and should be given the opportunity to share their understanding of Scripture with others and with the leadership and consensus drawn on the interpretation of Scripture.

The Salvation Army makes the following statement concerning the role of the General:

> "*The general has a role that is similar to the Pope's role within the Catholic Church. Since the Salvation Army maintains a hierarchical, quasi-military structure, all appointments and regulations are issued under the general's authority*."[154]

The British newspaper, The Times, said that General Booth was:

> "*…known as the head of a vast organisation well known over all the world, and yielding to him an obedience scarcely less complete than that which the Catholic Church yields to the Roman Pontiff*."[155 (p250)]

Salvation Army officers had to solemnly promise to obey the General and to report any cases of 'neglect or variation from his orders and directions.' General Booth even appointed his successor - his own son, Bramwell Booth - revealed to the commissioners in his own handwriting in a sealed envelope upon his death.[57 (pp143,153)]

This style of leadership can hinder open dialogue within the church concerning doctrinal issues. For example, General Booth made the decision not to offer Baptism in the Salvation Army, partly due to the controversy amongst evangelicals between infant baptism and baptism by immersion.[2 (p51)] General Booth decided that only spiritual baptism is required and not water baptism. With the prominent role of women in the Salvation Army, if they were to administer the sacraments in church, it would only work to heighten the controversy. Because of the autocratic power that the General held, he was able to shut down any risk of dissension by ordering that members refrain from discussion of the issue. The sacraments, henceforth, have not been practised by the Salvation Army.

Historically, in the Roman Catholic church, any dissent from church teachings attracted discipline. Throughout history, the Pope has been given titles such as Vicar of Christ. The Catholic Encyclopaedia states: "*Vicar of Christ (Lat. Vicarius Christi), a title of the pope implying his supreme and universal primacy, both of*

honor and of jurisdiction, over the Church of Christ."[156 (p403)] Fr. William G. Most, in The Basic Catholic Catechism, said of the authority of the Pope:

> "*By the Magisterium we mean the teaching office of the Church. It consists of the Pope and Bishops. Christ promised to protect the teaching of the Church… the promise of Christ cannot fail: hence when the Church presents some doctrine as definitive or final, it comes under this protection, it cannot be in error; in other words, it is infallible. This is true even if the Church does not use the solemn ceremony of definition. The day-to-day teaching of the Church throughout the world, when the Bishops are in union with each other and with the Pope, and present something as definitive, this is infallible. It was precisely by the use of that authority that Vatican I was able to define that the Pope alone, when speaking as such and making things definitive, is also infallible*.
>
> *A 'theologian' who would claim he needs to be able to ignore the Magisterium in order to find the truth is strangely perverse: the teaching of the Magisterium is the prime, God-given means of finding the truth… Vatican II taught: 'The task of authoritatively interpreting the Word of God, whether written or handed on (Scripture or Tradition), has been entrusted exclusively to the living Magisterium of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ*.'"[157]

Humans are prone to error, whether chosen by the church or by God Himself. Judas was chosen by Jesus, but he betrayed the Lord. King Saul was selected by God but disobeyed His prophet. We cannot put our confidence in humankind. Putting too much power in the hands of a few leads to error. Seventh-day Adventists teach that it is the Holy Spirit that reveals truth to us (Jn 16:13; 1 Cor 2:9-14).[158] Just as we can boldly come to the throne of grace (Heb 4:16) without going through a priest, we can also go to Scripture and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, come to an understanding of Scripture without the need for the clergy to interpret it for us. Speaking of church structure, Mrs White advised:

> "*God has not set any kingly power in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to control the whole body or to control any branch of the work. He has not provided that the burden of leadership shall rest upon a few men. Responsibilities are distributed among a large number of competent men.*
>
> *Every member of the church has a voice in choosing officers of the church. The church chooses the officers of the state conferences. Delegates chosen by the state conferences choose the officers of the union conferences, and delegates chosen by the union conferences choose the officers of the General Conference. By this arrangement every conference, every institution, every church, and every individual, either directly or through representatives, has a voice in the election of the men who bear the chief responsibilities in the General Conference*."[47 (p236)]

What if God did not strike Uzzah dead? The Israelites would have kept carrying the ark all the way to the new City of David by cart. The next time the ark needed transporting, they might have done it the same way, since it was practical and convenient and even King David had approved. If they did not turn to Scripture to discover God's will but instead trusted David's lead, in time, after many generations, it could have easily become custom. When custom becomes set in stone, it is difficult even for Scripture to overturn it. This is how false doctrines and practices often develop. It may begin with sincerity to serve God but a neglect to carefully analyse Scripture. Once a false teaching becomes the norm, it is hard for it to be undone. It becomes tradition. However, custom and human endorsement does not make something right.

If we are to worship God correctly, we have to look for the proper order as outlined in Scripture. If we are to understand what the Bible says about music, we must be as true to the plain commands and teachings of the Bible as possible, while maintaining harmony with all of Scripture to the best of our ability. We must look for God's pattern of use of music and at the way godly Biblical characters used it. We have to look at all the passages on a given topic and lean in the direction of where the weight of evidence lies – the more often something is repeated, especially if given directly by God or His prophets, the more significant its importance. We are not to put confidence in man's wisdom but we are to empty ourselves of our own desires and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us as we seek God's will in Scripture with all our hearts.[158] Jesus said, "*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him **deny himself**, and take up his cross, and follow Me* (Matt 16:24)." We must not rely on the wisdom of individuals, but collectively, we must study Scripture and come to a consensus on the proper way of doing things by following an ordered process that considers the views of all members.

As with every belief, our theology of music should be firmly grounded in Scripture. Many decisions about music and worship style have been, as with the Booths, based on discontentment with formalities and church authority rather than a firm understanding of Scripture. Most Christians have barely studied about music in the Bible. They have not tried to discover why David encouraged shouting, dancing and loud music while Jesus did not talk about music. Why is music, though encouraged, given a subordinate role in the New Testament compared to other forms of ministry? Why is music not even listed as one of the spiritual gifts? Can the cymbals, tambourines, harps and dance of Psalm 150 be extrapolated to include drums and pop rhythms of modern worship?

We must wrestle with these questions and find a satisfactory explanation. We have to strive to harmonise the teachings of the Bible before we rush into adopting innovative music styles for our ministry. Like the Salvation Army, we must be churches of action and practical in our methods (the Salvation Army excelled in this area compared to most other denominations), but we must also be firmly grounded in God's Word. Otherwise, we risk becoming indistinguishable from the world – just another charity or a self-help organisation or just another so called

path to God amongst many. Our message must be distinct and founded on truth and everything we do must express the uniqueness of God.

Chapter 9
Emotionalism

Music is presented as an important form of praise to God in the Bible. The Israelites praised God in song after crossing the Red Sea (Ex 15:1-21). Music was a valuable element of temple worship. Jesus sang with the disciples (Matt 26:30; Mk 14:26) and singing was also part of the narrative of the early Christian church as outlined in Acts (e.g. Acts 16:25). Finally, in the book of Revelation, there are scenes of singing praise to God and the Lamb in heaven (Rev 5:9, 15:3).

Psalm 49, written by the sons of Korah, says, "*I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will solve my riddle to the music of the lyre* (Ps 49:4 ESV)." This verse introduces the Psalm's theme by stating that the speaker will listen to a difficult saying and will use the music of a lyre or harp to help explain the meaning. It suggests that meditating on Scripture with music can help us to better understand deeper spiritual truths.

Moreover, Paul seems to understand that singing accompanies or facilitates the indwelling of the Holy Spirit when he says, "*be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord* (Eph 5:18-19)." When faced with concern, Elisha called for a musician and the hand of the Lord came upon him (2 Kings 3:15). Throughout the Bible, we learn that music is an important way of expressing different aspects of our relationship with God, such as faith, repentance and devotion. It is also a means of proclaiming and remembering God's words and commands (Deut 31:19).

During the dark ages, martyrs sang songs of triumph to God as they were being burned at the stake.[159] The reformer, Martin Luther, had a high regard for music:

> "*I truly desire that all Christians would love and regard as worthy the lovely gift of music, which is a precious, worthy, and costly treasure given mankind by God... next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in this world*."

Again, Luther wrote: "*After theology I accord to music the highest place and the greatest honour*."[160 (p4)] Music was a chief pleasure for General Booth.[161] He believed that Christian music should be used to attract people and to speak the message of salvation to their hearts.[3] As a preacher in the Methodist church, he noticed there really was not much joy in church a lot of the time. For example, as he looked over the congregation as they sang "Oh happy day", there wasn't much happiness to make it a happy day.[31 (9:18)] Mrs White said that music, rightly employed, "*is a precious gift of God, designed to uplift the thoughts to high and noble*

themes, to inspire and elevate the soul… It is one of the most effective means of impressing the heart with spiritual truth."[135 (pp167-8)] It is widely agreed, therefore, that music is an important part of the worship of God.

Music is also one of the strongest triggers of, and most effective mediums for, conveying emotions.[162] Emotions are an essential part of life but can be harmful if not controlled appropriately, as seen in some of the fanatical demonstrations in 19th century revivals. Peter counselled us to be sober-minded (1 Peter 1:13, 4:7, 5:8-9). The Pulpit commentary interprets sober as: self-restrained, calm, thoughtful and avoiding excitement and neglect of common duties.[163] Barne's Notes on the Bible says: "*There are advantages in seriousness of mind. It enables us to take better views of things… a calm, sober, sedate mind is the best for a contemplation of truth, and for looking at things as they are*."[164] King Solomon said there is wisdom in sombreness over amusement: "*The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools* (Ecc 7:4-5)."

Jesus and the apostles talk a lot about joy and rejoicing, but this joy comes in response to abiding in Jesus rather than a reaction to external stimuli. For example, Jesus said:

> "*As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you,* ***that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full***." (Jn 15:9-11)

Throughout His ministry, Jesus brought about conviction and transformation by teaching, preaching and instruction. Never in the gospels did he use instruments or music or popular entertainment to create excitement or joy in his listeners. Likewise, with the apostles, the emphasis is on preaching and teaching.

In the book of Psalms, we do find outward expression of ecstatic joy in the last few Psalms, but only after 147 Psalms of thoughtful reflection on our wretchedness, sorrow and lament and reflecting on God's glory and His creation, redemption, judgement, sovereignty, wisdom, law, mercy, compassion, guidance, help in time of trouble, righteousness, peace, holiness and many other topics. The purpose of the praise is a climactic celebration of God, but only after meditating on His law and his perfect character. Reflection on God's Word brings conviction and is followed by a natural outpouring of praise. When Paul instructs believers to sing together, he says to sing and make melody **in our hearts** to the Lord (Eph 5:19). The melody is to emanate from the heart.

There is praise scattered throughout much of the book of Psalms; however, it is not until the very end of the book that we find true ecstatic praise. It begins with the following stanza in the opening verses of Psalm 148:

> "*Praise the Lord!*
> *Praise the Lord from the heavens;*

Praise Him in the heights!
Praise Him, all His angels;
Praise Him, all His hosts!
Praise Him, sun and moon;
Praise Him, all you stars of light!
Praise Him, you heavens of heavens,
And you waters above the heavens!" (Ps 148:1-4)

This enraptured praise continues throughout the last three Psalms. This is an important pattern that we see in the Bible. Euphoric praise is not a momentary feeling brought about by an external stimulus, such as music, but it is the end result of discovering God and it flows from the heart. Psalms opens with the admonition to meditate on the law of the Lord day and night and joyous praise is the outcome as expressed at the very end of Psalms.

The Science of Excitement & Decision Making

Neuroscience and brain imaging is revealing just how powerful the influence of music is over our emotions. Sukhbinder Kumar is a neuroscientist who specialises in auditory perception, cognition and emotion processing. He and his colleagues have been involved in numerous studies which have repeatedly shown that music is a powerful stimulus for all kinds of emotional experiences. "*There's nothing like it that evokes such strong emotions*," he says.[165 (p123)]

The universality of music also makes it a useful tool for creating excitement in congregations. People commonly think that the emotional meaning of music is primarily culturally dependent. However, this view has been challenged by the research of Dr Petr Janata and colleagues. Janata is a cognitive neuroscientist with a special interest in the mechanisms underlying strong emotional experiences of music. It is recognised that listeners can perceive the mood expressed by music of a different culture. In one of Janata's studies, excerpts of Western classical, traditional Chinese and Hindustani classical music were presented to controlled groups of participants. Participants felt a similar number of chills to both familiar and unfamiliar musical styles. Chills is an autonomic response and, therefore, a useful objective measure of a person's emotional reaction to a stimulus. This study suggests that strongly felt emotional responses can be induced cross-culturally.[166]

People often have the idea that music is innocuous and, therefore, music choice should merely be a matter of personal preference. However, Steven Brown, researcher in cognitive neuroscience, and his colleague, Ulrik Volgsten, professor in Musicology, emphasise the power of music to influence us in their book Music and Manipulation, On the Social Uses and Social Control of Music. On the back cover of their book, it is stated:

"*Since the beginning of human civilization, music has been used as a device to control social behavior… Music is an emotive manipulator that influences*

attitude, motivation and behavior at many levels and in many contexts. This volume is the first to address the social ramifications of music's behaviorally manipulative effects, its morally questionable uses and control mechanisms, and its economic and artistic regulation through commercialization, thus highlighting not only music's diverse uses at the social level but also the ever-fragile relationship between aesthetics and morality."[167] (back cover)

God never forces allegiance to Him - including emotional manipulation. Given the powerful influence of music on our emotions and its universality, a whole congregation of worshippers from diverse backgrounds, even culturally diverse, can have a deep emotional experience due to the influence of music if it is highly emotive. They do not have to understand or believe the message to be moved by the music. Mrs White argues that highly exciting emotional experiences are 'not favourable to growth in grace, to true purity and sanctification of the Spirit.'[168] (p612) On the other hand, church services which are dominated by the message, rather than by excitement driven by highly emotional music and loud energetic preaching, will stir the hearts of those who are truly convicted by the message. If Mrs White is correct, this would be an example of a 'healthy enthusiasm' created by the Holy Spirit.

Dr Archibald D. Hart, Senior professor of psychology and dean emeritus, Fuller Theological Seminary said of excitement:

"*Our world and our digital world is a world of excitement. One famous sociologist just recently said that 'Excitement is now our most dangerous drug.' And we are literally fragmenting the brain. Scientists are now saying we are rewiring the brain… And not only that, but we are dumbing it down. There is a lot of evidence to show that our brightest students at our top universities are now not as smart as they used to be.*

Multitasking for example: everyone thinks that multitasking is a good thing for you. You must learn to multitask because you'll get on better in the world - absolute nonsense! The science is clear that it fragments the brain. You are toggling and jumping backwards and forwards. And we are losing our capacity to stay focused. We are losing our capacity to contemplate and most important, we are losing our ability to tolerate boredom… I'm telling you now as a scientist, with expertise in neurology and psychology, boredom is something the brain needs a lot of. Boredom is necessary for the learning process because, if you keep rushing things in… nothing stays put, it all goes out again the other side."[169]

Research has shown that intense excitement can diminish attention and concentration as well as lead to distorted perception and judgement. After very exciting events, such as concerts, people are often left with symptoms of grief and depression which can last for greater than 2 weeks. Symptoms can include fatigue,

difficulty concentrating and feeling sad, empty and disconnected.[170,171] When we feel sad, research has shown that we set our goals lower.[172]

Another well-known phenomenon of concerts is post-concert 'amnesia' where chunks of the concert are totally forgotten. When bombarded with sensory overload, such as at a concert, cortisol levels rise compromising frontal lobe executive function which is important for cognitive functions such as attention, reasoning, judgement and impulse control.[170,173] According to Psychology Today, there is a reason why casinos employ bright lights and loud noises:

> "*They want you to get excited. The more excited you feel, the more likely you'll be to spend large amounts of money*." Therefore, they advise that "*We make the best decisions when we can achieve a careful balance between emotions and logic. When your emotions run too high, your logic will be low, which can lead to irrational decisions*."

Excitement can cause us to overestimate our chances of success and underestimate the risks.[172] Another thing that causes us to overestimate our success is what is known as the Dunning-Kruger Effect. This effect occurs when a person's lack of knowledge and skill in a certain area causes them to overestimate their own competence, leading to flawed decision-making. As Dan Pilat, author of the best-selling book 'Intention' said:

> "*People who don't know much about a given subject don't have the knowledge or skills to spot their own mistakes or knowledge gaps. Due to these blind spots, they can't see where they're going wrong, and they, therefore, assume they're doing fine*."[174]

Therefore, excitement coupled with a lack of Biblical knowledge can greatly impair our judgement. For example, we may overestimate our likelihood of salvation. We may think we are right with Jesus, when in actual fact, we do not even know Him. Young people may come to church and in the excitement of the worship, give their hearts to Jesus and then go to the night club that evening still thinking that they are right with Jesus. They may underestimate the weakness of their flesh and the power of the devil to manipulate them and draw them away from Jesus.

Fanaticism in the Nineteenth Century

In the 19th century, there were sporadic outbreaks of emotionally expressive worship styles in various evangelical Protestant denominations, particularly in the Holiness movement. The Salvation Army in its early years was a very different entity to what it is today. Roland Robertson divides the establishment of the Salvation Army into four phases. He says the first two phases of Salvation Army's history was characterised by sensationalist methods of conversion.[175] Salvationists would stop at almost nothing to attract the attention of the public. For example, two

Army lasses stirred up an immense sensation and record crowds when they paraded the streets in nightgowns over their uniforms.[176] Another officer lay motionless in the snow for 45 minutes every night until, after several days, he finally drew a crowd, upon which time he stood up and preached.[2] Many of their preachers used theatrical techniques. Posters advertising the spectacular were used to draw crowds. The music and display attracted those who had no interest in hearing about God or the Bible. The Salvation Army leaders also drew on the controversy and novelty surrounding women speakers to draw a crowd with extraordinary effect. These methods – the brass bands, theatrical preaching, street exhibitions and women preachers – all appealed to the senses and created a storm of excitement. George Scott Railton viewed sensationalism as the most effective means of arousing people out of their callous indifference.[2]

General Booth himself was not blind to the fact that open acts of repentance might be produced by a mere passing excitement. In a letter to him when he was in his early ministry, Catherine wrote: "*I know how possible it is to preach & pray & sing & even shout while the heart is not right with God… Watch against mere animal excitement in your revival services*."[14] However, General Booth felt that excitement was necessary to make it easier for people to overcome the appreciable barriers to conversion.[57] Though his methods attracted much criticism in the early years, as the organisation grew, his popularity around the world increased. In a report, the General wrote:

> "*When I went to Japan, the entire missionary community everywhere united to uphold me as the exemplar of true Christlike action for the good of all men. But the leaders of all the five sects of Buddhism were no less unanimous in their welcome to me, or in their expressions of prayerful desire for the success of my work.*"[57 (p52)]

When the Salvation Army published a successful article in their periodical, The War Cry, opposing the work of the brothels in Japan, the brothel owners immediately hired men to attack sellers of The War Cry. When word got out, the whole Press of the country came out strongly on the side of the Salvation Army and from that day on their standing in the country was assured.[57] The General continued his report as follows:

> "*In India and Africa I have repeatedly seen supporting me in my indoor and outdoor demonstrations the leaders of the Hindu, Parsee, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, and Mohammedan communities, who had never met with the Christians in so friendly a way before. I cannot think this would have been the case had I ever become settled amongst any Christian body in this country*."[57 (p52)]

Between the social work and the exuberant presentations, General Booth was gaining quite a reputation. Excitement began to centre around General Booth and his family as they gained celebrity status. Kings and government officials wel-

comed him to their tables. The Queen praised General Booth for his success.[2] He was received by King Edward VII in 1904 and granted an honorary doctorate from Oxford University in 1907.[177] Booth weddings became a grand public spectacle, with twenty thousand people, for example, attending the wedding of Frederick Tucker and Emma Booth, General Booth's daughter. Upon the death of Catherine Booth in 1890, she was praised as a most famous and influential Christian woman of her time and 50,000 people attended her funeral.[2] On a tour of the United States in 1903, the General was welcomed by large audiences in their thousands and received by President Roosevelt at the White House. Policemen had to keep the crowds back as people came out in their droves to catch a glimpse of the General. Even in far-flung lands such as India where he expected small turnouts, he was pleasantly surprised to be met by crowds of greater than 3000 people.[57] General Booth recalled a pleasurable send-off he experienced in 1900:

> "*On that occasion a crowd of my own people and friends came to the station to give me a send-off. Such was the affection shown, and so manifest was the pleasure derived from my visit, that I said to myself: 'Why should I not impart this satisfaction to those comrades and friends throughout the country who have never had the satisfaction of seeing my face, or hearing my voice*?'"

That was the inspiration for starting his motor tours. One little girl remarked that the General was like Father Christmas, while an old lady who had lost the use of both of her legs, waited eagerly for him to pass by her home. When he did, she remarked, "*I can now die happy, I have seen The General*."[57 (p207)] One reporter wrote:

> "*It was not mere love of sensation that led such a stream of men to the Princes Hall on Tuesday evening. They wished for once to come face to face with the old General whose work they had learnt in the course of time to value. Men of science, clergymen and officials and educated people generally, for once made The Army their rendezvous*."[57 (p226)]

So popular had this man become that an unhealthy admiration developed. People started to put too much stock in the man rather than his message. Similar could be said of Mrs White. Some of those convinced of her prophetic gift began to develop an unhealthy admiration for the person rather than the message and were reading her books more than they read the Bible and speaking of Mrs White more than they spoke of Jesus – though Mrs White strongly discouraged this behaviour. Speaking of Jesus, John the Baptist said, "*He must increase, but I must decrease* (Jn 3:30)."

Ambition was a constant temptation for General Booth. As a young man, he longed to be a preacher and evangelist but, because of the competition for the pulpit, he became increasingly frustrated at the lack of opportunities. Numerous

times in her letters to her husband, Catherine warned against becoming overly ambitious. In 1852, she wrote to her fiancé:

> "*My dearest Love, beware how you indulge that dangerous element of character, ambition. Misdirected it will be everlasting ruin to yourself and perhaps to me, alas. Oh, my Love, let nothing earthly excite it, let not self-aggrandizement fire it; fix it on the Throne of the Eternal*."[14]

Again, in 1853, she wrote to William:

> "*I know how popularity & prosperity have a tendency to elate & exalt self, if the heart is not humbled before God. I know how Satan takes advantage of these things to work out the destruction (if possible) of one whom the Lord uses to pull down the strong holds of his kingdom…*
>
> *Allow me, dearest, to caution you against indulging ambition to be either a revivalist or anything else. Try to get into that happy frame of mind to be satisfied if Christ be exalted, even if it be only by compelling you to lie at the foot of the cross & look upon him*."[14]

Now, in older age, he appears to be revelling in recognition. But, in 1904 when invited to Buckingham Palace to meet King Edward VII, perhaps recalling his wife's advice, he wrote in the king's autograph book: "*Some men's ambition is art. Some men's ambition is fame. Some men's ambition is gold. My ambition is the souls of men*."[14]

Upon his death in 1912 at age 83, 150,000 mourners attended General Booth's funeral.[177] By contrast, Mrs White's main funeral service was attended by only 3000 people.[178] Upon his death, the General was highly venerated in the press across the globe. Berlin Exchange Courier said of General Booth that he was "*perhaps the most popular man of our day*."[179 (p267)] The General Gazette of Erfurt called him "*The Bonaparte of free Social help*."[180 (p267)] The General Business Paper of Amsterdam said that he was "*one of the noblest men who ever lived*."[181 (p271)] The Age, of Milan said "*he was one of the most celebrated men in the world*."[182 (p273)] Swedish Morning Standard said General Booth was one of the world's "*noblest and most remarkable men*."[183 (p274)] Gothenburg's Post said he was "*the greatest modern apostle of Christianity, charity, and mercy… and one of the most discussed and remarkable of modern personages*."[184 (p275)] The Daily Chronicle said he was the world's "*greatest missionary evangelist, one of the supermen of the age. Almost every land on the face of the globe knows this pioneer and his Army.*"[185 (p253)] The Army had procured much fame and adoration. So influential was General Booth that over 50 substantial biographies have been written on his life since his death.[31 (3:22)]

If he was such a successful evangelist, why not embrace his methods? If music was one of his best helps in the growth of his movement, why hold back on using popular secular tunes as he did? The General did not just use music to create excitement and get people's attention but 'startling' and 'terrific' content in his ser-

mons. He discovered that simply preaching of 'Christ weeping over sinners' did not get the desired attention of the audience. His wife, Catherine, would often help in his sermon preparation and the following is a request he made of her in one of his many letters to her:

> "*I want a sermon on the flood, one on Jonah and one on the Judgment. Send me some bare thoughts; some clear, startling outlines. Nothing moves people like the terrific. They must have Hellfire flashed before their eyes, or they will not move. Last night I preached a sermon on Christ weeping over sinners, and only one came forward, although several confessed to much holy feeling and influence. When I preached about the harvest and the wicked being turned away numbers came. We must have that kind of truth which will move sinners*."[186 (p19)]

It is clear that General Booth had a great passion to reach the lost and believed excitement was an effective means of achieving this. Mrs White disagreed. She repeatedly cautioned against excitement, arguing that it distracts us from contemplation of truths: "*We need to be thoughtful and still, and to contemplate the truths of revelation. Excitement is not favourable to growth in grace, to true purity and sanctification of the Spirit.*"[168 (p612)] In 'Selected Messages' she says that it is not our job to create excitement, but it is the work of the Spirit: "*Calmly and clearly preach the word. We must not regard it as our work to create an excitement. The Holy Spirit of God alone can create a healthy enthusiasm*."[12 (p16)] "*Love is the agency through which God works to draw the heart to Him*,"[16 (p283)] she said. In everything we do, we are to demonstrate calmness: "*In our speaking, our singing, and in all our spiritual exercises, we are to reveal that calmness and dignity and godly fear that actuates every true child of God*."[12 (p43)] She also said, "*the itching desire to originate something new results in strange doctrines*."[12 (pp37-8)] Martin Luther also criticised those who "*rush in… without faith or reason, and who delight only in novelty and tire of it as quickly, when it has worn off*."[7 (p19)]

The Salvation Army's counterargument to the accusation they were attempting to substitute excitement for a deep heart work was the great reaping they were experiencing, as described by Mrs Booth:

> "*Something more than excitement*," it has been argued, "*is necessary to produce a force of men and women who deny themselves all personal comfort and ease, and, separating themselves from all their old friends, come out in all weathers, night after night, to do their utmost for the rescue of others, whom they see to be perishing around them… It must be a true and not a false faith which can enable rough men, who have been accustomed to drink and swear and fight, and delicate women, to go through storms of abuse and even to endure all sorts of violence without retaliation… in every part of the world to which it has gone, the Army has succeeded in assembling together crowds of the most ignorant and ruffianly*

kind, thus proving that the means made use of have been admirably fitted for the accomplishment of the purpose in view."[45 (p204-6)]

While large growth can be a sign of the success of a ministry and the working of the Holy Spirit, it is not absolute proof. In fact, truths can make a message unpopular. During Jesus' ministry, crowds of people followed Him but when He told them hard sayings, they soon departed (Jn 6:60-66). Some have reasoned, perhaps unfairly, that Salvation Army theology is just an expression of 'self-help' for the destitute,[2] since even secular organisations can transform drunkards into able citizens.

There are many agnostics, atheists, secular organisations and people and organisations of other faiths who work tirelessly for the needs of the downtrodden. This is excellent and deserving of respect, but it is not proof that they are faithfully carrying out God's will. Even tyrants can also do acts of kindness. We can look to numbers and praise God that His spirit is transforming lives, but we should never look to numbers as a measure of our success or failure. Success in ministry is measured by our faithfulness to God's will and our abiding in Him. If the church is not growing, we should ask ourselves, are we doing His will? Are we teaching and observing all that Jesus commanded (Matt 28:20)? Are we totally consecrated to Him and totally dependent on His Spirit? These are the measures of success.

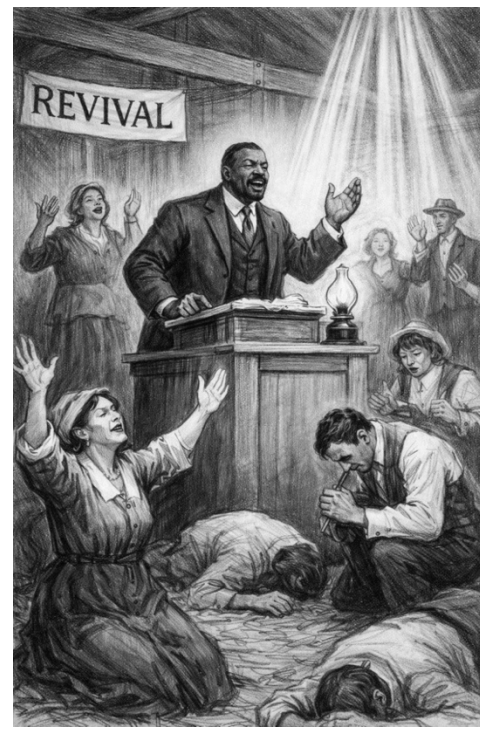
In an interview on his YouTube channel to two members of the Newsboys Christian rock band, Sean McDowell posed the following question concerning Christian music: "*do you share the concern that there's an overemphasis on emotionalism*?"[187] Sean expresses his concern for the emphasis on feeling and experience rather than obedience and faithfulness, which the Bible talks a lot about. He queries whether or not the emotionally high moments brought about by Christian rock and pop concerts might foster the idea that it is only in these emotional states that we experience God. In response, Jeff Frankenstein, keyboardist for Newsboys, admits that we are very emotional people so we can easily be emotionally manipulated; therefore, leaders need to be sure that what is coming out is grounded in truth and reality and it is not just something to rile people up.[187]

This is sound advice; however, during the conversation Jeff appears to inadvertently contradict his own advice. He recalls his experience growing up in a Pentecostal church and how the teachings and practices were not always sound. But he argues that just because not everything was 'legit' doesn't mean that, overall, the church's teachings were not acceptable. If some of it is 'legit' then that's what you go on, he argues.[187]

However, Jesus taught us to recognise false teachers by their fruits. If they are producing bad fruit, then they are false teachers. In Testimonies for the Church, volume 2, we read: "*The hypocritical Pharisees prayed and fasted, and observed the forms of godliness, while they were corrupt at heart*."[188 (p142)] Even the worst criminal can do acts of kindness but is judged according to his criminal acts. Likewise, a church is gauged by its false teachings rather than its true teachings. The devil mixed truth with error when he tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden and emo-

tionally manipulated her with false promises. Prosperity theology does the same thing. False teachings can be very persuasive, especially if the worship is emotionally driven, and can have serious consequences for a person's faith. In God's kingdom there is perfect harmony between love, mercy, peace, faithfulness and righteousness (Ps 85:10-11).

The great religious awakenings of 19th century America were facilitated by large camp meetings which drew crowds numbering in the thousands. Most of the time, they produced a strong influence for good and music was often used to good effect. However, the camp meetings of some denominations of the 1800s were prone to sensationalism. Many historians recognise that music was at least partially responsible for bringing about extreme emotionalism and excitement in these camp meetings. Preachers, such as General Booth, liked to use songs popularised by revivalists, such as Ira D. Sankey and Dwight L. Moody, which were often simple and repetitive.[2] Hymns were sometimes sung over-and-over with hypnotic effect, leading to erratic behaviour, such as jumping, screaming, clapping the hands, thumping the floor and agitating the body and lying prostrate.[9 (p41-2,47)]



For them, these bodily manifestations demonstrated a physical encounter with God and were sought after as a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Salvation came through the body, they believed. The music, preaching and other sensational performances were intended to cause people to sing, clap, shout and move the body until the Holy Spirit came upon them.[2] It was not uncommon in these settings for people to fall into trance-like states that could last for hours or even days.[189–191] As described by Walker, these Christians believed that "*A religion that did not make a convert shake, weep, and shout did not have the power to transform that person into a Christian, ready to do battle with sin*."[2 (p243)] In her concluding remarks in her book on the history of the Salvation Army, Walker states:

> "*Its evangelical, holiness theology, dramatic bodily conversions, and the steadfast commitment to a strict behavioral code all link the Salvation Army to the Pentecostal movement of the early twentieth century.*" Given the large growth of the Pentecostal church and its widespread influence, she

reasons that the Salvation Army contributed to one of the most significant developments in twentieth-century Christianity.[2 (p243)]

Pentecostal & Charismatic Influence

Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are the modern-day version of the early Salvation Army. Similar behaviours to the 19th century revivalist meetings can be witnessed in contemporary Christian worship services when songs are played repetitively. Contemporary songs often lend themselves to repetition due to the simple lyrics and repeated 'builds' that create tension and increase energy toward a drop to keep the audience interested and maintain a high level of emotion. For example, Way Maker was sung at Jesus '19 in Orlando, Florida, January 1st, 2020, and recorded live and made available on YouTube. The song was played continually for a marathon 28 minutes, repeating the same line over and over again for much of the song. One of the lead singers is seen swirling around, throwing the arms and legs in the air, jumping up and down, sitting on the floor rocking backwards and forwards, shaking the head, shaking the arms and legs, sitting on all fours on the floor and speaking with a quivering voice.[192] In the 19th century, this kind of behaviour was termed fanaticism. Similar manifestations are often seen in Pentecostal worship services. Unfortunately, modern music has become so powerful at capturing people's interest that it can take over and dominate the worship service. It can also crowd out time for prayer and Bible study in our daily lives.

In an attempt to keep everyone happy, church leaders have segregated congregations according to preferred worship style. However, when the Methodists splintered into numerous groups, each going their own way according to the style of worship and revival they preferred, it led to extremes - some to extreme excitement and fanaticism, others to extreme formalism and ritual. Mrs White urged members to 'press together.'[16 (p292)] When we pull together, it prevents extremes: grandma does not like the modern music, so the music gets toned down a bit; the young people get bored with repeating the same old hymns, so new medleys are added to keep it interesting. In the end, balance is maintained. The worship does not end up dry and formal, neither does it become like a night club atmosphere.

The problem with extremes is that emotional experiences without understanding do not lead to lasting conviction. In His explanation of the parable of the sower, Jesus said:

> "*When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles*." (Matt 13:19-21)

Emotional experiences might hook people in and grow the church rapidly, but without depth of truth, these members can easily fall away. The American Super Bowl and the Australian State of Origin are examples of how hype and emotion can draw people in. A large proportion of the crowd and those who tune in on television know little about football, its rules or the players because they rarely watch it or take any notice of it the rest of the year. The excitement draws them in. If they had to sit through a game without the added effects of sound and music, they would be bored and confused. They would not attend the next time. Only the die-hard footy lovers would still attend because they are in it for the footy and not for the emotional experience. Likewise, sincere Christians are drawn to the message and not the experience. Though music helps, it is the message that sustains them and guides them through every difficult experience.

One reason music has gained the influence it has is because of modern technology coupled with large resources that have been injected into creating catchy tunes. Recent research has found that the most popular worship songs come from four influential Charismatic megachurches - Bethel, Hillsong, Passion City Church and Elevation. These churches believe a particular style of worship song is instrumental in bringing about God's presence in a meaningful and powerful way – a primary means of connecting with God. They have had a major influence on the spiritual practices of churches around the world.[81] To varying degrees, these churches hold to Charismatic Word of Faith teachings, including the belief that Christians can gain financial prosperity, power and good physical health through prayer and belief in Jesus' resurrection and death.

Cristina Rocha, Professor of Anthropology at Western Sydney University, said that by adopting pop music, cool designs, fashion trends, and styles of clubs and concerts, churches like Hillsong have blurred the sacred and the secular (similar to General Booth).[46] There is less distinction between what is sacred and what is of the world. If the lyrics are removed, it becomes indistinguishable from secular pop music. Even with the lyrics, some Christian songs might be confused as simply secular love songs. The Salvation Army became so adept at copying the designs of the advertisements of popular entertainment that people sometimes mistakenly attended Army programs thinking they were music-hall events or circus performances.[2] Likewise, some modern Christian artists have so mastered the art of copying secular music that it has become almost indistinguishable from it.

Chapter 10
Moral & Spiritual Influences of Rock Music

King Solomon advises that "*It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to* ***hear the song of fools*** (Ecc 7:5). He also says to "***Leave the presence of a fool****, for there you do not meet words of knowledge* (Prov 14:7)." So, if we are to leave the presence of fools and avoid their songs, we need to be able to identify who a fool is. King David said, "*The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God* (Ps 14:1).'" Some of the other characteristics of a fool described in the Bible, include: a person who proclaims folly (Prov 12:23), spurns a parent's discipline (Prov 15:5), speaks perversity (Prov 19:1), is quick-tempered (Prov 12:16), mocks at sin (Prov 14:9) or commits sexual immorality (Prov 6:32; 7:7–12). While not pretending to be righteous and perfect ourselves, this list of characteristics of fools sums up many of the glaring and unapologetic immoral and godless attributes of the secular music industry. What Solomon's text, therefore, suggests is that popular worldly music, in general, is the 'song of fools.' Having said that, we have all been fools at times, so we should avoid calling people fools, but Solomon's advice to avoid spending time in the presence of people who openly live foolish lifestyles is sound advice, including avoiding their songs.

Solomon's advice and the Bible's definition of a fool would also suggest that we should not describe someone as virtuous simply because they have talents and 'good works' - which is often seen in musicians. Pop stars may be highly skilled at their art plus they may support charities or advocate for the disadvantaged. It is often concluded that, if they do enough good works, regardless of their flaws, then their music must be acceptable to listen to. We are quick to rationalise the virtues of something we watch or listen to as long as there is some good found in it. Perhaps this is why the theologian, Mark Powell, author of Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Christian Music, believes that secular and Christian rock and roll has done more good for humanity in the last thirty odd years than all of the theologians in the world.[5] However, much immorality in rock and pop music has to be filtered through to get to the good.

According to the Biblical definition, musicians who are agnostic or promote sexual immorality or perversity of any kind, are fools. We are to depart from them. Though we should not call them fools, we must recognise the foolishness of their ways and their music. Folly tends to contaminate any good thing that it comes in contact with. Some secular musicians may have some wonderful traits and they may be kind-hearted and generous. They may even eventually turn to God, but while ever someone is deliberately and openly continuing in foolishness, accord-

ing to the Biblical definition, we should not listen to their songs, as advised by Solomon. But how far do we take this? Does it mean all secular music is bad and should be avoided? We will talk more about this topic in a later chapter.

General Booth and Mrs White were both opposed to popular secular music and entertainment. General Booth viewed it as evil. Mrs White said:

> "*When turned to good account, music is a blessing; but it is often made one of Satan's most attractive agencies to ensnare souls. When abused, it leads the unconsecrated to pride, vanity and folly*."[193 (p505)]

Her comments on popular secular music are always negative.[194] For example, she warned that songs "*fit for the dance hall*" cause angels to flee from the scene and darkness gathers around those who are present.[193 (p505)] "*A love for music,"* she said, *"leads the unwary to unite with world lovers in pleasure gatherings where God has forbidden His children to go*."[195 (p594)]

However, for General Booth, it was only the lyrics that made music bad; therefore, any style of music was acceptable for worship as long as the lyrics were spiritual. Mrs White, on the other hand, believed that the style and characteristic of music are also important. She said:

> "***Satan knows what organs to excite, to animate, engross and charm the mind so that Christ is not desired****. The spiritual longings of the soul for divine knowledge, for a growth in grace, are wanting.*"[193 (p496)]

Mrs White's suggestions for appropriate worship music, includes: "*not loud singing… but clear intonation, correct pronunciation and distinct utterance*;"[196 (p144)] "*like the music of the birds - subdued and melodious*;"[168 (p510)] "*conducted with solemnity and awe*;"[197 (p493)] "*not funeral notes, but cheerful, yet solemn melodies. The voice… modulated, softened, and subdued*."[168 (p508)]

Is there any evidence from the Bible that music in itself has influence for good or evil? We know from the Bible, especially from Saul's experience, that music has power over spirits. As discussed in a previous chapter, Saul disobeyed God's command to utterly destroy the Amalekites (1 Sam 15:19) and the prophet Samuel told Saul that "*rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft* (v23)." Soon afterward, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit entered him (16:14). Whenever the distressing spirit was upon Saul, David would play his harp, and the distressing spirit would depart from him (v23).

Paul says we wrestle against "*spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places* (Eph 6:12)." We are to be sober minded and vigilant because our *"adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour* (1 Pet 5:8)." Spirits are going about looking for someone to torment. If spirits are driven out of someone, they soon return with even greater force if the person is void of the Holy Spirit (Lk 11:24-26), such as when we are living in rebellion against God. The tormenting spirit left Saul only to return again because he failed to fix his mind

on the Lord (1 Sam 18:10-11; 19:9-10). We leave ourselves vulnerable if we are not in continual prayer and meditation upon God's Word (Eph 6:17-18).

If the right music has the power to drive out evil, then it stands to reason that certain music might also have power to invite evil. The more time we spend in secular activities that distract us from Jesus and tempt us into immorality, the more opportunity evil spirits have to influence us. Our most reliable protection is the armour of God, including "*the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God* (Eph 6:17)." Paul says to "*Abstain from all appearance of evil* (1 Thes 5:22)." Why leave ourselves vulnerable? Why spend time listening to music orchestrated by minds controlled by the one who knows "*what organs to excite… so that Christ is not desired*?"[193 (p496)] It is better to have nothing to do with the music of the unconverted, especially if they live immoral or godless lifestyles.

Therefore, there is some evidence from Scripture that music, apart from the lyrics, may have moral force to shape human behaviour for good or evil. There are many principles in the Bible, such as Solomon's advice to leave the presence of fools and Paul's advice to abstain from all appearance of evil, but does that mean that the very tunes produced by unbelievers has evil influence and should be avoided? For some, these examples alone are enough to warrant avoiding popular secular tunes. Others need more convincing. Information from extra-biblical sources may help us better understand the power of music.

Rock Music's Association with Rebellion and Sex

It is not just scientists who recognise the powerful influence of music. Since the evolution of rock music, musicians and producers have openly admitted that rock and pop music communicates sex and rebellion – not just in the lyrics, but in the very rhythm and beat of the music. African Americans had been using the term rock and roll as a euphemism for sex, decades before rock and roll music emerged in the mid-1950s.[198] The terms 'rock' and 'roll' have been traced back as far as 1922 in Black music, when Trixie Smith recorded My Baby Rocks Me with One Steady Roll, a song about Smith, a woman, making love with her man.[199] Seven years later, the same song was sung by a man, Frankie Jaxon, singing in a feminine voice and performed as a female impersonator adding in various grunts and moans which leads many music historians to believe this is the first recorded song to include an allusion to an orgasm.[200]

Rock and Roll was founded on folk African music. Daniel Glass, American drummer, writer and authority on classic American drumming and the evolution of American popular music, describes how American pop music is made up of a whole variety of ethnic elements:

> "*You have Chinese cymbals, Greek cymbals, Chinese tom-toms, wood blocks, cowbells and of course European tradition of the bass drum and the snare drum coming from a marching band martial background. All these*

things are thrown together with an African American sensibility giving it swing and that's how you get our pop music."[201 (3:30)]

Alan Lomax was a pre-eminent anthropologist in the area of folk music and he helped to popularise folk, blues and jazz in America. His field trips into the American South in the thirties and forties played a seminal role in the emergence of the Blues and African American folk music in the global marketplace. He was instrumental in launching the Folk and Blues revivals that took place among American musicians and listeners in the 1950s and 60s. In 1959, he produced Folksong '59, a Carnegie Hall concert, which was one of the first major events to recognise Rock and Roll as a musical form worthy of serious consideration. Lomax is also celebrated for his extensive research into and recordings of folk-dance traditions across the globe. **He said that the multi-unit dance, upon which Rock and Roll dance moves are based, is highly sexual**.[202–205] Elvis Presley, whose music and dance moves oozed sexuality, emerged in the mid-1950s on this backdrop.[198]

Rock and pop music has continually been identified with sex and rebellion. Andrew Oldham, recording manager of the Rolling Stones, said "*Rock music is sex and you have to hit them in the face with it*."[206] TIME states that it isn't just the lyrics that makes rock music rebellious: "*In a sense, all rock is revolutionary.* ***By its very beat and sound it has always implicitly rejected restraints and has celebrated freedom and sexuality***."[207] Raymond Arthur Gosling, English broadcaster, journalist, author, and gay rights activist said:

"*Rock 'n' roll is a beast. Well-intentioned people thought you could pick it up and cuddle it. They forgot it had claws…* ***Behind every sweet doowop and bebop is an unfettered sexuality and sympathy for the devil****… Anybody with a penn'orthy of grey matter could see it was trouble*."[208]

Hans Rookmaaker, Dutch scholar who wrote and lectured on art theory and history, music, philosophy and religion said of rock and roll music:

"*A new music emerged, again completely nonintellectual, with a thumping rhythm and shouting voices, each line and* ***each beat full of the angry insult to all western values … their protest is in their music itself*** *as well as in the words,*

for anyone who thinks that this is all cheap and no more than entertainment has never used his ears."[209 (p188-190)]

Drummer, Mickey Hart, said "*Looking back on the early years of rock and roll now, I can see why the adults were scared. The screams, the ecstatic states, the hysteria - **this music had a power that adults didn't understand**. We didn't even understand it ourselves…*"[210 (p171)]

Therefore, the leading authorities in the secular music industry, in no uncertain terms, openly affirm the power in the rhythm and beat of pop and rock music to communicate sexuality and rebellion. As well-meaning as General Booth may have been, scientists and music experts do not seem to agree that music, apart from the lyrics, is neutral. That is why we have to be very careful making bold claims without proof – especially clear evidence from the Bible.

In all reality, the association of rock and pop music with sexuality and revolt against social norms is self-evident - it does not need pointing out. The evidence is in the fruits of the music. Something about this form of music causes performers to accentuate their sexual organs. By contrast, performers in a classical orchestra are generally fully and appropriately clothed. Pop music artists have a reputation for wearing sexually explicit clothing, continually pushing the boundaries of lewdness even to the point of performing highly inappropriate sexual portrayals on stage. These performances are broadcast to homes around the world where children are watching. Authors of an article on the trends of lyrics in the Billboard Hot 100 Charts made the following observation:

"*When we look at the mentions of 'sex', 'love', and related terms in the lyrics of songs appearing in the Hot 100 since 1960, it's easy to see how popular the two have been over time. One of the most striking trends is that while love has waxed and waned, sex has skyrocketed, with mentions becoming several times more common in the 2010s than in the 1960s*."[211]

Paul says that "*the flesh lusts against the Spirit… Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness…* (Gal 5:17,19)."

We can conclude, therefore, that rock and pop music is contrary to the Spirit of God and we should have nothing to do with it:

"*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit*." (Gal 5:22-25)

Since Paul said to "*Abstain from <u>every</u> form of evil* (1 Thes 5:22)," and since the very name 'rock and roll' is synonymous with promiscuous sex, it would be wise to have nothing to do with this style of music, regardless of the lyrics. Paul also said:

"*…among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people*." (Eph 5:3 NIV)

Brandon Toews is a drummer, author and educator based out of Vancouver, Canada. He is the author of The Drummer's Toolbox and the co-author of The Best Beginner Drum Book. Toews, who has experience in secular and worship drumming, says that worship drumming is essentially no different to pop and rock drumming:

"*Every groove and fill that you hear played in your favourite worship songs are also used in pop and rock*."

He says that 99% of the skills required to play drum music for contemporary Christian music (CCM) is absolutely identical to rock and pop. He advised that if you want to improve your skills for playing worship music you can look to any pop or rock drumming lesson.[212] Therefore, at bare minimum, there is at least a hint of sexual immorality in the rhythm of the tunes we copy from the secular world. There is strong Biblical precedent, therefore, to stop listening to contemporary Christian music which copies these identical rhythms from pop and rock music.

Still, some may not be convinced even of the opinion of leading authorities and musicians in the secular music industry. Therefore, later in the book, we will look at the science behind sex and rebellion in the beat and rhythm of popular music. We will also examine what the Bible has to say about music. That way, we can all make an informed decision regarding this important subject.

The Influence of Music on Spirituality & Character

The concerns over rock and pop music do not end with rebellion and sexuality. We know from the Scriptures that music also has spiritual influence. Just as David was able to use melodious music to drive away spirits (1 Sam 16:23), Jimi Hendrix, ranked by Rolling Stone magazine as the number one greatest guitarist of all time,[213] believed his music had spiritual influence. When asked in an interview if he thinks music has meaning, Jimi Hendrix replied: "*Oh yeah, definitely, it's got a more spiritual soul than anything now.*" In the same interview he described the 'electric church' as belief coming into people through the electric guitar:

"*That's why we play so loud. Because it doesn't actually hit through the eardrums… We plan for **our sound** to go inside the soul of the person and see if they can awaken some kind of thing in their minds, because there's so many sleeping people*."[214]

Hendrix told Life magazine in 1969:

"*I can explain everything better through music. You hypnotize people to where they go right back to their natural state… and **when you get people***

> ***at that weakest point, you can preach into their subconscious what we want to say***."[215]

We now know from a scientific perspective that these goals of Jimi Hendrix to influence people through music are possible.

Judy Mowatt, one of the backup singers for Bob Marley, likens the experience of their concerts with church:

> "*It was a crusade, it was a mission. We were like sentinels, like lights. On tour the shows were like church; Bob delivering the sermon. There were mixed emotions in the audience: you see people literally crying, people in a frenzy, on a spiritual high ... These concerts were powerful and highly spiritual. There was a power that pulled you there. It was a clean feeling ... For months and maybe years it stays with you*."[216 (p74)]

Musicians also often seek enlightenment and spiritual experience through the use of drugs which, in turn, changes culture via the influence of their music. Certain illicit drugs bring on an altered state of consciousness. During these psychedelic experiences, musicians turn to song writing. Dr Timothy Leary, a prominent American psychologist, widely known for his scientific research into the effects of psychedelic drugs, describes how LSD has influenced the rhythm of music, and the expression of the arts in general, moulding the way we think as a population:

> "*The LSD cult has already wrought revolutionary changes in American culture. If you were to conduct a poll of the creative young musicians in this country, you'd find that at least 80 percent are using psychedelic drugs in a systematic way. And this new psychedelic style has produced not only* ***a new rhythm*** *in modern music but a new decor for our discotheques, a new form of film making, a new kinetic visual art, a new literature, and has begun to revise our philosophic and psychological thinking*."[217 (p141)]

Little Richard, American singer and song writer, described as the architect of Rock and Roll and renowned for signature songs such as 'Tutti Frutti,' once said:

> "*My true belief about Rock 'n' Roll is this: I believe this kind of music is demonic. I have seen the rock groups and the punk rock people in this country. And some of their lyrics is demonic. They talk against God. A lot of the beats in music today are taken from voodoo, from the voodoo drums. If you study music in rhythms, like I have you'll see that is true*."[218]

Music can also fundamentally change us by its influence on our character. In his book The Secret Power of Music, psychologist David Tame explains how there are two factors that influence our character: experiences and innate traits, which are genetically inherited. Psychological studies have estimated that about one-third of our character is shaped by experience. It logically follows, he reasons, that:

> "*…if music gives us feelings, then these feelings - of uplift, joy, energy, melancholy, violence, sensuality, calm, devotion, and so forth - can certainly be said to be experiences. And the experiences which we have in life are a vitally important factor in the moulding of our character*." Therefore, he concludes, "*Music moulds character*."[219 (pp146-147)]

Of course, this just confirms what many historical figures already believed, including Plato, Aristotle and Confucius,[220] just to name a few.

CCM's Foundation in Rock Music

The reason that the influence of rock and pop rhythms is so important is because contemporary Christian music (CCM) developed out of rock and roll during the Jesus Movement of the late 60s and early 70s.[5] CCM is an umbrella term for modern music with lyrics that express the Christian faith or biblical themes. Though it can include any modern style of music, CCM is most often seen as sacred themes wrapped in folksy, upbeat or rock-style music.[5,13] In other words, CCM is the modern version of what General Booth was doing – putting popular dance tunes to Christian lyrics – something Mrs White was outspoken against.

A quick surf of the web reveals that almost every source defines CCM as synonymous with rock and pop music. According to Wikipedia:

> "*Contemporary Christian music has influences from folk, gospel, pop and rock music. Genres of music such as soft rock, folk rock, alternative, hip-hop, etc. have played a large influence on CCM. Charismatic churches have had a large influence on contemporary Christian music and are one of the largest producers of CCM*."[221]

The website, AllMusic, defines CCM as "*pop music with inspirational and religious lyrics. Musically, much CCM is indistinguishable from mainstream pop/rock, featuring the same melodic and production techniques*."[222]

Mark Powell, who compiled an exhaustive encyclopaedia on CCM, says:

> "*…the term 'contemporary Christian music' was coined as a euphemism for Christian rock music back in the days when many Christians couldn't bring themselves to admit that they were listening to the supposedly demonic sounds of rock and roll*."[5]

Mark Powell, who is a professor of theology and a professional music critic, thinks "*rock and roll is a beautiful thing*" and, in his encyclopaedia on CCM, he wonders why church leaders are not more invested in CCM, given its ability to capture the attention of its people.[5]

In his very influential book, The Purpose Driven Life, Rick Warren defends the neutrality of music:

"*God loves all kinds of music because he invented it all - fast and slow, loud and soft, old and new. You probably don't like it all, but God does! ... Christians often disagree over the style of music used in worship, passionately defending their preferred style as the most Biblical or God-honouring. But there is no biblical style! ... God likes variety and enjoys it all. There is no such thing as 'Christian' music; there are only Christian lyrics. It is the words that make a song sacred, not the tune. There are no spiritual tunes.*"[223] (pp65-66)

There are quite a few claims that Rick Warren makes here but they need to be supported by evidence before we can accept them. What if Mark Powell and Rick Warren are wrong? Given the great influence they have had on ministers and worship leaders around the world across many denominations, the implications are significant. As already discussed, science and secular music experts agree that music is not at all neutral, contrary to Rick Warren's view – it has powerful positive and negative effects on us. The very beat can communicate sex and rebellion. It has spiritual influence and can change our characters. It can also influence culture. There is no statement in the Bible that tells us that God likes all music. We must be careful not to put words in God's mouth.

If our "*adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour* (1 Pet 5:8)" and if Lucifer is a master musician (Ez 28:13), then we can be certain that he will use music for his purpose. If the very foundation of rock music was sex and rebellion, we should question its suitability for Christianity. Given that music has such power to influence us, as demonstrated by science, if we are not sober and vigilant (1 Pet 5:8), we can be certain that Satan will find ways to use music in ways that we are totally unaware of to divert our minds away from God and His true nature. If music 'talks to us,' as the neurologist, Dr Richard G. Pellegrino, says, might it not be possible that anti-God sentiments could be transmitted through the very music of godless people?

If CCM is mimicking the sounds of worldly music, are we not risking the influence of worldliness? One of the goals of secular pop and rock music companies is to make their tunes sensual and sexual because that is what sells.[224] Equally, the goal of CCM companies is to mimic the sound of secular pop and rock music – because their music sells. However, Paul said to flee from sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:18); therefore, if secular musicians and managers openly admit that their music is sexually seductive, we should flee from it. We should not imitate it. Since so much of the secular music industry is openly defiant against our Saviour and His commands, might it not be prudent, out of protest alone if for no other reason, to reject these popular forms of music? Is God's Word so deficient that we must turn to worldly tunes to make it attractive?

PART 3

HOW TO PRAISE GOD

Chapter 11
The Wellspring of Our Praise

Charismatic megachurches and their worship teams, who have had great influence over the direction of church music, justify their use of emotional and rock- and pop-style worship with reference to passages such as Psalm 150. However, the expressions of joyful praise in Psalms are seasoned with much metaphor. The rivers are exhorted to clap their hands in praise to God and the mountains to sing together for joy (Ps 98:8). The sun, moon and stars are to praise God. The great sea creatures; the hail, the storms and clouds; fruitful trees and cedars; creeping things and flying fowl (Ps 148:3,7-10); everything that has breath is to praise the Lord (Ps 150:6). Therefore, the exhortation to praise God with stringed instruments and flutes and clashing cymbals is not so much a literal instruction manual on how to praise God but rather an attitude of the heart after meditating upon God's Word. It's a metaphor of what true praise from the heart should feel like. This joy and praise can be expressed in joyous music, but it flows from the heart. The Psalmist said, "*My heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God* (Ps 84:2 ESV)."

His heart and flesh are not literally but figuratively singing. The moon and stars and the flying fowl cannot literally praise the Lord, but after meditating on the law of the Lord and contemplating His power and goodness, the stony heart comes alive and springs forth with joyful praise for the creator. This joy can be expressed in many ways, including in song, in sharing our faith with others and in living a life that gives glory to our creator and saviour. If we are bursting at the seams with joy for what God has done for us, music is only one way to express this joy. When we express this joy in church, we edify ourselves. An even better way is to let the joy overflow in the sharing of our faith to fellow human beings. A literal orchestra with literal trees, every breathing thing and sea creatures is not required to sing our praises to God. Metaphorically, we can sing our praises to God by being faithful to Jesus' commission to make disciples of all the nations, teaching them everything that He commanded us (Matt 28:19-20).

Not everything the Psalmist said and did agrees with Jesus or applies to us today. David hated his enemies with 'perfect hatred' (Ps 139:22) and asked God to punish them. David even asks God to raise him up so that he can repay his enemies (Ps 41:10). Jesus said, "*love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you* (Matt 5:44)." The Lord said, "*Vengeance is mine, I will repay* (Rom 12:19)." David was a polygamist but Jesus accepted only monogamy. The Psalms

are filled with human expressions and frailties. What was appropriate or acceptable for David as King of Israel may not be appropriate for us. God has been gradually revealing more light to his people over time and, consequently, has different expectations for His followers today.

We often see Old Testament practices used as metaphors to illustrate a spiritual principle, even if the practice itself may not be encouraged in the New Testament. For example, costly jewellery and gold ornaments are commonly used for adornment by God's people in the Old Testament (Gen 24:53; Song of Sol 1:10). To illustrate the spiritual blessings of His people, God metaphorically dresses the nation of Israel in fine linen and silk and adorns her with ornaments of gold and silver and other precious jewellery (Ez 16:10-13). However, in the New Testament, Paul discourages women from adorning themselves with costly jewellery and clothing, but rather to dress modestly and to focus on good deeds and inner beauty (1 Tim 2:9-10; 1 Pet 3:3-4). Without Paul's comments, one might get the impression that extravagant dress is acceptable for the Christian. Likewise, though we see occasional examples of ecstatic praise in the Old Testament, the ministry of Jesus and the early church excluded extravagant worship. On the other hand, the principle of self-control and restraint is a common theme throughout the Bible, especially in the New Testament.

Jesus is our ultimate example. He held no worldly attraction: no beauty or majesty to attract us to him and nothing in his appearance that we should desire Him (Is 53:2). He worked with calmness, soberness and self-restraint. Likewise, there is no record of highly emotional worship amongst his disciples. That is not to say there is never a time to praise God with great excitement. On what occasions, in what manner and how often should we do this though? There is no doubt we will be jumping and dancing with great joy at Jesus' second coming. But the New Testament appears to put the brakes on emotionalism.

In Jesus' ministry and in the early church there is no use of tambourines, cymbals, trumpets or dancing expressly recorded. That does not mean that instruments were not used, but it does set a precedent. There is a pattern of ministry to be recognised – a blueprint for us to follow. People were reached primarily by plainly preaching the Word of God. Music and singing was not used as a prominent means for reaching the lost or for connecting with those who are not responding to the message.

When Jesus sent out the disciples to evangelise, He instructed them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick (Lk 9:2). Though music was a very significant part of Jewish culture at the time, He did not ask them to make use of it. Instead, "*He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff - no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts - but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics* (Mk 6:8)." They were to be totally dependent on the Holy Spirit. If the people did not receive their message, He did not tell them to figure out how to better get their attention, but they were to move on. They were not advised to

take a lyre or a flute along. There is no injunction to entice people by manipulating them emotionally or to make it easier to accept the message by watering it down.

The success of our work is not based on the response of the recipient of the message but on our faithfulness in delivering the message God has called us to deliver. The majority of the Jews rejected their Messiah. Did Jesus get it wrong? Should He have united His message more with the popular culture? Should He have used more excitement to rally people to His cause?

From the time of Jesus' ascension until and including the Day of Pentecost, Luke records that Jesus' followers were gathering together for prayer and sharing from Scripture. There is no indication that there was shouting, incessant clapping, ecstatic praise or sensational preaching. God pours out His Spirit on people when He is ready. We prepare our hearts in readiness for His Spirit by calmly meditating on His Word (including in song). We cannot gain the Spirit by forceful and excited activity.

After believers received the Spirit at Pentecost, there is still no mention of rapturous praise, dancing, loud music, shouting or jumping up and down. The Holy Spirit enabled them to teach and preach to all present by the gift of languages (Acts 2:4-13). Peter preaches a long sermon, followed by an appeal to repent (v14-39). Then Peter continued "*with many other words he testified and exhorted them*… (Acts 2:40-42)"

Even in the Old Testament, there are few examples of godly people dancing and singing rapturously. Though there are moments of joyous praise expressed, the majority of the Psalms, for example, in language and by the instruments mentioned, appear solemn, mellow, meditative, prayerful and melodic, rather than noisy and exuberant. The book of Psalms opens with the focus of our attention:

> "*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked… but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.*" (Ps 1:1-2)

Prayer and meditation on God's Word is essential for a healthy spiritual life. Constant noise and business crowds out time for contemplating God. General Booth frequently found himself burning the candle at both ends – running from one event to another. George Railton, the man second in command of the Salvation Army, in defence of the General, argued that it is not necessary to separate ourselves from others to spend time with God. As long as we are 'busy doing his bidding,' we can experience the fulness of fellowship with God. But this was the exact same mistake David made. He was eagerly doing God's bidding – running the kingdom, fighting battles, setting up the new capital, moving the ark to the new city – but he failed to spend time in Scripture, in God's law, hence his failure to carry the ark correctly. If mighty men like General Booth and King David can make such a big mistake, how much more should we be on guard to ensure we are meditating on God's law day and night as advised by the psalmist.

George Railton argued that the notion that it is essential that we always set apart private time with God is just a superstition that should be buried. He claimed it was only supported by one or two quotations from the gospels. So convinced was he that the General was safe in neglecting devotion that he said:

> "*Of what value could a Saviour be who drew back from helping His own messengers upon the ridiculous pretence that they were too busy doing His bidding, and did not spend enough time seeking Him for themselves*?"[57 (p114)]

However, Jesus must always be our example. Even He had to come aside to spend much time in meditation with His father. We are blessed when we meditate on the law of the Lord day and night (Ps 1:2). Mrs White counselled:

> *"…every teacher should strive to have an increased knowledge of spiritual truth, but he cannot gain this knowledge while divorcing himself from the Word of God. If he would have his powers and capabilities daily improved he must study; he must eat and digest the Word, and work in Christ's lines. The soul that is nourished by the bread of life will have every faculty vitalized by the Spirit of God. This is the meat which endureth unto everlasting life*."[16 (p153)]

There are serious consequences from neglecting God's Word, as David discovered. We start trusting in our own wisdom, which leads to error. Mrs White placed much emphasis on the study of Scriptures:

> "*Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his disguise. To all, the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation, the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His Word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only? Satan will, if possible, prevent them from obtaining a preparation to stand in that day*."[159 (p625)]

That is why Christianity has fragmented into so many denominations. When are we ever going to learn not to trust in human wisdom? It must continually be of the highest priority to daily seek God's will in prayer and study of His Scripture, to wrestle with His Word until we can be certain of truth. The Psalms is a deep and thoughtful meditation upon God and His Word and it ends with the outcome of meditating on His Word day and night – great joy! Singing alone is not what brings on the Spirit. In Selected Messages, Volume 2, we read: "*God's Spirit and life are in His Word… tame and expressionless are all efforts to get something new to create a sensation*."[12 (p39)] In other words, **real joy is an outflow of meditating on God's Word, but sensational experiences are boring in comparison!** John said:

> "*…that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And* ***these things we write to you that your joy may be full***." (1 Jn 1:3-4)

Our joy comes from fellowship with Christ - which can be extended to us through the written Word.

General Booth emphasised singing at evangelistic programs. Preachers were encouraged to keep the speaking short and to have several breaks with lively singing in between.[2] Though singing is encouraged in the New Testament, it takes a back seat compared to other forms of ministry. Much more often the early church was reminded of the importance of prayer and of prophesying. Paul says to pray without ceasing (1 Thes 5:17). He also said that the most important spiritual gift is prophesying (1 Cor 14:1). The context suggests that prophesying here means to preach a message under divine inspiration. For example, in verse 3 he says, "*he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men*." In the Benson Commentary on the word 'prophesy' as found in 1 Corinthians 14, it is suggested that "*The word here does not appear to mean foretelling things to come, but rather opening and applying the Scriptures, and discoursing on divine things in an edifying manner*."[225 (p210)] Therefore, teaching and preaching under the influence of the Holy Spirit is the supreme spiritual gift.

Clearly, though music is important, other things take priority over singing. In line with Scripture, in Testimonies for the Church, volume 1, the youth are admonished to pray more than they sing.[193 (p513)] Luther said, "*when God's Word is not preached, one had better neither sing nor read, or even come together.*"[7 (p11)] Even the music itself, Luther believed, was to teach theology.[8]

A heart that has been soaked in prayer and in God's Word throughout the week is like dry kindling soaked in kerosene. A tiny spark, a simple soft melody, ignites the heart into joyous praise. It is a joy that wells up from the inside by the Holy Spirit, rather than an artificial joy that is stimulated from the outside. The heart that is separated from its creator requires external stimulus made by humans – lights, sounds, smells – to feel joy. It might need loud sounds and fast tempo, for example, to build excitement and happiness. This joy is temporary, lasting only while ever the external stimulus lasts. However, our joy is made full by abiding in Jesus' love and by keeping His commandments (Jn 15:9-11). This type of joy is everlasting (Is 61:7) and never runs dry. Just like God wants obedience to come from His law written on our hearts, it is not merely songs of praise that God wants but sincere praise demonstrated in justice and righteousness (Amos 5:23-24).

While in the synagogue on Sabbath in Nazareth, Jesus stood up and read of the suffering servant in Isaiah. Then he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant, sat down and declared, "*Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing* (Lk 4:21)." Though he was making a momentous announcement, He did not use instruments or music to excite people. He just spoke and sat down. At the sermon

on the mount, Jesus preached (Matt 5-7). During the feeding of the five thousand he taught the people many things (Mk 6:34) and healed their sick because He had compassion on them (Matt 14:14). There is no mention of the use of music. On only one occasion during Jesus' whole ministry is singing mentioned: "*And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives* (Matt 26:30; Mk 14:26)." No doubt Jesus would have sung with His disciples often, but He never exhorts us to use music as a means of evangelism. This is despite the fact that, according to Brill Encyclopedia of Early Christianity, music was an important part of the culture in 1st century Palestine across Jewish and secular communities:

> "*…music and especially singing were important features in the world of early Christianity. During the late Second Temple period, Psalms sung by the Levites with instrumental accompaniment still were part of the sacrificial cult at the Temple at Jerusalem… Philo of Alexandria describes liturgical singing of the Jewish sectarian group of the Therapeutai. This is not explicitly the case for the Qumran community but there are strong hints to musical activity in its own literature. In the Roman Empire, vocal and instrumental music was present in pagan cults, in the theatre, at symposia, and in diverse other areas of public and social life*."[226]

The emphasis throughout the gospels is on teaching and preaching truth – the gospel message. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. We can only know Jesus by knowing the truth which is found in Scripture. Though Paul exhorted believers to sing and make melody in their hearts to the Lord, it was almost as if it were an afterthought. It was something believers did, but it wasn't ever emphasised as a means of evangelism. It is not even mentioned as a spiritual gift, even though many examples are listed, such as: prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership, mercy, words of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, distinguishing between spirits and speaking in tongues (Rom 12:6–8; 1 Cor 12:4–11). As we have seen by the science, music has great power to stir up emotions. But God is looking for genuine conviction and true faithfulness rather than emotions. Conviction comes through the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:8) and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph 6:17).

The founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were constantly struggling to keep members balanced. Some were leaning toward sensationalism while other members were focused on head knowledge or dry formalism and legalism devoid of the Spirit. John Wesley also struggled to keep church members balanced between a personal emotional experience with God and adherence to church structure and doctrine. He tried to balance feelings and scriptural theology. While Wesley encouraged revival as well as adherence to established church doctrine, his successors discouraged revival. This led to cold formalism. Consequently, splinter groups, such as the Primitive Methodists, branched off in the opposite extreme. In the excitement of the emotional moment, conformity to doctrine was exchanged for personal experience – including instantaneous new birth and sanc-

tification.[131] The Salvation Army was part of this movement which elevated the importance of personal experience.

The apostle Paul also struggled to keep the early church balanced. Some members were too focused on the Spirit, as with the tongue speakers in Corinth, while others were too focused on formalism, as with many of the Jewish converts. Thus, Paul's counsel to sing in spirit and in understanding (1 Cor 14:15). Jesus also said that "*true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him* (Jn 4:23-24)." The problem is, people who want to over emphasise the spirit take Paul's passages addressing formalism and legalism to support their stance, while those who over emphasise formalism and legalism take Paul's passages addressing emotionalism to support their stance. We have to find harmony between spirit and truth.

What did Exuberant Hebrew Music Look and Sound Like?

David and the Israelites sang and danced with great enthusiasm as they attempted to transport the ark to Jerusalem. The Israeli musicologist, Joachim Braun, notes that among the instruments they played was the rattle, a widely used instrument among Canaanites for cultic religious ritual.[227] It was common practice amongst the pagans to use singing and dancing to express devotion to and appease the gods. Despite his enthusiasm, David was soon to discover with the death of Uzzah, that singing and dancing did nothing to appease the God of Israel. Excitement is not what impresses God, but complete devotion, including obedience.

Though the harp (lyre) is the primary instrument of the musical culture of ancient Israel,[228] which lends itself to soft melodic music, there are scattered examples of energetic and noisy music in the Bible. When the psalmist commends the reader to praise God with trumpet, lute, harp, tambourine, stringed instruments, loud clashing cymbals and dance (Ps 150:3-6), what did this look and sound like to the Israelites? We often imagine it in terms of our own experience. However, the sound and musical notation of ancient Israel has been lost and the experience of their music was likely different to our own.[227 (pp.ix-xii),228 (p347)] For one thing, it may have been quite a shrill sound for our ears today![33] The Psalms are ancient folk songs of faith.[229] In his book on ancient Judaism, John Arthur Smith states: "*To make value judgements about the performance of ancient Israelite and Jewish music on the basis of modern Western musical tradition is unhelpful*."[34 (p59)]

The music and dance of ancient cultures often (but not always) had an innocence about them. This reflected the conservative rules of those communities – including dress, courtship and roles. The rhythm of the music often communicated the toil and discipline of everyday life. Unlike modern music which is free from constraints and is often at the forefront of social change and rejection of traditional rules and social norms, ancient folk music, on the contrary, was often bound by social constraints and utilised as a means of solidifying societal rules and discouraging social deviancy. It was a way of preserving knowledge and obligations

and warning of the consequences of immoral behaviour.[230] Therefore, especially given that the Hebrews were more conservative compared with their surrounding neighbours, what an ancient Hebrew might describe as exuberant praise might seem constrained and conservative to a modern-day person who is used to a very unrestricted style of music and dance.

What Should Our Worship Sound Like?

Mrs White's emphasis is on sharing solemn truths clearly and in calm contemplation:

> We should "*sing in a way that all can understand. It is not loud singing that is needed, but clear intonation, correct pronunciation and distinct utterance*."[196 (pp143-4)]
>
> "*Good singing is like the music of the birds - subdued and melodious.*"[168 (p510)]
>
> "*All the service should be conducted with solemnity and awe, as if in the visible presence of the Master of assemblies*."[197 (p493)]
>
> "*And let the singing be accompanied with musical instruments skillfully handled. We are not to oppose the use of instrumental music in our work. This part of the service is to be carefully conducted; for it is the praise of God in song. The singing is not always to be done by a few. As often as possible, let the entire congregation join*."[196 (p144)]
>
> "*All present should be encouraged to join in the song service*."[168 (p507)]
>
> "*Those who make singing a part of divine worship should select hymns with music appropriate to the occasion, not funeral notes, but cheerful, yet solemn melodies. The voice can and should be modulated, softened, and subdued*."[168 (p507-8)]
>
> Of the school of the prophets she spoke: "*The art of sacred melody was diligently cultivated. No frivolous waltz was heard, nor flippant song that should extol man and divert the attention from God; but sacred, solemn psalms of praise to the Creator, exalting His name and recounting His wondrous works*."[231 (p97)]

In these statements, Mrs White is recommending a particular type of sound and style of music which she indicates recommends itself to worship. Prophets are often taken in vision to witness scenes in heaven. Though she never claimed to be a prophet, Mrs White describes visions of heaven, including heavenly music:

> "*I have seen companies of angels, who stood in a hollow square, everyone having a harp of gold. At the end of the harp was an instrument to turn to set the harp or change the tunes. Their fingers did not sweep over the strings carelessly, but they touched different strings to produce different sounds.*

> *There is one angel who always leads, who first touches the harp and strikes the note, then all join in the rich, perfect music of heaven. It cannot be described. It is melody, heavenly, divine, while from every countenance beams the image of Jesus, shining with glory unspeakable*."

Though she was a prolific writer, Mrs White struggles here to put into words what she claims to have seen. She also describes the sound of earthly music as "*very harsh and discordant*" in comparison[193 (p146)] and that many professed Christians "*know not the language of heaven.*"[188 (p265)]

Joel Beckerman, expert in sonic branding, emphasises the importance of companies and organisations having their own unique sound or sonic identity:

> "*Strategic sound does more than just amplify an intangible feel-good idea. It gets results.*"[165 (p119)]

What sets our music apart from the world? If we are copying the sound, styles and fashions of the secular world, what makes our music stand out as different and special? Do lyrics alone make music sacred? According to Beckerman, the sound or music alone is a powerful and essential force for creating a unique identity. Since this concept conflicts with General Booth's view of music, it has to be challenged. Later in the book, we will look at research studies that put Beckerman's claim to the test.

Who Should We Believe?

General Booth and Mrs White are clearly in disagreement as to what is appropriate worship. So, who do we believe? How can we have unity if one person believes a certain style of music is appropriate for worship, while another thinks it is of the devil? There can be no doubt that both of them were sincere Christians. Their deep appreciation and love for their saviour and for humanity and the need to warn the world of judgment came through in their teachings. But, as we learned from the story of Uzzah, sincerity alone is not enough. We have to diligently seek God's will and live in harmony with Him, otherwise we may cause harm to ourselves and others. We can only understand God's will when we search Scripture thoroughly, without the distortion of human wisdom or tradition. This is facilitated by the Spirit of Truth which guides us into all truth (Jn 16:13).

Why then are there so many versions of truth amongst Christianity? As Alberto R. Timm, rector of the Latin-American Adventist Theological Seminary put it:

> "…*the fact of the matter is that Christianity has become more divided today in its interpretation of the Bible than ever before… Christianity is divided today into many conflicting schools of biblical interpretation, each of them claiming hermeneutical faithfulness to the Scriptures."*[84]

The Roman Catholic Church argues that this division is evidence of the failure of Protestantism. However, there can be no other explanation for the disunity amongst Christians other than a failure to be guided by the Spirit of Truth.

One of the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is that the gift of prophecy has been manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. It is believed that her message is a testimony from Jesus Christ himself. It is part of who Seventh-day Adventists are – the belief that she was given a message to help prepare the world for Jesus' second coming, no less than John the Baptist was a prophet who prepared the way for Jesus' first coming. It is believed that her writings provide comfort, guidance, instruction and correction in harmony with Scripture.[28] Repeating Timm's words:

> "*Those writings are a divine prophetic filter that helps us to remove all the human rubble that tradition has artificially imposed on the Bible, so that the divine message of the Scriptures can flow pure and clean into our hearts*."[84]

It is a bold claim that most Christians have a hard time accepting, although very few have read very much of her writings. At most, they have read or listened to comments from critics, of which there are many. However, few would accept the Bible if they only ever heard what the critics said about it rather than reading the Bible for themselves. Likewise, it is not possible for someone to determine the authenticity of Mrs White for themselves without reading a significant portion of her writings.

According to devout Adventists, if Mrs White is a true prophet and her testimonies are ignored, it will ultimately lead to rejection of Biblical truth because they are of the same Spirit.[197 (p235,683)] Being people of 'The Book' means listening to prophets who are sent by the author of 'The Book.' One of the great sins of the Israelite people that brought upon them God's wrath was rejection of His prophets (Dan 9:6; Lk 11:47-51). At the same time, God's harsh judgement came down on Israelites who followed the advice of false prophets. The Israelite's became divided when they failed to recognise the voice of God's prophets but instead listened to false prophets and teachers. Apparently, we are to distinguish between true and false prophets. As with King David and the Israelites, it is important that we carefully observe the counsel given in God's Word and by his prophets, for "*It is hardly possible for men to offer a greater insult to God than to despise and reject the instrumentalities that he has appointed to lead them*."[197 (p680)]

Just as in the time of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Isaiah, false believers are identified by their rejection of true prophets and acceptance of false prophets. Believing Jesus means believing his prophets. As Mrs White put it, "*Unbelief in the testimonies of warning, encouragement, and reproof is shutting away the light from God's people*."[197 (p674)] Rejecting what His prophets say means rejecting Him because they are sent by Him. True believers will diligently "*listen to the voice of God and seek to catch every ray of light from heaven,*" growing "*in wisdom and in favor with God*."[197 (p549)]

Does that mean, even if she is a true prophet, that every Christian and every Seventh-day Adventist member must fully embrace the writings of Mrs White? Not necessarily. In all reality, her writings are vast and there is much to contemplate and compare with Scripture and it takes time for some to be convinced one way or the other. But, for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be unified, its leaders, pastors, elders and administrators must embrace its own fundamental beliefs. King David praised God that, though other nations did not know the will of God, the Israelites were blessed to know His rules (Ps 147:20). Likewise, any people group that receives light from God is blessed. General Booth, speaking of the Bible, said "*who would ever have dreamed of many of the things we know about God if they had not been there revealed*."[232 (p19)] We should cling to every word of light God has graciously bestowed upon us, for without it, we live in darkness.

Who we listen to concerning music depends on who we think is in harmony with Scripture and with God's Spirit. Mrs White, along with many other Christians in her time, found fault with the Salvation Army's use of the bass drum.[146 (p115)] Were they simply influenced by the popular conservative view of their time? Some have argued that Mrs White was simply a product of her time - the Victorian era - and fell in line with other reformers based on her personal preference. However, most Seventh-day Adventists recognise something unique and special in Mrs White's message. They would argue that, though she was conservative in some areas, such as in her view on drums, in other areas she was moderate, such as her encouragement of musical instruments in worship which was widely opposed by many Christians until the mid-19th century. Quite often, she was even very radical in her ideas.

When it came to doctrines, such as the Sabbath, hell and the work of Jesus in the Most Holy place, she was very radical and departed from mainstream Christianity altogether. The 19th century was a period of rapidly changing ideologies, social norms, religious revival and technological discoveries. The three predominant reform movements were abolition, temperance and women's rights. According to George Railton, in the Salvation Army, no distinctions of race, country or colour existed.[57] They were ahead of their time in race relations. Likewise, with Mrs White, Professor Kenley D. Hall of Andrews University describes how, when it came to slavery, unlike most conservative Christians:

> "*Ellen White identified with the most radical-abolitionist who called for an immediate end to slavery and the integration of African-Americans into the United States as free citizens. She spoke out strongly against the sin of slavery, supported John Brown's actions at Harpers Ferry, called for civil disobedience against the fugitive slave law, and during the Civil War, decried not only the South's propagation of slavery, but also the North's refusal to do something about it*."[233 (p100)]

Despite her extreme anti-slavery stance, some critics of Mrs White make the claim that she was racist toward African Americans. They base this claim mainly

on her 'amalgamation' statements found in Spiritual Gifts chapters 6 & 7. The statement in chapter 6 reads as follows:

> "*But if there was one sin above another which called for the destruction of the race by the flood, it was the base crime of* ***amalgamation of man and beast*** *which defaced the image of God, and caused confusion everywhere. God purposed to destroy by a flood that powerful, long-lived* ***race that had corrupted their ways*** *before him*."[234 (p64)]

Francis D. Nichol makes a case for Ellen White's statement 'amalgamation of man and beast' to mean the amalgamation of different races of mankind and the amalgamation of different races of animals rather than the union of humans with animals. First, he argues that in the mid-19th century, the word 'amalgamation' is never used to describe cohabitation of man with beast but was commonly used to refer to the blending of races, such as the intermarriage of the white and black races. Second, he argues that the context of the statements is the depravity of humankind that came about by the intermingling of the sons of God (the descendants of Seth) with the sons of man (the descendants of Cain) which led to the destruction of the world by the flood.[235] The statement in chapter 7 reads as follows:

> "*Every species of animal which God had created were preserved in the ark. The confused species which God did not create, which were the result of amalgamation, were destroyed by the Flood. Since the Flood there has been amalgamation of man and beast, as may be seen in the almost endless varieties of species of animals, and in certain races of men*."[234 (p75)]

Based on this, the Ellen G. White Estate concludes: "*Mrs White speaks of two clearly distinguished groups that testify to this amalgamation. There are (1) 'species of animals' and (2) 'races of men*'"[235] There is no suggestion that there were species part man and part animal.

Clearly, it is argued, Mrs White's statements on the 'amalgamation of man and beast' is in the context of the corruption of the human race by intermingling of the worldly race of men with the godly race of men. However, it wasn't just the amalgamation of races of men that led to judgement by the flood but also the amalgamation of various species of animals. The animals had also become corrupted. The Ellen G. White Estate maintains that this is wholly consistent with Scripture:

> "*And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them*." (Gen 6:7 KJV)

Why should the Lord repent that He had 'made them,' the beasts and birds and creeping things, as well as man? In a few verses farther on is found the answer:

> "*And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth*." (Gen 6:12 KJV)

"*And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man*." (Gen 7:21 KJV)

In all of her writings, there is no suggestion that Mrs White considered any particular race as subhuman. In fact, her support for the abolition of slavery helps to affirm her belief in the equality of races. This was radical for her time. Considering the vast extent of her writings, it is unrealistic to expect there to be no difficult passages or apparent contradictions in Mrs White's writings, because language is not perfect at conveying meaning and meaning changes with time. This could be said for the Scriptures also, that we consider the whole and not just isolated statements.

Mrs White was also ahead of her time when it came to health reform. Contemporary reformers promoted health reform ideas that were dangerous. For example, Sylvester Graham, author of Lectures on the Science of Human Life, died at the relatively young age of 57, likely due to following his own recommendations.[119 (p50)] Though Mrs White grew up enjoying a traditional diet with plenty of meat, she promoted, not what she personally preferred or what her contemporaries were promoting, but she blazed her own path based on what she believed was divinely revealed to her. Adherents of Mrs White's health claims do not die prematurely. In fact, according to the National Geographic, Seventh-day Adventists of the Loma Linda region who adhere to her health teachings live significantly longer than the general population.[236]

Another example is Mrs White's attitude to sex. She encouraged pleasurable sex within marriage, contrary to the more conservative Christian view that held that sex should only be engaged in for the practical purpose of bearing children. In fact, when an Adventist man in California approached her for endorsement of his conservative view on this matter, she told him to "*Go home and be a man*", which is quite amusing.[237 (p23)]

When it came to dress reform, Mrs White agreed wholeheartedly that it was needed, but instead of embracing the women's rights movement and their ideas for dress reform she outright rejected it. So forthright was she against the women's rights movement that she warned:

"*Those who feel called out to join the movement in favor of women's rights and the so-called dress reform might as well sever all connection with the third angel's message*."[193 (p457)]

She opposed their dress reform because of its resemblance with men's clothing. This is supported by Scripture: "*A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the Lord your God* (Deut 22:5)." She warned that "*confusion will be the result*."[193 (p459)] Today, there is great confusion in gender identity just as she predicted would happen. How was she able to navigate her way through all the noise and change – sometimes supporting a conservative stance, other times a very lib-

eral one – while in hindsight getting it right every time? Few would disagree today on her extreme abolitionist stance. Science and the World Health Organisation (WHO) have validated a significant proportion of her health claims.[119 (p32,43,89)] Regarding women's rights, few in the church would deny the evils of this movement. It went on to become very anti-Christian and the gender identity turmoil we see today is closely linked to the feminist movement. The World Economic Forum website states: "*The feminist movement has been dismantling the belief that our sex and gender should define our roles in society*."[238] This is contrary to the Bible which clearly states that men and women, though equal, have distinct roles in society. How did this poorly educated woman know that she needed to be an extreme anti-slavery supporter while an extreme opponent of the women's rights movement?

None of this yet proves Mrs White was right in her opposition to the Salvation Army method and emotionalism in worship. But what it does do is force us to dig deeper. What do the Bible and science tell us about music? As already discussed, science has shown that excitement can impair judgement and, especially when combined with a superficial knowledge of Scripture, can make us prone to deception. Churches that did adopt the Salvation Army method, including Holiness doctrine and the use of music as a primary means of attracting converts, provide the majority of the music material for churches around the world today. These Charismatic megachurches often adhere to suspect theology, such as the prosperity gospel, and some have even adopted clearly heretical teachings, such as the New Age, which will be discussed later in the book.

Scripture is our ultimate source of truth. So far, we have found that the Bible encourages sober mindedness. There is no reference to ecstatic worship in the early church – music was not given great prominence in the record of Jesus' or the apostle's ministry. The emphasis, rather, is on proclaiming truth. The song book of the Bible, Psalms, does encourage boisterous praise on occasions but, by far, the emphasis is on quiet meditation upon God's glory, love and law as well as reflection upon our wretchedness and solemn contemplation of God's judgement and wrath. This meditation leads to genuine praise from the heart.

Chapter 12
A Day for Special Praise

If we are to **worship** God in spirit and in truth, we must ensure that we worship Him according to the truth of His Word. As discussed previously, we cannot have true joy unless we are living in obedience to our Lord's commands. We are to search Scripture to ensure we are abiding by His will. But how do we know we are interpreting Scripture correctly? One person believes rock music is acceptable for worship of God because the Israelites sang and danced exuberantly when moving the ark of the covenant (1 Chr 13:8); while another person believes rock music is unacceptable because Paul says not to conform to this world (Rom 12:2). But neither of these passages provide a direct command from God concerning music. So who is to say one person's view is correct and the other incorrect?

We often draw conclusions about God's will based on philosophical arguments, which are prone to human error and have less certainty. How then can we know what God's will is with more certainty? It is much safer to be guided by the direct commands of God. His command is like light, giving us clarity: "*For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light* (Prov 6:23)." His command opens our eyes to truth: "*The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes* (Ps 19:8)." When we know what God's command is, it gives clarity to the rest of Scripture.

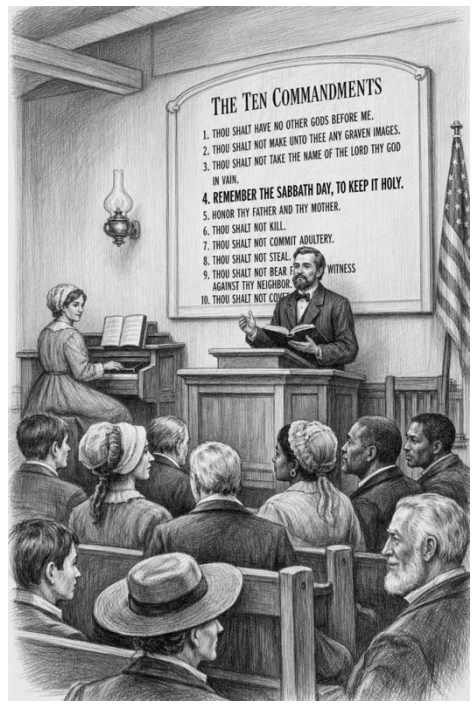
General Booth's primary motive in his life and ministry was to preach in such a way and do whatever it took to encourage people to say yes to God's gracious invitation and thus avoid the fires of eternal torment. He had a heart for saving the lost. According to the Bible, those who avoid the fires of hell "*are those who keep the commandments of God* (Rev 14:12)." They "*follow the Lamb wherever He goes* (v4)." Jesus said, "*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me* (Jn 10:27)." They have the testimony of Jesus (Rev 12:17) which is the spirit of prophecy (Rev 19:9). Therefore, they also listen to His true prophets. Jesus followed His Father by being obedient to His commands: "*But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do* (Jn 14:31)."

As their name suggests, Seventh-day Adventists have a lot of regard for the seventh-day Sabbath. This is not a popular message. Just as the Salvation Army received much ridicule for their style of worship, Seventh-day Adventists received much criticism for Sabbath keeping. Still today, seventh-day Sabbath keeping is by far the minority practice, though there are some prominent public figures who keep the seventh-day Sabbath, including world renowned retired neurosurgeon,

Dr Ben Carson and the late Charlie Kirk, a conservative Christian political activist who was fatally shot while this book was being written.

From the story of Uzzah and the transport of the ark to Jerusalem, we learned that obedience is more important to God than songs of praise, therefore, we need to ensure we are obedient in our worship. For many Seventh-day Adventists, if we are to worship God correctly, even more important than the style of worship is the day in which we worship, since they believe there is clear command concerning the Sabbath. Following is a brief outline of Seventh-day Adventist reasoning for Sabbath keeping.

The Sabbath was first introduced to Adventists of Washington, New Hampshire, as early as 1844, by Sister Preston, a Seventh-day Baptist. Elder Joseph Bates, one of the founding fathers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, began teaching the Sabbath in 1845. James White read a little pamphlet that Joseph Bates had written on the topic and became convinced of the Sabbath also.[32] In Revelation, Joseph Bates and James White saw an end-time call to Sabbath worship in the proclamation of the three angels as found in chapter 14.[239] The first angels' message reads as follows:



> "*Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth - to every nation, tribe, tongue and people - saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made* ***heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water***.'" (Rev 14:6-7)

Central to the gospel message in these verses is a call for people to worship 'Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.' Adventists see a glaring sign here to what is meant by worship. This phrase is actually a quote from the fourth commandment which is a command to worship the creator by honouring His day. The fourth commandment is an admonition to keep the seventh day holy, "*For in six days the Lord made* ***the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them****, and rested the seventh day* (Ex 20:11)." In turn, the fourth commandment is a quote from the creation story. At the foundation of the world, on the seventh day, God had finished creating "***the heavens and the earth, and all the host of***

***them**… Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it* (Gen 2:1&3)." It was set apart for a special purpose to worship God.

God refers to the seventh day as His holy day (Is 58:13). Jesus said He is Lord of the Sabbath (Mk 2:28). Therefore, Adventists hold that the seventh-day Sabbath is a direct command from God. From the foundation of creation, God set it apart as a holy day. The seventh day still exists today and, without a clear command from God stating that the seventh day is no longer holy, Seventh-day Adventists are not satisfied to ignore it.

Martin Luther upheld the ten commandments but believed the Sabbath could be kept on any day.[240 (p161)] General Booth also believed in keeping Sunday as a Sabbath day of rest:

> "*Now I had strong notions in my youth and for long after - indeed, I entertain them now - about the great importance of keeping the Sunday, or Sabbath as we always called it, clear of unnecessary work…I still think we ought to abstain from all unnecessary work ourselves, and, as far as possible, arrange for everybody about us to have one day's rest in seven. But, as I was saying, I objected to working at my business on the Sabbath, which I interpreted to mean after twelve o'clock on Saturday night. My relatives and many of my religious friends laughed at my scruples; but I paid no heed to them, and told my master I would not do it, though he replied that if that were so he would simply discharge me*."[57 (p19)]

Pastor David Earnshaw referred to General Booth as very legalistic because he refused to do paid employment on the 'Sabbath.'[31] Is simply following the law legalism? Christianity.com defines legalism as attempting to:

> "…*secure righteousness in God's sight by good works... Legalism focuses on God's laws more than relationship with God. It keeps external laws without a truly submitted heart. And legalism adds human rules to divine laws and treats them as divine*."[241]

There is no hint that General Booth believed he could win salvation by keeping the Sabbath or any other law of God. Therefore, he probably was not a legalist. We tend to overcompensate for legalism by referring to any form of obedience to God's commands as legalism.

The Israelites worshipped God with great enthusiasm before the ark of the covenant while completely ignoring God's command. Before we even think about how we should worship God with music, we first must ensure that we are following His commands, which includes the day we are to set aside for worship. Seventh-day Adventists regarded the ten commandments as still binding. Many well-known reformers and preachers believed the same. John Calvin said:

> "…*we must not imagine that the coming of Christ has freed us from the authority of the law: for it is the eternal rule of a devout and holy life, and must,*

> *therefore, be as unchangeable, as the justice of God, which it embraced, is constant and uniform*."[242 (p277)]

Dwight L. Moody said:

> "*Jesus never condemned the law and the prophets, but He did condemn those who did not obey them… The people must be made to understand that the Ten Commandments are still binding, and that there is a penalty attached to their violation*."[243 (p15-6)]

Charles Spurgeon said:

> "*Jesus did not come to change the law, but he came to explain it, and that very fact shows that it remains, for there is no need to explain that which is abrogated*."[244]

If the commandments are still binding, Sabbatarians ask, would not the day also be binding? Therefore, they regard the seventh day as a special day belonging to God, rather than the first day or any other day. Regarding the fourth commandment, Charlie Kirk said:

> "*I will challenge the Christian church because I believe this is the most ignored commandment of the decalogue to our own detriment*."[245 (3:50)]

Before his premature death, Charlie Kirk wrote a book called, Stop, In the Name of God: Why Honoring the Sabbath Will Transform Your Life. He said he would like to carry on the tradition of bringing the teachings of the seventh-day Sabbath to millions of people.[245]

But, if we are under grace, why do we need to continue to keep the law, especially knowing that "*Christ has redeemed us from the **curse** of the law* (Gal 3:13)." Firstly, Paul said "*the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good* (Rom 7:12)." A psalmist said, "*Great peace have those who love Your law* (Ps 119:165)." David said:

> "*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;*
> *The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;*
> *The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;*
> *The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;*
> *The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;*
> *The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.*
> *More to be desired are they than gold,*
> *Yea, than much fine gold;*
> *Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*
> *Moreover by them Your servant is warned,*
> *And in keeping them there is great reward*." (Ps 19:7-11)

If the law is perfect, holy, just, pure and good, and if the law makes us wise, warning us and enlightening the eyes, and if the law is like much fine gold and sweeter

than honey, rejoicing the heart and giving great peace, why then did Paul call the law a curse? The law is a curse to sinners because "*the wages of sin is death* (Rom 6:23)" and sin is transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). Fortunately, Jesus cancelled the debt owing to us, "*having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us* (Col 2:14)." Therefore, we can once again enjoy the benefits of the law without the penalty owing to us due to transgression. That is wonderful news, worthy of songs of praise! Though David lived long before Christ, by faith He believed he was forgiven – he knew he was under grace:

> "*For as the heavens are high above the earth,*
> *So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;*
> *As far as the east is from the west,*
> *So far has He removed our transgressions from us*." (Ps 103:11-12)

Therefore, though he knew he was a sinner and he felt the weight of his transgressions, David could rejoice in the law because he knew he was under grace. David establishes the law. That is the beauty of Jesus' sacrifice – He upheld the law while freeing us from our debt – but it came at a great cost, and hence, the great penalty that comes to those who make void the law for which Christ paid such a dear price to uphold. Jesus said:

> "*Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven*." (Matt 5:19)

Similarly, Paul said: "*Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law* (Rom 3:30-31)."

The other reason we obey the law is because, when we give our lives to Jesus, we become slaves to righteousness rather than slaves to sin:

> "*What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness*." (Rom 6:15-18)

Having said all that, we are no longer bound by Moses' ceremonial laws but only by God's commands:

> "*Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters*." (I Cor 7:19)

Therefore, since the seventh-day Sabbath was laid down at creation, Sabbatarians believe it belongs to the commandments of God which still matter. Mrs White's

husband, James White, in his book, Life Incidents, argues that the Sabbath day was altered by a corrupted church, especially around the 4th and 5th centuries.

Joseph Bates and other early Adventist pioneers asserted that not one text in the New Testament taught a change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week.[32] Many people have cited Romans 14:5 as a reason to regard the seventh day as no more holy, blessed or special than any other day:

> "*One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind*."

Sabbath keepers are quick to point out that this verse does not mention the words 'holy', 'Sabbath' or 'seventh day.' Without looking at the context, we do not know if Paul is referring to worship days, Sabbath days, fasting days, festival days or some other days. In fact, the context of this passage is mostly about food, suggesting that Paul is referring to days of fasting, which was a contentious issue during Paul's time (there is no hint in the New Testament that the perpetuity of the Sabbath day was ever under dispute). In that case, the verse would read "*One person esteems one day as better than another [for fasting], while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind [which day is most appropriate for fasting]*." Therefore, it is argued, this passage certainly cannot be used to overrule the seventh-day Sabbath. It is certainly not a clear command to overturn the Sabbath.

Colossians 2:16-17 is another significant passage used against the perpetuity of the holy Sabbath day. Before we take a look at this passage, it is important to point out that Adventists acknowledge that there are different uses of the word 'sabbath' in the Bible. There are two types of Sabbaths in the Old Testament – the weekly Sabbath of the ten commandments and the festival Sabbaths. An example of a festival Sabbath is the Day of Atonement: "*the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement* (Lev 23:27)… *It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest* (v32)." On the Day of Atonement, the priest killed the goat of the sin offering, which was for the people (Lev 16:15). Therefore, this festival sabbath, the Day of Atonement, pointed forward to Jesus' sacrifice. It was not the real thing, but a 'shadow' of something to come. This is true of all of the festival sabbaths – they looked ahead to Jesus.

The other type of Sabbath is the seventh-day Sabbath:

> "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy* (Ex 20:8)… *For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it* (v11)."

The seventh-day Sabbath, therefore, points backward to creation. The festival Sabbaths look ahead to Jesus our saviour and the sacrifice that He made for us - they were a shadow of things to come. The seventh-day Sabbath, on the other hand, looks back to creation, acknowledging God as our creator, the one we wor-

ship – the one 'who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.' Therefore, the seventh-day Sabbath is not a shadow of things to come but a memorial of creation. With that context in mind, let us take a look at Colossians 2:16-17:

> "*So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a* ***shadow*** *of things to come, but the* ***substance*** *is of Christ.*"

Since this passage does not mention 'seventh day,' we have to determine from the context if the word 'sabbaths' in this text is referring to the seventh-day Sabbath, the festival sabbaths, or both. If the festivals were pointing ahead to Jesus, then this verse is clearly referring to the festival sabbaths which were a shadow. Jesus was the substance because He fulfilled the festivals. Some may question the accuracy of this interpretation; however, since the verse does not explicitly state 'seventh-day' Sabbath, there is too much ambiguity to emphatically render the seventh-day Sabbath obsolete. Abolishing an institution of God requires a clear and unambiguous divine command. Therefore, Seventh-day Adventists insist that this passage cannot be used to overrule the Sabbath. It is not a command to end the Sabbath. Besides, if Paul did mean the seventh-day Sabbath, Adventists argue, it would have caused a huge uproar in the early church, since the Sabbath was such an important part of Jewish law and culture. However, we see no such backlash.

The Origin of the Change of the Sabbath

So, what do Adventists propose was the cause of the Sabbath change? Historical records show that the change was a gradual process which, Adventists say, came about by prejudice and persecution. According to Socrates, the historian (not the philosopher), in about 439 AD, most Christians were still observing the seventh-day Sabbath:

> "…*although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this*."[246] (p289)

By this time, four centuries after Christ, it is estimated that the church had grown to at least 30 million members (mostly gentiles) or greater than half the population of the Roman empire.[247] Christianity had also spread to vast areas of the Roman empire and beyond, including Britain in the west, Persia in the east and Ethiopia in the south. The majority of these believers, apparently, were still keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. The Christians in Rome and Alexandria, however, were observing Sunday instead.

Seventh-day Adventists hold that the change of the Sabbath in Rome and Alexandria did not come about due to sound exegesis. Unfortunately, the early

church fathers were only human. There existed amongst some of them hatred and contempt toward Jews. Justin Martyr, for example, was very intolerant of the Jews. He claimed that the Jews were sick with spiritual disease, cursed & rejected by God.[248 (p22)] Justin Martyr provides clear and unambiguous affirmation that, by the mid-2nd century, Christians in Rome were regularly observing Sunday.[249 (p65)] There are few references to Sunday keeping prior to this time and those that we have are ambiguous and highly controversial and cannot be used emphatically to show that Christians were keeping Sunday in the first or early 2nd century.

For example, the Didache and the letters of Ignatius are frequently cited to support an early tradition of Sunday keeping in the church. Sabbath keepers have pointed out a number of theological concerns with these documents. For example, the Didache instructs followers of Christ to fast on Wednesday and Friday instead of on Monday and Thursday like 'those of the hypocrites'. Paul said not to judge concerning fasting days. Concerning baptism, it teaches to baptise by pouring water on the head three times if running water is not available.[250 (p5)]

The Roman Catholic Church exalts the writings of the church fathers and establishes authority for its doctrines from these ancient texts. The Catholic Encyclopedia, for example, states that the Ignatian letters bear to the Divine origin of Catholic doctrine.[251 (p644)] Numerous modern-day scholars, however, question the reliability of these documents. Even John Calvin denied the authenticity of the Ignatius letters and recognised their inconsistency with Scripture:

> "*With regard to what they pretend as to Ignatius, if they would have it to be of the least importance, let them prove that the apostles enacted laws concerning Lent, and other corruptions. Nothing can be more nauseating, than the absurdities which have been published under the name of Ignatius; and therefore, the conduct of those who provide themselves with such masks for deception is the less entitled to toleration*."[252 (p138)]

In his Dialogue with Trypho, Justin wrote of the Jews:

> "*…it was by reason of your sins and the sins of your fathers that… God imposed upon you the observance of the Sabbath*."[253 (p178)]

Sabbath observers point out that God blessed the Sabbath day (Gen 2:3) and that it is to be a delight (Is 58:13). But Justin's prejudice toward the Jews caused him to distort the Sabbath as a curse from God, rather than a blessing. Consequently, he felt justified in ridding the church of Jewishness, including Sabbath keeping. His views had profound influence on Christian thought. So much so that the Jewish Virtual Library identifies Justin Martyr's writings as "*the origins of Christian anti-Semitism*."[254] We must not judge Justin's sincerity as a Christian, for he was martyred for his faith, and only God knows the heart of any individual. But he was misled in his zeal for Christ, which caused him to condemn the race that killed his saviour. Likewise, we must not let our zeal for Christ cause us to hate those who are not like-minded with us.

Though earlier records are disputed, Sunday keeping was undeniably practised by Christians in Rome and possibly Alexandria by the mid-2nd century and seventh-day Sabbath keeping was discarded in these places. However, Sabbath observers still maintain that this is no reason to assume that they got this tradition from the apostles or that all Christians at the time were in favour of replacing Sabbath keeping with Sunday observance. We cannot put our trust in extra-Biblical sources or even the forefathers of the church, they argue, but we must always turn to Scripture for guidance. Besides, much of the historical record of Sunday keeping in the early church comes from Rome; therefore, it can appear to the casual observer that most Christians by this time period no longer considered the seventh day a holy day. However, as highlighted by Socrates, the change in the Sabbath was not widespread initially. The majority of Christians were still observing the seventh-day Sabbath as a holy day but were also gathering on Sunday to celebrate the risen saviour. Sozomenus, Roman lawyer and historian of the Christian Church, confirms that Sabbath keeping was still widespread across Christendom, apart from in Rome and Alexandria, as late as the 4th and 5th centuries:

> "*Assemblies are not held in all churches on the same time or manner. The people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is never observed at Rome or at Alexandria*."[255 (p390)]

Therefore, as late as the 5th century after Christ, Christians were keeping Saturday and Sunday. This was the origin of the weekend. The Apostolic Constitutions, a collection of authoritative instructions for Christian conduct written in the 4th century, provides advice on the days to be observed: "*keep the Sabbath, and the Lord's day festival; because the former is the memorial of the creation, and the latter of the resurrection*."[256 (p469)] The fact that the weekend became a permanent tradition around the world demonstrates just how widespread and influential the practice of Sabbath keeping was in the early church and helps to bolster the Sabbatarian claims.

Rev. James C. Moffat, professor of church history at Princeton Theological Seminary, in a book on the history of Scotland, wrote:

> "*It seems to have been customary in the Celtic churches of early times, in Ireland as well as Scotland, to keep Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, as a day of rest from labor, and Sunday, commemorative of the Lord's resurrection, as one of rejoicing, with exercises of public worship. In that case they obeyed the fourth commandment literally upon the seventh day of the week - the day on which the Lord lay in the grave and did not understand the precept about resting from labor to apply to the day of rejoicing over his resurrection. On the latter, people did not feel under obligation to refrain from any of their ordinary occupations consistent with their attending upon public worship. The queen insisted upon the single and strict observance of the Lord's Day. People and clergy alike submitted, but without entirely giving up*

their reverence for Saturday, which subsequently sank into a half-holy day preparatory for Sunday."[257 (p140)]

Present day Sabbath keepers cite Polycarp as a Sabbath keeper,[258] along with his church at Smyrna, identified in Revelation as a faithful church (Rev 2:8-11), although there is no absolute proof they were Sabbath keepers. Polycarp is an important example of Sabbath keeping for those arguing for the Sabbath, because he lived at the time of Justin Martyr in the 2nd century and was an apostle of John the Apostle. Polycarp fought against heresy. He wrote a letter to the Philippians, between 110-140 AD, affirming adherence to the commandments of God. This letter was considered so valuable to the early Church that, even two centuries later, the early Christian theologian and historian, Jerome, attested to its widespread circulation amongst the Churches of Asia.[259 (p35-6)]

So why did Christians gradually change from Sabbath to Sunday observance? In the first few centuries after Christ, Christians faced persecution because of the Sabbath. In 135 AD, for example, the Roman Emperor, Hadrian, expelled Jews and Jewish Christians from Jerusalem and prohibited them from practising any Jewish rites, including circumcision and Sabbath keeping. This persecution, apparently, did not stop them from keeping the Sabbath. Instead, Christians from Palestine spread throughout Asia to form the Eastern Church and continued to observe the Sabbath.[260] Some of the fiercest persecution against Jews and Christians began in Rome. This is where we see the first definite records of Sunday observance amongst Christians. Justin Martyr, for example, who was a pagan convert to Christianity in the 2nd century, was in favour of Sunday worship. The questions put forward by Adventists are: did persecution in Rome cause Christians to become biased against Jews and Sabbath keeping? And did this bias lead to distortion of their understanding of Scripture?

Those promoting Sunday observance in the early church looked for evidence in the Bible against Sabbath keeping to justify the change. However, Adventists question their hermeneutical methods. For example, some early church fathers argued that individuals in Genesis, such as Adam, Noah and Abraham, did not keep the Sabbath.[261 (p152-3)] However, Scripture does not tell us if they kept the Sabbath or not. We do know that Abraham was obedient to God's commandments: "*Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws* (Gen 26:5)." However, we do not know exactly what these commandments were. We are not told. He may have kept the Sabbath, or he may not have kept the Sabbath.

Persecution of Christians in the early church came to an abrupt end when Roman emperor, Constantine the Great, granted religious tolerance to Christians in the Edict of Milan in 313 AD. Consequently, Christianity increased in popularity, but paganism was still prominent. Though Constantine professed a belief in Christ, he continued to revere the Pagan sun god, Sol Invictus. On March 7, 321 AD, Constantine declared Sunday a day of rest:

"*On the venerable Day of the sun, let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed*."[262 (p872)]

With this secular endorsement, church authorities in Rome established laws which discouraged Sabbath observance across the vast empire extended across southern Europe, Britain, the Near East and North Africa. The focus of change began in Rome but gradually radiated out to distant parts of the empire and beyond. For example, in the early 5th century, Pope Innocent I decreed that the Sabbath be a day of fasting.[263 (p343)] This destroyed the joy of Sabbath observance. The church, at other times, prohibited religious meetings on Sabbath as well as celebration of the Lord's Supper on Sabbath. Many pagan practices began to come into the church around this time. Some Seventh-day Adventists identify this time period with the church in Pergamos, the compromising church, as found in Revelation chapter 2. This would lead into a dark period in church history where the Scriptures were kept from the common people and those who opposed the church were persecuted.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church controversially identifies the church at this dark time - the Papacy - as the little horn power of Daniel 7. One of the reasons for this is that it arises after the 10 horns of the fourth beast, as described:

"*The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings. He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time*." (Dan 7:23-25)

Seventh-day Adventist's interpretation of this prophecy goes as follows: the fourth beast is readily identified as the Roman empire, since it was the fourth consecutive empire following Babylon. After the fall of Western Rome, the empire was divided into 10 kingdoms, represented by the 10 horns. Three of these kingdoms – the Ostrogoths, Vandals and Heruli – were overthrown by Eastern Rome as the Papacy was coming to power. This was represented in the vision by three of the 10 horns being plucked up by the little horn. Daniel's prophecy also identifies the little horn power as one that "*shall intend to change times and law* (v25)." The fourth commandment, the Sabbath commandment, being the only commandment with a time component.

They continue to describe the fulfilment of this prophecy as follows: when seventh-day Sabbath keeping was still widespread in the 4th and 5th centuries, the Roman empire was declining in power and eventually fell to the German barbarians in 476 AD. This was when Rome was divided into 10 kingdoms, just as prophesied. Simultaneously, the Roman Catholic church was rising in power and began boldly exercising its authority, declaring that they officially changed the Sabbath

to Sunday. The Papacy arose out of the church in Rome, where the Sabbath had already been discontinued. Once the church of Rome had the authority of the state, it then used this authority to enforce Sunday law on all Christians. For example, Eusebius of Caesarea in the 4th century, said: "*All things whatsoever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord's day*."[264 (p86),265]

Instead of the popular modern view that the little horn of Daniel 8 is Antiochus IV Epiphanies, Adventists hold to the traditional view that it is symbolic of the Papacy, as described: the little horn power of Daniel chapter 8 which arises out of the Greek empire, is identical to the little horn power which arises out of the Roman Empire in chapter 7. This movement, therefore, which undermines Christ, His law and His followers was already at work before the time of Christ. It was seen in the workings of the Jewish establishment when it united with Rome to put Christ to death. Paul said that the antichrist was already at work in His time (2 Thes 2:7; 1 Jn 4:3). The little horn power was seen working in the early Roman church when it stopped honouring God's holy day and it was seen in the emerging Papacy when it began to institute laws to force the end of Sabbath keeping. It would 'intend to change times and law (Dan 7:25).' In 364 AD, for example, the Council of Laodicea established the first Sunday law:

> "*Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day they shall especially honour, and, as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ*."[266 (p316)]

Due to these measures, eventually, the Roman Catholic Church essentially eliminated Sabbath keeping across all of Christendom, apart from a remnant faithful who continued to uphold the Sabbath, including some of the Waldenses.

Seventh-day Adventists are certainly correct that the Roman Catholic Church believes that the Scriptures do not authorise the change of Sabbath to Sunday but that the church changed the day by the authority given to them by Christ through apostolic succession. In the Convert's Catechism, it reads:

> "*We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday*."

According to the Convert's Catechism, the church claims to have received authority from Christ to substitute Sunday for Saturday:

> "*The church substituted Sunday for Saturday, by the plentitude of divine power which Jesus Christ bestowed upon her*."[267 (p50)]

By claiming to have the authority of Christ on earth, while undermining His law, Adventists say that it is speaking "*pompous words against the Most High* (Dan 7:25)." In his book, Life Incidents, James White quotes from The Doctrinal Catechism to demonstrate the Roman Catholic Church's claim to such authority. The

compliance of Christianity with Sunday keeping Catholic leaders declare to be proof of the Catholic Churches authority, as stated in Stephen Keenan's doctrinal catechism for the Catholic Church:

> "*Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her; she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no scriptural authority*."[32 (p221)]

The little horn power would also persecute the saints of the Most High for a time, times and half a time (Dan 7:25). Comparing this verse with Revelation 12:6 and 12:14, Biblical scholars have recognised 'time, times and half a time' to equal 1260 days. Using the day-for-a-year principle, Adventists interpret this to mean that the saints would be given into his hands for 1260 years. During the transition of power in Rome following the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD to the Arian Christian Germanic tribes, the political independence and influence of the Roman Pope was limited. However, after Emperor Justinian defeated the city of Rome in 538 AD, the authority of the papacy in Rome was strengthened and re-established. Adventists identify this as the beginning of the 1260-year time period. The Papacy quickly grew in civil authority and maintained this power in Europe until the pope was put in prison by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798. A total of 1260 years, fulfilling precisely the prophecy of Daniel 7.

Hence is the reason, Adventists maintain, that the majority of Christians now worship on a day different to that which was instituted by God at creation. This is not to say that Adventists regard Catholics and other Sunday keepers, and even popes, as bad people because they reject the seventh-day Sabbath – although Adventists have often given this impression. Just as with the Salvation Army, Mrs White urged members not to judge Catholics. They are not to judge them, but neither are they to join them. Rather, they are to call all Christians out of the apostate system which opposes God's law. Referring to the corrupted political and religious system of the world in the end time, God says, "*Come out of her <u>my people</u>, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues* (Rev 18:4)." God has His people scattered everywhere and, therefore, we should not judge people just because they belong to an organisation different to our own.

Sabbath keepers claim that the change of the Sabbath is not founded on Scripture but on human wisdom. The veneration of Sunday as a memorial of Jesus' resurrection is a human institution. However, Jesus already established a special memorial in remembrance of His death and resurrection, the Lord's supper (Lk 22:19-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26). God gave us an institution - the Sabbath - to remember Him as our creator and He gave us an institution - the Lord's supper - to remember Him as our saviour. These He commanded and these we must keep in honour of Him. In the beginning God made a distinction between the first six days and the seventh day: "*God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it* (Gen 2:3)." However,

we have removed the distinction that God created, making the seventh day no different to any ordinary day.

In these last days, God is calling His people out of Babylon. He is calling us out of a religious system that undermines God's law. He is calling His people back to true worship of Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water. In other words, He is calling His faithful followers to worship him on His holy day. Seventh-day Adventists believe that their denomination has been given the special task of proclaiming the three angels message to the world – including calling Christians back to worshipping the creator on His holy day – the seventh-day Sabbath. The decalogue does not include a command about style of music or worship, but it does include a command about the day of worship. First things first, they would argue, we need to harmonise ourselves with God's commands and only then should we seek to get the style of worship correct. Having said that, the Bible also gives much instruction concerning music and we will discuss this further in the coming chapters.

Consequently, for the Sabbatarian, there are many questions concerning Sabbath-keeping in the early church. If the apostles are the ones who changed the Sabbath to Sunday, why did they not say so? If the majority of Christians in the 2nd century had already stopped keeping the seventh-day Sabbath, why did the Roman Catholic church have to bring laws in to prohibit Sabbath keeping in the 4th century? If the only Sabbath keepers in the early church were Jews, why were they told not to Judaise by keeping their own Sabbath? If it was only the relatively small number of Jewish Christians keeping the Sabbath, where did the widely practised weekend tradition come from? If the apostles changed the Sabbath to Sunday and the majority of Christians by the 2nd century were keeping Sunday instead of Saturday, why did church Bishops living in the 4th and 5th century say that they changed the day of worship? If the apostles established Sunday keeping and the early church followed the tradition they established, why did Socrates and Sozomenus say in the 4th century that almost everywhere Christians were still keeping the Sabbath? If Sunday keeping gradually evolved without a clear command from God, would not that make it a human institution?

Sabbath keepers also have many questions concerning the seventh day. If the seventh day exists because God created it and if He blessed it and made it holy when He created it, why do we not treat it as holy? If God blessed the seventh day at creation, in what way was it to be a blessing if it was not established to be a blessing for His creation? If God meant for the Sabbath to only be a symbol of rest in Him, why did He create a separate physical day of the week that He called blessed and sanctified? If God made the seventh day holy at creation, would it not remain holy until He removes the holiness? If God made marriage sacred at creation and if He also made the seventh day sacred at creation, why do we only treat marriage as sacred today? Why would God set apart the seventh day as holy and blessed at creation but not expect it to be treated as holy and blessed for the first two-and-a-half thousand years, and then only by a select few of people for a lim-

ited time? If there is no command in the Bible for Sunday keeping, why not keep the day that God made holy at creation instead of a day established by human tradition? If, at creation, God made a distinction between the seventh day and the other days of the week, should not that distinction remain until God removes it? If Genesis clearly states that God Himself made the seventh day holy, should we not put aside tradition and honour God by assuming it is still a sacred and blessed day, since there is no clear and unambiguous statement to the contrary in all of Scripture?

PART 4

INSTRUMENTS

Chapter 13
Musical Instruments

So far, we have talked a lot about worship and music in general but not a lot about musical instruments specifically. There is surprising silence regarding musical instruments in the gospels and epistles. There is no record of Jesus ever using or promoting drums, cymbals, trumpets or any other musical instruments in His ministry. Neither is there any record of the apostles specifically using or encouraging the use of musical instruments in the church or as a means of attracting people to the faith, though there is mention of singing in general. This by no means suggests that Jesus never or rarely allowed for or encouraged the use of instruments in His ministry. Given the importance of music in the lives of the Jews and the fact that Jesus never spoke against instruments, it is difficult to imagine that Jesus would not have used singing and music in his life and ministry. But everything in the Bible is there, or not there, for a reason and God expects us to take every word of Scripture into consideration (2 Tim 3:16).

Why the relative silence on musical instruments in the Gospels and Epistles? How do we harmonise this with frequent references to musical instruments in the Psalms and Old Testament worship? Jesus is our example and the gospels were written as they were for a reason. This chapter will explore ways to harmonise the Old and New Testaments with scriptural evidence as well as with help from science.

Martin Luther was in favour of the use of instruments in church and encouraged the training of church members, including children, in the use of musical instruments. He strongly encouraged preachers and schoolteachers to be trained musicians. Some reformers, however, such as John Calvin and Huldrych Zwingli had a much stricter view of music and its emotional influence and did not allow the use of instruments in church.[268]

There was much debate in the 1800s regarding the place of musical instruments in church. Some denominations prohibited them altogether. In the official Salvation Army publication, The War Cry, General Booth testified of the central role of musical instruments in their worship: "*we have proved the great utility of musical instruments in attracting crowds to our open-air and indoor meetings*."[3] Likewise, from the very beginning, the Seventh-day Adventist Church welcomed the use of instruments in their worship services.[9] Mrs White encouraged the use of musical instruments at camp meetings and in local churches[9 (p80)] and was in favour of the use of all kinds of musical instruments:

"*Let the talent of singing be brought into the work. The use of musical instruments is not at all objectionable. These were used in religious services in ancient times. The worshipers praised God upon the harp and cymbal, and music should have its place in our services. It will add to the interest*."[168 (p500)]

In her comments on the General Conference of 1905, she said:

"*I am glad to hear the musical instruments that you have here. God wants us to have them. He wants us to praise Him with heart and soul and voice, magnifying His name before the world*."[269]

A Bedlam of Noise

Mrs White did, however, sometimes have a problem with how instruments were used. The Seventh-day Adventists at the 1900 Indiana camp meeting who belonged to the Holy Flesh movement "*worked themselves up to a high pitch of excitement by the use of musical instruments*."[61] S. N. Haskell described what he saw at this camp meeting as "*a mixture of truth and error, with much excitement and music*."[270 (p102)] In response to the Holy Flesh movement, Mrs White said:

"*The Lord desires to have in His service order and discipline, not excitement and confusion. We are not now able to describe with accuracy the scenes to be enacted in our world in the future; but this we do know, that this is a time when we must watch unto prayer; for the great day of the Lord is at hand. Satan is rallying his forces. We need to be thoughtful and still, and to contemplate the truths of revelation. Excitement is not favorable to growth in grace, to true purity and sanctification of the spirit*."[12 (pp33-6)]

To S. N. Haskell, she replied:

"*The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time. Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to use* ***musical instruments*** *to do the work which last January was represented to me would be brought into our camp meetings. The truth for this time needs nothing of this kind in its work of converting souls. A bedlam of noise shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing. The powers of satanic agencies blend with the din and noise, to have a carnival, and this is termed the Holy Spirit's working*."[12 (p36-7)]

Some modern-day commentators on the 1900 Indiana camp meeting have suggested that descriptions like 'bedlam of noise,' 'shrieks' and 'shouting' describe total auditory chaos rather than music. It is argued that this chaotic noise along with descriptions of 'half insane,' 'fanatical excitement,' 'hysterical' and 'fairly shaking as though they had the palsy,' describes extreme Pentecostal prac-

tices. The implication then would be that loud and ecstatic worship music is appropriate in church, as long as the sound is of comprehensible tunes and that the conduct is not comprised of extreme behaviours, such as shaking uncontrollably or running about hysterically.

This understanding is dependent, however, on the interpretation of subjective terms, such as 'hysterical,' which can easily be misinterpreted by the influence of our own modern context which is far removed from the event. The way we describe what we hear and see depends on our experience. Author and professor of music at the University of Liverpool in the UK, Michael Spitzer, notes:

> "*When those stratospheric high notes belted out by Whitney Houston… are performed in parts of the world that haven't been exposed to that style of singing, such as in South Asia or most of Africa, they really do sound like screams. Growing up in a Western musical culture, we learn not to be afraid of these sounds, and even to like them*."[271]

If we peel away the subjective descriptions which are difficult to interpret, we are left with a more accurate objective description of what was happening at the 1900 Indiana camp meeting. For example, S. N. Haskell reported that the Holy Flesh revival effort was "*simply a complete* ***copy of the Salvation Army method***."[270 (p102)] His wife reported that they played "*dance tunes to sacred words*…" and they shouted "*'Amens' and 'Praise the Lord,' 'Glory to God,'* ***just like a Salvation Army service***."[61] Since we have much documentation of 19th century Salvation Army worship, it is clear from these objective descriptions that the eyewitnesses were not describing chaotic sounds or extreme Pentecostal practice but typical worship and music seen within Holiness denominations like the Salvation Army in the late 1800s before Pentecostalism even existed. Salvation Army musicians were well trained – the General insisted that they play good music. It was not random beating and shouting out of chaotic nonsensical noise as some have suggested.

These objective descriptions are equivalent to the descriptions of modern-day contemporary worship – sacred words put to pop music, congregational shouting of 'Praise God!' and 'Amen!', hand waving and jumping up and down. It was exciting, loud and up-beat worship that most Christians had never witnessed prior to the 19th century. To these Christians, it was fanatical, hysterical and insane. Eyewitnesses of Salvation Army worship used very similar descriptors as were used to describe the 1900 Indiana camp meeting, such as: 'confused noise,' 'sensational,' 'nonsensical rhymes they call hymns,' 'clapping of hands and stamping of feet,' 'intemperate bawlings out of Hallelujahs,' 'noisy meetings,' 'screaming,' 'shouting ejaculations,' 'irreverence,' 'shocking,' 'over excitement,' 'carnival,' 'jocosity,' 'loud tones' and 'shrieking.'[2]

The unique Pentecostal element at the 1900 Indiana camp meeting was the 'through the garden experience.' Individuals would fall to the ground and then were carried to the rostrum where they were surrounded by singing, praying and

shouting members. Once the individual revived, he was a born son of God fully cleansed from sin and sinful tendencies.[60 (p447)] This is equivalent to what would later be termed baptism of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostalism and grew out of Holiness theology. In fact, these practices were already common in revivalist meetings in other denominations, including the Salvation Army. These were the bodily manifestations they were seeking as a sign that they had achieved instantaneous sanctification and removal of original sin.

Paul Hamel, former music department chair at Andrews University, describes how the physical manifestations of the 1900 Indiana camp meeting are, once again, very much part of the contemporary religious scene. He describes how:

> "*many popular churches are using jazz and rock music in their services. In order to evaluate the influence of this kind of religious music, I have attended a few such services. In them the music is central and it almost, if not entirely, excludes everything else. In its persistence, its beat and its highly amplified sound, the music pervades and controls almost absolutely. Usually, it is not long after the music begins until hand clapping starts in rhythm to the music. Soon feet are also responding and before long the entire body seems to be affected by the musical stimulation. I have seen worshipers lie on the floors of their churches, rolling, jerking and shouting*."[9 (p45)]

For General Booth, as with the Holy Flesh movement, the noise and excitement created by the musical instruments had a central purpose: the "*beating and blowing is to get people first into the barracks and then to the Penitent Form*."[3] The penitent form is a vacant bench at the front of a meeting where those who wanted to repent of their sins and turn to Christ could identify themselves and receive prayer.[272] Pamela J. Walker describes how:

> "*Music was essential to all these gatherings. Salvationists sang and played a variety of instruments… All the songs, whether written expressly for the Army or popularized by Moody and Sanky and others, were easy to sing and expressed in words and music a distinct emotional state. Songs were used to sustain a sinner's conviction of sin or to give voice to a convert's hallelujahs*."[2 (p101)]

Therefore, the primary purpose of Salvation Army music was to lead people to repentance. "*But,"* said Mrs White, speaking of Salvationists, *"it is more necessary that they should study and preach the Word than act in a sensational way in order to draw the attention of the people.*"[27] Though Mrs White encouraged the use of musical instruments in worship, it was the preaching of the Word that was to lead people to conviction, rather than the music. She did not always approve of the way musical instruments were used and she never spoke positively about the drum. Speaking of outdoor meetings at Gisborne, New Zealand, in 1893 she wrote of the success they had in attracting considerable crowds without the need for drums and putting on a spectacle to gain attention:

"*Quite a number of the Salvation Army were present on these occasions. They can learn that meetings can be held in the open air without the **drum**, without the jumping and the gesticulations that create a laugh and rob the service of God of its solemnity. Our meetings were very orderly, and we know that much prejudice was swept away*."[146 (p115)]

In her response to the 1900 Indiana camp meeting, Mrs White made the following statement:

"*The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, **the Lord has shown me** would take place just before the close of probation. Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be shouting, with **drums**, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit.*"[12 (p36)]

S. N. Haskell recalled the instruments used by the Holy Flesh movement at this camp meeting: "*They have an organ, one bass viol, three fiddles, two flutes, three **tambourines**, three horns, and a big bass **drum**, and perhaps other instruments which I have not mentioned*."[270 (p102)] The tambourine is a type of percussion instrument resembling a shallow hand drum with metal jingles around the edge. Drum kits were not invented by then, but individual bass drums were being used to good effect by the Salvation Army to attract a crowd and contribute to the excitement and 'jocosity' and lead people to conviction and repentance.

No explanation is given by Mrs White for the apparent censoring or singling out of the drum as undesirable. Did she mean for this censoring to be applied to all situations and to our time today? Her references to drums mentioned above concerned evangelistic programs contemporary to her time as well as church worship just before probation ends. The references were also in the context of Salvation Army style worship, Holy Flesh worship and the worship of people in the end time just before probation ends - the central issue in regard to music in these contexts was the excitement.

Instruments Mentioned in the Bible

What does the Bible have to say about musical instruments? There is often ambiguity when it comes to the naming of instruments in the Bible and the identity of certain music instruments is often disputed.[227] Hence, the inconsistency which is often seen in the translation of instruments. However, despite this, there is much that we do know, thanks to Biblical scholarship and archaeology. The musical instruments used by the Hebrews were very similar to that of the ancient Egyptians and Assyrians.[273]

The lyre, often translated as harp, was the instrument of choice for ancient Israel and the primary instrument of their musical culture, especially with regards to melodic music.[228 (p.iv)] The most frequently mentioned instrument in the Old Testament is the *shofar*, a naturally occurring goat or ram's horn. The shofar is very often simply translated as 'trumpet' in English versions of the Bible.[227 (p26)] Metal trumpets, and in particular, silver trumpets are also commonly mentioned in the Bible. For simplicity, we will use the term 'trumpet' in this book to mean either the shofar or the metal trumpet, as they are often used in similar contexts and for overlapping purposes, although they did have their distinctive uses. Being cone-shaped and valveless, the silver trumpet and shofar would probably have been able to produce only the second, third and fourth notes of the harmonic series.[34 (p54)] The tambourine was a small, rounded frame drum, much like modern tambourines, except without metal jingles attached to the side. It is the only type of drum known to the region of ancient Israel.[227 (p29-30)] Other instruments mentioned in the Bible include: the flute, wood clapper, rattle, cymbals and bells among others. In the coming chapters, we will discuss in more detail some of the instruments of the Bible.

Chapter 14
The Trumpet

The trumpet is the first and primary musical instrument assigned by God for use by His people. The very first reference to the trumpet in the Bible is when God appeared to the Children of Israel at Mount Sinai with thunder, lightning, a thick cloud of smoke and very loud trumpet sounds (Ex 19:13,16&19). This sets the stage for God's use of music amongst His people. The trumpet sound became a means of communication between God and His people. From that point onward, the trumpet would be an important means of communicating important messages to the Children of Israel.

The blast of the trumpet is likened to **voice** (Is 58:1; Rev 4:1)[227 (p28)] and **loud voice** or **shouting** is often used as a synonym for the trumpet sound, such as in Psalm 47:5: "*God has gone up with a shout, The Lord with the sound of a trumpet*." When God called Ezekiel to give a message of warning to His people, He associated His **word** with the sound of a trumpet (Ez 33:6-8). Indeed, the trumpet served a very practical purpose of communication, since the children of Israel did not have telephones or a mail service and the written language was still in its infancy. The trumpet is the instrument of choice for this purpose because of its ability to communicate specific signals across long distances.

When all references to trumpets used by God's people in the Bible are analysed, they can be grouped into three practical uses according to God's command in Numbers 10:1-10:

1. Assembling & directing the Israelite people
2. Signalling & commanding war against Israel's enemies
3. Observing burnt offerings and peace offerings during significant joyous Israelite national events, feast days & new moons

In general, the trumpet was used for these specific purposes only, as instructed by God (see Figure 1).

Apart from directing crowds or signalling war, the trumpet was almost exclusively used in connection with the temple and its services. Even for directing people, it was often used to gather people to the sanctuary. The trumpet was used to praise and worship God but only in the context of these special purposes of national and religious significance. In time, God allowed other instruments, including cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, to be used along with the trumpet (2 Chr 29:25-30). Singers also joined in with the music and the whole assembly would worship (v28). Therefore, the use of music in temple worship evolved from simply the blowing of trumpets to the use of multiple instruments, along with singing. Despite the addition of other instruments and singers and the whole congregation joining in with the worship, the function of the music remained the same as when God first assigned the trumpets for use in the temple: for observing burnt offerings and peace offerings during significant joyous Israelite national events, feast days & new moons. As with trumpets, cymbals are also loud and when all instruments are played together, along with shouts of joy, it can add to the effect of the trumpet.

As with other items associated with the temple, the trumpet has symbolic meaning. Every item in the sanctuary and every ritual associated with the temple was a metaphor or a symbol of a certain aspect of God's plan of salvation. For example, the unleavened bread represents Jesus' sinless life, the slain lamb represents Jesus' crucifixion, and the lampstand represents the church because it shines the light of truth to the world. Likewise, the trumpet was a metaphor for communication of God's plan of salvation to the world – calling the world to God, pronouncing God's judgement and proclaiming salvation. Just as the bread, the lamb and the lampstand were object lessons to illustrate the redemptive work of God in the world, the trumpet and shouting were object lessons symbolising the communication of God's redemptive work. Below are some examples of literal and symbolic uses of the trumpet in the Bible (including shouting and associated instruments

and singing). The examples are categorised according to the three main uses assigned by God in the temple as found in Numbers 10.

	Literal meaning	Symbolic meaning
1	Assembling & directing the Israelite people (**Num 10:2-8**)	Calling the world to God
2	Signalling & commanding war against Israel's enemies (**Num 10:9**)	Pronouncing judgement
3	Observing burnt offerings and peace offerings during significant joyous Israelite national events, feast days & new moons (**Num 10:10**)	Proclaiming salvation

Figure 1: The purpose of the trumpet as laid out in Numbers 10:1-10

Symbolism of the Trumpet: 1. Calling the World to God

Command:

> "*Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps… The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets; and these shall be to you as an ordinance forever throughout your generations*." (Num 10:2&8)

Examples:

When Nehemiah was directing the rebuilding of the wall, he commanded the builders: "*Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there* (Neh 4:20)." When Jesus returns as King, there will be a literal trumpet call and a shout (loud command) as He returns to gather His people:

> "*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord*." (1 Thes 4:16-17)

Here again, we see 'loud command', 'voice' and 'trumpet call' being associated together. When Israelite leaders blew the trumpet, the Children of Israel were to gather at the temple and when Jesus returns at His second coming, a trumpet will sound to gather God's people, including the dead in Christ.

Symbolic use:

The trumpet was also often used figuratively in the Bible for calling and assembling God's people spiritually. For example, the prophet Joel said:

> "*So rend your heart, and not your garments;*
> ***Return to the Lord*** *your God,*
> *For He is gracious and merciful,*
> *Slow to anger, and of great kindness…*
> ***Blow the trumpet*** *in Zion,*
> *Consecrate a fast,*
> *Call a sacred assembly;*
> ***Gather the people****,*
> *Sanctify the congregation*." (Joel 2:13,15-16)

Of the Israelite exiles, Isaiah declared:

> "*So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; they will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, and they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem*." (Is 27:13)

There is no literal trumpet in Jerusalem that can be heard in Assyria and Egypt – this is not possible – but God's people are called to Him out of bondage through the words of His prophets. The words of the prophets, in this case, is the trumpet call. Likewise, the angel cries "*mightily with a loud voice… Babylon the great is fallen* (Rev 18:2)." And another voice says, "*Come out of her my people* (Rev 18:4)." Metaphorically, the trumpet sound and loud voice in these examples symbolise God's Word being preached with the power of the Holy Spirit to draw people out of bondage with the world and false religion and into a true relationship with God.

(See Figure 2 for more examples)

Symbolism of the Trumpet:
2. Pronouncing judgment

Command:

> "*When you go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the Lord your God, and you will be saved from your enemies.*" (Num 10:9)

Example:

When Judah was ambushed by Jeroboam, King of Israel, and the battle line was at both front and rear:

> "*they cried out to the Lord, and the priests sounded the **trumpets**. Then the men of Judah gave a **shout**; and as the men of Judah shouted, it happened that God struck Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. And the children of Israel fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hand*." (2 Chr 13:14-16)

Ironically, it was the northern kingdom of Israel that was the enemy and God drove them away at the sound of the trumpet and the shouts. Anyone who oppresses God's people is the enemy, including professed followers of God.

Symbolic use:

Warning and judgement is probably the most widely recognised figurative meaning of the trumpet in the Bible. Of His own people, God declared "*Cry aloud, spare not; lift up your **voice** like a **trumpet**; tell my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins* (Is 58:1)." God used the metaphor of the trumpet to illustrate Ezekiel's role as watchman for the house of Israel. He said:

> "…*if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not **blow the trumpet**, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand*." (Ez 33:6)

God then interprets the meaning of the trumpet in this illustration:

> "*I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore, you shall hear **a word from My mouth** and warn them for Me. When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die!' and you do not **speak to warn** the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand*." (Ez 33:7-8)

God clearly interprets the blowing of the trumpet here as a metaphor for declaring His word. But it is not just God's rebellious people that are to be warned. Isaiah declared:

> "*All inhabitants of the world and dwellers on the earth: when he lifts up a banner on the mountains, you see it; and when he blows a trumpet, you hear it*." (Is 18:3)

As a church, it is our job to sound the alarm to the world. If we do not declare God's Word to the lost, they will die in their iniquity and their blood will be on our hands. The seven trumpets of Revelation are God's judgements on the world. When the Israelites went into battle and blew the trumpet it was a pronounce-

ment of doom for the enemy because God would fight for the Israelites. Likewise, the seven trumpets of Revelation 8-11 are symbolic of God's judgement on the world because of their opposition to Him and His people. We are living in the time of the last trumpets. Seventh-day Adventists believe it is their job to proclaim the three angels' message with a loud voice so that all may have the opportunity to repent, turn to God and avoid receiving the wrath of His judgement. In Testimonies for the Church, volume 9, we read:

> "*Do not divest the truth of its dignity and impressiveness by preliminaries that are more after the order of the world than after the order of heaven. Let your hearers understand that you hold meetings,* ***not to charm their senses with music and other things, but to preach the truth in all its solemnity, that it may come to them as a warning, arousing them from their deathlike sleep of self-indulgence****. It is the naked truth that, like a sharp two-edged sword, cuts both ways. It is this that will arouse those who are dead in trespasses and sins*."[196 (p142)]

General Booth by no means neglected to warn his hearers of the coming judgement. In fact, this was the main emphasis of his preaching. He so vividly captured the scenes of judgement that the anguish invoked in his listeners sometimes caused them to literally tear up whatever they had in their hands.

Mrs White also warned her readers and listeners of God's judgement. This has caused some to see Mrs White as a stern and judgemental person. However, others see in her writings saturation with love for God and for her saviour. Her most widely read book is the Christian classic, Steps to Christ, which discusses how to come to know Jesus Christ at a personal level. It is listed on the popular website, Godtube, as one of the top 10 selling Christian books of all time, amongst other classics, such as Pilgrims Progress, by John Bunyan and The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis. It is estimated to have sold 60 million copies in 160 languages.[274] This is apart from her other classic on the life of Christ, The Desire of Ages, which, for many years, some Adventist sources say, was listed by The Library of Congress in the United States as the best book on the life of Christ. Her other works never fail to discuss the profound love of Christ for His creation.

It is in the nine-volume series, Testimonies to the Church, that readers come across some of Mrs White's harshest judgements, especially in the first few volumes. These are very often directed at individuals and often come close to home for each reader as they relate to the very sins that she was calling out in individuals. Some people use this as a reason to disregard Mrs White as overbearing and unloving.

However, one of the primary jobs of prophets is to call out people's sins, such as that of David when Nathan publicly confronted him over Uriah the Hittite and Bathsheba (2 Sam 12:7-9). Jesus, Himself, often publicly declared the sins of individuals, especially the Pharisees, and warned of judgement. As God explained to the prophet Ezekiel, if a prophet hears a word from God but fails to "*speak to warn*

the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand (Ez 33:8)."

If we are used to solely hearing messages of grace and mercy in songs and sermons, the voice of prophets, such as we read in the major and minor prophets of the Old Testament, will seem excessively harsh. Mrs White describes how she was shown in vision errors in people's lives that were leading them and others astray. If she truly was receiving warnings from God, she had no choice but to sound the warning to these individuals, many of whom affirmed the veracity of her visions and were grateful that they were given the opportunity to repent and turn to God.

If she was a genuine prophet, she was doing her job of blowing the trumpet - sending a warning to help save sinners. She did, however, warn that those who are not prophets are not to judge others in this way. That is why she could, on the one hand, point out errors in the Salvation Army method, while on the other hand, instructing Seventh-day Adventist members not to judge Salvationists:

> "*Neither is it our work to condemn them and speak harsh words against them. There are precious, self-sacrificing souls in the Salvation Army. We are to treat them kindly.*"[47 (p184)]

When we see someone living in sin, we are to gently warn in a loving way. We do not know the hearts of individuals, so we cannot judge as God judges through His prophets. However, we are obligated to humbly and gently help our fellow Christians, in a tactful way, to see the error of their ways, according to Biblical methods and in an orderly manner (Matt 18:15-20). If we turn a blind eye to sins in the church, the blood of those who are lost as a consequence is on our hands (Acts 20:26-27; Jam 5:19-20).

(See Figure 2 for more examples)

Symbolism of the Trumpet:
3. Proclaiming Salvation

Command:

> "*Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: I am the Lord your God*." (Num 10:10)

Examples:

When Hezekiah became king, he restored the temple worship, including blowing the trumpet over the burnt offering as commanded by God:

> "*And he stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for thus was* ***the commandment of the Lord*** *by His prophets. The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. Then Hezekiah commanded them to offer the burnt offering on the altar. And when the* ***burnt offering*** *began, the song of the Lord also began, with the trumpets and with the instruments of David king of Israel. So, all the assembly worshiped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. And when they had finished offering, the king and all who were present with him bowed and worshiped. Moreover, King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So, they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped*." (2 Chr 29:25-30)

King Hezekiah assigned the blowing of trumpets precisely according to the command of God in the law of Moses along with accompanying instruments according to the commandment of the Lord by His prophets. The loud praise commemorates the blessings of God's mercy and grace. After returning from Babylonian exile, the Jews again restored the temple music "*according to the ordinance of David king of Israel* (Ezra 3:10; Neh 12:45)" as approved by God. The praise to God given in song was always according to God's specific instruction.

Examples of days of gladness (joyous national events), include: dedication of Solomon's temple (2 Chr 7:6); dedication of the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem (Neh 12:31-36); laying the foundation of the second temple (Ezra 3:10-11) and the anointing of kings, such as King Solomon (1 Ki 1:34). These can all be regarded as types that were fulfilled in Christ's kingdom, the antitype.

<u>Symbolic use:</u>

Many uses of the trumpet are found in Psalms, which focuses a lot on God's mercy and grace. Psalms uses a lot of poetic language, very often in the context of temple worship and ritual. Though references to shouting and trumpets in Psalms can be taken literally, the meaning is also very symbolic. In the literal setting of the earthly temple, the trumpet would sound from the temple and the Israelite people would gather at the temple. From the temple, God would give instructions to His people. Also, sacrifices were made to provide forgiveness for their sins and trumpets were blown over these offerings.

But instead of referring to the temple in a literal sense, Psalms generally refers to these same activities in a spiritual sense involving the whole world. The whole world is called to assemble, figuratively, in praise before God. For example, in Psalm 33, we are admonished to "*Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy* (v3)." A few verses after this, we are given the context of this praise: "*Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him* (v8)." This is temple im-

agery of God's people gathering at the temple. Reading further along, we find out where God is located: "*The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth* (v13-14)." Therefore, God's people are assembled before God who is seated in His sanctuary in heaven. And what is God doing? "*He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works* (v15)". In other words, He is instructing His people, making them into a holy people. As they gather, His people are also reminded of His mercy: "*Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy, to deliver their soul from death* (v18-19)"

Therefore, in Psalm 33, we see temple worship symbolically represented. Remember, shouting is a synonym for the trumpet. The shout goes out – this is the trumpet call. God's people all over the world, spiritually speaking, assemble before God who is looking down from His sanctuary in heaven. As they behold Him, their hearts are changed and He gives them hope in His salvation. The purpose of singing and shouting in Psalm 33, as with many other Psalms, symbolises the call for the world to come to God to witness His salvation.

In the literal earthly temple, the trumpet was blown at the temple. It signalled to the people to gather at the temple and it let the people know that a sacrifice was being made, a temple festival was being celebrated or another joyous event was taking place. This was symbolic of the saving work that Jesus would do for us which gives us great joy. The trumpet sound communicated the joyous event to the community.

Psalm 32 begins with the blessings of forgiveness of transgression: "*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered…* (v1-5)." Further along, we discover the setting of this forgiveness: "*You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance* (v7)." My hiding place refers to the temple (see Ps 27:4-6) – this is where we receive forgiveness. The end result of this forgiveness is joyous thanksgiving as we find expressed at the end of the chapter: "*Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!* (v11)."

In Psalm 98, 'all the earth (v4)' is called to 'shout joyfully before the Lord (v6)':

> "*…All the ends of the earth have seen* ***the salvation of our God****.*
> *Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth;*
> *Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.*
> *Sing to the Lord with the harp,*
> *With the harp and the sound of a psalm,*
> *With trumpets and the sound of a horn;*
> ***Shout joyfully before the Lord****, the King*." (Ps 98:3-6)

It is not physically possible for the whole earth to gather together before the Lord at His temple, as the Israelites did. There is no literal trumpet, no literal shouts and no literal procession or gathering of people at the temple. But in a

spiritual sense, the psalmist is calling all people in the world to shout joyfully before the Lord for the salvation that he brings to the world.

God was present with the Hebrew people in the temple and when a burnt offering was made, the trumpets were sounded. Symbolically, we also see these three elements in the Psalms as we have seen with the above examples. When shouting or trumpets appear in the Psalms, there is also a call to come before God in His sanctuary, to witness His mercy and receive forgiveness and salvation. In the Psalms, however, it involves the whole earth.

In Psalm 150, we see these same three elements in the first three verses. God is praised "*in His sanctuary* (v1)." He is praised for "*His mighty acts* (v2)," which includes His atoning work. And He is praised "*with the sound of the trumpet* (v3)," along with other accompanying instruments. Also, the whole earth is involved, in fact, "*everything that has breath*" is to praise God (v6). The context is very poetic. It is not literally possible for 'everything that has breath' to praise the Lord 'in His sanctuary.' The trumpet blowing and cymbal clashing, therefore, is a metaphor for praise. John said, "*let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth* (1 Jn 3:18)." In Amos 5, God told the Israelite people that He did not accept their burnt offerings (v22) or the melody of their stringed instruments (v23). Instead, He said "*let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream* (v24)." Therefore, we primarily praise God through our actions. The best way to sing God's praise to the world is to live a life of righteousness and justice and to share truth with others.

Psalm 66 is a song of praise to God for His wonderful works and His deeds toward the sons of men. Figuratively speaking, David invites the whole earth to "*make a joyful shout to God* (v1)" as he enters into God's "*house with burnt offerings* (v13)." After symbolically making the offering, he then says, "*Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul* (v16)." When we look upon Jesus' sacrifice, the longing of our hearts is to share with others what He has done for our souls. This is what the trumpet being blown over the burnt offering symbolises – the joy that gushes out of our souls as we share the good news of salvation with others. It is not possible for all the earth to literally join with David in sacrifice and praise in the sanctuary; however, spiritually speaking, when all believers around the world share the good news of Jesus' sacrifice, we are blowing the trumpet in all the earth.

Sometimes the temple imagery is not obvious, but whenever there is shouting and trumpets in Psalms, invariably it is in the context of the temple. For example, Psalm 47 opens with, "*Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph* (v1)!" The context of this shouting is given further down:

> "*God has gone up with a shout,*
> *The Lord with the sound of a trumpet.*
> *Sing praises to God, sing praises!*
> *Sing praises to our King, sing praises*!" (v5-6)

We know from Psalm 68 that this is a procession of singing and music accompanying God as He goes up into His sanctuary:

> "*They have seen Your procession, O God,*
> *The procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary.*
> *The singers went before, the players on instruments*
> *followed after;*
> *Among them were the maidens playing timbrels*."
> (Ps 68:24-25)

It is not only in Psalms that we find symbolic use of the trumpet as proclamation of salvation. For example, we see shouting, a synonym for the trumpet, figuratively used in this messianic passage:

> "*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!*
> ***Shout**, O daughter of Jerusalem!*
> *Behold, your King is coming to you;*
> *He is just and having salvation,*
> *Lowly and riding on a donkey,*
> *A colt, the foal of a donkey*." (Zech 9:9)

The sacrificial offering, which was symbolically represented in the temple with the sound of a trumpet, is prophetically heralded here by the trumpet sound, by a shout, as He enters Jerusalem on a donkey in preparation for that great sacrifice which was forecast from the foundation of the world.

When the Lamb ascends to heaven, having made the ultimate sacrifice, the trumpet sound is still proclaiming His mighty act, "*saying with a **loud voice***:

> '*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain*
> *To receive power and riches and wisdom,*
> *And strength and honor and glory and blessing*!'"
> (Rev 5:12)

(See Figure 2 for more examples)

In summary, the Bible likens the sound of the trumpet to words and voice. The trumpet is also very often used interchangeably with expressions such as 'shout', 'loud voice' and 'loud command.' God assigned the trumpet in the temple for three purposes of communication: to assemble people, to command war and to blow over the sacrificial burnt offerings and peace offerings during special occasions. The use of the trumpet in the temple, with God's approval, evolved to include other instruments, shouting and singing but the original purpose remained the same – to praise God for His mighty works of salvation which came about via sacrifice.

Very often, the trumpet and its synonyms, such as shout, are used symbolically in the Bible to gather God's people to Him – not literally, but spiritually – and to pronounce judgement on God's enemies. The blowing of the trumpet over sacri-

fices is also very often used metaphorically in the Bible, especially in Psalms, for proclaiming God's salvation to the whole world. God's people are His instruments to achieve this end – for we are to sing and shout his praise, figuratively speaking, all around the world. The gift of salvation is so great that it has to be 'shouted' so that the whole world can hear it.

Uses of the trumpet and its synonyms (e.g. shouting) in the Bible:

Purpose	Literal use	Symbolic use
Literal: assembling & directing large crowds (**Num 10:2-8)** **Symbolic:** calling the world to God	Jud 3:27; 6:34; Num 10:2; 1 Sam 13:3-4; 2 Sam 20:22; Neh 4:18-20; Matt 24:31; 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thes 4:16	Is 27:13; Jer 4:5; 6:1,17; 51:27; Joel 2:15
Literal: signalling & commanding war (**Num 10:9**) **Symbolic:** pronouncing judgement	Num 10:9; Josh 6:5-20; Jud 7:18-22; 2 Sam 2:28; 18:16; 2 Chr 13:14; 1 Cor 14:8; Jer 42:14	Ps 5:11-12; Is 18:3; Is 42:11; 58:1; Jer 4:19,21; 50:15; Ez 7:14; 33:3-6; Hos 5:8; 8:1; Joel 2:1; Amos 2:2; Zeph 1:16; Zech 9:14; Rev 8:6-13; 9:1,13
Literal: observing burnt offerings and peace offerings during significant joyous Israelite national events, feast days & new moons (**Num 10:10**) **Symbolic:** proclaiming salvation	Ex 19:16,19; 20:18; Lev 9:24; 23:23-25; 25:9; Num 10:10; 29:1-6; Josh 6:8; 1 Sam 4:5; 2 Sam 6:15; 1 Ki 1:34,39; 2 Ki 9:13; 2 Ki 11:14; 1 Chr 13:8; 15:24,28; 16:6,42; 2 Chr 5:12-13; 7:6; 15:14; 20:28; 23:13; 29:28; Ezra 3:10; Neh 12:35,41; Ps 81:3; Lk 19:37-38	Num 23:21; Ps 32:7,10-11 (see Ps 27:4-6); 33:3,5,8,13-14; 35:18,27-28; 47:1-5 (see Ps 68:24); 66:1-2,13-20; 98:6; 100:1-2; 132:9,16; 150:3; Is 12:6; Jer 31:7; Zeph 3:14-15; Zech 9:9; Rev 4:1; 5:12-14; 7:10; 11:15-18; 14:2

Figure 2: Passages in the Bible using the words trumpet/horn or its synonyms: e.g. loud instruments/loud singing/shouting. The examples are categorised according to the purpose of their use and divided into literal and symbolic use

Though the psalms were literally accompanied with instruments and song, when the psalms use 'trumpets' and 'shouting' as lyrics, the language is very poetic and figurative. The burnt offering was a freewill offering and the whole offering was completely burned up. The sacrifice was a symbol of Jesus' sacrifice, but the giver also had to give up something. When we give something valuable for God, it shouts our praise. Paul said to "*present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service* (Rom 12:1)." We praise God - we sing, we shout, we blow the trumpet - by giving of ourselves, by offering our lives in service to God. Therefore, the trumpet is symbolic of our praise in action, living a life that demonstrates our love for God. The trumpet is also symbolic of

our voice, carrying the gospel message to a fallen world by whatever means – in personal testimonies, in sharing with our neighbours, in preaching, in Bible studies and in the lyrics of our songs.

Chapter 15
Instruments for God's Service

Jesus Fulfills the Trumpet Blast

If we take Psalms literally without considering the context, we should be going about shouting and dancing in the streets and making a loud commotion with musical instruments wherever we go, as the Salvation Army did. However, we do not see this practised in the life and ministry of Jesus or the apostles. The analysis of Old Testament use of trumpets, shouting and accompanying instruments reveals precisely why Jesus and the apostles did not use them literally in this way in their ministry. These instruments were tied to the Mosaic ceremonial system which Jesus came to fulfil. When John the Baptist heralded the coming of the Messiah, he was blowing the trumpet. When Jesus came to pronounce judgement on the wicked, to call the world to repentance, to gather His people to Himself and to offer Himself up as a sacrificial offering for the forgiveness of sins, He was blowing the trumpet. When the church warns the world of judgement and proclaims the gospel message, it is blowing the trumpet.

When all of the examples of praise and worship with trumpets or shouting in the Old Testament are examined closely, practically all of them, whether literal or symbolic, revolve around the sanctuary and associated feasts, offerings and other religious celebrations (see Figure 2). These are symbolic of the saving work of Jesus Christ which was fulfilled in his ministry, death and resurrection. Psalms is saturated with sanctuary imagery.[275] The theme of many of the psalms was connected with specific events of the Hebrew sanctuary. The worship of the Israelite people was intimately tied to the sanctuary and the ceremonial rituals which we know was just a symbol of Christ's atoning work.

The loud noise had a practical purpose of projecting the sound out to the whole of the Israelite community, but it has symbolic meaning today. The symbolism of the trumpet, shouting and loud noise as a metaphor for proclaiming God's saving grace to the world, is repeated time and again in Psalms. God's church and his people are the temple (1 Cor 3:16) and we are all priests (1 Pet 2:9). We are all to blow the trumpet. His message is to be projected out to the world - loud and clear. Jesus became the sacrificial offering but instead of literally blowing a trumpet over the sacrifice, the apostles communicated his sacrifice to the world by preaching the Word and writing down the gospel in written form. Paul was a chosen instrument to carry the name of Jesus before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15 ESV). Likewise, we are to be instruments of righteous-

ness (Romans 6:13). **When we live righteously and when we preach the Word, we are, metaphorically, shouting, blowing the trumpet and clanging the cymbals**. We are to be living instruments for God's service.

James White shares an experience he had at a tent meeting as an Advent preacher in August 1844 in Exeter, New Hampshire. This was before the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church when he was a young itinerant preacher in the Millerite movement. It was a large meeting ground with many tents and thousands of people in attendance. He describes a tent from Massachusetts on the campground filled with fanatical people and they attracted much attention by the way they worshipped. Their tent was filled with excitement and people shouted until they became hoarse and clapped incessantly until their hands blistered.

James accompanied a group of people from Portland and, unaware, pitched their tent next to the tent from Massachusetts, oblivious of the annoyance they were about to suffer from the presence of the fanatics. As time progressed, more and more people attending the Portland tent moved across to the Massachusetts tent out of curiosity. In an attempt to escape the annoyance, the Portland people moved their tent to a distant part of the ground. Despite this, speakers still failed to get the attention of those present because their minds were being continually drawn to the fanatical excitement. James said that the fanatics "*were destined to triumph, unless the attention of the people could be fastened in another direction*."[32 (p146)]

The next morning, a solemn and dignified speaker in the Portland tent stood up and captured the attention of the crowd with deep insight from Scripture. James says that "*The deepest solemnity pervaded the entire encampment*."[32 (p148)] Because their minds were drawn with intense interest to the Scriptures, they forgot about the fanatics. Instead of participating with the noisy fanatics, they became quiet and attentive. They were no longer affected by them. James explains how fanaticism dried up before the solemn and searching message of Scripture with the realisation of the soon coming of Christ and the need to proclaim it to the world. It is not by literal shouting that the soon coming of Christ will be proclaimed, but by teaching people of the solemn truths of Scripture. James White went on to say:

> "*The time for shouting, and display of talent in speaking, singing, and praying, seemed to be past. The brethren and sisters calmly consecrated themselves and their all to the Lord and his cause, and with humble prayers and tears sought his pardon and his favor. All those unhappy divisions and extravagances, which had threatened the prosperity of the Advent cause, were lost sight of, and the watchmen, and the people also, were beginning to lift up one united voice, with strength and heartfelt solemnity, 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him*.'"[32 (p150)]

Many influential church leaders, as with General Booth, have recommended the use of music as a primary means of reaching the lost. For example, Rick War-

ren of Saddleback Church outlines his view on the central importance of music for growing the church, as follows:

> "*I'm often asked what I would do differently if I could start Saddleback over. My answer is this: From the first day of the new church, I'd put more energy and money into ensuring a first-class music ministry that matched our target audience. In the first years of Saddleback, I made the mistake of underestimating the power of music…*
>
> *…You must decide whom you're trying to reach, identify their preferred style of music, and then stick with it… It may be the most influential factor in determining whom your church reaches for Christ and whether or not your church grows. You must match your music to the kind of people God wants your church to reach.*
>
> *The music you use 'positions' your church in your community. It defines who you are. Once you have decided on the style of music you're going to use in worship, you have set the direction of your church in far more ways than you realize. It will determine the kind of people you attract, the kind of people you keep, and the kind of people you lose*."[276]

While singing is encouraged by Paul for the edification of church members, there is no suggestion in Jesus or the apostle's ministry that music plays a key role in evangelism and growing the church. Though important, it is not given a prominent role in the establishment and growth of the early church. The Bible does not say we are defined by our music, as suggested by Rick Warren, but by our adoption into His family (1 Jn 3:1) and by our Christian characters - by being transformed into Jesus' likeness (Col 3:12). We are united in one body under Christ (1 Cor 12).

Healing Ministry Sings the Good News

Instead of using emotion and music to attract crowds, Jesus attracted people to Himself through His healing ministry. Living the gospel by helping to meet people's temporal needs is the model that Jesus used as an example for us. Once He had their attention, He was then able to present to them the gospel message. In the temple, priests blew the trumpet to gather the people and to signal that the sacrifice had been burned. Jesus, on the other hand, gathered the crowds by healing people physically, then He taught them about His mission to save the world through His sacrifice. Isaiah says to "*Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet* (Is 58:1)." This loud cry was to be a message of warning to God's people and a call to true service:

> "*Is this not the fast that I have chosen:*
> *To loose the bonds of wickedness,*
> *To undo the heavy burdens,*

To let the oppressed go free,
And that you break every yoke?
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out;
When you see the naked, that you cover him,
And not hide yourself from your own flesh?
Then your light shall break forth like the morning,
Your healing shall spring forth speedily,
And your righteousness shall go before you;
The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.
Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.'" (Is 58:6-9)

This is the gospel message united with the healing ministry, as lived out in the life of Christ. When we help to restore the physical and emotional health and well-being of others, we are then able to share with them the eternal truths of the gospel as Jesus did. When we follow Jesus' example and combine healing ministry with the gospel it produces powerful results.

In the first few decades of its existence, the Salvation Army was renowned for its preaching of the gospel plus its healing ministry, such as visiting the sick and teaching people to live a life of abstinence. The world benefited by the knowledge of salvation spread throughout every part of the habitable globe.[57] Mrs White said:

"*…the proclamation of the soon coming of Christ, the necessity of obedience to the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus. This message is the burden of our work. It is to be proclaimed with a* ***loud cry*** *and is to go to the whole world. In both home and foreign fields the presentation of health principles must be united with it*."[16 (p290)]

She says that the medical missionary work demonstrates the practical working of the gospel.[16 (p289)] So insistent was she on the importance of health ministry that she said, "*Medical missionary work is to be done… no one can ignore the ministry without ignoring God*."[47 (p160)] By missionary work, she is not just talking about mission overseas, but ministry to our neighbours, which includes every person who needs our help, every soul who is wounded and bruised by the adversary and everyone who is the property of God.[85 (p376)] Mrs White said:

"*The world will be convinced not so much by what the pulpit teaches as by what the church lives. The preacher announces the theory of the gospel, but the practical piety of the church demonstrates its power*."[16 (p260)]

This was the driving philosophy of the Salvation Army. As the work of the Army opened up in countries around the world, General Booth was received by the common people as well as eminent men, including emperors in their palaces, provincial governors, the mayors of cities and business owners. All the time, having opportunity to plead with them for Christ. "*What a sight it was to see,*" said George

Railton, "*the great platform crowded with all the chief men of a city, singing like the rest of the audience 'Stand up, stand up for Jesus*.'" Salvationists were recognised as the loving friends of the friendless and oppressed.[57 (p166,164)]

In the early years of the Salvation Army, it effectively combined the gospel message with health, especially temperance, but members were also encouraged to improve their diet and practise cleanliness and hygiene. Mrs Booth recognised the benefits of fresh air and exercise for her family.[14 (ch8)] The Booths also supported the use of hydropathy[2 (p184)] and recommended a vegetarian diet to Salvation Army Officers. The Booths' son, Bramwell, especially advocated vegetarianism.[277] By transforming the life of individuals and families caught in the vice of alcohol and gambling, the Salvation Army was then able to deliver to them the gospel. This is how Jesus blew the trumpet and how the early Salvationists blew the trumpet and how we should be blowing the trumpet to the world. The Seventh-day Adventist health message is a complete health message, summed up in the acronym, NEWSTART: Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunshine, Temperance, Air, Rest, Trust. But what is the point of having a complete message if we are not sharing it? Isaiah continues by saying:

> "*If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath,*
> *From doing your pleasure on My holy day,*
> *And call the Sabbath a delight,*
> *The holy day of the Lord honorable,*
> *And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,*
> *Nor finding your own pleasure,*
> *Nor speaking your own words,*
> *Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord;*
> *And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth,*
> *And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father.*
> *The mouth of the Lord has spoken*." (Is 58:13-14)

In this passage, therefore, Seventh-day Adventists see a connection between the Sabbath and the health message. One of the greatest health needs of today is rest. People are crying out for physical and mental rest. The late Charlie Kirk, who wrote a book on the seventh-day Sabbath, titled Stop, In the Name of God, pointed out that longevity is one of the health benefits of Sabbath keeping.[278] Sabbath keeping is part of the holistic health lifestyle practised by Seventh-day Adventists in the Loma Linda region of California, identified as a Blue Zone - a region where people live significantly longer and healthier lives than the rest of the population.[279]

At creation, God said He "*blessed the seventh day and sanctified it* (Gen 2:3)." Who was it to be a blessing for? The context tells us. God created mankind to have dominion over the earth (Gen 1:28). He also planted a garden for us and gave us the herbs and fruit for us to eat (v29). In the verses that follow, God tells us that He also made the Sabbath. As with the earth, the garden and fruit and herbs, He

made the Sabbath for us. Jesus confirmed this when He said, "*The Sabbath was made for man* (Mk 2:27)." So, if the Sabbath was made for us, then the blessing is for us.

The Sabbatarian believes that the seventh day exists because God created it for us. He sanctified the seventh day – that means, He set it apart. He made it Holy. It is to be different to the rest. At creation, He did not make a command for us to keep the Sabbath, but He commanded the seventh day to be Holy. It is blessed. It is special. Therefore, it is to be treated as blessed and Holy. One way in which it is special is the physical and mental rest that we have on that day. But it is more than just rest that is a blessing. The day itself is a blessing. No other day can be a substitute, because the other days are not blessed or Holy. If we are to harmonise with God, Adventists believe, we need to harmonise with the day He blessed. The Sabbath is to be a spiritual blessing also, for if we call the Sabbath a delight and turn from doing our own pleasure on that day, we shall delight ourselves in the Lord and He will cause us to ride on the high hills of the earth (Is 58:13-14). Therefore, the Sabbath is an essential means of obtaining and maintaining physical, mental and spiritual health.

The founders of the Seventh-day Adventist movement declared that nowhere in the Bible does it say that the seventh day is no longer blessed or holy. Until God tells us such, we must assume that it is still holy, they argued. Paul said, "*let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ* (Colossians 2:16-17). As discussed previously, the sabbaths mentioned here refer to festival sabbaths which pointed forward to Jesus – the Hebrew festivals were a shadow of what would be fulfilled in Jesus who is the substance, or the real thing. However, the seventh-day Sabbath of the 10 commandments looks back to creation and, therefore, has a different purpose – it is to remind us of our creator. Adventists argue that, even if Paul is also referring to the Sabbath commandment, why would we want to honour any other day than the day that God blessed and set apart for us? Sure, we should not judge others, for God is the ultimate judge, but if we love others, we will want to point them to the day that God created as a blessing for them.

For many centuries, Christians kept Sunday as a Sabbath rest, as did General Booth, but it is no longer regarded as a Sabbath by the majority of Christians. People go to church and then come home to continue their busy activities as on any day of the week. Like the Salvation Army and baptism, the Sabbath was made into a symbol only. People are crying out for rest and for relief from their physical ailments. Though the health needs may be different, the health message is just as relevant today as it ever was, as upheld by Mrs White:

> "***Again and again*** *I have been instructed that the medical missionary work is to bear the same relation to the work of the third angel's message that the arm and hand bear to the body. Under the direction of the divine Head,*

they are to work unitedly in preparing the way for the coming of Christ."[16] (p288)

The Salvation Army had a health message, but it was mainly focused on temperance. However, particularly in our time, there is also a huge burden of chronic disease due to other unhealthy lifestyle habits, such as poor diet, lack of exercise and over work. Just as in the time of Christ, there is much suffering due to ill health. Poverty is very often due to poor health, which is usually due to bad lifestyle choices.

When Jesus sent the 12 disciples out to preach, they were commanded to heal the sick and minister to the physical needs of the people (Lk 9:1-2). Multitudes of Christians are in church each week making music but failing to attend to the poor and downcast or to bring healing to the sick; therefore, they are failing to live the practical message of Psalm 150. This was at the core of General Booth's motivation for his ministry. He saw how, to a large extent, Christians had confined themselves within the walls of their churches and within a rigid, stale, ritualistic system and failed to meet people, especially the large poorer classes, where they were at to give them the gospel.

Jesus' healing ministry was a powerful attraction. Mimicking the tunes of the world gives Christians very little acknowledgement from the world. In fact, it can cause us to lose respect from the world because we are seen to be try-hards, attempting to look like them. But when we show a genuine interest in the temporal needs of the community – when we live the gospel – we win the hearts and respect of the community. If we are willing to spend time with our 'neighbours,' to risk our health, to go to foreign lands, and even to risk our lives to help the poor and bring physical healing to others, we can win the hearts and ears of the people to listen to our gospel message. Mrs White stresses the importance of every member being involved in this work:

"*Some think that if they give money to this work, it is all they are required to do; but this is an error. Donations of money cannot take the place of personal ministry. It is right to give our means, and many more should do this; but according to their strength and opportunities, personal service is re-*

quired of all… We are to show the tender sympathy of the Samaritan in supplying physical necessities, feeding the hungry, bringing the poor that are cast out to our homes…

As you visit your friends and neighbors, show an interest in their spiritual as well as in their temporal welfare. Present Christ as a sin-pardoning Saviour. Invite your neighbors to your home, and read with them from the precious Bible and from books that explain its truths. This, united with simple songs and fervent prayers, will touch their hearts."[16 (p275-6)]

There is much more we could and should be doing to combine health and gospel ministry. In many churches, music is getting louder and more exciting and upbeat, but outreach is getting 'quieter' and less conspicuous. The trumpet call has been muted. In many places, fewer church members are coming along to small group Bible studies and fewer people are having personal devotion at home. Personal and small group Bible study is essential if we are to effectively prepare ourselves to blow the trumpet to the world.

The Booths did not only blow the trumpet literally, but they also faithfully blew the trumpet figuratively in the highways and byways. They were much more faithful to Jesus' command to preach the gospel and warn the world of judgement, especially amongst the poor, than most Christians. Mrs Booth preached:

"*Set yourself to work for God. Go to Him to ask Him how to do it. Go to Him for the equipment of power, and then begin. Never mind how you tremble. I dare say your trembling will do more good than if you were ever so brave. Never mind the tears. I wish Christians would weep the Gospel into people; it would often go deeper than it does. Never mind if you do stammer. They will believe you when it comes from the heart. They will say, 'He talked to me quite natural'… Go to the closet until you get filled with the Spirit, and then go and let it out upon them. Finney says, 'I went and let my heart out on the people.' Get your heart full of the living water and then open the gates and let it flow out. Look them in the face and take hold of them lovingly by the hand and say, 'My friend, you are going to everlasting death. If nobody has ever told you till now - I have come to tell you. My friend, you have a precious soul. Is it saved?' They can understand that! Not beginning in a roundabout way, but talking to them straight: - 'Do you ever think about your precious soul? Is it saved? Are your sins pardoned? Are you ready to die?'*"[130 (p159-60)]

Paul and the disciples even had to break the law at times to share the gospel because the authorities often prevented them from sharing their faith. We have been commanded by Jesus to spread the gospel and nothing should stop us from obeying this command. Mrs White says:

"*The medical missionary work should be a part of the work of every church in our land… If the work of the third angel's message is carried on in right*

lines, the ministry will not be given an inferior place, nor will the poor and sick be neglected. In His Word God has united these two lines of work, and no man should divorce them."[16 (p289)]

There are many wonderful materials available for health outreach, such as Elia Wellness, NEWSTART, Nedley Programs, the CHIP program and others, just to name a few. These are great resources that anyone can use with a small amount of training – you do not have to be a health professional. There are health topics ranging from stress, gut health, anxiety and depression, nutrition, general wellness, forgiveness, and many more health-related topics. Spiritual health is tied into these programs and provides a very simple and holistic approach to health. Programs like these can be run as a wellness hub through the church, which is a wonderful way to build bridges to the community. But we do not have to run health programs to help people. The most effective means of helping people is by simply being there for them. When they are sick, offer them your help by lifting their burdens. Visit them in hospital. Pray with them and for them for healing.

Although modern medicine has come a long way, as Christians, we want to educate people to focus on healthy lifestyles and trust in God to protect and heal them from disease. Medicines are not the ideal way to manage health. It is well recognised today that primary prevention, such as promoting healthy lifestyle choices, is more effective than treating disease. Mrs White strongly discouraged the use of drugs: "*We have been instructed that in our treatment of the sick we should discard the use of drugs*."[12 (p288)] Elsewhere, she said, "*It is the Lord's purpose that His method of healing without drugs shall be brought into prominence in every large city through our medical institutions*."[280 (p393)]

Despite being against many of the medical treatments of her day, claiming that they caused thousands of untimely deaths, Mrs White did allow room for the use of modern treatments if deemed rational and effective. In her time, there was no standard for assessing the efficacy or safety of medical treatments. Her general opposition to drugs was at a time when mercury, opium, arsenic and strychnine were used as medicines! Though some of her statements seem to indicate that there is never a place for modern medicines, other statements allow room for their use when appropriate. For example, she said:

"*Our institutions are established that the sick may be treated by hygienic methods, discarding **almost** entirely the use of drugs.... There is a terrible account to be rendered to God by men who have so little regard for human life as to treat the body so ruthlessly in dealing out their drugs.... We are not excusable if through ignorance we destroy God's building by taking into our stomachs **poisonous drugs** under a variety of names **we do not understand**. It is our duty to **refuse all such prescriptions***."[12 (p283)]

No drugs in Ellen White's time had been tested for efficacy or safety; therefore, physicians did not understand the treatments they were giving. We now know that many of the common drugs used in standard practice were poisonous. The counsel from Mrs White was not to prescribe potentially **poisonous** drugs,

which ruled out the possible use of practically all drugs in her time. However, by her statement 'almost entirely,' she apparently did not totally rule out the possibility of occasional use of drugs. In fact, drugs were used at the hospital in Battle Creek in her time to anaesthetise patients for surgical procedures.[281] Anaesthetics are powerful drugs which can alter a person's consciousness and can potentially cause serious harm and even death. Apparently, Mrs White did not object to the use of anaesthetics despite having said that "*Nothing should be put into the human system that will leave a baleful influence behind*"[282 (p228)] (baleful means threatening to cause harm or injury). In fact, despite the use of these drugs, Mrs White said the hand of God was on Dr Kellogg as he performed these complicated procedures:

> "*The Lord stood by the side of Dr Kellogg as he performed difficult operations. When the doctor was overwrought by taxing labor, God understood the situation, and he put his hand on Dr Kellogg's hand as he operated, and through his power the operations were, successful*."[283]

Therefore, Mrs White was generally opposed to modern medical treatments but tended to accept them if they were shown to be effective. As another example, she cautioned against indiscriminate use of X-ray treatments:

> "*I have been instructed that the X-ray is not the great blessing that some suppose it to be. If used unwisely, it may do much harm. The results of some of the electrical treatments are similar to the results of using stimulants. There is a weakness that follows…*"[284 (p390)]

Despite this, Mrs White accepted 23 rounds of X-ray treatment for a black spot on her forehead. She was very grateful for the success of the treatment.[12 (p303)] Another example was her opposition to quinine when it was used for medical conditions without a solid scientific basis. Quinine was later found to have antimalarial properties and is still used today as an effective treatment for malaria - it has saved millions of lives.[285] Dr Merlin D. Burt, founding director of the integrated Center for Adventist Research at Andrews University, describes the tragic case of a first-born son who lost his life to malaria:

> "*Some Adventists refused to use quinine to treat malaria because of what Ellen White had written against the earlier dangerous and false medical practice (such as heroic therapy). While in Australia in the 1890s, W. C. White remembered his mother responding to a tragic inquiry by a man who had lost his first-born son to malaria. Because of Ellen White's early testimony against quinine, as used by doctors without scientific basis, he refused to allow his son to be treated with this drug. When he met with Sister White, he asked her this question, 'Would I have sinned to give the boy quinine when I knew of no other way to check the malaria and when the prospect was that he would die without it?' In reply she said, '**No, we are expected to do the best we can**.'*"[286]

Today, there are many life-changing and life-saving benefits of modern medicine despite the potential adverse effects. Antibiotics is an example of a common modern medical treatment which can potentially cause harm – it can have baleful effects - but saves many lives each year. Antibiotics can damage our gut flora, impacting our health and immune system in the short and long term. A review article in The Lancet describes how exposure to antibiotics and certain other classes of medications during pregnancy, infancy and childhood can affect health later in life.[287] We do not yet know the full effects of antibiotics on our health – only God knows. The Colon Cancer Foundation states that, due to their effect on gut microbiome, frequent use of antibiotics can be quite dangerous, even potentially leading to various types of cancer.[288] People can also die from acute complications from antibiotics, such as anaphylaxis and post-antibiotic *C. difficile* associated diarrhoea.[289] Antibiotics can also build resistant strains of bacteria, creating deadly superbugs. Despite all of this, antibiotics save millions of lives each year. They have their place, despite the known and unknown adverse effects.

Despite their potential benefits, Mrs Booth mistrusted modern medical treatments, preferring to rely on alternative remedies, such as homeopathy and hydrotherapy. Because of this mistrust, she was hesitant to seek medical help. Sometime in 1887, Mrs Booth noticed a lump in her breast. Though her mother had died from breast cancer, she ignored the lump and it was some months before she consulted her family doctor. Though he warned her that it was likely cancerous, it took him some time to persuade her to have a proper examination with a surgeon.

Having obtained celebrity status, Mrs Booth had ready access to advanced treatment for her time. Radical mastectomy was first performed in 1882 by William Halsted. Survival rates were high and recurrence rates low and, therefore, became the treatment of choice until the mid-1970s when modified radical mastectomy and lumpectomy became standard. She was seen by London surgeons, Sir James Paget, best remembered for naming Paget's disease, and Jonathan Hutchinson, a proponent of radical mastectomy. Hutchinson advised her of the need for immediate radical surgery, though he may not have yet been familiar with Halsted's procedure.[290,291,292 (p183)] She vehemently resisted this advice, instead allowing nature to take its course according to God's will. She turned to alternative therapies for management of her pain but suffered with distressing pain until her premature death in 1890 at age 61.[290 (p48)]

Therefore, while Mrs Booth and Mrs White both strongly emphasised lifestyle and natural remedies, Mrs White believed God could work through physicians and modern technology and guide the hand of surgeons to bring about healing from disease. Regardless, the emphasis of health ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist church was to be on lifestyle and natural therapies with the ultimate aim of sharing Jesus and the truths for our time. Small sanitariums were to be raised in numerous places to guide people to good health without the use of poisonous drugs but with an emphasis on the natural healing power of the body. According to Mrs White these health facilities were "*to be established for one object – the procla-*

mation of the truth for this time… We have a warning message to bear to the world, and our earnestness, our devotion to God's service, are to bear witness to the truth."[47 (p200)]

Other Ways to Blow the Trumpet

The gospel must be proclaimed loud and clear. That is the object lesson of the trumpet and the loud clashing cymbals. Jesus Christ came to this earth to die for us – the world has to hear about it. Jesus got the work done by humbling Himself and we must do the same. He became a servant, he was born to a lowly family and he became a carpenter. He was never ordained as an earthly priest of the Levitical priesthood. He never gained any prestigious titles on earth. However, He achieved the most important work that has ever been achieved. He was given a special role as priest of the line of Melchizedek. He humbled Himself but God elevated Him to King. It is not position that makes our gospel message loud and influential, but it is humility combined with the power of the Holy Spirit that makes for effective ministers of the gospel.

At every opportunity, Mrs White would share the gospel in her community. For example, reminiscing about their upbringing, the grandchildren of Mrs White recalled how, as she rode in her horse and buggy, if their grandmother saw someone in their front yard working in the garden or hanging out the washing, she would ask, "*I wonder if that person knows Jesus*." She would often stop and have a conversation with the person, maybe giving them some produce from her own garden, and sharing her love for Jesus. She gained the affectionate reputation in Healesville of being the little old lady, dressed in black, who would talk so lovingly of Jesus.[293]

The Whites' house was always open to guests and they would often support young people to receive an education. For example, the Whites' took in a pale, sickly boy of about 10 years of age with a sunken chest whose mother had passed away from consumption. Mrs White taught him breathing exercises and fed him nutritious meals which restored his strength. That young boy was Dr John Harvey Kellogg, renowned surgeon and inventor of Kellogg's corn flakes. He lived into his 90s and throughout his career, treated many patients in the Seventh-day Adventist Battle Creek Sanitarium, including presidents, business titans and movie stars. Kellogg said he owed his life to the things Mrs White taught him.[294,295]

Prayer ministry is another powerful way to blow the trumpet. Everyone has a need and almost everyone loves to be prayed for. When someone expresses to you that they have a hardship or difficulty they are facing, offer to pray for them. Give them an encouraging tract or booklet to read. Add them to your prayer list and follow them up. Find ways to help them out.

Sharing Christian literature and resources is also a powerful method to share Christ and His teachings. The best book of all to share is the Bible. How many Bi-

bles have you given away in the last 12 months? The Gospel of John or the Gospel of Mark is a great place to get people to start. Apart from the Bible, books that share about the life of Jesus is a great introduction for people. Mrs White's Steps to Christ and the Desire of Ages are classics which have led many people to Christ, along with her Conflict of the Ages series which spans all of history from Genesis to Revelation. There are wonderful evangelistic materials to share with people from Answers in Genesis which give people confidence in the creation story. We have a wealth of wonderful resources at our disposal. They just need to be used. And, of course, music can be a magnificent way to share the gospel… when it tells the right story.

Once we have built bridges into people's lives, whether it be through health ministry or through other means, it is important that we actually go the next step and share truths with people, pray with people, invite them to church programs and encourage them to get to know our Saviour. We have to help people to know why God is good. We should look for opportunities to explain why we believe what we believe and offer to do Bible studies with people. We need to help people see why the sacrifice Jesus made is so marvellous. We need to warn people of future judgement and, through the working of the Holy Spirit, bring people to conviction and then baptise them. That is what the apostles did. That is what Jesus commanded us to do. We should all be involved in that process.

The community we live in is a mission field. Every morning when we wake up, we should ask God to lead us to people to share our faith with. We should have our minds prepared through morning devotion with God. The home is the most important mission field of all. That is where our work begins. Addressing mothers, Mrs White says:

> *"…to a great degree the destiny of your children rests in your hands. If you fail in duty, you may place them in the ranks of the enemy and make them his agents to ruin souls; but by a godly example and faithful discipline you may lead them to Christ and make them the instruments in His hands of saving many souls*."[133 (p238)]

Mrs White compares the work of employed ministers with that of mothers:

> "*The minister has his line of work, and the mother has hers. She is to bring her children to Jesus for His blessing. She is to cherish the words of Christ and teach them to her children. From their babyhood she is to discipline them to self-restraint and self-denial, to habits of neatness and order. The mother can bring up her children so that they will come with open, tender hearts to hear the words of God's servants. The Lord has need of mothers who in every line of the home life will improve their God-given talents and fit their children for the family of heaven*."[133 (p236)]

The work of the mother is often disparaged, but Mrs White speaks highly of the mother's work:

"*No other work can equal hers in importance. She has not, like… the musician, to express a beautiful sentiment in melody. It is hers, with the help of God, to develop in a human soul the likeness of the divine*."[133 (p237)]

"*To lead them to Jesus is not all that is required*," she says, "*These children are to be educated and trained to become disciples of Christ… The Christian mother has her God-appointed work, which she will not neglect if she is closely connected with God and imbued with His Spirit*."[133 (p234)]

This is her divinely appointed role, and in doing this great work, she goes on to say, the godly mother fulfills the great commission, often with greater effect than the ordained pastor or elder:

"*Although one is in the missionary field, the other is a home missionary, whose cares and anxieties and burdens frequently far exceed those of the husband and father. Her work is a solemn and important one.... The husband in the open missionary field may receive the honors of men, while the home toiler may receive no earthly credit for her labor. But if she works for the best interest of her family, seeking to fashion their characters after the divine Model, the recording angel writes her name as one of the greatest missionaries in the world. God does not see things as man's finite vision views them*."[133 (p235)]

It is not only the wife that is to lead the children to Christ. Both parents are involved, as Mrs White states:

"*When children are born to parents who have practical godliness, they will not be troubled as to how to educate them to meet the world's standard, but their question will be, 'How shall we order the education of our children to please the Lord?' They will search the living oracles that they may understand the way of the Lord and lead their children to Christ. They will teach them the precepts of Christ and train them to be workers together with God, saying, 'That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace*.'"[44 (p217)]

Alma McKibbin, a Seventh-day Adventist school teacher who was present at many of Mrs White's sermons, said that no matter the topic of the sermon, before she finished, Mrs White would always make a special appeal to parents and children:

"*She always said, 'Parents, don't be stingy with your love. Children and young people require love in order to make a proper development.' You would have thought she'd talk about discipline, wouldn't you? Very seldom did she say anything about discipline. She said, 'You stand in the place of God to your children and they must learn from you what God is like. They*

don't know. You must represent Him to those children or they'll get a wrong impression of their Heavenly Father.'"[296]

The mother's influence is not confined to the home only. Mrs White says:

"*The salutary influence which she exerts in the home circle she may and will make felt in more widespread usefulness in her neighborhood and in the church of God. Home is not a prison to the devoted wife and mother*."[133 (p236)]

She is to be involved in Bible work, visiting church members, health ministry and many other areas of ministry. Mrs Booth and Mrs White both agreed that, after the fall at least, women were given different roles in the home. But what is their role in the church? Are men and women to be treated as identical in the church? In the next chapter, we will compare the views of these two women on this topic.

Chapter 16
Women Revivalists: Church Roles

Ordination of Women

Apart from their role in the family, how are women to be instruments for God's service? Mrs Booth believed that, though wives are subject to their husbands in the home, women have identical roles to men in the church. Some Adventist scholars and theologians agree with Mrs Booth on this point. For example, Richard M. Davidson, Senior Research Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at Andrews University, does not agree with the traditional Adventist view which opposes the ordination of women. His understanding is more in line with Mrs Booth. However, he does point out that this is not an easy position to argue scripturally. He says that "*women did not immediately receive full and equal participation with men in the ministry of the church*." Though women are not given prominent roles in the New Testament, Richard Davidson argues that, just as Paul did not immediately outlaw slavery, the removal of gender role distinctions would eventually be removed in time. He believes that the early church had begun baby steps in that direction.[137 (p3)]

According to The Acts of the Apostles, ordination is a public recognition of divine appointment. It gives a believer the right to, not only teach truth, but to baptise converts and to organise churches with the full authority of the church. It is "*an acknowledged form of designation to an appointed office and a recognition of one's authority in that office*."[297 (p161-2)] The word ordination is a Latin word used by most Bible translations to convey this meaning. The church practice of authorising someone for a holy purpose is found throughout Scripture. Examples of ordination in the New Testament include the twelve apostles (Mk 3:14), Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1-2), Timothy (1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6) and elders in general (1 Tim 3:1–6; 1 Tim 5:22). Mrs White speaks of all of these events as 'ordination.'[298]

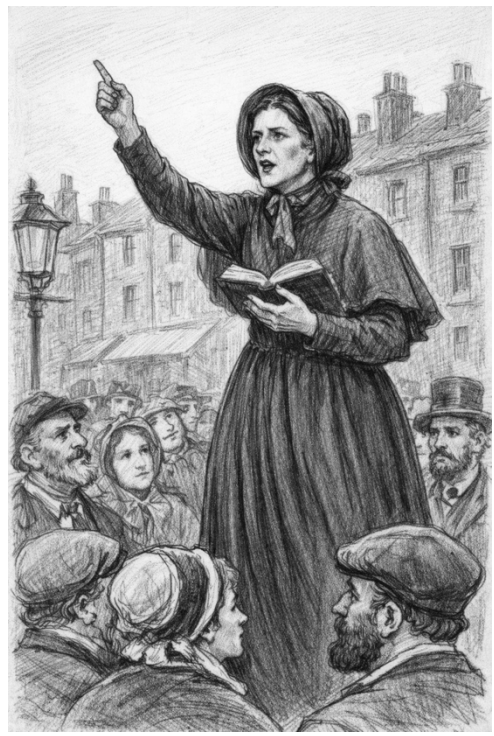
In her article, Female Teaching, Mrs Booth's arguments in favour of equality in roles becomes increasingly technical. Though she normally dismissed the value of academics and educated clergy for spiritual guidance, she relies heavily on Biblical scholarship to help interpret Paul's writings on this topic. These arguments are complicated and open to debate. Richard Davidson argues that:

> "*…in 1 Tim 2:13 Paul is not arguing for a creation headship of man over woman as has often been assumed. Rather, he is correcting a false syncretistic theology in Ephesus which claimed that woman was created first and man fell first, and therefore women are superior to men. Because of this*

false theology, wives were apparently domineering over their husbands in public church meetings… Paul's counsel for husbands and wives cannot be extended to the relationship of men and women in general."[137 (p2)]

Mrs Booth, though drawing on a different scholarly argument, comes to the same conclusion as Richard Davidson - that Paul's statements about women being subject to men in church is an issue between husbands and wives and not between men and women in the church in general.[136 (p10)] Because the Booths saw the traditional roles of women as demeaning compared to men, they felt that the role of women had to be elevated.

Liberation of women in America was a hot topic in the 1800s. Mrs Booth struggled with the heavy demands of motherhood. Once she began her preaching career, in a letter to her parents, she explained how she felt more at home preaching than in the kitchen.[2] Advocacy for women's rights was one of Mrs Booth's most enduring legacies and it was a core attribute of the Salvation Army. She fought tirelessly for equal opportunities for women in leadership and ministry in the Salvation Army.[299] Many working-class women assumed positions of authority.[2] Mrs Booth herself became a prominent public evangelist. Her significant influence extended beyond the Salvation Army, including advocating for the right of women to vote.[299] From the foundation of the Salvation Army, due to Mrs Booth's influence, it became official policy that **women were eligible for any office and to speak and vote at all official meetings**. Women were officially made equal in their roles as men, though this was not always the case in practice.



Paul said there is "*neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ* (Gal 3:28 KJV)." Mrs Booth sees in this statement "*that in the **privileges, duties, and responsibilities** of Christ's kingdom, all differences of nation, caste, and sex are abolished*."[300] Opposers of women's ordination have argued that, if Paul meant that women and men are equal in duties and responsibilities, why did he later say that "*the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church* (Eph 5:23)?" They argue that the context of Paul's statement concerns salvation. In Christ we have all been redeemed (Gal 3:13). We 'are all sons of God (v26).' We 'have put on Christ (v27).' From the context we know that Greeks and Jews, slave and free,

male and female, are all equally part of God's kingdom when they accept Christ, it is argued. Equally saved does not necessarily mean equal in role. However, Richard M. Davidson agrees with Mrs Booth that "*This is not merely a statement on equal access to salvation among various groups*." Rather, he goes on to argue:

> "*…it specifically singles out those three relationships in which the Jews had perverted God's original plan of Gen 1 by making one group subordinate to another: (1) Jew-Gentile, (2) slave-master, and (3) male-female*."[137 (p3)]

Mrs Booth leaned heavily on passages that supported the prominent standing of women in the Bible and their equal share in the gift of prophecy.[2] She cites a number of women in the Bible as examples of females who led or spoke with authority, including Deborah, Huldah and Miriam. Richard Davidson also compiles a similar list of female leaders in his arguments in favour of women's ordination. Most of these examples are prophetesses or women who were inspired to make prophetic statements.[298 (p37)] However, those opposing women's ordination have argued that the leadership roles of these women were limited in extent compared to their male counterparts. For example, Mrs White writes of Huldah:

> "*The mind of the king, filled with anxious foreboding, reverted to her, and he determined to inquire of the Lord through this chosen messenger to learn, if possible, whether by any means within his power he might save erring Judah, now on the verge of ruin*."[301 (p44)]

In other words, she saw Huldah's position as that of messenger of the Lord. There is no suggestion that Huldah had a leadership role over men.

Miriam was also cited by Mrs Booth and Richard Davidson as an example of female leadership. God said he sent Moses, Aaron and Miriam before the people (Mic 6:4) indicating leadership. Miriam led the women in song and dance in praise to God after the crossing of the Red Sea and, as with Huldah, she was a prophetess (Ex 15:20-21). Therefore, Miriam had leadership capacity, including as a messenger of the Lord and in leading women in worship. The book, The Adventist Ordination Crisis (authored by Doug Batchelor, Stephen Bohr and others), opposes the ordination of women. They state that "*Although Miriam had a leadership role, her dispute with Moses offers clear evidence that it was not a headship role*."[298 (p42)] Mrs White writes:

> "*After Moses had told the Lord that he was unable to bear the burden of the people alone, and God had directed him to choose seventy of the elders, and he had put the same Spirit upon them which was upon Moses, Aaron and Miriam were jealous because they had not been consulted in the matter*."[302 (p285)]

Miriam had instigated an uprising against Moses because she had not been invited to be part of the process of selecting leaders for overseeing the governance of the Children of Israel – she was denied that leadership role. Miriam was also never

given a priestly role as was her brother Aaron. Therefore, her leadership was limited compared to her two brothers.

The prophetess, Deborah, is another example of female leadership discussed in Mrs Booth's book and cited by Richard Davidson in support of women leadership in the church. The Adventist Ordination Crisis, on the other hand, states:

> "*Deborah lived in the era of the judges, at a time when the prescribed theocratic government had broken down… Deborah did what a vice president might do in the absence or incapacity of a president, or what a wife should do in the absence or incapacity of her husband*."[298 (p42)]

According to Mrs White, Deborah had to step in as leader of the nation because there were no male magistrates available and the man God assigned to lead the nation was timid and lacked faith:

> "She *was known as a prophetess, and in the absence of the usual magistrates, the people had sought to her for counsel and justice. The Lord communicated to Deborah His purpose to destroy the enemies of Israel, and bade her send for a man named Barak, of the tribe of Naphtali… Although he had been designated by the Lord Himself as the one chosen to deliver Israel, and had received the assurance that God would go with him and subdue their enemies, yet he was timid and distrustful... He refused to engage in such a doubtful undertaking unless Deborah would accompany him, and thus support his efforts by her influence and counsel.*"[301 (p37)]

Turning to the New Testament in support of women leadership, Mrs Booth and Richard Davidson both make reference to Junia as a female apostle. The text reads as follows, "*Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me* (Rom 16:7)." There is much controversy over the meaning of this passage. Unlike Mrs Booth and Richard Davidson, the authors of The Adventist Ordination Crisis see no hard evidence of female apostleship in this passage. In fact, they say:

> "*…theologians, Bible translations, and even the underlying Greek manuscripts disagree about whether Junia was a woman… A female apostle is an extraordinary claim, and it would require extraordinary, clear biblical proof, which is not present here. Even granting that Junia was a woman, the better reading of this ambiguous passage is that Andronicus and Junia were well known to the apostles, not themselves apostles*."[298 (p33-4)]

Therefore, there are no clear or undisputed examples of female apostles in the New Testament.

In the immediate context of Paul's discussion about women's submission in church, he discusses the requirements of Elders and Deacons, including the requirement that they be men - the husbands of one wife:

"*Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control. This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.* ***A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife****, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach… Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.* ***Let deacons be the husbands of one wife****, ruling their children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus (1 Tim 2:11-3:2, 3:8-13)."*

Pr. Stephen Bohr, one of the contributors to the book, The Adventist Ordination Crisis, highlights what he sees as a clear pattern of male leadership in the Bible, as follows:

"*Adam was given the leadership role at creation. After sin, the firstborn males were the spiritual leaders of each household. When God established Israel, he chose 12 males as the founders of the tribes. The regional leaders that were established in the days of Moses, which were the 1000s, the 100s, the 50s and the tens, were all male. The 70 elders that were chosen by Moses… was all composed of males. All of the priests of the Old Testament were males. All of the Levites - which would be equivalent, I believe, to the deacons today - they took care of the temple, the offerings, cleaning up and so on which is the role of the deacons today. All of them were males. Of the 42 kings in the history of Israel and Judah, all of them were males, with the exception of Athaliah, who was a usurper.*

The 12 apostles that Jesus established were all males. The 70 that Jesus sent out were all males. The successor of Judas was chosen from two males that had been chosen from a larger pool of males. The seven deacons were all males. Paul and Barnabas of course, were males. The apostles and elders, who were delegates at the Jerusalem Council, were all males. Paul's criteria was that those who are leaders in the church - the elders and the bishops – must be the husbands of one wife. And then you have, of course, Timothy and Titus that were ordained as elders, both males. There's not a single case in all of Scripture where a woman was ordained as an elder or as a pastor of a church. So, as you look at the preponderance of the evidence in Scripture, it becomes very clear that God's pattern of leadership is males."[303 (9:55)]

Mrs White did encourage women to do 'pastoral' work. She said, "*It is the accompaniment of the Holy Spirit of God that prepares workers, both men and women, to become pastors to the flock of God*."[16 (p322)] Pastor Ted Wilson, General Conference President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the time of writing, explains what the term 'pastoral' meant in Mrs White's time: "*Today, we use the word 'pastor' and 'minister' interchangeably*," but, when she wrote this, "*ordained gospel ministers were referred to as ministers*." He then quotes Mrs White from Manuscript Releases, vol. 5:

> "*The ministers are paid for their work, and this is well. And if the Lord gives the wife, as well as the husband, the burden of labor, and if she devotes her time and her strength to visiting from family to family, opening the Scriptures to them,* ***although the hands of ordination have not been laid upon her****, she is accomplishing a work that is in the line of ministry…*
>
> *Seventh-day Adventists are not in any way to belittle woman's work. If a woman puts her housework in the hands of a faithful, prudent helper, and leaves her children in good care, while she engages in the work, the conference should have wisdom to understand the justice of her receiving wages.*
>
> *Women helped our Saviour by uniting with Him in His work. And the great apostle Paul writes, 'Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life…'*
>
> *Again and again the Lord has shown me that women teachers are just as greatly needed to do the work to which He has appointed them as are men*."[304]

Therefore, though they were not ordained ministers, women who were "*seeking to do all in their power to win souls to Jesus Christ*," were encouraged to do 'pastoral' work, which included Bible studies, visiting families and even preaching when appropriate. These women were to be paid for their labours. However, though Mrs White also encouraged much freedom of women in the church, when her ministry and writings are compared with that of Mrs Booth, there is a stark contrast.

Women were able to hold positions of the highest level of authority in the Salvation Army. For example, General Booth's daughter, Evangeline Booth, became the fourth general of the Salvation Army. Although the opportunity also existed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church for women to be given the same level of authority as men, it never eventuated. William Fagal, author of Ellen White and the Role of Women in the Church, said that he had no evidence that women ever served as leaders of any Seventh-day Adventist Churches during the time of Mrs

White.[305 (p12)] Similar to the Army, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was a new denomination, open to involvement of women in ministry and to other radical changes. It also had an influential female as one of its founders, as with the Salvation Army.

In her book, Women Called to Witness, Nancy A. Hardesty describes how:

> "*Throughout the nineteenth century, Christian women and men wrote innumerable works questioning traditional Biblical definitions of women's role, offering quite different interpretations of the relevant texts*."[126 (p74)]

Prominent amongst these women, she says, were Sarah Grimke, Antoinette Brown, Phoebe Palmer and Catherine Booth. Opportunities were also opening for women in other segments of society. For example, The London School of Medicine for Women was established in 1874 and Mrs White encouraged involvement of female physicians in medical missionary work.[138 (p335)] In this social setting, there was much opportunity for Mrs White also to endorse women's ordination. What is more, Adventists tended to believe in the authority of Mrs White's prophetic gift, giving her influence for change. Yet, unlike Mrs Booth and Mrs Palmer, along with other prominent advocates for women, Mrs White did not concern herself with women's rights movements. When urged by other women to join the crusade for the right of women to vote, she declined. She said her work was of another character.[306 (p6)] Consequently, though identified as a significant figure in American history by the Smithsonian institute, Mrs White has not been named amongst the great Christian women liberators of the 19th century.

While Mrs Booth led the way in bringing about equal opportunities for women in the Salvation Army, Mrs White never asked for women to be given the same leadership roles as men. There is no documented record of any article between 1850 and 1915 that recommended the ordination of a woman to gospel ministry or as Conference, Union or General Conference presidents in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.[298 (p44)] A reader submitted the following question to the Signs of the Times: "*Should women be elected to offices in the church when there are enough brethren*?" In the January 1895 edition of the Signs of the Times, we find the editor's response:

> "*If by this is meant the office of elder, we should say at once, No. But there are offices in the church which women can fill acceptably, and oftentimes there are found sisters in the church who are better qualified for this than brethren, such offices, for instance as church clerk, treasurer, librarian of the tract society, etc., as well as the office of deaconess, assisting the deacons in looking after the poor, and in doing such other duties as would naturally fall to their lot. The qualifications for church elder are set forth in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and in Titus 1:7-9. We do not believe that it is in God's plan to give to women the ordained offices of the church. By this we do not mean to depreciate their labors, service, or devotion. The sphere of woman is equal to that of man. She was made a help meet, or fit, for man, but that*

does not mean that her sphere is identical to that of man's. The interests of the church and the world generally would be better served if the distinctions given in God's word were regarded."[307 (p56)]

Sometimes women were given ministerial licences but not ministerial credentials. The General Conference Bulletin of 1899 explains the difference:

"***Ministerial credentials*** *are granted to ordained ministers in good standing, and engaged in active labor.* ***Ministerial licenses*** *are granted to licentiates, - those who are engaged in preaching, but who have not yet been ordained to the gospel ministry*."[308 (p43)]

Mrs White was the only exception because of her recognition as a prophet. The church had no official credential for a prophet; therefore, she was periodically issued standard ministerial credentials from 1871 to officially recognise her unique prophetic ministry. However, no ceremony of ordination was ever performed on Mrs White[298 (p39-40)] and on at least one occasion, the word 'ordained' was crossed out from her credential indicating she was not to be regarded as an ordained minister. W. C. White (son of Mrs White), wrote in a letter to his son-in-law, Dores E. Robinson, that Mrs White was never ordained, she never baptised, nor did she ever give the ordination charge to others.[307 (p86-7)] Neither did she perform weddings or organise any churches.[309 (p4,36)] Mrs White herself, in 1909 filled out a biographical record for the General Conference marking that she had not been ordained by the church.[310]

Though she was heavily involved in the foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, she said, "*No one has ever heard me claim the position of leader of the denomination*." Instead, she said that the responsibilities of church leadership should be "*distributed among a large number of competent <u>men</u>*."[47 (p236)] She saw her calling as from God, not from humans, and did not perform typical ordained duties like baptism. This is how she described her role:

"*I have a work of great responsibility to do – to impart by pen and voice the instruction given me, not alone to Seventh-day Adventists, but to the world… This is my work – to open the Scriptures to others as God has opened them to me*."[47 (p236)]

Though she often delivered instruction and rebukes to male leaders of the church, because she had no administrative authority over them, they were free to reject her counsel, which they did on several notable occasions. In fact, she dutifully submitted to the authority of the male leadership of the church, such as when called to move to Australia at the request of the General Conference.[298 (p40)]

When certain men called for ordination of women, Mrs White did not encourage their efforts. When the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church voted down women's ordination in 1881, she was silent. In contrast, Mrs Booth wrote a scathing rebuke when the Rev. Arthur Augustus Rees spoke out publicly against women preachers. She wrote to her mother saying, "*I am deter-*

mined that fellow shall not go unthrashed."[2 (p25)] She then compiled one of her most memorable and popular works, Female Teaching, in 1859 – the focus of discussion of this chapter.

Unlike the women's ordination issue, when the church was divided on other issues, Mrs White spoke up. For example, when there was debate over the Trinity, for which even her husband was originally opposed, Mrs White spoke up in favour of the Trinity on the first page of chapter one of Desire of Ages: "*From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father*."[87 (p19)] And again, in chapter 58, she wrote: "*In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived*."[87 (p530)] Concerning the emancipation of African Americans, Mrs White was very vocal and active, calling for the abolition of slavery and the liberation of African Americans in the United States.[233 (p100)] However, regarding the authority and liberation of women, she made no such call.

Why was Mrs White silent concerning equal opportunities for women? Mrs Booth's holiness theology taught her that entire sanctification removed original sin and restored women to pre-fall status – which she believed was identical to Adam. Therefore, she concludes, women who have received entire sanctification have equal role to men in the church. She made it a life goal to give women equal authority to men in the Salvation Army. Mrs White, on the other hand, while finding room in Scripture for women to do much more in ministry than tradition had allowed, she did not go as far as Mrs Booth in calling for equality in roles between the genders. Unlike the Salvation Army, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as a whole, has never approved the removal of all restrictions on female leadership. On July 8 2015, delegates at the 60th Session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists again voted 'no' with an overwhelming majority on a question regarding the ordination of women to Gospel Ministry. However, it has remained one of the most debated issues in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Not all Divisions of the church accept the official position of the church on women's ordination and some regions have appointed women pastors to lead churches. The distinctions between men and women are gradually diminishing. The worldwide survey of Seventh-day Adventist pastors conducted in 2013 showed that about 45% believe it is correct to limit ministerial ordination to males only, another 17% are happy to accept what the church teaches while 22% have questions and 15% have major doubts.[77]

Adventists prided themselves in being 'people of the Book,' reflecting their strong emphasis on the Bible as their central source of truth and authority. Sometimes, unfortunately, this led to an overemphasis on head knowledge and a lack of reliance on the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. That is why Mrs White, with the help of her husband, James, urged members to keep their spiritual life in balance. For example, Mrs White said:

> "*The evil of formal worship cannot be too strongly depicted, but no words can properly set forth the deep blessedness of genuine worship. When hu-*

man beings sing with the spirit and the understanding, heavenly musicians take up the strain and join in the song of thanksgiving."[196 (p143)]

Like a symphony, all of Scripture must be kept in perfect harmony according to how God has weighted it. If the trumpets in an orchestra are played too loud or the violins too quiet, the music is not pleasant to the ear. Worse still, if the wind instruments ignore the conductor and start doing their own thing, there is complete disharmony. God is the conductor of our spiritual lives, and He has given us the balance He wants in His Word. Like skilled musicians, we have to ensure we are following the conductor to keep all of Scripture in harmony. Just as a highly skilled orchestra has to put much time into practice to ensure they get every note in harmony, we have to keep studying together until we are perfectly in harmony with God.

Seeing the patterns in Scripture and figuring out their significance is important. The fact that God ordained only men as priests in the Old Testament is significant. The fact that there are no clear and unambiguous examples of women being ordained as elders in the New Testament is striking. For the Whites, although they also did not agree with the dry formalism of the established churches and the restrictions on the involvement of women, they felt that the Army and other Holiness movements had gone too far to the side of emotionalism, radicalism and the associated emphasis on women's rights and were out of harmony with Scripture – they were leaning too much into the 'spirit' but not enough into the 'understanding.' That is why Mrs White said numerous times not to adopt Salvation Army practices.

Like Richard Davidson from Andrews University, numerous Adventist scholars and theologians today who are in favour of women's ordination have adopted many of the arguments found in Mrs Booth's highly influential book, Female Teaching. None of her arguments were her own original ideas but she drew heavily on the scholarly arguments of her day. Though this book was in wide circulation in Mrs White's time, she did not refer to it or adopt the same arguments that Mrs Booth was using.

Female Preaching and Teaching

So, what do we do with Paul's statement on the silence of women in church? If there is one thing that Mrs Booth and Mrs White did agree on more than anything else, it is that women are free to teach and preach in church. However, they seem to be out of tune with Paul in this regard:

"***Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive****, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church*." (1 Cor 14:34-35)

"***Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence****. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control*." (1 Tim 2:11-15)

Actually, Paul's two statements on the silence of women in church at first appearance seem to be out of harmony with Scripture, since there are multiple examples in the Bible of women speaking and teaching publicly about spiritual matters in the presence of men, including in the New Testament. There are multiple examples of women prophets in the Bible and there is no hint that they were only to prophesy to women. In fact, Paul, addressing the issue of order in the church when the whole congregation comes together, discusses how women are to behave when they prophesy, pray and speak in tongues (1 Cor 11:5; 14:23), therefore, even Paul admonishes that women were to speak in church. An example is the story of Priscilla, the wife of Aquila, who taught a man, Apollos, in the synagogue:

"*Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue.* ***When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God*** *more accurately*." (Act 18:24-26)

When Jesus was brought to the temple by His parents to present Him to the Lord, Anna, the prophetess, addresses publicly in the temple all who were present:

"*Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord,* ***and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem***." (Lk 2:36-38)

Therefore, Paul's statements on the silence of women does not appear to sync with Scripture. We have to dig deeper to look for the harmony. Looking closely at the context of Paul's statements, the issue he is addressing is not silence of women but order in the church. The goal is to maintain order, not to keep women silent. One way we achieve order, he maintains from the outset, is by acknowledging our God ordained roles: "*I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God* (1 Cor 11:3)." As outlined above, God likes to maintain order in our conduct and roles. Paul is in

complete harmony with Scripture in this regard. The goal is proper conduct in church. The means to achieving this goal may change over time according to local customs.

Paul then proceeds to give examples of how the women of Corinth are to fulfil their role. Firstly, when women pray and prophesy, they are to keep their heads covered, for, according to the custom of the day, it is shameful for a woman's head to be uncovered (1 Cor 11:5-6). In a culture where it is not shameful for a woman to have her head uncovered, there is no point in keeping her head covered since it does not help to maintain the goal of proper conduct. In fact, in some cultures, it might be shameful for a woman to have her head covered indoors and therefore it would lead to disharmony if she was to ignore the local customs.

In chapter 14, Paul describes how people were speaking in church whenever they felt like it, leading to disorder. Therefore, to fulfil the goal of maintaining order, members were to keep silent and only speak when it was their turn. It is in this context that Paul says that women must keep silent in church and, instead, they are to be submissive. The aim is not to silence women, but to maintain order. Apparently, by telling the women of Corinth to keep silent he was helping them to maintain order. There is obviously some meaning lost to us today because these same women were praying, prophesying and speaking in tongues in church and Paul did not object to this. Scholars like Richard Davidson have tried to give a satisfactory explanation, but they can be technical and difficult to understand. What is clear is that these women knew what Paul meant by keeping silent but the meaning has been lost to us today. This does not matter. The lesson is, we need to conduct ourselves in church, first and foremost, according to God's order and commands and, secondly, according to the customs of our time and location - as long as they do not clash with God's commands - to ensure that we are maintaining order in the church.

Though the Seventh-day Adventist Church officially restricts ordination of women into ministerial positions, there is otherwise no restriction on women. Women are encouraged to be involved in all other areas of church work, including other leadership positions. In that respect, there was very little difference in views between Mrs Booth and Mrs White. For example, Mrs White encouraged both men and women to obtain a profession. There are advantages in doing ministry without the title of Elder or Pastor – it frees us from many committees and mundane tasks. For example, women who gain a profession in other fields, such as medicine or business, can have profound influence and a powerful gospel ministry that pastors cannot achieve, as they are in the community connecting with people, blowing the trumpet, clanging the cymbals and bringing honour to their Lord.

PART 5

RESTRICTIONS ON INSTRUMENTS

Chapter 17
Censored Instruments

For the first three millennia after creation, there is no instruction in the Bible from God for instruments to be used for making music. Though musical instruments are mentioned often in the Old Testament, there is not a lot of instruction from God concerning the use of musical instruments. There is no clear record of the patriarchs worshipping God with musical instruments or in song. The first instruments introduced by God - the Trumpet and bells - were designed to make sound but not to make music as such. Their purpose was for practical and ceremonial purposes.

In the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, God gives detailed instruction regarding how He wanted His people to relate to Him – music was not one of them. For example, the Bible is filled with instruction concerning a loving covenant relationship, His law, obedience, sacrifice, separation from pagan worship and forsaking the ways of the wicked. It is not until His people are in the promised land that God gives instruction for the use of cymbals, stringed instruments and harps to be used along with the trumpets in temple worship for making music. Even then, this instruction is revealed to us in the Bible indirectly and not as a direct command from God (2 Chron 29:25). This helps to illustrate how God values practical demonstrations of loving relationship, such as through righteous obedience, over emotional expressions of worship, such as through music. To rebellious Israel in the time of Amos, God said:

> "*Take away from Me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments. But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream*." (Amos 5:23-24)

Jewish musician, conductor and musicologist, Alfred Sendrey,[311] in his book Music in the Social and Religious Life of Antiquity, describes the importance of singing to the Jewish people:

> "*In Ancient Israel, music – **especially singing** – meant: to serve God, to exalt God with sounds. Singing, in whatever form, is for the Jew the religious creed expressed in sounds, the palpable affirmation of his close connections with the Eternal, the union in harmonious sounds of the Creator with His creation*."[312 (p167)]

Likewise, Mrs White affirms the elevated status of the human voice over musical instruments: "*The human voice that sings the music of God from a heart filled with*

gratitude and thanksgiving is far more pleasing to Him than the melody of all the musical instruments ever invented by human hands."[168 (p506)] Therefore, she encourages us all "*to cultivate the voice so that God's praise can be sung in clear, soft tones, not with harshness and shrillness that offend the ear. The ability to sing is the gift of God; let it be used to His Glory*."[196 (p143)] She also instructs that only the best singers should lead congregations in singing and "*they should devote some time to practice, that they may employ this talent to the glory of God*."[313 (p466)]

Therefore, it seems that praise through musical instruments is not first priority for God. Regardless, the playing of musical instruments remained an important part of temple services from the time of David onward. Music was undeniably a very important part of Israelite culture. Moses is known to have possessed a knowledge of music which was imparted to the Israelite people. The Jewish temple music tradition is considered by musicologists to be of the highest order and one of the greatest spiritual traditions of antiquity. The fame of Jewish music spread far beyond the borders of Israel.[9 (p58-9)] When in captivity, "*By the rivers of Babylon*," the Psalmist recollects, *"those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, and those who plundered us requested mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion*!'" But the Jews sat down and wept when they remembered Zion and hung up their harps upon the willows (Ps 137:1-3).

Today, there are many of us living in captivity to sin and in hardship due to the consequences of sin. For some, when they come to church and hear upbeat, joyful praise, it rings hollow. They feel no immediate joy because the music denies their reality. Even if the music elevates them for a moment, they may feel deflated afterward. This was the experience of God's people in captivity in Babylon. The music did not bring them joy. We want people to feel cheerful at church, so we play joyful, light-hearted and exuberant music, yet oddly, it may not be what some people need to feel happy. Paradoxically, sad music can make us happy while happy occasions can make us sad. Research has demonstrated the healing power of sad music.[314–316] The sad sounds of stringed instruments, for example, can be healing for these people. The greatest celebration is yet to come, when our Lord comes to take us to the Promised Land. Now is the time to work – to rescue people from captivity and save souls for eternity.

Upon return from captivity, musicians were reappointed by Nehemiah after the wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt (Neh 7:1-2) indicating the important place of music in temple service. Singing and instruments are mentioned repeatedly in the Psalms and, therefore, was an important part of worship for God's people. It was eventually allowed and even commanded by God, but not as first priority. The giving of the law and call to obedience came first. In this regard, General Booth's use of musical instruments as first priority to motivate people to repentance does not seem Biblical.

Hierarchy of Instruments

Certain instruments in the Bible had special functions suggesting a hierarchy of sacredness by the way they were used. Plucked stringed instruments, shofars and metal trumpets were used in conjunction with sacrifices and at non-sacrificial rituals. Percussion instruments, such as the tambourine or hand drum, ranked below these since they were not employed in sacrifices.[34 (p59)] God specifically ordained certain instruments for use in the temple, while others were not allowed. Stringed instruments, cymbals and trumpets were played in the temple. Other instruments were not generally associated with temple worship but were used during processions, feasts and special events.

There is evidence that certain musical instruments were forbidden by the Israelite religious leaders. The lute was a favourite instrument amongst the Egyptian people whom the Hebrews had lived with for centuries but, for some puzzling reason, was not popular with the Jewish people. Israeli musicologist and author of Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine, Joachim Braun, theorises that the Jews regarded the lute as impure due to the Egyptian tradition of associating it with the pleasures of love.[228 (p360)] Note that some Bibles give the impression that the lute was in common use by the Hebrews. That is because some Bibles translate the nēbel as lute, others as harp but the consensus of modern scholarship is that it was probably a variety of lyre.[34 (p52-3),227 (pp22-3)]

The rattle is another instrument that was undoubtedly censored from Scripture and religious ritual. An enormous number of rattles have been excavated with even distribution across different regions of Israel/Palestine dating from very early periods to modern times. It was literally produced for the masses, including for Israelite people. Despite this, there is only one single reference to the rattle in the whole Bible - it was named amongst the instruments played by David and the Israelites while attempting to move the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:5). Even more telling, in the parallel passage in First Chronicles, written at a later date, the rattle is conspicuously absent. Braun attributes this censoring of the rattle by Israelite religious leaders to its association with pagan religious ritual, especially debaucherous cultic festivities.[227 (pp19,98-107)]

The round tambourine, a small handheld frame drum without jingles, is depicted in Egyptian artwork as being exclusively played by women.[317] Likewise, in Israelite archaeology and Biblical references, it is more often women that we encounter playing the tambourine (Jud 11:34; 1 Sam 18:6; Jer 31:4; Ps 68:25). For example, Miriam, with the other women, played the tambourine in her song of praise after crossing the Red Sea (Ex 15:20-21) – a reflection of the culture they had just left behind in Egypt. Though it was sometimes used in secular and religious settings – such as processions, secular celebrations, religious feast days and the singing of hymns – the drum is not mentioned in connection with temple mu-

sic (1 Chr 25:6).[227 (p29-30)] Moreover, although the small, handheld drum was adopted by the Hebrews and used largely by women, as with the Egyptians, the ancient Hebrews did not adopt other types of drums commonly used by surrounding nations, including the larger bass drums.[34,317,318] A scholarly explanation for this is not readily available. Though the musical instruments used by the Hebrews were very similar to that of their neighbours, it is evident that there was partial and complete censoring of certain instruments, including the rattle from religious practices, the tambourine from the temple and larger drums as well as the lute from secular and religious use.

Musical Instruments in the Early Church

At the time of Christ, music was an important element in pagan society as well as various segments of Jewish life, including religious and non-religious settings. Outside of Judaism, "*In the Roman Empire, vocal and instrumental music was present in pagan cults, in the theatre, at symposia, and in diverse other areas of public and social life*."[226] Within Judaism, singing was expressed during sorrowful occasions, death and in the face of calamity. Singing and the sound of musical instruments were also frequently associated with public and private expressions of joy, pleasure and prosperity in Jewish communities – such as weddings, pregnancy, love, public festivities and victory celebrations. For devout Jews, in ancient times and throughout history, the whole of life is sacred. On joyous occasions, praise is given up to God and in times of sorrow, appeals are made to God for comfort and help. Therefore, music outside of religious occasions did not necessarily lack a religious dimension.[34 (p135-65)]

There is evidence of singing during informal religious occasions in Jewish homes. For example, a passage in 4 Maccabees has a father singing Psalms and other Biblical material to his children.[34 (p117)] In keeping with Jewish custom, Mary likely gave Jesus oral instruction consisting of singing and other forms of recitation. As Paul Hamel, former music department chair at Andrews University, describes:

> "*Large amounts of sacred literature were set to music and learned by the young. A cooperative and willing student, such as Jesus surely was, would accumulate a large repertoire of sacred songs based upon the teachings of the Old Testament*."[9 (p121)]

Though little is documented in the gospels of music in Jesus' life and ministry, the songs He learnt in childhood would have been a comfort and strength to Him throughout His life and ministry. Paul's instruction for believers to encourage each other in singing was likely inspired, at least in part, by the testimony of eyewitness accounts of Jesus' ministry. Extra Biblical sources indicate that it is also likely during the time of Christ that singing, and possibly the playing of music, was a part of

formal religious occasions in the home, especially the Passover meal.[34 (pp117-21)] Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn during the Passover meal (Matt 26:30).

In the late temple period, Psalms were still being sung with the accompaniment of musical instruments as part of the sacrificial system in the Temple at Jerusalem. However, curiously, according to Brill Encyclopaedia, singing and music was not part of the synagogue services.[34 (p131-34),226] In his book on ancient Judaism, John Arthur Smith states, "*Sources from the early first century CE show that the main religious purpose of the synagogue was the Sabbath instruction of the faithful through scriptural exposition and exegesis*." There is no documentation of musical activity in the synagogue until late, he says.[34 (p131)]

Written sources in the early church frequently mention musical instruments but there are no concrete references to Christians playing musical instruments until well into the Middle Ages.[34 (p169)] In fact, many of the church fathers expressed hostility toward the playing of musical instruments and this only increased with the course of time. Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD), for example, rebuked the use of certain instruments, such as the auloi, psalteries, Egyptian clappers and 'other such playthings' which, he said "*become altogether indecent and uncouth, especially when joined by beating cymbals and tympana and accompanied by the noisy instruments of deception*." Though Christians used musical instruments metaphorically to interpret Scripture as Paul did (1 Cor 14:7-9), he reasoned that instruments were not to be played because of their association with superstition, licentious living, moral degeneration, paganism, aggression and war. We Christians, he admonished, are pacifists and we:

> "…*make use of but one instrument, the word of peace alone by which we honour God, and no longer the ancient psaltery, nor the trumpet, the tympanum and the aulos, as was the custom among those expert in war and those scornful of the fear of God who employed string instruments in their festive gatherings, as if to arouse their remissness of spirit through such rhythms*."

Clement of Alexandria was certainly not alone in these sentiments. According to some scholars, so influential were the attempts to keep worldliness and paganism out of the church that music in early Christian settings was, it seems, largely vocal with little accompanying musical instruments.[34 (p172-4)]

The Mingling of the World with the Church

In Genesis, where we find the foundation of many of our doctrines, we discover the first mention of musical instruments. It is recognised by many theologians that the first appearance or mention of something in the Bible – especially in the book of Genesis – has significance to its meaning in Scripture. Jubal, of the lineage of Cain, "*was the father of all those who play the harp and flute* (Gen 4:21)." It was the 'sons of men' or the descendants of Cain, those opposed to God,

who are first to become masters of musical instruments. The 'sons of God' or the descendants of Seth, those who accepted God, are not mentioned to have made use of musical instruments. This does not make musical instruments evil, but it is a warning or caution to God's people that those who oppose God were masters of musical instruments from the beginning.

A century after the death of Clement of Alexandria, Christianity was legalised. There was less attempt to keep the world out of the church. Relics, chants, bells, paintings, statues and incense, adopted from the pagan world, were brought into the church to impress the mind and attract the masses. The Great Controversy highlights just how impressive Roman Catholicism became:

> "*Its gorgeous display and solemn rites fascinate the senses of the people, and silence the voice of reason and of conscience. The eye is charmed. Magnificent churches, imposing processions, golden altars, jeweled shrines, choice paintings, and exquisite sculpture appeal to the love of beauty. The ear also is captivated. The music is unsurpassed. The rich notes of the deep-toned organ, blending with the melody of many voices as it swells through the lofty domes and pillared aisles of her grand cathedrals, cannot fail to impress the mind with awe and reverence*."[159 (p566)]

As with Paul, who recognised the mystery of lawlessness already at work in his time, Mrs White recognised the "*striking similarity between the church of Rome and the Jewish church at the time of Christ's first advent*."[75 (p568)] This is not to say that Catholics and Jews are not godly people. At the time of Christ, there were many Jews who accepted Jesus, just as there are many Catholics who are genuine followers of Christ today. But ever since the time of Christ, the devil has been infiltrating the church to corrupt it and distort its purity.

Cristina Rocha, Professor of Anthropology and the Director of the Religion and Society Research Cluster at Western Sydney University, compares the outward splendour, pomp and ceremony of Roman Catholicism with the ecstatic material experiences of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity. The Roman Church, she says, uses:

> "*…objects (relics, altars), sounds (chanting, bells, drums), lights (think stained-glass in cathedrals), images (paintings, statues of saints), rituals, and their bodily senses (the smell of incense burning, ecstatic states) to engage with the divine*."[46]

Likewise, she explains, Pentecostal and Charismatic churches create ecstatic experiences by engaging the senses with music, objects, lights, images and other spectacle to make the transcendent immanent. Though Rocha sees no problem with this, Mrs White points out that:

> "*The religion of Christ needs not such attractions to recommend it. In the light shining from the cross, true Christianity appears so pure and lovely that*

no external decorations can enhance its true worth. It is the beauty of holiness, a meek and quiet spirit, which is of value with God.

Brilliancy of style is not necessarily an index of pure, elevated thought. High conceptions of art, delicate refinement of taste, often exist in minds that are earthly and sensual. They are often employed by Satan to lead men to forget the necessities of the soul, to lose sight of the future, immortal life, to turn away from their infinite Helper, and to live for this world alone."[159 (pp566-7)]

History tells us the end result of mingling worldliness with the church as described in The Great Controversy:

"*When the early church became corrupted by departing from the simplicity of the gospel and accepting heathen rites and customs, **she lost the Spirit and power of God**; and in order to control the consciences of the people, she sought the support of the secular power. The result was the papacy, a church that controlled the power of the state and employed it to further her own ends, especially for the punishment of 'heresy.' In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the state will also be employed by the church to accomplish her own ends.*

Whenever the church has obtained secular power, she has employed it to punish dissent from her doctrines. Protestant churches that have followed in the steps of Rome by forming alliance with worldly powers have manifested a similar desire to restrict liberty of conscience…

*…**It was apostasy that led the early church to seek the aid of the civil government**, and this prepared the way for the development of the papacy—the beast. Said Paul: 'There' shall 'come a falling away, ... and that man of sin be revealed* (2 Thes 2:3)*.' So apostasy in the church will prepare the way for the image to the beast.*

The Bible declares that before the coming of the Lord there will exist a state of religious declension similar to that in the first centuries."[159 (pp443-4)]

Though the early church may have been overly strict toward musical instruments in an attempt to keep worldliness out of the church, Christianity flourished. It remained largely pure in doctrine and spread rapidly, even in the face of extreme persecution in the 2nd and early 3rd centuries. No attempt was made to attract people to the church by worldly means. This all changed, however, beginning with Constantine, in the 4th century. As worldliness came in, human doctrine corrupted the church. Consequently, the 'Spirit and power of God' diminished and the church united with civil power in order to 'control the consciences' of the people.

In the 16th century, the Protestant reformers opposed many of the practices of the Catholic church, attempting to turn back to the Bible as the sole source of

authority for Christian faith and practice. In the 18th and 19th centuries, there were the great religious awakenings. The Great Controversy says of this time:

> "*Deep conviction took hold upon their minds and hearts. They were convinced of sin and of righteousness and of judgment to come… With faith and humility they accepted the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world*."

True conversion brought about a complete change of character:

> "*The things they once hated they now loved, and the things they once loved they hated. The proud and self-assertive became meek and lowly of heart… The vain fashions of the world were laid aside*."[159 (p461)]

Christians sought not the outward adornment - *"arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel* (1 Peter 3:3),*"* rather, they sought *"the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God* (1 Peter 3:4)." They were deeply passionate about their faith and many Victorian Christians opposed worldly amusement and leisure pursuits. Christian influence pervaded social and political life to an extent almost unimaginable today, elevating morality and bringing about social reform. The Bible became the primary textbook of education for many young people. It was a time of deep searching of the Scriptures. Many ran to and fro, and knowledge increased (Dan 12:4), especially understanding of end time prophecy. The Bible society was established and missions were set up around the world.

It was in this setting that the Millerite movement arose and the soon coming of Christ was proclaimed. Then came the great disappointment of the Advent movement. Seventh-day Adventists see this as fulfilment of the opening of the 'little book,' which was sweet as honey in John's mouth but bitter in the stomach (Rev 10:8-11). After the great disappointment, knowledge continued to expand. Religious revival, forsaking of worldliness and turning to deep study of Scripture led to a movement promoting the faith of Jesus, the keeping of the commandments of God (Rev 14:12) and the soon coming of Jesus. Historicists see this as the age of the 'Philadelphia' church. Unlike the Adventists, the Salvation Army did not often discuss the prophecies of the Bible or tie the events of the 1800s with any prophetic events of Daniel or Revelation.

When Christians are willing to forsake all, the Holy Spirit can manifest in mighty ways. But not all religious revivals yield such profound and lasting effects. The Great Controversy suggests that the revivals of the late nineteenth and early 20th century were not as they were with earlier revivals, for:

> "…*many of the revivals of modern times have presented a marked contrast to those manifestations of divine grace which in earlier days followed the labors of God's servants. It is true that a widespread interest is kindled, many profess conversion, and there are large accessions to the churches; nevertheless the results are not such as to warrant the belief that there has*

been a corresponding increase of real spiritual life. The light which flames up for a time soon dies out, leaving the darkness more dense than before.

Popular revivals are too often carried by appeals to the imagination, by exciting the emotions, by gratifying the love for what is new and startling. Converts thus gained have little desire to listen to Bible truth, little interest in the testimony of prophets and apostles. Unless a religious service has something of a sensational character, it has no attractions for them. A message which appeals to unimpassioned reason awakens no response. The plain warnings of God's Word, relating directly to their eternal interests, are unheeded."[159 (p463)]

When worldliness is kept out of the church, the church moves closer to the light, developing a purer doctrine and elevating the morality of society. The attempt by some of the early church fathers to censor musical instruments is symbolic of their desire to keep worldliness out of the church due to its association with worldliness. But when worldliness comes into the church, it moves further into darkness and apostasy. When the church fails to oppose the immorality of the world, society sinks further into debauchery and depravity. As Mrs White put it: "*Conformity to worldly customs converts the church to the world; it never converts the world to Christ*."[159 (p509)] We tend to blame the world for its wickedness, but when we fail to share the gospel with our neighbours, when we fail to blow the trumpet and clang the cymbals, both the world and the church become corrupted:

"*Wherever a church is established, all the members should engage actively in missionary work. They should visit every family in the neighborhood and know their spiritual condition. If professed Christians had engaged in this work from the time when their names were first placed on the church books, there would not now be such widespread unbelief, such depths of iniquity, such unparalleled wickedness, as is seen in the world at the present time…*

And not only in the world do we see the result of the church's neglect to work in Christ's lines. By this neglect a condition of things has been brought into the church that has eclipsed the high and holy interests of the work of God. A ***spirit of criticism and bitterness*** *has come into the church, and the spiritual discernment of many has been dimmed. Because of this the cause of Christ has suffered great loss. Heavenly intelligences have been waiting to co-operate with human agencies, but we have not discerned their presence*."[16 (p296)]

The greatest evidence of the failure of the church is the great darkness that is seen in the world today and even creeping into the church. Instead of pushing back against the world, the church of the late 1800s began to embrace it – including using worldly music and entertainment to attract the world. In like fashion, the modern church has embraced the rhythm and methods of the secular world. In-

stead of opposing Hollywood and the secular music industry, the modern church has remained silent, even indulging in their products, bringing them into their homes and even into the churches. Consequently, we too have lost the 'Spirit and power of God.' We have found ourselves in the Laodicean age with a lukewarm membership. The 'unbelief', 'iniquity' and 'wickedness' in the world at the time of writing of The Great Controversy in the 19th century is far greater today. Unlike the praiseworthy works of the church of Smyrna (Rev 2:9), the works of the Laodicean church is lukewarm, therefore, Jesus will vomit it out of His mouth (Rev 3:15-16).

We have lost our influence and, consequently, the world has become like Sodom and Gomorrah. As with the Catholic Church which lost its influence due to apostasy from the time of Constantine and united with civil power to gain influence; in recent years, the evangelical church has been looking to unite with civil power to enforce its will against the liberty of conscience. President Donald Trump recently stated in a public speech, "*Separation between church and state… let's forget about that… we're bringing religion back to our country*."[319 (7:03)] Clinical psychologist and television talk show host, Dr Phil, said to President Trump in response to his speech, "*I can't tell you first off how proud I am to see religion coming back to the White House. God bless you for doing this.*"[319 (18:16)] The second beast has become like the first beast and is ready to restore the power of the first beast. Just as the apostate Catholic Church led to the dark ages, so will we be plunged into "*great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be* (Matt 24:21)."

Chapter 18
The Drum

We have an explanation as to why the Israelite people may have censored the rattle and the lute. But why is it that, down through the ages, God's people have so often prohibited the drum in church? Despite migrating out of Mesopotamia, which used drums, and living in Egypt for four centuries where a range of drums were commonly used, including the bass drum, the Hebrew people chose to adopt only the small hand drum and no other – and even this was kept out of the sanctuary. There is no record of Jesus or the disciples ever using or prescribing the use of the drum and, down through the Christian ages, it has often met with disapproval. According to Mrs White, even the Lord Himself, in vision to her, singled out the drum for mention, along with shouting, music and dancing, as one of the uncouth activities that would be in the church just before the close of probation: "*Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be shouting, with* ***drums****, music, and dancing*."[12 (p36)]

Harms of Low Frequency Sounds

Apart from its association with rock and roll, perhaps one reason for the drum's sinister reputation is the physical effect that the drumbeat has on us. For example, the deep bass sounds can be felt vibrating through the body. As discussed previously, exposure to noise with sufficient intensity and duration can alter the physical state of human beings. Risk of harm depends on the frequency distribution and their relative intensities which is largely determined by the type of instrument. In particular, in recent decades, low frequency sound has been put under the scientific spotlight for investigation.

There are few examples of naturally occurring persistent sounds that are dominated by low frequency sound waves. Waterfalls, mountain streams, forest rain and the sound of the surf consist of a wide frequency spectrum producing white noise which tends to have a therapeutic calming effect.[320] In contrast, many man-made machines, devices and instruments produce predominantly low frequency sounds and vibrations which has been proposed by some scientists to be a cause

of physical harm to human beings on a mass scale. Because of their longer wavelengths, low frequency sounds are better able to penetrate through walls and deep into the human body. That's why the bass sound of music can be heard and felt from a long distance and from behind thick walls.[321]

Many people who are diagnosed with disease have a known cause for their illness. However, when the cause is unknown or unproven, it is classified as idiopathic. For example, about one-third of all epilepsies are idiopathic generalised epilepsies.[322] In 1980, researchers in Portugal discovered that aeronautical technicians employed at an aircraft manufacturing, maintenance and repair facility were diagnosed with late-onset epilepsy at much higher rates than the Portuguese general population. In subsequent studies, the researchers concluded that people with prolonged exposure to high-intensity, low frequency noise are at risk of developing:

> "*…thickening of cardiovascular structures – carotid arteries, pericardium and cardiac valves; lung fibrosis; and neurological problems, including late-onset epilepsy and disabling balance disorders*."[323]

They established the term vibroacoustic disease (VAD) to describe the cause of these physical manifestations due to excessive exposure to low frequency noise. This disease, they propose, has been observed in low frequency noise exposed professionals, such as disk-jockeys, restaurant workers, aircraft technicians, commercial and military pilots and cabin crew members and ship machinists, as well as other people from the general population exposed to excessive environmental low frequency noise.[323,324]

Because of their frequent exposure to intense bass sounds in music, disk-jockeys and restaurant employees have been identified as being at risk of developing VAD. Though the research is in the early stages and has been viewed with scepticism by some scientists, there is a mounting body of evidence confirming that noise pollution in general may have temporary and permanent effects on humans.[320] The scientists involved in the VAD studies are convinced of the harmful effects of low frequency sounds and have attempted to raise the alarm, claiming that disease burden from low frequency noise around the world is staggering.[97] The general consensus of mainstream science is that, apart from hearing defects, noise-induced disease is controversial, contradictory and inconclusive.[324]

However, the potential harms of low frequency noise has been acknowledged by the World Health Organisation. In the WHO Guidelines for Community Health, it states, "*a large proportion of low-frequency components in noise may increase considerably the adverse effects on health*."[325 (p.xiii)] In a review of the scientific literature, Kerstin Waye, professor of the Department of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at University of Gothenburg, Sweden, acknowledges the need for further studies into the effects of low frequency noise. She concludes that there is accumulating data showing adverse effects from exposure to low frequency noise and increasing acceptance that it is a public health problem that

needs to be addressed. She cites numerous studies that point to low frequency noise as a cause of disturbed rest, lack of concentration, fatigue, irritability, feeling of pressure in the head and eardrums, elevated cortisol, sleep disturbance, dizziness, reduced work performance, impaired learning, hearing loss, VAD and problems associated with noise-induced annoyance.[326]

The modern-day drum kit and electric guitar are able to produce an intensity of bass sound not possible in former times. Add to these numerous other factors – including, artificial amplification of music, ready access to recorded music, as well as home, car and public stereo systems – and certain members of the population, especially young people, are at risk of frequent exposure to harmful, high intensity, low frequency noise.

Brush drumming was introduced to quiet the drums back in a time when there were no amplifiers to increase the volume of other instruments. Electric guitar and electric bass and microphones for voice and other instruments allowed the drums to play heavier grooves. They were able to play the back beat all the way through the song. Prior to that, the drum set would have drowned out the other music. By the late 50s, as rock and roll emerges, drum music becomes more beefed up.[327,328] It is yet to be determined the potential risk of harm due to frequent exposure to bass music in rock and pop music in the home and in social settings such as nightclubs and even church worship services. Science is uncovering the link between frequent consumption of concentrated and processed foods. Likewise, future science may yet reveal the link between idiopathic disease and frequent exposure to artificial modern day sounds, including electronic and amplified music.

The Susceptibility of the Human Brain to Drum Rhythms

Probably a more important reason for the drum's sinister reputation is its association with pagan ritual and trance. The strength of the drum is said to be in its ability to give a song its rhythmic beat and energy. But even modern-day secular musicians admit that there is something ominous about this beat. As the late BBC radio broadcaster and gay rights activist, Ray Gosling, put it, behind every beat of rock and roll is a 'sympathy for the devil.'[208] TIME magazine saw in the very beat of rock music rebellion against social restraints.[207] What is it about the drum beat that gives it such a sinister reputation? Science may be able to provide some answers to this baffling question.

From a scientific perspective, musical instruments in and of themselves are not harmful. However, certain types of instruments produce particular properties of sound that can cause unusual manifestations and even physiological or psychological harm when used in certain ways. The drum, for example, being a percussion instrument, produces rhythmic tunes. Also, drums, especially deep bass drums, produce mainly low-frequency sounds. These two sound properties of the drum – rhythm and low frequency – makes the human brain and body particularly

vulnerable to its effects. The rhythmic tunes of the drum can quite effectively synchronise with brain waves. Moreover, sound receptors in the ear are more tolerant to low-frequency sounds and, therefore, can withstand higher amplitudes of sound before pain is felt. Consequently, more energy can be transmitted to the brain than higher-frequency sounds.

With the right rhythm and tempo, coupled with other precipitators, such as dance movements and flashing lights, a person may enter a trance state and experience hallucinations. This has been observed in ceremonies in different parts of the world and researched by anthropologists for many decades.[329] In scientific research, people in trance states often report feelings of becoming an animal, of being outside the body or of being possessed.[330] Some participants in trance states also report communicating with disembodied entities or deceased people. Shamanic trance is a widely known ancient practice used by shaman practitioners to interact with spirits and energies for the physical and spiritual wellbeing of individuals and communities. These trances are often induced through rhythmic drumming, chanting and dancing.[331] Thus is demonstrated the power of the drum to influence the mind in ways that other instruments do not.

Participants of Pentecostal worship have recounted experiences of trance-like states of 'feeling lost in worship' as well as instances of 'momentary apparitions or visions.'[332] In an earlier chapter, we discussed a YouTube video of the song 'Way Maker' which was sung at Jesus '19 in Orlando, Florida, January 1st, 2020. The song was played continually for 28 minutes, repeating the same line over and over again for much of the song. One of the lead singers is seen sitting on the floor rocking backwards and forwards for large segments of the song.[192] She was showing signs that she may have been experiencing a trance-like state.[330,331]

Across many cultures since ancient times, drums have been seen as vehicles for communication with the divine. The rhythmic beats of drums are believed by these cultures to have the power to summon the gods.[333] Historically, instruments used to attract gods have usually been rhythmic percussive and shrill instruments rather than melodic instruments. Common forms include drums, gongs, cymbals, bells and rattles.[334]

In West Africa, people believe in and worship ancestor spirits called Orisha. Examples of powerful Orisha include Shango (god of thunder, lightning and justice), Kori (goddess of fertility) and Ogun (god of iron and war). In a state of trance, an individual loses normal self-awareness and is believed to become possessed. When the ego leaves, the Orisha can enter through the head and then take over the whole body. The Bible refers to the gods that people sacrificed to as demons (Ps 106:37; 1 Cor 10:20). If that is the case, these gods that the West Africans worship are evil spirits. These African people believe there are spirits other than Orisha and that they must take great care to avoid possession by these undesired spirits. Jesus spoke in similar terms of spirit possession. If an undesired spirit leaves a person and that person is not then filled with the Holy Spirit, unclean spirits will then return to enter and dwell with that person (Matt 12:43-45).

West Africans believe they can control which spirits take up residence in them by the use of the drum. By playing particular drum rhythms, they attract only the Orisha. Secret societies in West Africa possess special powerful trance rhythms to attract specific spirits. During initiation training, candidates are taught the drum rhythms used by the sect to summon the desired spirits. These secret sects can keep their members in trances for months it is said.[210 (p152-4)]

If these African people are right about the influence of drum rhythms on spirits and, if Christian music mimics the rhythms created by people who are unconsecrated and antagonistic to God, might we not be at risk of inviting unclean spirits to enter and dwell within us by listening to this music? When the slave ships brought people from West Africa to America, they brought with them the drum rhythms that were used to call down Orisha. The Vodoun or Voodoo is a form of spirit worship also originating in West Africa and was introduced to New Orleans by enslaved West Africans and from slaves arriving from the Caribbean.[210 (p168),335] Out of these rhythms, says drummer Mickey Hart, came "*jazz, the blues, the backbeat, rhythm and blues, rock and roll - some of the most powerful rhythms on the planet*."[210 (p157)]

After years of drumming, travel, playing with shamans and African drummers and reflecting on the practice of drumming, trance and spirit worship, Mickey Hart came to the realisation that his own tradition of rock and roll does "*have a spirit side, that there was a branch of the family that had maintained the ancient connection between the drum and the gods*." Babatunde Olatunji, a renowned African drummer, describes his experience growing up in Nigeria in West Africa being taught by the master drummers. He said:

> "…*the most important rhythms in Yoruba land are those that communicate with the Orisha… There are several ways of celebrating these Orisha,"* he says, *"Sometimes we make sacrifices at the shrine of the Orisha and offer them gifts. Or else a feast with drumming and dancing is planned, and as we chant and dance, some of the people will become possessed by the spirit of, say, Ogun or Shango and be transformed to a higher spiritual level*."

At age 23, Babatunde Olatunji won a scholarship to attend college in Atlanta to study sociology. He thought his drumming was behind him until he turned on the radio in America for the first time and heard a pop song and was completely stunned. He remembered thinking, 'hey that's African music' and right away joined the campus jazz combo.[210 (p158,160-1)]

In ancient Egypt, the rattle, another percussion instrument used to bring on trances, was used in the worship of the goddesses Isis and Hathor[334] and was widely used throughout Canaan in cultic practices.[227] Archaeology has revealed that the rattle was also popular amongst the ancient Hebrews, yet it was apparently censored by Israelite religious leaders, as already discussed. The only time it appeared in the Bible was in the first account of David and Israel bringing the ark to Jerusalem when Uzzah was struck dead by God. In the second account, written

at a later time, it was removed from the narrative. This demonstrates that the inspired authors of the Bible did not want the rattle included in Scripture or in Hebrew worship.

In modern times, no other instrument is probably more widely associated with pagan ritual, spirit worship and rebellion than is the drum. Given the power of the drum to cause people to lose self-awareness and enter trance-like states, and given the widespread use of drums throughout the ages for cultic ritual, including in modern times, and its link to spirit possession, it might be wise for religious leaders of our time to limit the use of drums in worship, especially the rhythms that mimic secular and cultic practice. If religious leaders in the Bible restricted the use of instruments used in pagan cultic practice, there is scriptural precedence for religious leaders to do the same today.

The Aggressive Emotion of Drums

Maybe the most important reason of all for the drum's sinister reputation, and the reason the drum kit became a favourite instrument for rock musicians, is the emotional characteristics of various types of drums. Music is one of the most effective media for conveying emotion.[162] In his book, The Sonic Boom, Beckerman provides a chart of instruments with their associated emotional characteristics which he has observed from his own experience. He describes the primary emotions of the electric guitar, for example, as 'power', 'youthful energy' and 'rebellion'.[165 (p92-3)] Research has helped to formalise these emotional characteristics of instruments. Because it is such a huge industry, much scientific research has been carried out in recent decades exploring emotion recognition in music, especially addressing the effect of tempo, texture, pitch, timbre, and other characteristics on the emotional effect of music. For example, the violin, trumpet and clarinet have been highly ranked for happy, joyful, heroic and comic. The harp, flute and guitar naturally produce a sad emotion which is effective for creating a pleasant but sombre sound. The harp and violin were also judged shy.

These emotional characteristics of instruments are then used to convey desired messages for consumers to receive. Emotional characteristics can be manipulated in a song by emphasising instruments that are comparatively stronger in representing these characteristics. A more sophisticated mix of emotions can also be produced. For example, musicians could create a joyful melody mixed with an undertone of sadness by mixing in the sad emotion of the horn.[162,336] At every moment of the American Super Bowl, very specific messages are being broadcast through sound and music to consumers. These messages are powerful – and can be much more powerful than words or lyrics.

Beckerman said, the most basic vocabulary in the process of sonic branding involves "*instruments and sounds and the feelings and emotions they trigger*."[165 (p92)] This flies in the face of General Booth's conviction that only the lyrics count. Who do we believe: Beckerman or Booth? Of course, it is in Beckerman's best

interest to promote the importance of sound for conveying a message because he makes money from sonic branding. Despite this, ever since his best-selling book was published, numerous research studies have confirmed that the type of emotions generated by music is critically important to the message being conveyed. The first step is matching the emotions with the story followed by selecting instruments with the desired emotional characteristics. Other features, such as tempo and timbre, can also be altered to give the desired emotion. Although certain musical instruments produce desirable emotions for worship, such as cheerful, solemn, joyful, sad and heroic sounds, other instruments tend to produce undesirable emotions, such as anger and aggression.

As we know from our own experience listening to drum rhythms, different emotions can be expressed on drums by varying the rhythm pattern. However, one scientific study has shown that some emotions - happy, sad, fearful and angry - seem easier to communicate with the drum than tender and **solemn emotions**.[337] Note that most of the easily communicated emotions of drums are negative: sad, fearful and angry. Mrs White said that worship music should be 'cheerful, yet **solemn melodies**'[168 (p507-8)]. She often uses the word 'solemn' as an ideal attribute of appropriate music. As this study reveals, however, the drum is not an ideal instrument for producing solemn melodies.

In another study, by assessing drum sounds alone without regard to rhythm patterns, the inherent emotional characteristics of individual drum types was uncovered. The bass drum was strongly correlated with almost all negative emotions, such as agitation, anger, scary and terrifying.[338] Other research has shown that the intensity of an emotion is affected by the pitch and dynamics of the sound. In one study, for example, angry and scary sounds produced by instruments became more intense in the bass frequencies; whereas the other eight emotions studied all became less intense in the bass frequencies, including: happy, heroic, romantic, calm, comic, mysterious, shy and sad. The same study also found that heroic, angry, scary and comic sounds all become stronger with loud notes; while romantic, calm, mysterious, shy, and sad sounds become stronger with soft notes.[339] The findings demonstrate likely reasons why pitch and dynamics cause drum sounds to be perceived as angry: drums naturally produce both bass and loud sounds, each of which intensify angry emotions.

The negative, especially angry, emotional characteristic of drumbeats may help to account for the suspicion and mistrust of drum music by many Christians. Certain listeners may be more attuned to the natural negative undercurrents of the drum rhythm in music. Joel Beckerman, award-winning composer who has developed signature sonic branding programs for global giants such as Disney, AT&T, and Southwest Airlines, said that some companies fail spectacularly at using music to connect with customers. Earlier in the book, it was decided that Beckerman's ideas needed to be put to the test since they are in direct opposition to Booth's view that any music is fine, as long as the lyrics are spiritual. Concerning companies he has worked with, Beckerman said:

"*They make the mistake of confusing music their audience likes with music and sounds that create a more meaningful emotional connection with their story*."[165 (p58)]

What he has discovered is that most of the songs licensed by each brand don't sync with the brand's personality:

"*They used pop tracks that could have worked just as well in spots for chewing gum or denture cream… The sonic elements they did own merely complemented pictures or seemed to be chosen because they sounded cool*."[165 (p90-1)]

The studies referenced above support Beckerman's claim. If the emotional characteristics of instruments convey specific messages, would it not be important for organisations to match the message of their tunes to their unique story? The advice of Rick Warren of Saddleback Church to match the music to the people you want to reach[276] is contrary to the evidence of science. General Booth and those who followed, including the contemporary music industry, though well intended, have caused Christian music to lose its identity. The sacred and secular have merged. The unique story is lost. Christian pop blends in so seamlessly with the secular world that it can be hard to distinguish the two. By playing music the congregation likes – especially angry rock and pop tunes put to Christian lyrics - we are connecting the wrong emotion with our story which should be one of hope, joy and peace in Christ Jesus.

Secular music artists tend to play on the negative emotional characteristics of the drum to add to the rebellious effect of rock music, as suggested by TIME's statement: "*all rock is revolutionary. By its very beat and sound, it has always implicitly rejected restraints and celebrated freedom and sexuality*."[207] Even the Jesus Movement, of which TIME recognised music was a special medium, was a marriage of conservative religion with the rebellious counterculture.[340] The birth of the Jesus Movement and CCM coincided with rebellion against Christian norms.

Daniel Glass is an American drummer, writer and authority on classic American drumming and the evolution of American popular music. He has played around the world with bands such as Kiss, Neil Diamond and Bette Midler. He is with the band Royal Crown Review which plays a lot of classic American music from the 20s to the mid 60s. He said:

"…*we were trying to figure out how to take the rebellious Spirit of modern styles like Punk and put it into big band and other roots music - we found out it was already there*."[341]

Because of its frequent use in war down through the ages as a means of communication, boosting morale and inciting aggression, drums have become a symbol of war. During the American civil war, Henry White, son of James and Ellen White, learned to play the drum for marching exercises from Union soldiers who were stationed not far from their home. Concerned about their boys, Henry and

his brothers, getting caught up in the spirit and emotion of war, they ordered that the drum be put away. When they disobeyed, James had the drum destroyed.[9]

Distorted guitar riffs, drum patterns and synthesiser effects can be used to produce aggressive music tones.[342] Michael Spitzer, professor of music at the University of Liverpool in the UK, describes how the US Army played music at maximum volume in order to compel the Panamanian dictator, Manuel Noriega, to surrender when he was holed up in the Vatican's embassy in 1989. He said, "*Of course, they didn't bombard him with Céline Dion, but rather endless hard rock, since its aggressive power chords express the emotion of anger*."[271] A simple Google search brings up hundreds of websites teaching drummers and guitarists how to create aggressive sounds with their instruments. Research has demonstrated how aggressive music, especially when accompanied with violent lyrics, but even without lyrics, can lead to aggressive behaviour.[342]

Music is a universal language.[343] Music inspired by a Spirit filled heart is going to resonate with our spiritual nature, with God and His angels. Music emanating from the heart of a carnal person is going to resonate with our carnal nature. If we are copying the drum beat of the secular world, we are spreading a message inspired by minds that are not in tune with God but with the fallen world and the spirit of the world. That might be why, when Moses and Joshua came down from the mountain, Joshua confused the music of the Israelites with the sound of war (Ex 32:17-19). Likewise, the sound and feeling of a rock concert is angry and aggressive like war, especially when heard from a distance with the higher frequency sounds filtered out. The deep bass sound and vibrations can trigger a stress response, causing a rush of adrenaline raising the heart rate and blood pressure - the same reaction we have in response to fear and stress.[344] This is why rock music feels good, because it also causes a flood of endorphins in the brain.[99]

Peace & Love Toward Others is the Goal

Rather than expressing aggressive emotion, our music should reflect the fruits of the Spirit. It should instil peace and love toward others as well as concern for

their salvation. That way, when we face oppression, we might be more likely to respond as Jesus did:

> "*He was oppressed and He was afflicted,*
> *Yet He opened not His mouth;*
> *He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,*
> *And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,*
> *So He opened not His mouth*." (Is 53:7)

Jesus said "*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth* (Matt 5:5)." The harp/lyre was the instrument of choice for the Israelites. Harps produce sad and shy emotions.[336] Meek is a synonym of shy and meekness is a quiet, gentle and submissive nature. To mourn is to be sad over a loss and, as Christians, we mourn over the sin and suffering in the world and the fact that our creator had to suffer so much for us.

Research has shown that sad tunes, such as those produced by the harp, actually elicit pleasant emotions and therapeutic responses. Though we are saddened by the sin and suffering, we are not weighed down by this because we have peace and joy in Jesus. The harp produces meaningful emotions connected to our story as Christians.[165 (p58-9)] Guitars, flutes and violins are examples of other instruments that have been found to produce either meek or pleasant sad emotions. Professional composers are careful to select instruments that produce the emotions they want to elicit in the audience.

Martin Luther's understanding of music theory associated a particular character or emotional effect with each of the eight modes. He used this theory of music to elicit desired emotions, such as gentle and friendly emotions for the gospel. Johann Walter, musical advisor to Luther, recalled that Luther:

> "…*appointed the eighth tone for the Epistle and the sixth tone for the Gospel, saying: 'Christ is a friendly Lord, and his sayings are gentle, therefore, we want to take the Sexton tonum for the Gospel; and because St. Paul is a serious apostle, we want to appoint the Octavum tonum for the Epistle*.'"[8]

In the tunes of our music and the tone of our behaviour, we must endeavour to express peace and love. Despite William and Catherine Booth's enduring love affair, they did not agree on every matter and, being the strong-willed people they were, there were intense debates between the two from time to time, but they resolved to never argue in front of the children. When Catherine first met William, she was a teetotaller while William admitted to imbibing 'for medicinal purposes.' For Catherine, this was a deal-breaker and had to stop if they were to marry. Also, women's right to preach had been a bone of contention between them when they were first engaged, until Catherine managed to win him over to her view. General Booth was also plagued with depression and severe indigestion which could make him hypercritical of others and irritable, even explosive. But on the whole, the

couple managed to remain at peace with each other throughout their relationship together.[14 (ch2,8,10)]

Sometimes humour, used in the right way, can help us to settle disagreements in a pleasant way and maintain peace and unity. Though Mrs White discouraged irreverent jesting, she was not against the appropriate use of humour and was known to enjoy a hearty laugh at an amusing situation. For example, Mrs White loved to make rag carpets, but James did not appreciate it, perhaps because it was quite a messy hobby, but he tolerated it. One day he came up the pathway singing loud and heartily a hymn about heaven which he had adapted: "*In heaven there will be no more rag carpets, no more rag carpets*." Mrs White, who was listening inside the house, laughed at the humour of it, though it was at her expense. Shortly after, apparently, she took the hint and changed her hobby to knitting![141]

Overall, the marriage between James and Ellen White was a happy one and they shared a tender relationship. But it was not perfect. Neither of them were without their flaws. They were as human as William and Catherine Booth. It was tough at times for both William and James who had wives who were prominent public figures – they had to get used to changing roles in the relationship. James and Ellen White did ministry together and usually spoke together at the same venue, but if they spoke in separate venues, most people would go to see Mrs White rather than James - he could be left with almost no audience![141]

An even bigger stress in the Whites' relationship which brought them to the brink of breaking point was their health. James had several strokes which affected his personality. Mrs White became perplexed over his irritability and mood swings since the link between strokes and behaviour was not well recognised at the time. It was a very trying time for her because he would often take out his frustrations on her and he had all kinds of personality issues, including becoming very suspicious of everyone. At one point in 1876 they were forced to work in different parts of the country because they just could not get along. During this time of separation, they kept writing to each other frequently, but the communication only deteriorated.[141] James did not appreciate the advice that Ellen was giving him and in a letter of reply he said:

> "*I shall use the good old head God gave me until He reveals that I am wrong. Your head won't fit my shoulders. Keep it where it belongs, and I will try to honor God in using my own. I shall be glad to hear from you, but don't waste your precious time and strength lecturing me on matters of mere opinions*."[345]

In one of her letters, Mrs White had written to James:

> "*I do not receive your views or interpretation of my feelings on this matter. I understand myself much better than you understand me. But so it must be and I will say no more in reference to the matter. I am glad you are free and happy and I rejoice that God has blessed me with freedom, with peace, and cheerfulness and courage*."[346]

In desperation, Mrs White confides in her friend, Lucinder Hall, pouring out her heart to her. It was a tough time in her marriage. Afterwards, she felt bad about her own behaviour and politely asked Lucinda to burn the letters. She wrote to Lucinder:

> "*I am sorry I wrote you the letters I have. Whatever may have been my feelings, I need not have troubled you with them. Burn all my letters, and I will relate no matters that perplex me to you. ... I will not be guilty of uttering a word again, whatever may be the circumstances. Silence in all things of a disagreeable or perplexing character has ever been a blessing to me. When I have departed from this, I have regretted it so much*."[345]

Thankfully, Lucinda kept the letters, giving us a glimpse into the human side of this Godly couple.

Fortunately, reconciliation between James and his wife came surprisingly swiftly. Mrs White wrote apologetically to James:

> "*It grieves me that I have said or written anything to grieve you. Forgive me and I will be cautious not to start any subject to annoy and distress you. We are living in a most solemn time and we cannot afford to have in our old age differences to separate our feelings. I may not view all things as you do, but I do not think it would be my place or duty to try to make you see as I see and feel as I feel. Wherein I have done this, I am sorry.*
>
> *I want a humble heart, a meek and quiet spirit.* ***Wherein my feelings have been permitted to arise in any instance, it was wrong****. Jesus has said, 'Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls* (Matt 11:29).'"[347]

Ellen's letter of reconciliation was a turning point. They soon stood side by side in the public ministry once again. Though circumstances required that they were often separated in their ministry after that time, their private correspondence remained affectionate.

Apart from this temporary setback, overall, the Whites enjoyed an enduring and loving relationship right up until James' premature death at age 60. When James was away, Mrs White often spoke in her letters to him about how much she missed him and how cold the bed was without him.[141] James said that from the hour of their marriage Ellen had been his crown of rejoicing[348 (p126)] and at his death, Ellen said James "*is the best man that ever trod shoe leather.*"[349]

Despite their human frailties, due to meekness and humility, the Booths and the Whites both had enduring marriages and successful blended ministries that contributed significantly to the spread of the gospel. God used them as couples and not just as individuals. Interestingly, when the Whites were at the height of their quarrel, James said to his wife, "*When you have a message from the Lord for me, I hope I shall be where I shall tremble at His word. But aside from that, you must let me be an equal, or we had better work alone*."[345] If James had been har-

bouring any doubt about the veracity of Ellen's visions and prophetic gift, this would have been the moment to express those doubts. But even when he found other things about his wife to be disagreeable, he still believed in her prophetic gift and respected her as a genuine prophet.

Chapter 19
Aggression

Drums and electric guitars tend to tell a different story to our own – one that does not belong to Christians. Anger and aggression are not emotions that we embrace. Over and over, the Bible advises against anger. Here is a small sample:

> "*The discretion of a man makes him **slow to anger**, and his glory is to overlook a transgression*." (Prov 19:11)
>
> "*He who is **slow to anger** is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city*." (Prov 16:32)
>
> "*So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, **slow to wrath**; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God*." (Jas 1:19-20)
>
> "*Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for **anger rests in the bosom of fools***." (Ecc 7:9)
>
> "***Cease from anger** and forsake wrath; do not fret - it only causes harm*." (Ps 37:8)
>
> "*The Lord is merciful and gracious, **slow to anger**, and abounding in mercy*." (Ps 103:8)
>
> "*I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, **without wrath** and doubting*." (1 Tim 2:8)

There is much scriptural support, therefore, for removing aggressive tones from the music we play in church. Anger should seldom be expressed, yet it is rumbling along in the background, and sometimes even the foreground, of the majority of contemporary Christian songs these days. It may not generally be as prominent as in hard rock, and occasionally it may be quite subtle, but it is still there.

It is possible to tone down the aggressive emotion of drums and electric guitars by the way they are played, such as using different chord and scale techniques on electric guitars,[350] however, Christian drummers and guitarists frequently use similar techniques to secular rock musicians. Because these instruments produce naturally aggressive tones, unless there is deliberate effort to remove them, they come through in the music. If you have a listen to, say, Way Maker, it is likely when the drums pick up that you start to feel more energised. The term 'drum up ex-

citement' is an idiom for creating excitement and interest in something and is a fitting expression for this because the drum is a powerful instrument for creating excitement. The aggressive sounds excite and energise us, just like in a movie, fighting scenes and car chases excite us. We should not be driven by aggression, yet it is the drum that leads the rhythm.

In his best-selling book, The Sonic Boom, Beckerman advises managers to carefully choose every sound – sound that will draw attention to the essence of their brand, rather than randomly selecting music that simply sounds good based on gut instinct alone and without a clear goal. Most importantly he says:

> "*Don't make the even bigger mistake of picking music because you think it makes you or your brand seem cool or relevant. If you choose a song because you like some of the lyrics and you don't pay attention to what the song is really about, your potential customers will spot the disconnect in a hot second. They might even tune out your brand forever*."[165 (p82)]

Again, this conflicts with General Booth's assumption that only the lyrics count when it comes to communicating a spiritual message. He believed we should use any tune that will get the attention of the people. However, Beckerman's advice simply conveys what studies had already revealed at the time. As early as 1993, research had shown that it is critically important for business advertising to align the emotional tone and meaning of the background music with the core message being communicated. In fact, when music-message congruency is low, attention-gaining music tends to distract from the message, the research found.[351] This directly supports Beckerman's advice.

Companies have been slow to acknowledge this fact, and so have church organisations. Church leaders would do well to consider the implications of these research results. Our music is telling the wrong story. People join initially because it sounds good, but then, like Sean McDowell's friend who discovered contemporary Christian rock was telling the same story as Coldplay and gave up his faith, new converts walk out the back door in their droves. Some do not even make it past the foyer on the way in because they 'spot the disconnect in a hot second' – they want to hear a different story and experience than they get at the night club.

Our story is one of peace and hope. Jesus said:

> "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God*." (Matt 5:6-9)

God prefers a gentle spirit:

> "*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love*." (Eph 4:1-2)

We are to be filled with the fruit of the Spirit:

> "…*love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*." (Gal 5:22-23)

As far as it is possible we should live at peace with others in society as counselled by Paul:

> "*If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved,* ***do not avenge yourselves****, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord*." (Rom 12:18-19)

We fight, not with aggression but with kindness:

> "*If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head*." (Rom 12:20)

We defend ourselves with:

> "…*the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*." (Eph 6:17)

It was love that caused Jesus to offer up his body on the cross and anger and aggression that put Him there. When Paul and Silas were unfairly treated and thrown into prison, instead of retaliating, they prayed and sang hymns. Paul also took pity on the jailer (Acts 16). Paul advised Timothy:

> "*And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition.*" (2 Tim 2:24-25)

Mrs White said:

> "*Work disinterestedly, lovingly, patiently, for all with whom you are brought into contact. Show no impatience. Utter not one unkind word. Let the love of Christ be in your hearts, the law of kindness on your lips*."[196 (p41)]

Though there were likely quite a few pagan converts to Christianity still serving in the Roman army, pacifism was a dominant view amongst our forefathers in the early church before the time of Constantine.[352–354] Despite this, Christians were falsely accused of murder and cannibalism. Athenagoras' defence against this false accusation was Christian's renouncement of "*the contests of gladiators and wild beasts*" and the unwillingness of Christians even "*to see a man put to death… lest we should contract guilt and pollution*." Christians were not even to look upon killing, let alone participate in violence, for it was deemed "*that to see a man put to death is much the same as killing him*."[355 (p147)]

What would the early church fathers think of Christians today watching movies with violence and murder, such as the movie, Gladiator? Jesus equated lust with adultery and hate with murder. It would then stand to reason that taking pleasure in scenes of violence on TV and movies would equate with participating in it. If we frequently witness violence in the things we watch, we become de-

sensitised to the angry tones of music, but our story is not one of violence but of non-violence. Lest anyone is not convinced that early Christians would extrapolate real acts of violence and immorality to include acted out scenes in movies, the 4th century Christian apologist, Lactantius, viewed stage performances as an even greater corrupting influence than witnessing real acts of violence:

> "*If, then, it is in no way permitted to commit homicide, it is not allowed us to be present at all, lest any bloodshed should overspread the conscience, since that blood is offered for the gratification of the people. And I am inclined to think that the corrupting influence of the stage is still more contaminating*."[256 (p187)]

Persecution

After Constantine legalised Christianity, when armed with the authority granted them by the state and, perhaps, motivated by different sentiments than their forebears, the first acts of aggression Christians began to participate in was violence against so-called heretics. When Arianism was approved by the church, Trinitarians were persecuted, and when Trinitarianism was approved, Arians were persecuted. Sabbath keepers have also been persecuted by the church, beginning in the 4th century when the Roman Catholic Church shut out from the church anyone who was keeping the seventh-day Sabbath.[266 (p316)] This has been the trend ever since, down through the ages. Roman emperor, Justinian the Great, used military force and Roman law to establish Christianity across his empire. Systematic religious persecution was used against those who did not uphold orthodoxy, including Arians and Monophysites, amongst others.[356 (p8-9)] In his paper entitled, The Early Church Persecution of Paganism and Heresy, Willis G. Swartz concludes:

> "*Christianity, for more than three centuries persecuted by paganism, gradually emerged supreme, only to become almost as aggressive a persecutor as its former enemy. After the sixth century, all serious opposition to the Roman Church lay effectively crushed*."[357]

The closer the church was united with secular powers, the more the church persecuted its opponents. Christians who did not hold to the teachings of the Roman Church, such as the Waldenses, were persecuted and forced to hide away in the forests and mountains. The Inquisition was a powerful and cruel institution set up by the Catholic Church to root out and punish heresy throughout Europe and the Americas. It began in the 12th century and continued until the 19th century. The population, including Christians, Jews and Muslims, was beaten into submission to the church's doctrines.[358,359] Aggression is one of the biggest blights against Christianity. Enforcing religious doctrine by law is a form of aggression, yet we have not learnt from history but embrace aggressive tones in our music.

Revelation talks about the woman, God's church, escaping from persecution by fleeing into the wilderness for 1260 days (Rev 12:6,14). Using the day-for-a-year principle, Adventists understood prophetic days to equal literal years. This interpretation is taken from various passages. For example, Ezekiel was to lay on his side a day for each year of Israel's iniquity (Ez 4:4-6). For each day the Children of Israel spied out the land of Canaan, they were to spend a year wandering in the wilderness, forty years in total (Num 14:32-34). Therefore, Adventists believe God's remnant faithful people would receive protection in the wilderness from the antichrist for 1260 years.

Martin Luther and numerous other reformers, including John Huss and John Wycliffe who preceded him, identified the papacy as the antichrist. It was this understanding that triggered the Protestant Reformation. Until recent times, a broad spectrum of conservative evangelical Protestants believed the papacy to be the antichrist of Bible prophecy. Professor Dennis Pettibone said:

> "*Luther interpreted Daniel 2 and 7 as depicting four great empires, culminating with the Roman Empire, which would be divided, after which the antichrist would arise. His own generation, he believed, was symbolized by the toes in the image of Daniel. The little horn arising out of the Roman Empire he identified as the papal antichrist*."[360]

Whether or not someone holds to Luther's view of the antichrist, the Roman Catholic Church has admitted to and apologised for former acts of aggression, such as during the inquisitions. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire to the Germanic tribes in 476 AD, especially under the Arian Ostrogoths from 493-537 AD, the power of the Roman Catholic pope was significantly limited. The greatly diminished Roman empire was reduced to Byzantine in the east. After the capture of Rome in 537 by Justinian's forces, the Roman Papacy was dominated by Byzantine, increasing the power of the papacy. The Justinian code legally established the Roman pontiff as head over all of Christendom.

The church and the state were firmly meshed and this persisted until Napoleon Bonaparte's French troops captured Rome, seized the pope and put him in prison in 1798. This, coupled with the secularising influence of the French Revolution, effectively put into motion the rapid demise of the Papacy's temporal power. This time period, from 538 to 1798, equals exactly 1260 years as prophesied and includes the Dark Ages in Western Europe. During this period, anyone who opposed the authority of the church was persecuted, but many Christians sought refuge in the wilderness. It was because of this oppression by the church that the American forefathers built into the constitution separation of church and state. They did not want a repeat of religious persecution. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only major denomination which still adheres to the reformer's historicist interpretation of Revelation. They interpret the collapse of papal imperial power as the fatal wound received by the beast power in Revelation.

The Reformation, which began in 1517, was an attempt to reform the church of its many corrupt practices. Unfortunately, by 1560 Europe had descended into religious division and intolerance as it had never experienced previously. The upholding of church doctrine by force and threats became accepted also amongst Protestants. The Catholic Inquisition was an institution of the church established to persecute heresy. However, many Protestants were equally hostile to Catholics. Although aggression was usually directed at Catholics, different Protestant groups often detested one another also. In order to gain dominion over their opponents, church organisations would develop close ties with monarchs which provided them with legal, military and material means to secure territory. The end result of this union of church and state was the protracted European wars of religion which spanned two centuries and millions lost their lives. During this period, some part of Europe was at war 90% of the time and the most powerful dynasty, the Habsburgs, were at war two-thirds of the time. It included the Thirty Years War, the most devastating religious war in European history, which reduced the population of German Lands by up to 40%. Great suffering and horrific acts of violence were inflicted on both soldiers and civilians.[361]

Down through the centuries, from the time of Constantine through to the European wars of religion, Christianity was living the wrong story - a story of aggression, military conquest and forced allegiance. The military conquest of Canaan by the children of Israel does not give Christians the right to attack opponents. Abraham's descendants had to wait 400 years before God gave them direct authority to attack Canaan, "*for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete* (Gen 15:16)." Jesus told Peter to put the sword away (Jn 18:11). It is only by direct command from God that we should wilfully attack others. Though we should share our beliefs with fellow believers and humbly compare our understanding of Scripture, we should not attack others who have a different opinion to our own. In the Salvation Army, preachers were instructed to avoid speaking disparagingly of any religious body, including papists, infidels, publicans or any class of sinners.[2 (p100)] Mrs White said:

> "*We should not, upon entering a place, build up unnecessary barriers between us and other denominations, especially the Catholics, so that they shall think we are their avowed enemies. We should not create a prejudice in their minds unnecessarily, by making a raid upon them.... From that which God has shown me, a great number will be saved from among the Catholics*."[168 (p573)]

In fact, Mrs White believed:

> "*There are many among the Catholics who live up to the light they have far better than many who claim to believe present truth, and God will just as surely test and prove them as He has tested and proved us*."[168 (p144)]

Every effort should be made to dissociate aggression from the name of Christianity, starting with our style of music. We are to do what we can to preserve pure doctrine, but not by force. God has a set time to bring punishment on the wicked. Punishing the wicked is not our job but, rather, it is our responsibility to lovingly warn people of God's coming judgements. Only after centuries of forced allegiance to the church with periods of widespread bloodshed and poverty did civil powers finally start to clamp down on religious intolerance and explosions of religiously inspired violence.[361] This led to a period of increasing religious toleration,[357] allowing for the great religious revivals of the 18th and 19th centuries from which the Salvation Army and Seventh-day Adventist denominations emerged, along with others.

Unfortunately, Willis G. Swartz describes how in modern times, "*Physical persecution has almost entirely disappeared. But the spirit of intolerance is far from destroyed*."[357] That was in 1927. Today, there is increasing talk of intolerance toward others, both inside and outside the church. Mrs White said that because of the failure of professed Christians to actively engage in missionary work, there was widespread unbelief, deep iniquity and unparalleled wickedness seen in the world. If it was true in her time, it would be even more true today. She goes on to explain how failure to carry out our duty as Christians has brought intolerance into the church:

> "*And not only in the world do we see the result of the church's neglect to work in Christ's lines. By this neglect a condition of things has been brought into the church that has eclipsed the high and holy interests of the work of God. A spirit of criticism and bitterness has come into the church, and the spiritual discernment of many has been dimmed*."[16 (p296)]

The increased wickedness in the world, partly due to our failure as a church to influence the world, has led to increasing talk amongst evangelicals of removal of restrictions on separation of church and state and backing political leaders who will enforce religious law. Some secular commentators recognise the concerted effort of the conservative majority to force back religion into the United States political system.[362] The lessons from the past have been forgotten. If we want to

live the right story, we need to start singing the right story. We have to develop an ear for what is aggressive and be motivated and inspired instead by what is meek rather than what is rebellious.

Pacifism

There were, however, amongst the Protestant churches of the 16th and 17th centuries, pacifist organisations, such as the Brethren, the Quakers and the Anabaptists. They were considered radicals because of their strict adherence to the Scriptures, being willing to lose their lives for their beliefs but not willing to take lives. Likewise, we ought to remove the angry rhetoric from our conversations, preaching, YouTube channels, vaccine protests and anti-abortion and anti-LGBT protests and we should remove the aggressive tones out of our music; while, at the same time, we must lovingly share our beliefs and push back against immorality and false teachings. When we present arguments for a young earth creation, it should not be with ridicule and derision toward evolutionists, but we should present the plain facts as we see it with loving concern for those who are ignorant of truth.

Though the Salvation Army has traditionally avoided clashing with other denominations, especially over doctrine, they did not always shy away from confrontation with the general public or government authorities, including the police. They felt they were at war with the immorality and evils of society, which kept people in poverty and on the pathway to hell. They were willing to oppose anyone who stood in the way of attracting the attention of the people and righting the wrongs.

For example, Kate Booth, the General's eldest daughter, along with Maud Charlesworth, were taken into custody and questioned in Switzerland for holding sensational meetings. They were attracting rowdy crowds who were attacking Salvationists in the streets. The authorities banned the Salvation Army from holding meetings and expelled Kate and Maud from Geneva. Despite this, Kate Booth later returned to Switzerland where she was jailed for continuing to hold Salvation Army meetings. The disputes gave the Salvation Army widespread publicity and eventually, as with other areas of the world, they gained sympathy from the general public.[2] The Booths were also willing to confront Christians who, they felt, were not living up to their Christian duties to humanity, a sentiment often expressed in Catherine's book, titled Aggressive Christianity.

The Salvation Army found themselves embroiled in a major scandal when they enlisted the support of a tabloid journalist, W. T. Stead, to expose the evils of the child sex trade. At the time, there were several thousand child prostitutes in the East End of London and girls less than 13 years of age were being exported to other parts of Europe. Officials denied the evils, or even the existence, of a widespread child sex trade in Britain. Mrs Booth, his son, Bramwell and wife, Florence, designed a scheme to 'buy' a child for prostitution to reveal the existence of the

practice to the general public and pressure the government to take action. General Booth was rather opposed to the scheme due to its involvement of scandalous journalism. The campaign succeeded - the public became outraged and The Criminal Law Amendment Act was passed – but it came at a cost. A number of those involved in staging the abduction found themselves on trial and sentenced, including Stead, who spent 3 months in prison. Though no Salvation Army officers were sentenced, it did tarnish the name of the organisation.

Seventh-day Adventists, on the other hand, tended to be pacifists when it came to civil and military matters, but were willing to be embroiled in doctrinal arguments with other believers. Trevor O'Reggio, professor of church history at Andrews University, describes how some of the Seventh-day Adventist beliefs have their roots in radical Protestantism influenced by the Anabaptists. He goes on to say:

> "*Adventists would later be one of the principal champions of religious liberty among Protestants… The spirit of Anabaptism permeated early Adventism…What is incontrovertible is that early Adventists emerged from the groups constituting the radical tradition of Protestantism that were influenced by the Anabaptists*."

Examples of radical groups from which Adventism emerged, include Christian Connexion, Baptists and Methodists.[363] This connection with Anabaptism has carried over into Adventist beliefs about pacifism and religious liberty. Desmond Doss, a conscientious objector during World War II is an exemplary case of pacifism. Though ridiculed by fellow soldiers he became a hero when, on 'Hacksaw Ridge,' he risked his own life and miraculously saved the lives of many of the very people who ridiculed him. Two great legacies of the Anabaptist movement are freedom of conscience and separation of church and state.[364]

Though Adventists have historically appealed to governments for religious freedom, when it came to their own liberty, Mrs White cautioned against becoming overly passionate. Early Adventist leaders, while advocating tirelessly for religious liberty, remained law abiding and diplomatic. Below are various responses from Mrs White regarding reactions from church members when Sunday law threatened their freedom. Sunday law enforcement was especially severe in the southern states of the United States in the 1880s and 1890s. Some Seventh-day Adventists at the time were inclined to defy the law by continuing to work on Sunday. This attitude was opposed by Mrs White. Instead, they were counselled to avoid irritating their neighbours who revered Sunday by, for example, hanging out washing on that day. They were to avoid attracting attention and giving occasion to be called lawbreakers, thereby accelerating increasingly rigid laws, limiting freedom further. Rather, they were to 'love the brotherhood' and to act in a 'manner in which Christ would work'. They were to keep the peace by refraining from work that gives offence:

"*Those who compose our churches have traits of character that will lead them, if they are not very careful, to feel indignant, because on account of misrepresentation their liberty in regard to working on Sunday is taken away. Do not fly into a passion over this matter but take everything in prayer to God. He alone can restrain the power of rulers. Walk not rashly. Let none boast unwisely of their liberty, using it for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God, 'Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king* (1 Pet 2:17).'

This advice is to be of real value to all who are to be brought into strait places. Nothing that shows defiance or that could be interpreted as maliciousness must be shown."[365 (p193-4)]

"*In regard to the Southern field, the work there must be done as wisely and carefully as possible, and it must be done in the manner in which Christ would work. The people will soon find out what you believe about Sunday and the Sabbath for they will ask questions. Then you can tell them, but not in such a manner as to attract attention to your work. You need not cut short your work by yourself laboring on Sunday....*

Refraining from work on Sunday is not receiving the mark of the beast.... In places where the opposition is so strong as to arouse persecution, if work is done on Sunday, let our brethren make that day an occasion to do genuine missionary work."[366 (p69-70)]

"*If they should come here and say 'You must close up your work and your presses on Sunday,' I would not say to you, ... 'Keep your presses going,' because the conflict does not come between you and your God*."[367]

"*We should not feel it enjoined upon us to irritate our neighbors who idolize Sunday by making determined efforts to bring labor on that day before them purposely to exhibit an independence. Our sisters need not select Sunday as the day to exhibit their washing*."[90 (p399)]

"*I will try to answer your question as to what you should do in the case of Sunday laws being enforced.*

The light given me by the Lord at a time when we were expecting just such a crisis as you seem to be approaching, was that when people were moved by a power from beneath to enforce Sunday observance, Seventh-day Adventists were to show their wisdom by refraining from their ordinary work on that day, devoting it to missionary effort.

To defy the Sunday laws will but strengthen in their persecution the religious zealots who are seeking to enforce them. Give them no occasion to call you

lawbreakers.... One does not receive the mark of the beast because he shows that he realizes the wisdom of keeping the peace by refraining from work that gives offense....

Sunday can be used for carrying forward various lines of work that will accomplish much for the Lord. On this day open-air meetings and cottage meetings can be held. House-to-house work can be done. Those who write can devote this day to writing their articles. Whenever it is possible, let religious services be held on Sunday. Make these meetings intensely interesting. Sing genuine revival hymns, and speak with power and assurance of the Saviour's love."[196 (p232-3)]

"*Take the students out to hold meetings in different places, and to do medical missionary work. They will find the people at home and will have a splendid opportunity to present the truth. This way of spending Sunday is always acceptable to the Lord*."[196 (p238)]

According to Mrs White's advice, there is no justification for breaking civil law in the name of religious liberty alone. Paul exhorts Timothy to pray for kings and all who are in authority, that believers may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence (1 Tim 2:1-2). Peter says, "*Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man (1 Pet 2:13)*." Paul also says "*Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God* (Rom 13:1)." He also says, "*Bless those who persecute you… Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good* (Rom 12:14,21)."

Sometimes we have to give up our own rights to maintain peace. We are to avoid a rebellious spirit. God will defend our liberty if He so chooses. That is not to say we should not use peaceful and lawful means to protest against laws that limit our religious freedom. Partly due to the work of Seventh-day Adventists in the 1880s, religious freedom in the United States was upheld for all.

What we should be much more concerned about than our own freedom is the breaking of God's law. This is where the church has failed in this Laodicean age. Hollywood, and the entertainment industry in general, has been walking all over God's law, becoming more brazen as the years go by and the church has been effectively silent. Where is the peaceful lobbying and the protests against the blatant immorality? It is not to be readily found. Instead, Christians are sitting in their homes and in cinemas supporting the industry, watching movies full of violence, immorality and taking God's name in vain, thinking nothing of it, enjoying the entertainment instead. Jesus said that being angry toward others without a cause puts us in danger of the judgment (Matt 5:21-24). Likewise, by indulging in entertainment that disregards God's law, we are complicit in it.

When it comes to God's law, we must never bend. We must never give into appetite and watch the movie anyway, despite it containing profanities. If Sabbath

keepers are compelled to break the Sabbath, they ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). When Peter and John were commanded by the authorities not to teach in the name of Jesus, they answered and said to them, "*Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard* (Acts 4:18-20)." If they submitted to the authorities, they would have been disobeying the Great Commission and the church would not have grown. The authority of religious and civil rulers is not absolute. Here there is no ambiguity in Mrs White's writings when the law opposes God's plain commands:

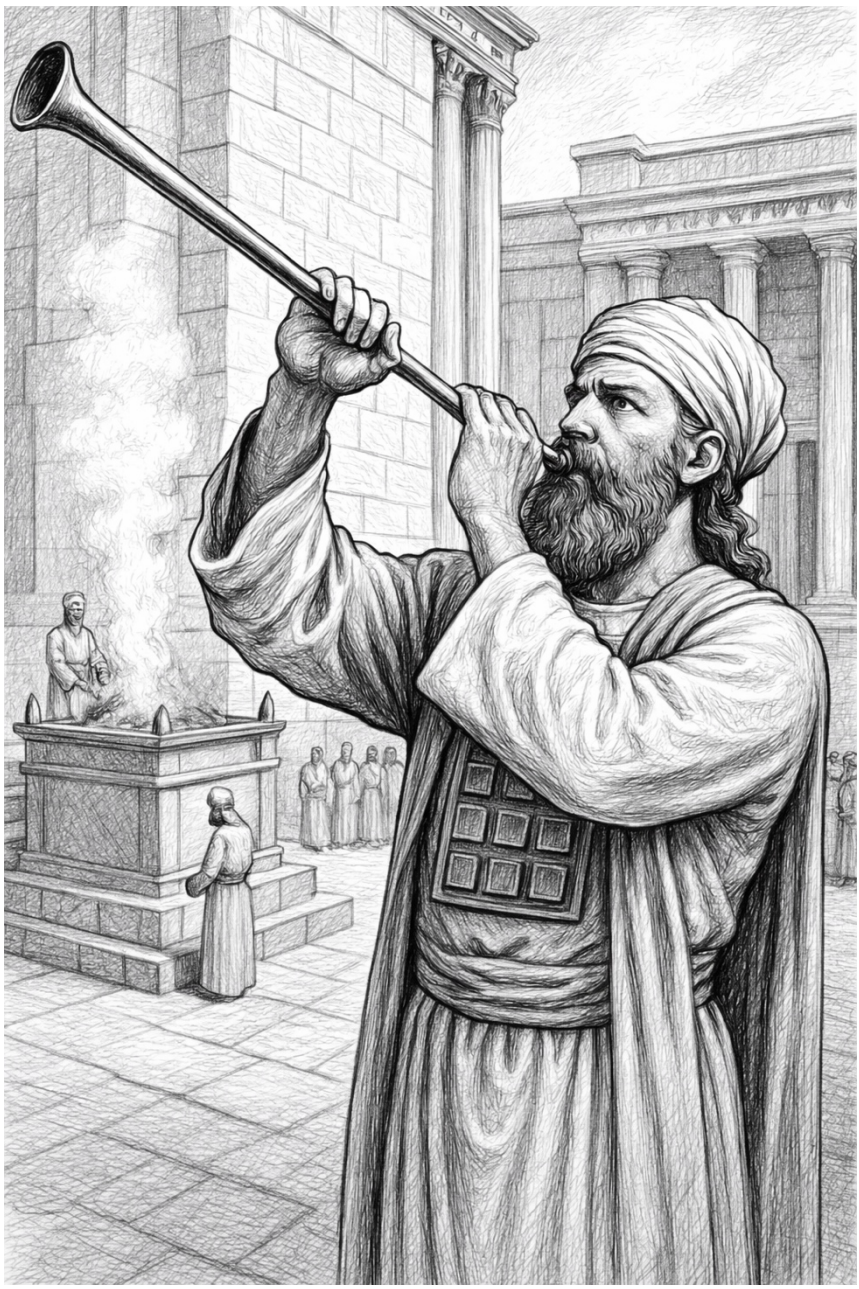
> "*The adherents of truth are now called upon to choose between disregarding* ***a plain requirement of God's Word*** *or forfeiting their liberty. If we yield the Word of God and accept human customs and traditions, we may still be permitted to live among men, to buy and sell, and have our rights respected. But if we maintain our loyalty to God it must be at the sacrifice of our rights among men, for the enemies of God's law have leagued together to crush out independent judgment in matters of religious faith and control the consciences of men....*
>
> *The people of God will recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment and will by precept and example teach obedience to it as a sacred duty so long as its authority is exercised within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God we must choose to obey God rather than men. The Word of God must be recognized and obeyed as an authority above that of all human legislation. 'Thus saith the Lord' is not to be set aside for a 'Thus saith the church or the state.' The crown of Christ is to be uplifted above all the diadems of earthly potentates*."[368 (p34)]

> "*Satan offers to men the kingdoms of the world if they will yield to him the supremacy. Many do this and sacrifice heaven. It is better to die than to sin; better to want than to defraud; better to hunger than to lie*."[62 (p495)]

…better to give up immoral worldly entertainment than to sing the tune of the enemy.

PART 6

INTENSITY



Chapter 20
Loud Music

There are accounts of loud music in Old Testament religious ritual and worship, and some of the Psalms encourage shouts of praise. In the New Testament, on the other hand, there is no record of Jesus or the apostles ever using or promoting loud music, trumpets or other loud instruments, loud singing, shouting, or loud noise of any type. It is not loudness and flamboyance which is encouraged but "*a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God* (1 Pet 3:4)."

What is God telling us with this discrepancy between the Old and New Testaments? Absence of loud music in the New Testament record does not necessarily imply that loud worship is inappropriate, but it does demand an explanation. It compels us to reconsider the purpose and characteristic of loud music in the Old Testament. We need to find a way to harmonise the apparent conflict in practices between the old and new.

In her early ministry, Catherine wrote to William discouraging loud noise:

"*Remember Caughey's silent, soft, heavenly carriage. He did not shout, there was no necessity. He had a more potent weapon at command than noise. I never did like noise & confusion, only so far as I believed it to be the natural expression of deep anxiety, wrought by the holy ghost, such as the cries of the jailer, etc., etc. Of such noise, produced by such agency, the more the better. But, my Love, I do think noise made by the preacher & the Christians in the church is productive of evil only*."[14]

Despite Mrs Booth's opinion on noise in church, the Salvation Army often used noise as one of its main attractions. As reported by one observer, compared with ordinary church services, the Salvation Army was "*unmistakeably louder; the choruses undeniably longer*."[2] (p97) Congregations would shout responses to the preacher.[2] General Booth encouraged members to literally shout out in their meetings, in the streets and in their processions. They were to shout of the danger of judgement and shout of salvation for everyone who chooses it.[369] (p12-3) A hymn published in The War Cry, the Salvation Army newspaper, promoted the virtue of noise and shouting:

> "*Some say I am too noisy,*
> *I know the reason why,*
> *And if they felt the glory,*
> *They'd shout as well as I*" [370] (p421)

As with Mrs Booth, Mrs White discouraged shouting and loud singing. She stated that: "*It is not **loud singing** that is needed, but clear intonation, correct pronunciation, and distinct utterance*."[196 (p143-4)] She says that she was shown by the Lord that, just before the close of probation, "*Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be **shouting**, with drums, music, and dancing*."[12 (p36)] Rather than shouting and loud music and singing, she encouraged soft and subdued singing:

> "*Some think that the louder they sing the more music they make; but noise is not music. Good singing is like the music of the birds - subdued and melodious.*" The angels, she said, "*delight to hear the simple songs of praise sung in a natural tone. The songs in which every word is uttered clearly, in a musical tone, are the songs that they join us in singing*."[168 (p510)]

She does not appear to completely discourage loud music, but it is not to be routine practice in worship. Perhaps there might be circumstances when loud praise is appropriate. For example, the second coming of Jesus is depicted as a loud event "*with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God* (1 Thes 4:16)." One of the primary reasons people listen to loud music, despite extensive education about its harm to hearing, is because of the excitement it produces.[371] In general, according to Mrs White, we are not to use music to create excitement, as outlined in an earlier chapter.

There are occasions when David and the Israelites sang and praised loudly - especially during joyous national celebrations. Some of the Psalms use imagery of this type of worship. Does that mean church worship should be loud? To answer that question, as with any question concerning the Bible, we must consider Scripture as a whole. For example, David sang about going into the house of God to make a burnt offering (Ps 66:13-15). When we read this psalm, we do not feel impressed to sacrifice an animal on an altar in church. This Psalm does not have to be taken literally to get anything from it, but we apply it to our lives figuratively because sacrificing animals is inappropriate for our time. The reason we do not apply it literally is because, after Jesus' death and resurrection, we no longer sacrifice animals. Instead, we present our own "*bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God* (Rom 12:1)." If we are to harmonise the Psalms with Jesus and the apostle's ministry, the Psalms often have to be applied as metaphor. While we should not always turn to metaphor or allegory to explain Scripture, it is something we often do when appropriate.

The first experience Israel had in the very presence of God was very loud. There were "*thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled* (Ex 19:16)." The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

> "*…let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it*." (Ex 25:8-9)

As soon as the Tabernacle was erected "*the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle* (Ex 40:34)" and God spoke "*from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony* (Ex 25:22)."

God also outlined the ordinances of the Tabernacle, which were given in great detail because it represented the saving work of Christ. Once the temple and the ordinances were set in place, God gave instruction for the use of **trumpets** in the Tabernacle which became permanently tied to the ordinance services (Num 10:1-10). In time, the Lord also instructed other instruments to be used in conjunction with the prescribed uses of the trumpet in the sanctuary services – the added instruments were **cymbals, stringed instruments and harps** (2 Chr 29:25). These instruments appear to have had a similar function to the trumpets in the sanctuary. Eventually, **shouting and loud voice** also became synonymous with the trumpet sound (Ps 47:5). Therefore, the trumpet blowing, loud clashing cymbals and shouting depicted in the Psalms, stems back to God's original command in Numbers 10 concerning the trumpets. The earthly sanctuary was a copy of the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 8:1-5) and the heavenly sanctuary is also depicted, at least symbolically, with loud trumpet sounds (Rev 4:1) and loud voices (Rev 5:2,12).

What do we make of all this? God assigns trumpets, a loud instrument, for a very specific purpose in the temple. Later, He adds cymbals, stringed instruments and harps to be played with the trumpet in the temple. When we step back and look at the Bible as a whole, there emerges a very clear pattern of use of music. It is only in the temple periods that we hear of loud music. The Psalms and Revelation are full of temple imagery and, therefore, these books also included references to the use of trumpets, loud music and shouting. Loud music is essentially absent from all other Biblical periods, including pre-fall, pre-flood and patriarchal periods, the period of Egyptian exile, the gospels and the apostolic age. In fact, these periods have relatively few references to music at all.

The temple and all of its observances had practical purpose – such as providing rules for health and hygiene. More importantly the ordinances and ceremonies symbolically pointed to Christ. Therefore, we need to consider the practical and the symbolic purposes of loud music in the temple.

The trumpet was assigned by God to be blown over sacrificial offerings in the temple during joyous and memorable occasions (Num 10:10; Lev 23:23-25). This allowed everyone to hear when a special sacrifice was occurring. As discussed previously, 'voice' and 'trumpet' sound are often used interchangeably. God made the trumpet sound a symbol of the proclamation of **His Word**, especially relating to salvation, including warning (Ez 33:1-9). When Jesus, the **Word of life**, became the sacrificial lamb, it was to be trumpeted to the world. The early church did a wonderful job of proclaiming Jesus' death and resurrection to the Jewish and pagan worlds. The literal shouting, trumpet blowing and clanging of cymbals over sacrifices and feasts in the temple ended when it was fulfilled in Jesus' sacrifice.

At the dedication of Solomon's temple, 120 priests sounded the trumpets, along with singers and musicians playing cymbals, stringed instruments and harps.

It was a very loud event! Can you imagine being in the presence of 120 trumpets being blown in unison? It must have been a breathtaking experience! Everyone in Jerusalem and beyond within a radius of up to 2 kilometres or more would have been able to hear it.

When the real sacrifice was made and when the real temple, Jesus, was raised up on the third day (Jn 2:19), it was a much more momentous occasion even than the dedication of Solomon's temple. The Son of God was alive! Everything was fulfilled! So, where was the noise? Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James & the other women with them (Lk 24:10) were the first to blow the trumpets. Before long, the disciples were proclaiming the risen Lord. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the believers and they were given the gift of speaking in other languages (Acts 2:1-4) so that they could proclaim the gospel to people from all nations and tongues (v5-12). This was the fulfillment of the Jewish Feast of Weeks or Feast of Firstfruits (Ex 34:22; Num 28:26).

The apostles and new converts were given many other gifts of the Spirit, including prophesying, ministering, teaching and other miraculous powers (Rom 12:6–8; 1 Cor 12:4–11). This gave them the ability to preach the Word with great power and authority. Curiously, music was not one of the spiritual gifts. The focus was on preaching (1 Cor 14:1), symbolised by the blowing of the trumpet in the sanctuary. The gospel was spread throughout the land and to the ends of the then known world. This was the loud shouting, the trumpet blasts and the clanging of cymbals. God commanded the Israelites to build a temple, sacrifice animals and celebrate feast days with the sounding of loud instruments. God appointed the Christian church to <u>be</u> the temple, to offer ourselves as living sacrifices and to celebrate Jesus' sacrifice by preaching the Word and making disciples of all nations.

Like in the sanctuary observances, the Salvation Army literally made loud noise but it also fulfilled the symbolism of the temple ordinances by enthusiastically teaching, preaching and living the gospel message. Unfortunately, today, many Christians are making loud music in church while neglecting to fulfil the symbolic meaning of loud music by enthusiastically and energetically sharing the gospel with the community. We are to <u>be</u> the instrument. We are to <u>be</u> the loud noise. One of the challenges the Salvation Army faced was the scarcity of suitable people for carrying the work.[57] Jesus said, "*The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few* (Matt 9:37)."

Just like the Israelites, we are to be a witness to others by observing God's commands:

> "*Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people*.'" (Deut 4:5-6)

Unfortunately, Israel became renowned for its music, but it failed, on the whole, to lead other nations to a knowledge of God by its example. Likewise, by our neglect to follow God's commands, we have failed to lead society to a knowledge of God; therefore, the world has become increasingly wicked.

The Feast of Trumpets was to serve as a spiritual wake-up call and a time for repentance. The Jews celebrated the Feast of Trumpets in September, prior to the Day of Atonement, after a long interval without festivals during the summer months. The Feast of Trumpets announced the soon coming Day of Atonement.[372] Seventh-day Adventists believe the Day of Atonement was fulfilled in 1844. The Millerite Movement sounded a message proclaiming the soon coming of Jesus Christ. This was the midnight cry (Matt 25:6), the first angel's message (Rev 14:6-7) according to Joseph Bates,[239] and was the fulfilment of the Feast of Trumpets.[373] It was a message that awoke Christians out of their slumber like no other movement since the time of the apostolic church. Up to half-a-million people joined the Millerite movement out of numerous denominations.

One of the frequent and valid criticisms of the Millerite and early Advent movement was their date setting for the second coming. Speaking of the second coming, Jesus said "*But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only* (Matt 24:36)." Despite this, in January 1843, William Miller announced that Jesus would return between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844.

As time drew near to the anticipated time for Jesus' second coming, especially as the Millerites became more set in their date-setting, the movement became more controversial amongst the Protestant churches with which the Millerites belonged. Charles Fitch, a well-known Second Great Awakening revivalist who preached with Charles Finney, became convicted of William Miller's teachings and joined the Millerite movement. In a fiery sermon in July 1843, Charles Fitch called for church members to 'Come Out of Babylon.' Those who opposed the teaching of the imminent return of Christ, he declared to be Antichrist. Though William Miller and other Millerite leaders never fully accepted Fitch's message, it intensified the conflict and their churches became less willing to tolerate them. Congregations began to ban Millerite services. Millerites who refused to keep quiet were expelled from their churches, and ministers who preached the Second Advent were often de-frocked. When Jesus did not return by March 21, 1844, the Millerites re-calculated the date of the second advent to be October 22, 1844. After Jesus failed to return on this date, most Adventists gave up date setting, including William Miller.[374,375]

Though Seventh-day Adventists have always taught against date-setting for the second coming, many of the founders did come out of the Millerite movement, which was involved in date-setting. Not only that, some early Adventists after the 1844 disappointment promoted a shut door doctrine which taught that probation for the world had ended after October 22, 1844, based on the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matt 25:1-13). Ellen Harmon (later Mrs White) pro-

claimed her first vision in December 1844 when she was just 17 years old. Influenced by her Millerite experience and the shut door ideas, apparently, she initially misinterpreted the meaning of the vision as supporting the shut door belief.[376]

Though she later admitted her error, understandably, Mrs White has received much ridicule over this experience. In isolation, it does appear to discredit her. However, Mrs White maintained that she was never instructed in vision that the door of salvation was already shut for the world.[376] Visions are not always interpreted for prophets. Daniel failed to understand visions given to him (Dan 8:27; Dan 12:9). The prophet Nathan misinterpreted the will of God when he told David to go ahead and build the temple (2 Sam 7; 1 Chr 22:8). Prophets are not infallible and should be assessed, not on flawlessness, but on the harmony of their teachings with Scripture – especially the teachings they claim to receive directly from God. If they are not shown by direct inspiration, they can misinterpret Scripture as with any genuine believer.

Like the early church, the Adventists truly believed in the second coming and were willing to sell their possessions as proof. But, just as the disciples misunderstood the purpose of Jesus' first coming, the Millerites misunderstood the purpose of the Day of Atonement and the meaning of the term 'cleansing of the sanctuary'. They thought that the cleansing of the sanctuary referred to Jesus' second coming. Their anticipation of the second coming was a very wonderful experience, but when Jesus failed to return in 1844, it was a great disappointment. Adventists see this experience as fulfilment of John's experience in vision of eating the little book which was sweet in the mouth but bitter in the stomach (Rev 10:9-10). Then God's end time people were commanded to continue prophesying about many peoples, nations, tongues and kings (v11). Seventh-day Adventists believe that the three angels' message is to be proclaimed loud and clear for all the world to hear to prepare the world for Jesus' second coming.

The Definition of Loudness

It was a relatively short time after General Booth and Mrs White's time that amplification was invented, coinciding with the birth of rock music in the 1950s. The Charismatic movement soon emerged in the early 1960s, which promoted loud and exciting worship style with an emphasis on emotional worship experience. Subsequently, religious revivals have also often tended to be driven by emotion unlike the revivals of the early 17th century which were characterised by deep conviction brought about by the searching of Scripture and investigation of the prophecies. Amplification of music allowed worship to become even louder than it had previously been.

The human ear can detect a very wide range of intensity of sound, from very quiet to very loud. The decibel (dB) is a logarithmic scale used to express a very wide range of sound intensities using simple number measurements. Compared to 1 dB, 10 dB is 10 times more intense and 20 dB is 100 times more intense.[377]

Sound levels of 85 dB or greater can cause hearing damage but it depends on the duration of the exposure. See Figure 3 for some common sounds and their intensities.

The loudness of a modern-day trumpet can range between 80 to 120 dB.[378,379] The loudness of a violin ranges from 82-92 dB.[380] A standard drum set makes noise ranging between 90-130 dB. The impact of loud sounds on hearing depends on three main factors: sound intensity (volume), duration of exposure and distance from the sound source.[377]

Even when it comes to loudness, the situation was vastly different in the Hebrew temple than in a modern-day church setting. Temple worship was of a much grander scale compared to even the largest megachurch. One temple served the whole nation and, since they did not have speaker systems, the sound had to be loud enough to project from the musicians over a long distance to reach the people. The sound would have only been perceived as loud for the relative few who were up close. The rate of reduction of sound is approximately 6 dB for every doubling of the distance. If the sound of a trumpet is 110 dB 1m in front of the trumpet, it will only be 80 dB at 32m (equivalent intensity to a piano) and 62 dB at 256m (equivalent intensity to a normal human voice).[380]

Sound	
Refrigerator hum	40 dB
Normal conversation	60 dB
Heavy city traffic, from inside the car	85 dB
Petrol lawn mower	90 dB
Loud rock concert	115 dB
Firecrackers, firearms	150 dB

Figure 3: Examples of some common sounds and their intensities[377]

Generally, temple music was likely played in the open air, which results in a lower volume than music played indoors with hard reflective surfaces.[381] The high-frequency sounds that a trumpet makes are very directional;[378,379] therefore, the sound of a trumpet is significantly louder directly in front of the trumpet than at the point of the trumpet player's ears. If a trumpet is directed upward to project the sound out into the surrounding community, the noise level for those in close proximity would be reduced. Considering all of these factors, even if multiple trumpets were played at once, for the majority of the people, the sound would not be excessively loud.

Compare that with modern settings which are often indoors, with a relatively small crowd and with amplified sound systems - every individual present can easily be subjected to high decibel sounds. Indoor rock concerts can exceed 120 dB, reaching the pain threshold. The average contemporary church service playing modern worship music can range from 92 to 100 dB.[382,383] According to the Na-

tional Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) guidelines, permanent hearing damage can be caused by less than 2 cumulative hours of 92 dB sound or greater than 15 minutes of 100 dB sound in a 24-hour period.[384]

The Intensity of Loud Temple Music

People enjoy loud music because it arouses increased feelings of excitement.[371] Referring to scientific studies, Barry Blesser describes how an altered state of consciousness is not only produced by drugs, tobacco and alcohol:

> "*A stimulus that changes our internal state need not be an illegal substance*," he says, "*pleasurable responses to music correlate with activity in those brain regions implicated with reward and emotion. Raising the loudness of music, like a double shot of whisky, elevates the intensity of the experience*."

Research has found that the sacculus, a structure found in the inner ear, has direct connections to pleasure centres in the brain. Studies by Dr Neil Todd have found that the sacculus causes release of endorphins when stimulated by loud music, especially bass sounds, above 90 decibels. That is an important reason why people find, for example, loud drum sounds pleasurable. Unfortunately, sounds above 90 decibels also start to cause significant harm to hearing and potentially to other areas of our health, as will be discussed later. "*The range of intensity between pleasure and damage is extremely small*," Blesser explains.[385 (p4-5)]

One of the fruits of the Spirit is self-control (Gal 5:23). Emotional self-control is a key aspect of emotional intelligence. At times, King David allowed his emotions to take over. For example, when transporting the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem the first time without consulting Scripture, emotion took precedence over obedience to Scripture. When he saw Bathsheba bathing and lusted after her (2 Sam 11:2-4) and when he ordered Uriah the Hittite to be sent to the front line (2 Sam 11:15), he was allowing his emotions to guide His decision making rather than obedience to God. On each of these occasions, it ended in disaster.

At other times, David exhibited great self-control and emotional intelligence. For example, when facing Goliath, rather than letting fear control him, he came in faith "*in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel* (1 Sam 17:45)." Also, while being pursued by Saul, David twice had opportunities to kill him, but he chose to spare his life because Saul was 'the anointed of the Lord (1 Sam 24:6, 26:11).' These are examples of great control over emotions, which is what made David a great soldier and conqueror. There is nothing wrong with emotions, but emotional intelligence gives us the ability to control our emotions and direct our energy into healthy and constructive activities, rather than allowing our emotions to control us.

Our emotions should be used to energise us for doing God's will, but we can only know God's will by deep searching of Scripture and by earnestly sharing it

with others. While shouting and beating out loud music might stir us and make us feel good and even energise us, it does not provide sustained energy or prove our allegiance to God or guarantee we will use the energy for good causes. God desires that we truly seek after him with all our hearts so that we can know Him:

> "*For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the **knowledge of God** more than burnt offering*s." (Hos 6:6)

When the Jews were living in unfaithfulness, God asked the Israelites to take away the 'noise' of their songs and replace it with righteousness (Amos 5:23-24). There was nothing wrong with their method of music but the condition of their hearts – they were living lives unfaithful to God's command. God prioritises the heart's condition over musical expression.

The irony is, if God truly has counselled against loud singing, as suggested by Mrs White - instead, desiring our singing to be cheerful, yet solemn melodies; modulated and softened, like the music of the birds, subdued and melodious - by the very method of worship, if it is regularly loud and boisterous, we are disobeying Him. What He desires is that we diligently strive to know Him and to do His will rather than seeking an emotional experience. Rather than seeking after happiness, the Bible encourages us to "*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness* (Matt 6:33)." When we seek righteousness, then happiness and joy come automatically (Jn 15:9-11).

But isn't sincerity enough? you might ask. Though David and the Israelites worshipped enthusiastically as they carried the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, Uzzah died due to disobedience. Their disobedience was not deliberate, but they failed to diligently seek God's rules for transportation of the Ark. Ignorance is no excuse if we have not bothered to put the effort in to studying the words of His prophets. Our worship is not sincere if we have not made His will priority. Loudness does not make up for slackness.

As noted previously, the sound of ancient Israel has been lost to antiquity.[33] It is unhelpful to make value judgements on the performance of ancient Israelite music based on modern Western musical tradition.[34] The purpose and definition of 'loud' to ancient Israel may have been very different to our time and setting. Barry Blesser proposes that the motive and objective of loud music varies among individuals and cultures.[385] The primary purposes of loud music in many modern settings includes the creation of excitement and social cohesion, conveying a feeling of freedom and expression of cool persona.[371,385] However, when God first established rules for music in the temple, its primary purpose was to communicate messages – to assemble people, command war and signal religious ritual and festive events (Num 10:1-10).

If you visited a village in one of the provinces of Cambodia, you would not be there long before you would hear the sound of festival music screeching out from one corner of the village and filling the whole community with its melody. Up close to the source of the music, even the locals might find the noise to be screechy and

uncomfortably loud – but it achieves one of its primary objectives of calling the village to attention and letting them know that a ceremony is taking place and the type of ceremony – whether it be a wedding, funeral or other celebration. Buddhist temples are often the source of loud music in Cambodian communities - loud music calls people to the temple which is the focal point of many social and religious events.

Likewise, in Jerusalem, religion was the central focus of society and the temple was the nucleus of their religion. This is where music was played loud. They did not have flyers, phones, radios or television to announce events. The trumpet was an ideal instrument for the purpose of communicating to the Israelite community – for assembling and directing large crowds, announcing sacred events, alerting people of danger and signalling war. Its loud and piercing tone makes the metal trumpet the ideal instrument for commanding attention and provoking a range of emotions, especially happy and heroic.[162]

How does this compare with the purpose of contemporary Christian music (CCM) in church? For one thing, the emotions produced by temple worship was likely very different to CCM. Brandon Toews, author of popular drumming resources and contributor of Drumeo, a popular drumming education website, says that worship drumming is essentially no different to pop and rock drumming. He says that 99% of the skills required to play drum music for CCM is absolutely identical to rock and pop.[212] Rock and pop music, by definition, is very often played and sung loudly. Jewish temple worship was loud at times also. But this is where the similarity ends. The instruments used are very different. Rock has become synonymous with electronically amplified music, with a very strong drum beat and often loud guitars and vocals.[386,387] It uses different instruments and has very different purpose and is driven by an ideology to break free from tradition and social norms and to make money. Rock musicians wanted to create a rebellious spirit in their music.[201 (3:30)]

As discussed previously, the study of the emotional characteristics of musical instruments has flourished in recent years. This research has shown that different musical instrument sounds have strong emotional characteristics. Studies have shown that the primary emotion of the drum is negative, including anger,[337] making it an ideal instrument for producing a rebellious tone.

Loudness is another characteristic of music that influences emotions. Angry, scary and heroic emotions are enhanced by loud notes.[339] Therefore, sounds that are not aggressive when played softly, may become aggressive when played loudly. For example, a loudly played piano note sounds angrier than the same note played softly. Also, when musical instruments, such as drums and electric guitars, are used to produce angry emotions, playing them loud intensifies the rebellious tones. Whereas, when instruments, such as trumpets, are used to produce heroic sounds, playing them louder intensifies the heroic tones, making them ideal for glorifying the King of Kings! Loving, calm, meek and sorrowful emotions are en-

hanced by soft notes,[339] making the subdued sounds of stringed instruments, for example, ideal for expressing Christlike character.

Though David allowed other musical instruments, along with the trumpet, into temple activities according to the commands of God given through the prophets (2 Chr 29:25), experts say that there is no indication that drums were ever part of sanctuary worship. God was very specific about which instruments were to be played in the sanctuary, by whom and for what purpose. In contrast to the rebellious emotions of the base drum and electric guitar, the instruments of the temple - the trumpet, cymbals, stringed instruments and lyre - produce primarily emotions such as sombre, happy, joyful, sad, heroic and shy. Everything that was done in the temple had a set purpose and loudness had a specific purpose of representing communication of temple services to the community. It had to be loud for the practical purpose of communicating to the broader community.

A number of Psalms call for loud praise, including Psalms 33, 47, 81, 98 and 150 along with others (see Figure 4). Just as the trumpet 'shouted' signals to the Children of Israel, the message of the Psalms uses temple imagery to figuratively shout a joyful, happy and heroic signal to the world and the universe, of God's mercy and love. Psalm 33 calls for "*all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him* (Ps 33:8)." Figuratively, the praise has to be 'shouted' aloud for all the earth to hear. Psalm 47 is an announcement to all peoples that God is the triumphant King over all the earth. It's for all the world to hear. In Psalm 98, it's a celebration of salvation going to all the earth. Again, the whole earth needs to hear it. In Psalm 150, the praise is to spread to the heavens and every breathing thing is called to praise God. These passages are calling to attention the whole earth and even the heavens – it has to be loud, not literally but metaphorically. Psalm 81 is another example of shouting but in this case, it announces a feast day. Likewise, Revelation uses the imagery of the temple in the seven trumpets which signal to earth and heaven important events that would take place (Rev 8-11).

The Proportion of Loud Sound in Temple Worship

Another important difference between Jewish temple music and contemporary worship music, apart from intensity, might be the proportion of loud sounds. In rock music, the drumbeat provides a strong and sustained pulse for the music. This was not always the case. Initially, in the evolution of the drum set the sound had to be dumbed down. When drum kits were first emerging during the development of rock and roll, drum sounds were relegated to the background. Drums were hidden at the back of the stage behind the other musicians. They were not played throughout the whole song and brush drumming kept the beat quiet to avoid drowning out the other instruments. With the invention of electrical instruments, amplifiers and microphones, all of the instruments and accompanying voice were able to be ramped up to match the sound level of the drum kit. From

that point on, drummers could let loose and the loud drumbeat took centre stage and provided the backbeat for the whole duration of the song.[327,328]

Psalm	Loud Praise	In His sanctuary/In His presence
5	Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them (v11)	But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; In fear of You I will worship toward Your holy temple (v7)
32	And shout for joy, all you upright in heart! (v11)	You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance (v7) [For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His Tabernacle (Ps 27:5)]
33	Play skilfully with a shout of joy (v3)	Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him (v8)
35	Let them shout for joy and be glad (v27)	I will give You thanks in the great assembly (v18)
47	Shout to God with the voice of triumph! (v1)	God has gone up with a shout, The Lord with the sound of a trumpet (v5) [They have seen Your procession, O God, The procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary (Ps 68:24)]
66	Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth! (v1)	I will go into Your house with burnt offerings (v13) Come and hear, all you who fear God (v16)
98	Sing to the Lord… With trumpets and the sound of a horn (v5-6)	Shout joyfully before the Lord, the King (v6)
132	I will also clothe her priests with salvation, And her saints shall shout aloud for joy (v16)	Let us go into His Tabernacle; Let us worship at His footstool (v7) For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place (v13)
150	Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet (v3) Praise Him with loud cymbals (v5)	Praise God in His sanctuary (v1)

Figure 4: Sanctuary imagery in Psalms with loud praise

Pop music has become progressively louder, less acoustic and more energetic ever since that time. The loudness of the most popular songs each year has been steadily increasing since the 1950s, especially in the last thirty years.[388] One reason for this is that loudness sells because it is exciting and consumers demand ever increasing loudness.

It is likely that the loud sounds of Israelite temple music was much less sustained. According to Rabbi Jack Abramowitz, Torah Content Editor at the Orthodox Union, "*The minimum number of trumpet blasts in the Temple on any given day was 21 and the maximum was 48*."[389] Professor Kim Cunio is a composer and music historian and was head of the School of Music at the Australian National University

from 2019-2023. He used a variety of sources, including ancient manuscripts and historical documents, such as the Talmud, to recreate the music of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem before its destruction by the Romans in 70 AD. Recordings were made in August 2006 at the Paddington Uniting Church in Sydney and are available on the ABC website.[390]

Kim Cunio's performance opens with Psalm 150. Other than a burst of trumpet sound at the beginning, most of the song is relatively soft and melodic without trumpet sound and with clear enunciation of every word. If loud trumpet sounds are sustained throughout the whole song, quieter instruments may have been drowned out. Possibly more importantly, being cone-shaped, valveless and limited in the range of notes they could produce,[34 (p54)] trumpets were suited for non-musical signalling[391] and possibly for solo trumpet interludes rather than sustained music.

Only a relatively small selection of Psalms has reference to trumpets, shouting and loud praise. Other Psalms are played solely with stringed instruments or flutes. In fact, there are up to 37 references to stringed instruments in Psalms, depending on translation (21 specifically to the lyre or harp), while there are only five references to trumpets and four references to tambourines.[392] In Cunio's rendition of 1st century Jewish temple music, even in songs with loud instruments, it is often the quieter instruments that predominate throughout most of the song.

Though even the loudest churches still have moments of quiet, on the whole, we have forgotten the value and power of silence in church for reflecting on God. We tend to have the notion that, if music is good for an experience, then more must be better. We do not utilise the quiet to our benefit like it once was. Dr Archibald D. Hart, Senior professor of psychology and dean emeritus at Fuller Theological Seminary said:

> "*If you don't have time to contemplate, to think, to pause, then you are going to be misled. You're going to make a lot of mistakes. There was a time when having a quiet time was the thing to do… Not many do that anymore."* He goes on to say that, "*Without boredom, you can't discover what is up there,"* pointing to his head, *"where the gifts are that God has given you*."[393]

The quiet time for reflection at church has been drowned out by long intervals of music. Mrs White referred to the Indiana camp meeting of 1900 as a bedlam of noise. Too much of a good thing can become a horrible thing. We need times of quiet, and plenty of it, to give ourselves time to think and process what we have seen and heard, rather than continually being fed by outside stimulus. Contemporary Christian music almost always includes sustained sounds of drums, electric guitars and amplified singers – loud music often dominates for a large proportion of a song and of the worship service as a whole. Though there are some lulls in the noise, loudness dominates.

The Pitch of Loud Temple Music

A third important difference between the loudness of temple music compared with contemporary Christian music is the pitch. The silver trumpet was a long instrument with a mouthpiece and broad conical or bell-shaped end and seems to have possessed a fairly shrill tone.[227] Conversely, contemporary Christian worship songs, as with secular rock tunes, are usually dominated by bass tones.[394] There are a number of properties of bass sound that sets it apart from high frequency sound. Bass sound is felt as much as it is heard.[395] Our ears are less sensitive to low frequency sound and require a higher volume to have the same perception of loudness as high frequency sound.[396,397]

Sound is usually measured using the A-weighted decibel (dBA) scale which is weighted more toward the high frequency sounds which are more readily perceived by our ears. Using the dBA scale, the loudness of bass sounds is underestimated.[398 (p5)] As noted earlier, the World Health Organisation (WHO) recognises the potential harmful effects of noise when there is a large proportion of low-frequency components. The WHO guidelines on noise recommends:

> "*When prominent low-frequency components are present, noise measures based on A-weighting are inappropriate. The difference between dBC and dBA will give crude information about the presence of low-frequency components in noise, but if the difference is more than 10 dB, it is recommended that a frequency analysis of the noise be performed*."[325 (p.xiii)]

Another important property of bass sound is its ability to penetrate through and around objects, resist absorption and travel further distances. A frequent cause of complaints to governing authorities is bass noise associated with music from community venues. Due to the considerable amount of bass energy in modern music and its ability to pass through a building facade with greater ease than higher frequencies, it often results in a pronounced bass beat penetrating walls in the complete absence of other components of the music. This noise can be disturbing even at very low levels,[398] especially since low frequency sound is often perceived as more annoying than high frequency sound.[320,399] That is why, when you are lying in bed late at night and a car drives by in the street playing loud music, all you hear is the thumping bass sounds which can easily penetrate the car doors and windows, pass around trees and shrubs, penetrate through the house walls and windows and enter your ears. The high frequency sounds, even though they are also loud, are absorbed within the car.

Andrew Wright, in a presentation in engineering psychology under Dr Steffen Werner at the University of Idaho, compares high frequency sound with a butterfly and low frequency sound with a T-Rex. The intensity of a sound is measured by the wave amplitude of the sound and is recorded in decibels. A higher amplitude wave has more energy and causes greater pressure variations. Andrew compares a low decibel sound (a quiet sound) with a tired, listless animal; whereas a high

decibel sound (a loud sound) has much more energy and is like an active, angry animal. His analogy helps to illustrate the importance of frequency when combined with intensity: a loud, high frequency noise is like an angry butterfly, while loud, low frequency noise is like an angry T-Rex.[400] That is one reason why loud bass sound causes the ground to rumble and the walls of the building to shake and you can feel the vibrations penetrating into your body.[395,397]

This may also explain why prolonged exposure to low-frequency noise (bass sounds) can lead to adverse health effects including headaches, increased heart rate, anxiety, vertigo and fatigue.[401] These are non-specific symptoms which people often suffer from and for which a cause is often not found. There are many idiopathic conditions that medical scientists are yet to find a cause for. Who knows if intense low frequency sounds may prove to be a common cause of some of these conditions in the future. Let's face it, the deep bass sounds of modern songs have generally only been made artificially available due to modern technology. Almost always, when we deviate from nature, we ultimately discover serious health consequences as a result. Like processed foods, sustained bass sounds have been artificially concentrated to a level which is unnatural. In the future, this may well prove to be the cause of many complaints of headache, fatigue and other ailments just as poor food choices can cause numerous maladies. Music in general is played at a loudness level and indulged in to an extent which is unnatural due to artificial amplification and recording technology.

In her book, Extremely Loud - Sound as a Weapon, journalist, Juliette Volcler, reveals how the military has learned how to:

> "…*exploit sound's biological effects, since sound waves - which are nothing more nor less than mechanical vibrations - can harm the ear and the entire body at certain frequencies and certain intensities*."[402 (p1)]

Dr Bart P. Billings is a retired US Army Colonel and former military psychologist who served in the US Army for 34 years and founded the International Military and Civilian Combat Stress Conference. Controversially, he has been outspoken against psychotropic treatment for returning veterans arguing that these treatments cause more harm than good. Military personnel are frequently exposed to high intensity (loud)/low frequency sound vibration. Vibroacoustic disease (VAD) is a term coined by Mariana Alves-Pereira, Nuno Castelo Branco and colleagues to describe disease due to frequent exposure to low frequency sound which can affect multiple organs of the body, including neurological, muscular and cardiovascular systems. Dr Billings describes patients who exhibit signs, symptoms and organ damage typical of VAD but are incorrectly diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He believes that the impact of loud, low-frequency sounds is underappreciated and that the diagnosis and treatment of VAD needs to be improved. Earmuffs protect the ears, but the rest of the body remains unprotected.[403]

In summary, the loud sound of Israelite temple worship likely had a very different purpose and provided a very different experience to the loud sound of contemporary Christian music. In other words, the loud sound of contemporary Christian worship likely has little resemblance to loud temple music of ancient Israel. In temple worship, the purpose of loud sound was to communicate messages to the surrounding community. Only those close to the musicians would have perceived the music as loud. It also had symbolic meaning of 'loudly' communicating the gospel message to the whole world. The purpose of loud sound in contemporary Christian worship, on the other hand, is primarily to intensify the emotions and create excitement, and all present are exposed to the loud sounds. The loud music of Jewish temple music was likely also much less sustained, with just short, infrequent bursts of loud sounds, whereas contemporary Christian worship is often filled with frequent sustained segments of loud music. Finally, ancient Israelite temple music was likely dominated by higher frequency sounds, whereas contemporary Christian music is very often dominated by bass sounds, which tends to lead to louder volumes, increased excitement and potential harms to our health. We will discuss more about the harms of loud music in the next chapter.

Chapter 21
Effects of Loud Music

Hearing Loss

Hearing loss is a well-known adverse effect of loud sound. People often view the effects of loud music on our ears as a trivial matter, but it can have debilitating consequences, including significant hearing loss and tinnitus, the sensation of sound (e.g. ringing, buzzing or hissing) in the absence of an external sound source. When sound waves reach the ear, they travel down the canal to the eardrum, causing hair cells (sensory cells) within the cochlea to move. The hair cells convert the vibrations into electrical nerve signals that travel along the auditory nerve to the brain. Regular exposure to loud noise causes hair cells to lose their rigidity. Also, during a period of intense exposure to loud sound, the level of free radicals in the cochlea increases, causing hair cells to die. These physiological changes result in reduced hearing sensitivity and/or tinnitus. We are born with a fixed number of hair cells in the cochlea and, once they have been damaged, they do not regenerate.

The factors that determine the level of risk of hearing loss are the loudness and duration of noise exposure. **The effect of lower volumes heard for long periods of time is the same as louder sounds heard for a short period**. Repeated exposure to excessive noise long-term, as well as a single exposure to an extremely intense sound, causes irreversible noise-induced hearing loss. Greater than 15 minutes of music at 100 dB may cause equivalent hearing damage to an industrial worker exposed to 85 dB of machine noise for greater than 8 hours. Just 2 hours of 90 dB of noise per day may cause permanent hearing damage, while sounds greater than 112 dB can cause immediate damage. A Levite trumpet player occasionally

exposed to a short trumpet burst of 100 dB would not sustain permanent hearing loss. However, in a modern setting, when loud drums are sustained throughout worship coupled with amplified instruments and singers, the noise exposure is significant, especially with the additive effect of other recreational, occupational and environmental noise exposure throughout the day. The hearing loss is usually slow in onset but progresses relentlessly if repeated exposure persists.

The initial hearing loss is usually subtle, involving only the higher frequencies, and may go unnoticed. Eventually, lower frequencies are affected, interfering with day-to-day activities, including conversation and communication. Research has shown a strong correlation between recreational noise exposure and tinnitus. Both hearing loss and tinnitus can lead to sleep disturbance, anxiety, depression and impaired concentration and communication, significantly impacting quality of life.

Presbyacusis refers to hearing loss due to the natural process of aging and is common in people over 60 years old. Noise exposure is more harmful to hearing than aging-related hearing loss and can accelerate hearing deterioration in later life, even after the exposure has ceased. Some people may be more susceptible to noise-induced hearing loss than others. There is no medical or surgical cure for noise-induced hearing loss and treatment is limited to hearing aids and counselling, which is often inadequate. Prevention is the most effective strategy.[377]

Exposure to loud noise is becoming increasingly prevalent in environmental, occupational and recreational settings, including traffic, machines, concerts, live sporting events, fitness classes, cinemas, nightclubs, personal music players and video game consoles. Children and teenagers are likely the most at risk from exposure to loud sounds associated with recreational activities. Noise exposure is often not from a single recreational source.

Global and regional trends in disabling hearing loss are increasing significantly.[404 (p5)] Between 1994 and 2006, the prevalence of hearing loss among teenagers rose from 3.5% to 5.3%.[377] Results of a United States meta-analysis in 2024 indicates that the prevalence of hearing loss in college students is 19%. The hearing loss in these students was reported to be significant enough to decrease attention, comprehension and memory, reducing their likelihood of succeeding in college.[405] It is predicted that hearing loss in Australia will increase to greater than 25% of the population in the next 25 years.[404 (p4)]

If noise-induced hearing loss is perceived as an insignificant threat, the motivation to avoid exposure to loud noise is reduced. If church prioritises enjoyment over safe listening, young people might perceive loud music listening as normal and acceptable. If an individual's attitude is that loud music is enjoyable and that it is a normal part of life, it is likely to hinder safe listening practice.[377] Church members, including young people, may be exposing themselves to loud noise in their own free time, as well as at church events, increasing their total exposure time and risk of permanent damage.

Strategies for prevention of harm from exposure to loud sounds are not just the responsibility of individuals but also communities – including churches. The recommended safe volume level is below 85 dB. Based on this figure, it is likely that the majority of worshippers in Israel were exposed to safe levels of noise, whereas worshippers in modern settings with contemporary Christian music are often exposed to unsafe levels of noise. The sound is likely too loud if other people must raise their voice to make themselves understood or if it is difficult to understand someone an arm's length away.[377]

Non-auditory Effects of Loud Noise Exposure

It is becoming increasingly recognised that hearing loss is not the only adverse health outcome of loud music. Evidence for non-auditory effects of loud noise exposure on health is growing. Because of the widespread exposure to noise in modern society, the adverse effects are diverse, serious and very prevalent. Barry Blesser cites findings from a number of studies which have shown adverse effects of loud music, including an increase in alcohol consumption, overeating, maladaptive behavioural patterns consistent with substance abuse and overstimulation of children with ADHD. Research has also shown evidence of the presence of chemicals associated with schizophrenia in the brains of people exposed to high level sounds.[385 (p5)]

Noise pollution is a well-recognised health concern. Dr Arline Bronzaft, expert in the general and mental health effects of noise for more than five decades, says:

> "*Noise pollution is more than just a nuisance. Researchers have found that noisy environments can take a real toll on people's mental and physical health*."

Studies have shown that noise exposure leads to annoyance, impaired cognitive performance in school children, disturbed sleep, hypertension and cardiovascular disease.[406] By contrast, Bronzaft says:

> "*…quiet enhances health. I didn't say silence because I still want to hear birds. I still want to hear the air*

blowing, and I still want to hear the babbling of young children."[407]

Probably an even more important issue than the impact of noise on the health of church members is its effect on the neighbouring community. Research has firmly established the adverse effect of noise pollution on both general health and mental health.[399] It can interfere with daily activities, feelings, thoughts, sleep or rest, and might be accompanied by negative responses, such as anger, displeasure, exhaustion and by stress-related symptoms.[406] Research has repeatedly shown that noise exposure increases blood pressure and heart rate and causes the release of stress hormones. Preliminary research suggests that long-term exposure to environmental noise affects the cardiovascular health of individuals, including hypertension, ischaemic heart disease, and stroke.[406] Chronic noise exposure in children has been shown to lead to learning disabilities, anxiety, attention-seeking behaviours, lowered academic performance as well as reduced motivation and concentration.[377]

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), one of the most influential figures in modern Western philosophy, in his book, Critique of Judgement, said:

> "*…music has a certain lack of urbanity about it. For, depending mainly on the character of its instruments, it extends its influence (on the neighborhood) farther than people wish, and so, as it were, imposes itself on others and hence impairs the freedom of those outside of the musical party*."[408 (p200)]

He said this long before modern recording and amplification projected music much further and more frequently into the community. While church attenders enjoy their own worship music, amplification can bring the music into the public sphere where it may be experienced as pollution by those who do not appreciate it.

On one occasion, the Salvation Army Corps in Oxford Street, London, brought a charge against a man who disturbed their meeting with shouting and screaming. When the man was summoned before the court, the residents of Oxford Street threatened to file an action against the Army in retaliation for the disturbance it was causing in the community – including the intolerable shouting, raving and playing of brass bands! In support of the residents, the presiding magistrate suggested that the Salvation Army had more in common with the rabble disturbing its meetings than with the respectable residents of Oxford Street![2 (p199)] It would do us well as a church to follow the advice of Bronzaft:

> "*…be respectful, be aware that your sounds may not be wanted by others*."[407]

The last thing we want to do as a church is annoy the neighbours and detrimentally impact their health.

Barry Blesser describes how:

"*Before a concert begins, you can hear the breathing of your friend sitting next to you, but after it begins, you hear nothing other than the music. Loud music makes a listener functionally deaf to everything but the music*." He goes on to say, "*In a real sense, loud music transports listeners into another aural space, moving them from the social space of people to the musical space of the performers. Loud music also suppresses the internal space of daydreams, overpowering the inner space of self-generated sounds and pictures, and listeners are only in the space of the musicians. Everything else is gone. Loudness is a space transporter because you become functionally deaf to the immediate environment*."

He goes on to explain how, because we do not have ear-lids, listeners have no intrinsic biological means of controlling the dominant environmental noise. Consequently, because the auditory cortex of the brain is connected to and influences many other areas of the brain, loud sound tightly bonds us to the environment without control, he says. That is why it is often almost impossible to focus on a task when exposed to loud sounds – it is like the brain freezes up and you cannot focus.

"*Loudness transports us to another world*," he says, "*Advertisers who present messages before movies know that loudness sells because you cannot focus on any other sonic event. You cannot escape physically or perceptually. They own your aural space, and they know it*."

Loudness, to a large extent, is a control mechanism, he concludes, because it dominates.[385 (p2-3)]

The Optimum Sound Level for Congregational Worship

The Bible encourages congregational singing. The earliest example of congregational singing in the Bible is the song of praise sung by the Children of Israel after the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex 15:1-18). The epistles seldom mention music or singing, but two of the prominent passages on the topic suggest congregational singing. As part of the body into which we have been called, Paul encourages us to teach and admonish "***one another*** *in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs* (Col 3:15-16)." Similarly, in Ephesians we read "*but be filled with the Spirit, speaking* ***to one another*** *in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord* (Eph 5:18-19)."

Examples of congregational singing are recorded by John of Patmos, such as Revelation 5:9 & 11-12. In the Roman Catholic Church, before the Reformation, music was restricted to the clergy and lower clergy and congregations did not participate in singing. Martin Luther is well recognised for his influential role in introducing congregational singing back into churches.[8] Mrs White describes as glorious the harmony that can be produced by combining instruments of music with

congregational singing.[62 (p71)] Scientific research has shown that singing with other people amplifies the many health benefits of singing.[96]

Effective congregational singing is influenced by the volume of the music. Dr David Gauger, professor at Moody Bible Institute, in a small study found that the optimum sound level to sing along to is about 81 decibels, while sound levels less than 70 dB or greater than 85-90 dB deterred congregational singing.[409] Worship Leader Magazine theorises that what happens physiologically when the music exceeds 90 dB is that people cannot hear others or themselves singing, so they become spectators and the worship team is reduced to a 'performance troop.'[410] Under 70 dB and the congregation does not feel confident to sing along as the music is too soft.[409]

Song worship is a problem when the focus becomes the worship leaders. Overly loud music tends to discourage congregational singing, putting the focus on the singers and musicians on stage. Paul Hamel describes a trend away from congregational singing that developed in the church in the late 1800s:

> "*There had been a shifting away from congregational singing to a reliance upon instrumental music and the employment of professional choirs, quartets and soloists*."[9 (p71)]

General Booth supported hearty congregational singing but was suspicious of choirs, organised music groups and solo singers. He did not approve of singers who stood out and became noticed. However, over time the General did become more accepting of choirs and music bands which became a prominent part of the Salvation Army corps.[3] Mrs White emphasised congregational singing over the hiring of singers:

> "…*when singers offer their services, they should be accepted. But money should not be used to hire singers. Often the singing of simple hymns by the congregation has a charm that is not possessed by the singing of a choir, however skilled it may be*."[168 (p509)]

Elsewhere she encouraged congregational singing over special performances:

> "*There should be in the meetings nothing of a theatrical nature. The singing should not be done by a few only. All present should be encouraged to join in the song service. There are those who have a special gift of song, and there are times when a special message is borne by one singing alone or by several uniting in song. But the singing is seldom to be done by a few. The ability to sing is a talent of influence, which God desires all to cultivate and use to His name's glory*."[411 (p115)]

Those who lead out in singing will often admit how exhilarating it can be and how tempting it is to put oneself in the centre of the worship experience. General Booth, aware of the potential evils of music, once said, "*I have ever found choirs to be possessed of three devils, awkward, ugly and impossible to cast out. They are*

the quarrelling devil, the dressing devil, and the courting devil."[412 (p191)] Hamel describes his experience as a musical director:

> "*Those who would practice music for the service of the church are counselled to engage in that work with solemnity, an unselfish attitude, humbleness and an awareness that their musical endeavours are for the praising of God and not for self-glorification.*
>
> *Anyone who has directed or sung in a church choir knows how very easily the sins of jealousy and evil surmising can creep into the organisation. When someone is selected to perform a solo passage it is human nature for others to wonder, 'Why was not I chosen for that honor*?'"[9 (p86)]

Mrs White says, "*Forms and ceremonies and musical accomplishments are not the strength of the church*."[168 (p512)] In The Great Controversy we read:

> "*Brilliancy of style is not necessarily an index of pure, elevated thought. High conceptions of art, delicate refinement of taste, often exist in minds that are earthly and sensual. They are often employed by Satan to lead men to forget the necessities of the soul, to lose sight of the future, immortal life, to turn away from their infinite Helper, and to live for this world alone*."[159 (p567)]

Music becomes acceptable to God only when our hearts have been sanctified and softened:

> "*Gorgeous apparel, fine singing and instrumental music in the church do not call forth the songs of the angel choir. In the sight of God, these things are like the branches of the unfruitful fig tree which bore nothing but pretentious leaves. Christ looks for fruit, for principles of goodness and sympathy and love. These are the principles of heaven, and when they are revealed in the lives of human beings, we may know that Christ is formed within, the hope and glory. A congregation may be the poorest in the land, without music or outward show, but if it possesses these principles, the members can sing, for the joy of Christ is in their souls, and this they can offer as a sweet oblation to God*."[168 (p512)]

Chapter 22
Loud Warning

Of course, as previously discussed, the trumpet, loud sound, shouting and loud voice in the Bible is symbolic of proclaiming a clear message far and wide – especially the gospel message and warning of judgement. General Booth interpreted these expressions more literally, believing we must literally shout a loud warning. One of the main driving motives for General Booth's loud and animated worship and preaching was to get people's attention in order to keep them from the fiery pits of hell. He believed in eternal conscious torment for the unrepentant. Therefore, there was a strong sense of need to compel people to repent by whatever means possible. Hence, the louder the noise the Salvation Army could make and the more demonstrative they were, the better.

The Salvation Army message, including the lyrics of their songs, was filled with warnings of judgement and hell. The New York Press reported the Salvation Army lassies singing the following song in the crowded sections of the city of London:

> "*The bells of hell go ding-aling-ling*
> *For you, but not for me;*
> *The sweet-voiced angels sing-a-ling-ling*
> *Through all eternity.*
> *Oh, death, where is thy sting-a-ling-ling;*
> *Oh, grave, thy victory!*
> *No ding-a-ling-ling, no sting-a-ling-ling.*
> *But sing-a-ling-ling for me*."[413]

One Salvation Army author wrote:

"*Look till you see the gay forms that sported about two hours ago writhe in the agonies of a torture you cannot possibly exaggerate, and hear the bit-*

ter ceaseless wailings of the very voices you just heard shouting with laughter! Look till the little wreathes and puffs of smoke you saw come from them just now swell out into dense black firelit clouds, that roll and roll and twist and swell again till they cover the whole scene with dense darkness - the smoke of your neighbours' torment ascending up for ever and ever!"[414] (p64)

Mrs White grew up in the Methodist Church with this same understanding of eternal suffering for the wicked. Consequently, she was tormented in her mind by thoughts of hell. She wrote of her early years:

"*When the thought took possession of my mind that God delighted in the torture of His creatures, who were formed in His image, a wall of darkness seemed to separate me from Him. When I reflected that the Creator of the universe would plunge the wicked into hell, there to burn through the ceaseless rounds of eternity, my heart sank with fear, and I despaired that so cruel and tyrannical a being would ever condescend to save me from the doom of sin*."[348 (p31)]

However, Mrs White's understanding of hell quickly evolved in her early life. She grew to trust in God's loving mercy and, as she studied Scripture, her understanding of hell and what happens to us when we die also changed.

There is not much discussion in General Booth's discourses on why he believed in eternal conscious torment. He seems to have simply accepted what he had learned from the Methodists on the doctrine of hell, as he did with the other doctrines. Mrs White and the early Adventists, on the other hand, had a lot to say about this doctrine. They made a distinction between what is plain literal language and what is metaphor to help harmonise Biblical references to hell and life after death. For example, Paul said in plain language, "*For the wages of sin is **death**, but the gift of God is eternal **life** in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Rom 6:23)." Similarly, Jesus said, "*And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life* (Matt 25:46)." Jesus also said, "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not **perish** but have everlasting **life*** (Jn 3:16)."

Mrs White came to believe from these and related passages that only the righteous live eternally, while the wicked perish – they are eternally annihilated:

"*He who chooses a course of disobedience to God's law is deciding his future destiny; he is sowing to the flesh, earning the wages of sin, even eternal destruction, the opposite of life eternal. Submission to God and obedience to His holy law bring the sure result*."[231 (p376)]

In other words, Mrs White, along with fellow Advent believers, came to believe in annihilationism. This gave her much comfort, knowing that the wicked were not to consciously suffer for eternity, especially as she grew in her understanding of the depth of God's love and mercy.

In contradiction to these verses, however, Revelation tells us that the wicked live on forever:

> "…*the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name*." (Rev 14:11)

So, do the wicked die an eternal death or do they live on forever in torment? Being a literalist in his approach to understanding the Bible, General Booth interpreted this verse in Revelation very literally. He often applied Scripture very literally. His discourses on hell were very vivid depictions of individuals literally writhing in pain. His church was not just an army in a spiritual sense, but he named and organised his church like a literal army – they were dressed in uniform; assigned to officer ranks, such as lieutenant, colonel, commissioner and general; and they marched to the beat of the drum. He also managed the Salvation Army with an autocratic style of governance much like in a real army.[161 (pp120-131)]

Adventists, on the other hand, recognised the highly symbolic context of Revelation 14:11 – with references to a beast and an image to the beast and so on. Therefore, they argued, nothing can be taken at face value. If there is no literal 'wine' and no literal 'beast,' we cannot be sure the 'smoke', 'fire' or eternal torment are literal either. They were trying to find the harmony between conflicting passages.

Revelation should always be interpreted in light of the rest of Scripture, they concluded. For example, Adventists turned to the story of Sodom and Gomorrah which was totally destroyed by fire and brimstone (Gen 19:12-29). Almost two thousand years later, Jude tells us that Sodom and Gomorrah are "*suffering the vengeance of eternal fire* (Jude 1:7)." Eternal fire here cannot be taken literally, they concluded, since the fires of Sodom and Gomorrah burned out two thousand years earlier.

Uriah Smith, a prominent theologian in the early Seventh-day Adventist movement, also turns to Isaiah to shed light on Revelation 14:11.[415] Concerning the Babylonian destruction of Edom, Isaiah says:

> "*Its land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night or day; Its smoke shall ascend forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; No one shall pass through it forever and ever*." (Is 34:9b-10)

Since there are no perpetually burning fires in Edom still burning today, Uriah Smith argues that 'eternal fire' and 'smoke ascending forever' should not be understood literally. Therefore, it is argued, the imagery of Revelation 14:11, which is very similar to these passages, is also to be understood figuratively.

This is a good illustration of how Seventh-day Adventists interpret Scripture: there is less freedom to allegorise passages which are written as if literal, such as the flood story, but passages which show us by their context that they are figurative must be interpreted based on the meaning of other passages of Scripture.

Many scriptural passages written in literal language, including direct teachings of Jesus, tell of our mortal nature and eternal annihilation of the wicked.

The Seventh-day Adventist church is one of the minorities that interprets Revelation 14:11 as figurative rather than literal. Using this line of thinking, Revelation could be interpreted to mean that so great is the contrast between death and the reward of the righteous that, even in their death, it is as if the wicked are tormented and have no rest day and night because of the glory they have missed out on.

Also, belief in eternal torment of the wicked requires belief in the immortal soul – the belief that the soul is a separate entity that continues to exist after death. Many protestant denominations, as with the Roman Catholic Church, hold to the teaching of immortality of the soul. Adventists argued that these beliefs – the doctrines of immortality of the soul and eternal conscious torment of the unrepentant – are based on philosophical reasoning and just a few Biblical references which are highly figurative in nature. Uriah Smith, for example, argued that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is based on philosophical reasoning rather than express teachings from the Bible:

> "*We are told that the Bible assumes the immortality of the soul as a truth so evident that it is not necessary expressly to affirm it. This is why the doctrine has come to be so generally received notwithstanding there is such explicit evidence against it. It has been taken for granted! Says Bishop Tillotson: 'The immortality of the soul is rather supposed, or taken for granted, than expressly revealed, in the Bible*.'"[416 (p318)]

Several reformers, such as Martin Luther and William Tyndale, also opposed the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and, instead, defended the teaching of soul sleep – the belief that the soul is unconscious after death until the resurrection. In fact, Luther placed the doctrine of the immortality of the soul among the "*monstrous fables that form part of the Roman dunghill of decretals*."[417 (p255)]

Another problem Mrs White and early Adventists had with interpreting Revelation 14:11 literally is that they felt it does not harmonise with what the Bible teaches about God's love and mercy. Mrs White said:

> "*How repugnant to every emotion of love and mercy, and even to our sense of justice, is the doctrine that the wicked dead are tormented with fire and brimstone in an eternally burning hell; that for the sins of a brief, earthly life they are to suffer torture as long as God shall live*."[159 (p535)]

Eternal torment seems to contradict the loving character of God, although not everyone agrees. The website, Got Questions, gives an explanation for eternal torment despite God's loving nature:

> "*As fallen, sinful human beings, we have difficulty grasping the nature of God. We tend to see God as a kind, merciful being whose love for us overrides and overshadows all His other attributes. Of course, God is loving, kind,*

and merciful, but He is also holy and righteous and just. His attributes exist together and cannot be separated from one another. In His holiness, He cannot tolerate sin (Proverbs 6:16–19). In His righteousness, He is angry with the wicked and disobedient (Isaiah 5:25; Hosea 8:5; Zechariah 10:3). In His justice, He must punish sin. If He failed to punish wrongdoing, God would be unjust."[418]

Mrs White concurs with the sentiments of this statement:

"*It is the glory of God to be merciful, full of forbearance, kindness, goodness, and truth. But the justice shown in punishing the sinner is as verily the glory of the Lord as is the manifestation of His mercy*."[419]

Many people choose to reject God because they simply do not accept God's intolerance of sin and His judgement of sinners. God created us in his loving image and with the ability to reason through these issues. People choose to either accept or reject God based on their understanding of His character. The Got Questions article goes on to say:

"*All sin is ultimately against God (Psalm 51:4). It is a transgression of His law (1 John 3:4). God is infinite in His nature, infinite in glory, and infinite in worthiness. This makes Him infinitely worthy of obedience, and crimes committed against Him warrant an infinite penalty—eternity in hell*."[418]

According to this statement, because of the infinite character of God, sinners must be infinitely tormented. It is an interesting argument; however, for the Adventist, as with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, rather than relying on express teachings from the Bible, the article relies too much on philosophical reasoning aimed at upholding the doctrine. There is no Biblical reference provided that gives definitive support for eternal conscious torment. Even if the premise of the argument is correct, why cannot the punishment be eternal death? It would still be true to His infinite nature.

Adventists feel that some doctrines are held too firmly without considering Paul's advice to "*Test all things; hold fast what is good* (1 Thes 5:21)." Even if it is true that someone's infinite character requires them to torment others for eternity, it would not necessarily make it moral and just.

God repeatedly challenges us to compare Him with other gods to determine if He is all powerful, righteous, all-knowing, just and loving. For example, in Isaiah 40 we read of the coming Messiah who will bring good tidings (v9) and will reveal the glory of the Lord (v5). This same God who brings salvation to the world is the same mighty God who "*measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure* (v12)." Then God asks, "*To whom then will you liken Me, Or to whom shall I be equal* (v25)?" and the prophet says, "*Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; he calls them all by name, by the greatness of his might and the strength of his power; not one is missing* (v26)." We

are invited to consider God's character and attributes. We are given a reason to acknowledge God as worthy of our praise, not simply because He is God, but because of His mercy and glory and His greatness and power above all else.

What if God asked, "*To whom then will you liken me. Who else tortures the wicked for eternity*?" Would this be something to attract us to Him? The psalmist rejoices in the Lord, asking: "*Lord, who is like You, delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, yes, the poor and the needy from him who plunders him* (Ps 35:9-10)?" What if the psalmist said instead, "*Lord, who is like You, with your strong hand, you will eternally torment unbelievers because they do not love you*?" Would this endear our hearts to Him?

The sentiment we get from Mrs White's statement above is that there is nothing to admire in such an attribute - why would we want to worship, adore and live with someone whose character causes him to torture for eternity people he claims to love? Every single human being, apart from the most vile and depraved, is revolted by this kind of behaviour in humans. Yet, if it was true of God, there would be nothing anyone could do about it, for God is all powerful and immortal. Anyone who objects would have to live with a God whose character they detest, even though they did not choose to be born. Even worse, they would have to be the victim of that eternal torment. On the contrary, according to Mrs White, God does not desire anyone to persist in misery if they do not love Him, "*for to bring them into the company of the pure and holy would make them exceedingly miserable*."[147] (p221)

Mrs White points out that the purpose of destroying sin is to remove suffering from the universe (Rev 20:15; 21:1,4,8) because sin causes suffering (Gen 3:16-19). So why would God destroy sin only to perpetuate suffering for eternity in hell, she reasons. We do not worship God simply because He is God. We worship Him because we are also attracted to His character, including His grace and mercy. The doctrine of annihilationism teaches that there is nothing attractive about a character that eternally torments people. Everyone either accepts or rejects God based on their understanding of His nature. This doctrine teaches that, if God's character is such that sinners who reject Him must be tormented for eternity, those who cannot stomach a God of torture have no choice but to yield to Him, for fear of facing the horrifying and unspeakable distress of hell themselves. In other words, God forces acceptance of Him on pain of eternal torment.

Seventh-day Adventists claim that we can safely conclude, in harmony with God's loving character and with Scripture, that He will not torment the wicked eternally. If they are correct, it is reason to lift our voices to God in joyous praise for eternity! When we truly harmonise with God's character, praise comes easily.

General Booth describes having visions and dreams throughout his life. In 1906, he published some of these visions, including his famous Vision of the Lost in which he sees people drowning in a dark, stormy ocean, representing the billions of sinners lost in sin and going to hell. In the middle of the ocean is a rock, representing Calvary, where people are rescued from doom.

Likewise, Mrs White describes visions that she had throughout her lifetime, including visions of the afterlife. For example, she describes what she was shown concerning the fate of unbelievers:

> "*But I saw that God would not shut them up in hell to endure endless misery, neither will He take them to heaven; for to bring them into the company of the pure and holy would make them exceedingly miserable. But He will destroy them utterly and cause them to be as if they had not been; then His justice will be satisfied. He formed man out of the dust of the earth, and the disobedient and unholy will be consumed by fire and return to dust again*."[147] (p221)

Adventists argue that the doctrine of eternal torment in hell portrays God as aggressive and merciless. Prior to The Age of Reason and Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, the lands of Christendom presented two options for the afterlife: eternal life in paradise or eternal torment in the lake of fire. General Booth so vividly preached of the torments of hell that listeners would shred their hymn books in anguish. Avoidance of the torment of hell was a common theme in the conversion stories of converts to the Salvation Army in the early years. An edition of The War Cry states:

> "*Oh, mothers and fathers, take warning, lest you find yourselves at the last day amongst the unhappy crowd, who, while waiting to hear the awful sentence pronounced upon themselves, will see the children they loved writhing with agony and pointing their hell-scorched fingers at you saying, 'It's all your fault; it's all through you*.'"[420] (p83)

This would have been particularly harrowing for mothers, given they were considered responsible for the spiritual welfare of their children.[2] (p83)

Annihilationists argue that the threat of eternal torment in hell allows for no freedom of choice at all. Anyone who takes the time to really think about it would prefer to spend eternity with a God they do not love than in a place of eternal physical torment. Who would choose perpetual torture? However, in true love, there is no coercion.

Paul presents a much fairer and just option from a loving God: "*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Rom 6:23)." Jesus also presented the same two options: "*And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life* (Matt 25:46)." The only option that provides eternal life is acceptance of Jesus. The other option is death – and this punishment is everlasting. Non-believers who do not want to suffer eternity with a God they do not love can choose eternal death. This is fair. It is just and humane. Highly metaphorical passages, such as is found in Revelation and Jesus' parables, should never be used to overturn the clear and plain teachings of God's Word that unrepentant sin leads to eternal death. God's warning to Adam and Eve was that they would surely **die** if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good

and evil. It is only by God's grace that He has provided a way for a second option: eternal life for believers. Praise God that He sings a tune of compassion, love and mercy, rather than aggression.

Empathetic beings cannot rest when they know that fellow beings are suffering. No wonder the thrust of the Booths' evangelism focused not so much on the love of Jesus, but on a yearning *"to rescue all the souls rushing to hell*."[2 (p7)] They could not bear the thought that fellow humans were going to hell. No wonder he said he would sooner starve than preach Calvinist doctrine, "*one special feature of which was that only a select few could be saved*."[57 (p21)] He could not bear the thought that the majority of humanity, billions of people, will continue on for eternity in torment. So central was the doctrine of hell to the Salvation Army that General Booth said, "*If you were to take hell out of our doctrine, The Salvation Army would soon disappear*."[421] He believed fear of eternal punishment was a powerful motivator for people to seek salvation and join The Salvation Army.

General Booth's desire to keep people out of an eternally burning hell was the driving motivation for loud preaching, singing and shouting. He wanted to get the attention of the people. He preached with great earnestness, and rightly so given his belief that the wicked are literally tormented for eternity. For Christians who believe that the lost will be physically tormented for eternity, why are they not weeping and wailing for the lost? Where are the General Booths today? Why are there not more Christians dancing and shouting in the streets? Does anybody care?

Mrs White believed that the doctrine of eternal conscious torment is surely the making of the devil who longs to taint the perfect image of a loving God:

> "*Satan has painted the character of God in false colors, making people fear, dread, and even hate our merciful Creator. The repulsive views of God that have spread over the world from the teachings of the pulpit have made millions of people skeptics and unbelievers.*
>
> *Eternal torment is one of the false doctrines, the wine of abomination (Revelation 14:8; 17:2), which Babylon makes all nations drink.*"[422 (p219)]

God never forces anyone to accept Him, Adventists argued; however, anyone who does not love God but truly believes He will torture them for eternity if they do not submit, will submit out of compulsion. Annihilationists teach that the threat of eternal torment removes choice from the relationship. If, on the other hand, someone can choose between death and eternal life, they have an acceptable alternative to living for eternity with a God they hate – that is, eternal nothingness. This is choice. Extreme punishment removes the element of free will. Therefore, God does not force His love on His created beings by making them choose between heaven and eternal torment.

But whether or not you believe in eternal conscious torment or in eternal annihilation, judgement is soon to come upon this earth. A loud warning must go to the world to prepare people but the message must be balanced. General Booth

discovered that he got many more converts when he focused his preaching on hell rather than on Jesus' love. American pastor and author, the late John MacArthur, taught that hell should be the first topic discussed when we talk about the gospel.[423] Mrs White, on the other hand, said:

> "*Love is the agency through which God works to draw the heart to him. It is the power by which he expels sin from the soul. In every department of life this principle must be the controlling power. In every enterprise of mercy this alone can give efficiency*."[424]

In other words, she believed our primary motivation for giving our lives to God should be driven by His loving character. Our message to others should perfectly balance His love and justice.

Chapter 23
Sacrifice Shouts Love

General Booth made a loud noise to keep people out of hell. Though not necessarily literally loud like the early Salvation Army, all Christians are to send a clear message to the world to be ready for God's judgement by accepting the gospel message. But we must be careful the way the message is presented. Rather than pushing people away by aggressive opposition, we want to draw people to Jesus by demonstrating His loving character. Our message of warning to the world must be given in love and the best way to shout love is by sacrifice.

The Booths sacrificed much for the gospel, at times struggling to make ends meet, especially early in their ministry. When General Booth left his employment with the Methodist New Connexion in 1861, he was left without a regular salary to support his young family as he travelled across England running revivalistic meetings. He became loved by the working-class people of London's East End because of his dedication to their physical and spiritual needs.

The Whites also faced many struggles in their ministry and sacrificed much for the Seventh-day Adventist movement. In the early years, there was no established church structure; therefore, there was no financial remuneration for anyone working for the cause. They had to pay their own way as they travelled around preaching. James went from job to job labouring to earn funds to support his family, to pay for travel expenses and to support the new publishing work. He harvested hay, chopped timber in the forest and laid sleepers on the railroad – whatever work he could get hold of – while preaching and writing publications. Very little of their earnings went toward building up a living for themselves.[141]

Later in life, the Whites were accused of profiteering from their ministry. Alma McKibbin, the first full-time Adventist school teacher in California, relates an experience she had as a young girl after her mother had become an Adventist. A visitor to their home, apparently trying to dissuade her from her beliefs, claimed the Whites were living a luxurious lifestyle in a palatial home with French colonial furniture, the richest carpets and upholstered chairs. When they went about travelling and preaching, he said, they put on their oldest clothes and told people to sacrifice everything in support of the cause. Curious, the young Alma arranged to visit Mrs White's house. To her surprise, she discovered a very different home to what the visitor had described. This is Alma's description of the sitting room in Mrs White's house - the place where family and guests met for worship every morning and evening:

> "*Well, I looked at the chair I was sitting in, it was just a little old-fashioned rocker of the cheapest sort. On the floor was a well-worn rug. There were three or four straight chairs in the room - very plain - and a little cottage organ which had seen much use. Sister White was very fond of music and she loved her little old cottage organ. And that's all there was in the room, except plain muslin curtains at the windows*."[296]

Because of this experience and others, Alma became convinced that all the stories about Mrs White were not true. On the contrary, she found Mrs White to be an honest and humble person who loved Jesus. She went on to become a pioneering Adventist educator, using Mrs White's principles of holistic, Bible-based education. Mrs White could have become wealthy from royalties from her books, but the profits were invested in people and ministry. For example, she would buy material and clothes for the needy, give away produce from her garden and orchard, feed and house guests and support church activities. Records have even revealed that she would take out personal loans, paying up to 8% interest, so she could support ministry projects, such as starting a new school or church.[293,296]

Vaccinations & Religious Liberty

Christians throughout the ages have sacrificed much, even risking their lives, to help people and spread the gospel. An issue which has stirred up a lot of noise in the church and community in recent years is the controversy over vaccinations. Some Christians viewed it as an opportunity to support the community and help protect the vulnerable, while others saw it as an infringement of religious liberty. It is particularly in hard times that we either shine Jesus' light to the world and help to build God's kingdom or we reveal our dark human nature and turn people away from Jesus. We have to tactfully juggle words of judgement with acts of loving kindness.

After comparing the views of Mrs Booth and Mrs White, and looking at passages of Scripture, this chapter will take a position on vaccination mandates, but it is only one position. The apostles did not always agree with each other, but they kept prayerfully wrestling over disputed issues, using Scripture and Christ's teachings as their guide, until they came to a consensus. Whether in favour of vaccines or against them, people on both sides of the argument want to be faithful to Jesus. However, some people have been very worked up over this issue. Mrs White cautioned against becoming indignant and flying into a passion over religious liberty. Quoting from Peter in this regard, as the servants of God, she said, '*Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king* (1 Pet 2:17).' Sensible dialogue on touchy issues like this can only occur in calmness and respect for each other.

Just as she was sharply critical of orthodox medical practice in general, Mrs Booth was strongly opposed to vaccinations and discouraged parents from vaccinating their children.[125] The first vaccine to be developed was the smallpox vac-

cination which became widely available in the 19th and 20th centuries, effectively eradicating the disease. The first mandatory immunisation program came into effect in the 1840-50s in Britain and parts of the United States.[425] Fear of turning into a cow caused resistance to the smallpox vaccination due to its derivation from cowpox, a disease found in cows. Despite this, uptake for the vaccination was high. Mrs Booth believed, instead, in hydropathic treatment for patients with smallpox. She advised, "*let us fall into the hands of God, and not of man*."[125 (p630)] Mrs White, on the other hand, did not speak out against vaccines. Though a prolific writer on health, there is no record of her ever advising people not to be vaccinated.

D. E. Robinson, Mrs White's grandson-in-law and long-time office assistant, in 1931, in a letter he wrote in response to a question on vaccination, claimed that even Mrs White received a vaccination against smallpox:

> "*You will be interested to know however, that at the time when there was an epidemic of smallpox in the vicinity, she herself was vaccinated and urged her helpers, those connected with her, to be vaccinated. In taking this step, Sister White recognized the fact that it has been proven that vaccination either renders one immune from smallpox or greatly lightens its effects if one does come down with it. She also recognized the danger of their exposing others if they failed to take this precaution.*"[286]

Some question the accuracy of Robinson's recollection of events, arguing that he was influenced by his own personal bias. However, the Ellen G. White Estate provides other statements denying Mrs White's objection to vaccinations. Arthur White, grandson of Ellen White and secretary of the White Estate at the time, responding to a letter he received, said "*If someone has informed you that Sister White counselled against vaccination or inoculations, they are mistaken*." He then gives the following advice:

> "*I think of missionaries who went out in the earlier years of our work, some of whom thought was a violation of principle to be vaccinated. They were cut down with disease and filled early graves giving virtually no service to the mission field. Would it not have been much more pleasing to God for them to have taken the steps which would have prevented their succumbing to these dread diseases*?
>
> *…I think of one of our physicians who today must spend much time in an iron lung [an early type of ventilator]. In the prime of life, he was sent a few years ago to North Africa where he led out in our medical work in a good way. The Lord blessed his ministry. The vaccine was secured for polio shots, but for some reason, there was not sufficient for all. The doctor gave the shots to everyone but himself. He recognized that it would be the part of wisdom for him to have taken the shots, but due to the shortage of vaccine, he did not do so. In the epidemic which swept the country, he succumbed to the disease, in a very paralyzing form. With the cooperation of the United States*

government, he was flown back to the United States in an ambulance plane. What the man suffered is hard to describe. There is little hope of his ever gaining the use of his normal faculties. He is a man with a family, a young man."[286]

It is obvious where Mrs Booth stood on vaccinations. She openly and publicly opposed vaccines and taught others to do likewise, including avoiding vaccinating children. Mrs White, on the other hand, never publicly opposed or endorsed vaccinations. Eyewitnesses and those close to her claimed that she supported vaccines. Mrs White had an extra 25 years of life compared with Mrs Booth in which to voice her objections to immunisations. She remained silent. Mrs White's usual pattern was to speak up when she disagreed with something, such as her opposition to slavery and the women's rights movements. She was very vocal in lobbying for religious liberty, especially concerning the Sabbath; however, when vaccine mandates were rolled out across the United States and Great Britain, especially after 1855, requiring children to be vaccinated against smallpox before starting school for the first time, unlike Mrs Booth, she made no protest. Mrs White never made vaccination mandates a religious liberty issue. Though Mrs White released numerous publications on health at the time, she said nothing opposing vaccinations. If Mrs White was God's messenger, He chose not to speak through her regarding vaccinations.

When it came to religious liberty, as already discussed, when Sunday laws started to come into effect in certain states of the US, Mrs White discouraged members from defying the law by working on Sunday. Though it was a religious liberty issue, she discouraged members from becoming overly passionate about it, warning against civil disobedience. Instead, she led by example by calmly and peacefully lobbying governing officials while remaining law abiding. Apparently, she believed that we should be obedient to the law, if at all possible, without breaking a direct command of God.

Elsewhere, Mrs White said:

"*If we receive the grace of God in the heart, we must reveal to others this grace in every word and act. Those who dwell upon the long-sufferance and mercy of Christ must practice His patience and forbearance… Some will say, 'How can we do this? We should be taken advantage of…'*"[426]

She is saying that we should be patient and forbearing, demonstrating grace toward others, even when wrongfully treated. To those who object to this advice, arguing that it will lead to others taking advantage of them, she counsels:

"*We are not to reason in regard to results… The Lord has spoken to us; and whatever may be the consequences, we are to receive His Word and practice it in daily life, else we shall be choosing our own version of duty and shall be doing exactly the opposite of that which our heavenly Father has appointed us to do… Jesus has said, 'Do good to them that hate you'… It is always best*

to endeavor to carry out the whole will of God just as He has specified. He will take care of the results."[426]

In other words, though it may make more intuitive sense to defend ourselves when unjustly treated, she says, don't do it. Do not retaliate. Be gracious. Be patient and long-suffering as Christ was. Let God look after the results.

Though modern medicine is not ideal, and there are potential side effects, Mrs White's advice was that the use of quinine to treat malaria is not a sin, explaining that we are expected to do the best we can. She was, however, opposed to the use of quinine for conditions where there was unproven benefit. Apparently, according to Mrs White, it is not a sin to use modern medicine if there is potential benefit. In the illustrations provided by the Ellen G. White Estate, missionaries and their children were removed prematurely from active service due to death and morbidity from preventable illnesses. Years of active service lost that could have been used to blow the gospel trumpet. In other words, in these cases, great harm resulted from not taking vaccines. The same could be said of numerous medical treatments. Though antibiotics disrupt the microbiome of the gut, which can have profound effects on our health, they can save us from deadly bacterial infections. Though we trust God and consider our body to be the temple of God, we still ingest and inject antibiotics when necessary because they have clear benefits when used appropriately.

A Seventh-day Adventist might ask, if it is okay to inject a vaccine which might cause harm due to an adverse reaction, why did Mrs White say, "***Nothing*** *should be put into the human system that will leave a baleful influence behind*"?[282 (p228)] The intent in her statement is to avoid harmful effects. Mrs White did not object to anaesthetics which, when put into the system can cause harm, even death (baleful effect). She also did not object to using x-ray to treat a black spot on her forehead even though she cautioned that x-ray could cause harm just like stimulant drugs can. How can we reconcile these apparent contradictions in her comments and practice?

If the intent of Mrs White was to avoid modern treatments at all cost even unto death, as with Mrs Booth, then her acceptance of the use of x-ray, anaesthesia and quinine for certain uses makes no sense. But if the intent is to minimise harm, then it does make sense. If minimising harm is the goal, when evaluating the appropriateness of a treatment, we not only need to consider the potential harm from **receiving** the treatment but also the potential harm from **not receiving** the treatment. No substance, even healthy food, is totally risk free. For example, people can choke on food or have anaphylactic reactions to it but the benefits obviously outweigh the risks. Therefore, risks and benefits always have to be considered when determining the appropriateness of something we intend to put into the human body.

Melanoma was recognised in the medical literature in the mid-1800s.[427] Perhaps Mrs White's physician was concerned that the black spot on her forehead was a deadly melanoma. If this was the case, then the benefits of x-ray treatment

might have outweighed the risks. If there were no alternative effective proven natural remedies available, then x-ray treatment might have been the appropriate choice. The same could be said of anaesthesia. Though anaesthetics can cause anaphylaxis, respiratory depression and other harms which can lead to death, the benefits of its use in necessary surgery outweighs the risk. Therefore, there would be a greater baleful effect from not using anaesthetic if a ban against its use prevented needful surgery. Likewise with quinine, when used for unproven purposes, it might cause more harm than good, whereas for the treatment of malaria, it has been proven to save lives.

Mrs White cautioned that we should not rely on prayer alone for healing, but that we should use the simple remedies provided by God. She goes on to explain that we:

> "*…are not to take the position that methods of restoration to health in accordance with nature's laws are to be neglected… The human agent should have faith and should cooperate with the divine power, using every facility, taking advantage of everything that, according to his intelligence, is beneficial, working in harmony with natural laws; and in doing this he neither denies nor hinders faith*."[280 (p381-2)]

Elsewhere, she said, "*There were physicians in Christ's day and in the days of the apostles. Luke is called the beloved physician. He trusted in the Lord to make him skilful in the application of remedies*."[428 (p26)]

Determining the risk versus benefit ratio was not a part of medical practice in Mrs White's time but is common practice today. For example, research has shown that all patients benefit from lifestyle intervention to prevent heart attacks, but not all patients benefit from drugs. While cholesterol and blood pressure lowering medications are harmful for low-risk patients, they have been shown to be protective for high-risk patients, even if they are in the process of making lifestyle changes. In other words, a person at high risk of heart disease might die of a heart attack before lifestyle interventions have taken adequate effect. Drugs, therefore, could be considered 'poisonous' for low-risk patients but lifesaving for high-risk patients. If the intent is to minimise harm, then high risk patients should be treated with medications until they can adequately reduce their risk through lifestyle change.

Christians who have a healthy lifestyle and who have faith in Jesus often do not feel much threat from infectious disease. In some cases, it might be that certain vaccines cause more harm than good for these individuals. Despite this, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many people were willing to 'risk it' so they could help protect the elderly and vulnerable. The vaccination issue is not simply an individual decision because it has community consequences; therefore, it is a community issue and requires a community decision. According to D. E. Robinson, Mrs White was of the opinion that, if we do not vaccinate ourselves, we are in danger

of exposing others.[286] Whether or not Mrs White really did believe this, it is a valid argument. Quarantine laws in the Bible took away liberty and caused harm to some individuals – in the case of leprosy, it caused greater harm to the leper who was forced out of the community – but it brought benefits to the community as a whole.

We hear stories of Christians, past and present, who have risked their lives by going to distant lands to help the poor and vulnerable and then give them the gospel message. They had to put their full faith and trust in God for protection but were willing to yield up their lives for His service if required. The Salvation Army is an exemplary illustration of the willingness to help others at all costs. In the Dutch Indies before immunisations were developed, for example, George Railton explains:

> "*Our Officers in every town and village are supplied with all the medicines and bandages they can use, for the Government has found that they live amongst the poorest all the time, and are always ready to bathe and bandage their wounded limbs and feet, or to give them the few medicines needed to combat the ordinary maladies. Moreover, from some terrible losses by death of Officers, in our earliest years there, it was made only too plain to everyone that* ***our Officers would not abandon their people in times of cholera or other epidemics, but would rather suffer and die with them***."[57] (p170)

If we just preach without first building a connection with the people, it often falls on deaf ears. But when we give of ourselves, give of our time, risk going to malaria- and dengue-infested areas, war zones and isolated regions far from the safety of modern services, and help those in need and spend time with their families, we earn their respect. We can then preach with much greater effect. However, we do not necessarily need to go to the back blocks of the world to serve. During the COVID-19 pandemic Christians had a great opportunity to 'love the brotherhood' and 'honour the king.' In other words, there was a golden opportunity to show our love to fellow humans and our willingness to cooperate with the law of the land. Numerous studies have shown, however, that religious conviction, including Christianity, can contribute significantly to vaccine refusal.[429,430]

A number of sensible reasons have been given for avoiding vaccines. Notable amongst these is the argument that our body is the temple of God and vaccines defile the body (1 Cor 3:16-17) because, unlike food and water, it was not made by God for the human body. However, the same could be said of antibiotics or quinine. Even though an antibiotic is a foreign substance which does not belong to the human body, we do the best with what modern medicine has to offer to combat the effects of sin and degradation – including infectious disease – while not ignoring the health principles God has given us. We have to be careful extrapolating too much from general principles and making rigid rules out of something God has not directly commanded.

The Pharisees were more concerned about defiling their own bodies by coming into contact with an unclean person than they were about having compassion on that person. They took general principles and designed rigid rules from that which God had not commanded. We have no command from God which directly or specifically informs us regarding the appropriateness of vaccines.

When the woman with bleeding touched Jesus, He had compassion on her, though she was unclean (Mk 5:25-34). His focus was on caring for her health and spiritual needs. Some of us prefer a plant-based diet because we believe it is good for our health and we want to honour the body God gave us. However, Jesus said, "*There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man* (Mk 7:15)." There might be occasions when we have to consume animal products in order to have compassion on others, such as a missionary working in an isolated location with limited resources. Being 'unclean' or eating animal products, though it may be desirable to avoid them, they are not necessarily sins. The same could be said of vaccinations. It is always a sin, however, to lack compassion on the needy. God said through Isaiah:

> "*Is it a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul. Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh*?" (Is 58:5)

In the eyes of God, fasting is desirable for it improves our own physical and spiritual health, but feeding the poor is an even greater priority.

There is no clear divine revelation from God concerning vaccinations, but there are commands regarding love to our neighbour, obedience to governing authorities, spreading the gospel and warning people of future judgement. The only time our church leaders, or individual members, should disobey the law is when it is in clear opposition to God's law. Sabbatarians believe that some of the early leaders of the Christian church made a fixed tradition out of that which was not

commanded in the Bible, the first day, while neglecting that which was commanded, the seventh-day Sabbath.

Making up laws and claiming they are required by God is just as serious as breaking His laws. One of the greatest problems Jesus had with the Pharisees was not that they were keeping God's law strictly - for He said, unless our righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees, we will not enter the Kingdom of God - it was that they expanded His law and added new laws of their own which were burdensome. If there is no clear command, the default should be to do what is seen by the majority as most loving and submissive, because that is clearly commanded in the Bible. We are to be peacemakers. To do otherwise promotes disorder and anarchy.

We should strive to give leaders the benefit of the doubt, many of whom make decisions according to the dictates of their own religious convictions - many of whom are Christians themselves. They are answerable to God for the decisions they make. Authoritarian governments are more likely to infringe on religious liberty. The church leadership, and individual members, have a responsibility to respectfully advocate for religious liberty. As a church, we should always lobby to have religious liberty in the forefront of the government agenda. This is more likely to be achieved if done with respect and by a united effort. If the government is being dictatorial and overbearing, it is likely because Christians have not been the beacon of light that we should be – we are not being the salt of the world (Matt 5:13-14). We are partially to blame. Our gospel message has to go to leaders as well. If we are seen in the community doing acts of goodwill toward humanity and we practise what we preach, this rubs off on the rest of the community, including government officials.

Due to their temperance work and opposition to immoral behaviour, the Salvation Army had a positive influence on society in reducing alcohol abuse, gambling, prostitution and other vices – including government regulations restricting these practices. George Railton describes how, due to the influence of the Salvation Army at the height of its work:

> "*Upon the question of temperance, there is happily a widespread awakening amongst the nations. So convinced are all governments and peoples that drinking and crime are closely connected, that much has already been done, with good effect, to lessen the sale of intoxicants in many lands*."[57 (p173)]

How do we determine if God's law has been compromised? Unlike the autocratic style of governance of the Salvation Army, the democratic structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church should allow for all members of the church to come together, the members with the leadership, to pray and wrestle with Scripture until a consensus opinion is agreed upon. Leaders must not make the mistake that David made when he brought the ark to Jerusalem without a thorough searching of Scripture to determine if God's law has been compromised. No doubt there

were individuals amongst the Israelites who knew that David was not following the proper order, but they were not consulted. David, as leader of the nation, made a rash decision without taking time to consult the people and God's Word.

When just a few men at the top make decisions without due process, mistakes are made. All sides of the story must be heard when it comes to important and contentious issues. Only then, must a vote be taken and a decision made on the consensus vote. Mrs White said:

> "*every conference, every institution, every church, and every individual, either directly or through representatives, has a voice in the election of the men who bear the chief responsibilities in the General Conference*."[47 (p236)]

In other words, the men at the top represent the voice of the constituency. For those in appointment positions, Mrs White advised that they must draw on the experience and wisdom of the church as a whole:

> "*So far as possible, committees should let the people understand their plans in order that the judgment of the church may sustain their efforts. Many of the church members are prudent and have other excellent qualities of mind. Their interest should be aroused in the progress of the cause. Many may be led to have a deeper insight into the work of God and to seek for wisdom from above to extend Christ's kingdom by saving souls perishing for the word of life. Men and women of noble minds will yet be added to the number of those of whom it is said: 'Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you,... that ye should go and bring forth fruit* (John 15:16).'"[411 (p259)]

Jesus came and lived in a sinful world amongst an unclean people. He exposed himself to the sin and decay of fallen humanity. He was willing to mingle with us to bring physical and spiritual healing. He warned of judgement but then provided us with a way out. His life and death was one of hardship and rejection, yet he never complained about the injustice inflicted on Himself.

> "*He was oppressed and He was afflicted,*
> *Yet He* ***opened not His mouth****;*
> *He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,*
> *And as a sheep before its shearers is* ***silent****,*
> *So He opened not His mouth.*
> *He was taken from prison and from judgment,*
> *And who will declare His generation?*
> *For He was cut off from the land of the living;*
> *For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.*
> *And they made His grave with the wicked—*
> *But with the rich at His death,*
> *Because He had done no violence,*
> *Nor was any deceit in His mouth.*

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him;
He has put Him to grief.
When You make His soul an offering for sin,
He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days,
And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.
He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.
By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,
For He shall bear their iniquities.
Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great,
And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,
Because He poured out His soul unto death,
And He was numbered with the transgressors,
And He bore the sin of many,
And made intercession for the transgressors." (Is 53:7-12)

He was silent before his oppressors, yet His sacrifice has resounded around the world. He is our example. If, when we are oppressed and afflicted, instead of protesting, we show love and concern for our enemies in return, it shouts love and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in our hands also.

PART 7

DANCE

Chapter 24
Dance

There is no record of Jesus or the apostles in the Bible ever dancing or promoting dance. David danced on occasions, as did other godly characters in the Bible, but there is no direct command from God concerning dance. So how do we decide what is appropriate and what is not appropriate? Numerous passages in the Old Testament mention dancing in positive as well as negative contexts. The number of different forms of dance is about as diverse as music, and we know from our own experience that, just like music, not all forms of dance are appropriate. Just as Christians would not accept voodoo or black metal music in church, regardless of the lyrics, there are also certain types of dances that Christians would not find acceptable in church, such as twerking and 'dirty dancing', which are overtly sexually provocative. The Holy Flesh movement and General Booth put dance tunes to sacred words. Ellen White agrees that some forms of dance are appropriate for worship, while other forms are totally inappropriate for use by Christians:

> "*David's dancing in reverent joy before God has been cited by pleasure lovers in justification of the fashionable modern dance, but there is no ground for such an argument. In our day dancing is associated with folly and midnight revelling… The music and dancing in joyful praise to God at the removal of the ark had not the faintest resemblance to the dissipation of modern dancing.*"[195 (p707)]

Commenting on the Feast of Tabernacles as conducted during Jesus' ministry on earth, Mrs White said:

> "*At evening when the lamps were lighted, the court was a scene of great rejoicing. Gray-haired men, the priests of the temple and the rulers of the people, united in the festive dances to the sound of instrumental music and the chants of the Levites*."[87 (p463)]

Ironically, it was in the temple court, where the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated, that Jesus spoke the words: "*I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life* (Jn 8:12)." Many of those who celebrated with great rejoicing and with festive dance the Feast of Tabernacles did not receive the light (Jn 1:10). This recapitulates the lesson that David learned when carrying the ark to Jerusalem. No form of rejoicing and worship, no matter how sincere, will save us if we are not obedient to His Word and walking

in His light. Therefore, from the Bible, it appears that dance is an acceptable form of worship and pleasing to God when conducted in the right manner and with the right attitude of obedience toward Him, but it is not an essential element of worship.

So, the question is clearly not, is dancing acceptable or necessary for Christians, but if we choose to dance, what type of dance is appropriate? At what point does dance transition from being an acceptable expression of praise and worship of God to something inappropriate? We all know that dance can be very powerful at arousing sexual passion, which is contrary to what we want when we are worshipping God. What types of dance moves are sexually provocative?

There is no straightforward instruction in the Bible showing us which dance movements are acceptable and which ones are not. Like ancient Hebrew music, we cannot go back in time to observe the dance moves of ancient Israel. What did it look like? When the Psalmist says to dance, what type of dance did he have in mind? Unlike a painting or sculpture, dance is an ephemeral art and can only be understood by experiencing or observing it. Written descriptions fail to adequately preserve an understanding of the movements displayed.[431] Regardless, there is still more than adequate detail in the Bible and from science to help us make an informed decision.

Dance and music are closely connected. Music provides the rhythm for dance, and certain types of music are even called dance music because it is easy to dance to these tunes. Each style of dance is suited to a certain type of music. For example, it is probably not possible to salsa dance to American country music. So, dance is very much tied to the style of music. A recent Harvard study confirmed that music is a universal language. No matter its cultural background, it is possible to understand the meaning of a song from its acoustic features, such as tonality, ornamentation and tempo.[432] Dance is a visualisation of the sound we hear[433] and dance is also considered a universal language in its own right.[434] Therefore, like lyrics, dance can communicate both appropriate and inappropriate messages, either by communicating a message of its own or by conveying meaning from the music. So, we can look at the message of the dance or its accompanying music and, if it is inappropriate, then it will not be suitable for worship. We can also look at more recent Israelite folk dance and culture as an approximation of principles that might have guided their ancient ancestors in their selection of appropriate dance. Finally, we can look to Scripture for clues to style of dance as well as principles that can guide our choices.

Sexuality in Dance

Alan Lomax (1915–2002) was a leading anthropologist in the area of folk music and is celebrated for his research of dance.[435] Because dance can only be truly understood by experiencing or observing it, Alan and his father, with the help of colleagues, underwent the monumental task of compiling more than 10,000 re-

cordings of songs and dance from around the world for the Library of Congress. In his later career, Lomax, who pioneered the term choreometrics, used this film archive to scientifically analyse dance styles, classifying them by the type of repetitive movements found in each culture's dances.

Alan Lomax observed that dance can be categorised into one of two different styles which he termed single-unit and multi-unit movement styles:

> "*Single-unit style uses a solid torso, mostly moving the legs, feet and arms and sometimes bending or using a rhythmic rocking motion forward and back at the waist… Meanwhile, multi-unit styles use an articulated torso, in which there is movement in the hips and undulation in the rib cage.*"

He concluded from his extensive study of cultures and their dances that the hip-rocking motions found in multi-unit styles of dance are representative of sexual motion.[431]

Lomax was instrumental in launching the folk and blues revivals that took place among American musicians and listeners in the 1950s and 60s. He discovered and helped to bring to popular awareness numerous blues guitarists, folk artists and country blues singers. In 1959, he produced Folksong '59, a Carnegie Hall concert, which was one of the first major events to recognise rock and roll as a musical form worthy of serious consideration.[435]

Rock and roll dances, which became popular in the 1950s, were mostly of African-American origin and displayed body movement involving pelvic and hip rotations and greater use of the torso.[436] As discussed earlier in the book, at the time when rock music was emerging, the term 'rock and roll' was a euphemism for sex.[198] The very first song acknowledged by historians to use the terms 'rock' and 'roll' was a song about a woman making love with her man.[199] TIME acknowledges that "*all rock…has always implicitly rejected restraints and has celebrated freedom and sexuality*."[207] Rock and roll dance, with its hip-rocking motions, matches precisely the meaning of the music. The very foundation of rock music was sex.

Perhaps the greatest evidence that rock music was founded on sex and rebellion is the fact that modern day rock and pop music is saturated with sexual messages. Nothing has changed. From its very inception until now, by its very beat and sound, by its lyrics and dance, rock music has celebrated freedom, rebellion and sexuality. The lyrics, sound, images and movement communicate sexuality and rebellion against God's laws. It glorifies materialism, unbridled passion and cheap love. We watch it and allow it into our homes and wonder why God is not giving us victory over our sin and sexual addictions. Even at church, we want to hang onto those familiar sounds we are used to, that resonate with us and invigorate our carnal nature. Contemporary Christian music copies the exact drum rhythms used in secular rock rhythms.[212] Therefore, when we dance to these rhythms, we are 'dancing to the same song.'

Dance is often defined as a set of intentional, rhythmic body movements, which is an important aspect of sexuality and is observed particularly in courtship

contexts.[437] It often functions as a means to attract potential partners.[438] A scientific study by Northumbria University has nutted out the specific dance movements that make a dancer appear sexier. This study found that women who dance with bigger and more varied motions of the hips and thighs are perceived as sexier.[438,439] In response to this study, The Verge, a popular technology news website, argues that most dancing is sexy.[440] This opinion appears to be given in the context of social dancing, such as at night clubs, and is a reflection of the association of sex with modern dance styles.

The results of the study would probably come as no surprise for most people. However, what is especially significant is the finding of another study that found that hip swings and variation in lower body movement may draw men's attention to these body areas and increase attractiveness in terms of short-term or promiscuous sex, whereas 'harmonic dance movements' are perceived as more attractive and desirable for long-term relationships. Unfortunately, the authors of the study do not quantify in kinetic terms which dance movement characteristics are perceived as harmonic.[441] However, what is clear from these studies, at least in women dancers, is that science has confirmed what we already intuitively knew and what Alan Lomax had concluded from observing dances from cultures around the world – that hip and thigh movements draw attention to those body parts, communicate sexual motion and make the dancer more attractive for sex, especially promiscuous sex.

Dance in Ancient Israelite Culture and the Bible

Unfortunately, we do not have detailed information from Scripture or historical sources of the types of dances practised by ancient Israelite people. However, there is still a lot of insight that can be gained from Biblical and Talmudic narratives. Karen Codman, former Jewish dance instructor and graduate of dance anthropology at University of California, states that there are 11 terms used in the Bible for ritual dance while there is only one word for secular dance, indicating the essential role of dance in religious practice. The words themselves, she says, give some indication of the general styles of the dances, such as 'hul' which, when used in reference to dance, connotes a whirling, writhing, twisting motion and a fairly brisk tempo.[442]

As with musical instruments, according to Codman, early Jewish dance was profoundly influenced by the dances of the surrounding cultures, such as Egyptian, Phoenician, Babylonian and Hittite dance and ritual. For example, Miriam's dance of thanksgiving to God by the Red Sea, reflected the sacred thanksgiving rituals of the Egyptians. However, "*the Jews tended to assimilate the more refined and dignified dance styles of the Egyptians and shunned those dances which were unrestrained or orgiastic.*" Likewise, the Phoenician bacchantic dances in honour of Ba'al Markod, the god of dance, was frowned upon by the Israelite priests. Sacred ritual dances done in conjunction with temple observances were always per-

formed in a solemn, dignified manner. Processionals were also generally ritual in nature as were dances encircling sacred objects. These round dances also became popular in secular settings. Any form of unrestrained dance in a ritual context was considered pagan.[442]

There are also a few examples in the Bible of very joyous dancing, such as when David danced 'with all his might' before the ark when it was brought to Jerusalem.[442] When we abide in Christ and we are completely submissive to His will, the Holy Spirit dwells in us and we experience great joy. That joy will be expressed in many different ways, including service to God and outward expressions of praise, such as singing and dancing. However, when we artificially create an atmosphere of excitement without obedience, the Holy Spirit is not present. The ecstatic feeling may give us a sense of oneness with God, when in actual fact, His Spirit may be far from us. David and the Israelites thought they were praising and pleasing God but were actually provoking His anger.

The fact that the Israelites neglected to carry the ark according to the proper order was a reflection of a deeper problem. God is not on His throne waiting to send a lightning bolt down to earth the moment we slip up. He is patient and forbearing. The deeper problem was that they were not familiar with their Scriptures – the Torah – and, therefore, they misinterpreted what was important to Him. Cain thought it did not matter which offering he brought to God, as long as He offered something. But God does not need our gifts, He needs our full allegiance. If David was carefully studying Scripture, he would have also discovered that for the first 2500 years God gave no instruction for his people to show their loyalty to Him through song and dance. This was not a priority for God. As discussed throughout the book, singing is a way to strengthen us spiritually, to unite fellow believers and to increase understanding. God enjoys hearing our praise, but without obedience, our praise is meaningless.

The word used to describe David's dance in 2 Samuel 6:14, me·char·ker, is a whirling dance.[443,444] Verse 16 also describes David as leaping and whirling. Therefore, according to Alan Lomax's categorisation of dance, it was a single-unit style of dance, using a solid torso, mostly moving the legs, feet and arms. It was not a sexual motion as seen in the multi-unit movement styles where the emphasis is on hip-rocking motions.

According to Mrs White, in our time dance is associated with folly and midnight revelling and, therefore, believers should not participate in this type of dance.[195 (p707)] If her testimony is truly from Jesus and if the dance moves we use in worship resemble the dance moves of night clubs and pop concerts, by our very worship we are disobeying God. We may be angering Him by the way we praise Him. In excitement, we are prone to ignore God's instructions and to be carried away with carnal passions and open to deceptive teachings.

The parallel account of the transport of the ark to Jerusalem, as recorded in 1 Chronicles 13-16, was written much later than the account in Samuel 6 and is a more detailed description of the event. In this second chronicle of the procession,

the list of instruments has been altered. Israeli musicologist, Joachim Braun, says that the description of dance and the list of instruments in Samuel 6 has undertones of heathen practice. Apart from the removal of the rattle from the list of instruments played because of its association with cultic practice, as discussed in previous chapters, the name of the cymbals was changed from selselim to mesiltayim. These alterations, he argues, effectively removes the association with heathen practice and changes the later parallel account into "*An organised, solemn liturgical ceremony of consecration*."[227 (p107)] The divinely inspired Biblical authors were, apparently, removing every trace of heathenism from the narrative of song and dance in the Scriptures. It appears that God was gradually and patiently weeding out heathen practice from their song and dance just as he was removing other inappropriate practices such as polygamy.

Bruce Bierman, award-winning theatre director in Los Angeles and celebrated Jewish dance master, teaches the many styles of Jewish dance. He demonstrates how the focus on hand gestures (as opposed to motions of the hips and thighs) is a distinguishing element of Jewish dance that has remained since ancient times and throughout the diaspora until now.[445]

Another important element of traditional Jewish dance is separation of the sexes. Victory dances were celebrated by groups of women,[446] such as when Miriam led the women in dance with timbrels after the triumphant crossing of the Red Sea (Ex 15:20) and when the women sang and danced on the return of David upon his victory against Goliath (1 Sam 18:6). Men participated in joyous whirling dances. Festival dances were performed by both men and women; though, they were segregated by gender. Even in secular celebrations, God was to be glorified. During wedding celebrations, men danced with the bridegroom and women with the bride to maintain separation of the sexes. More recently, men could dance with the bride in traditional weddings, but only by maintaining separation by wrapping their hands in a cloth or by holding a cloth between them.[447]

Jewish dance instructor, Teresa Cook, describes the types of dances used in ancient Israel, including circle dances, processional or line dances, and dances with hopping and whirling movements, which were exuberant with joy. However, she emphasises that the movements in Jewish dance had prohibitions and that worship to the Lord was to be in the beauty of holiness (Ps 29:2). She describes the clear distinction between the dances of the Jewish people, which were more of a sacred nature, and the sensual or ceremonial dances of the pagan nations that surrounded them:

> "*There would have been nothing inappropriate in the movements or the attire of the Jewish dancers. And I really think we would be wise to follow their example and be especially cautious of both our attire and our movements so that nothing is drawing attention to parts of our body that people shouldn't be paying attention to, such as really tight tops or really low cut tops or things that really just accentuate parts of the body. That's not for the people*

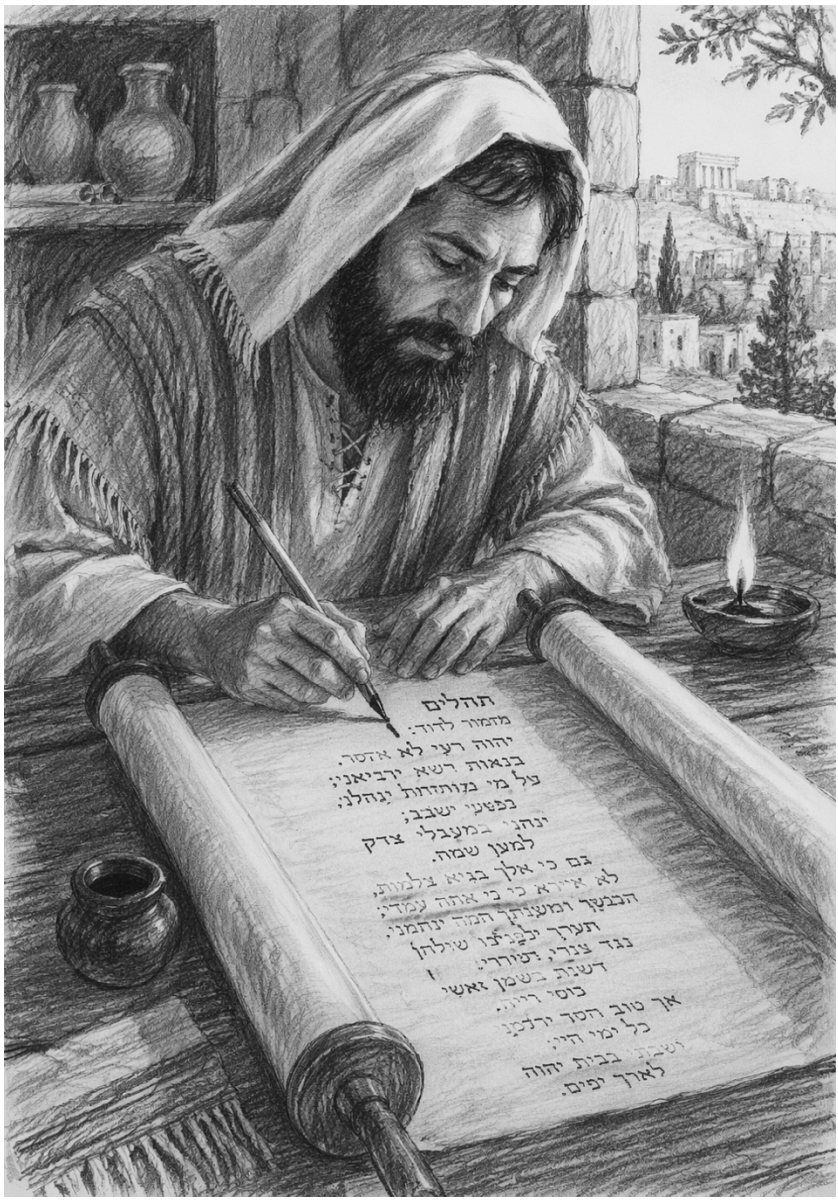
of God. Our dancers should give glory to God and not to the performer or to the performer's body."[448 (4:55)]

Cook goes on to describe how girls who attend her classes naturally want to swing their hips but that would not have been done with the Jewish people. She said:

"*It's unfortunate that in our culture so much of dance is out in the secular world and its children are taught at such a young age to move their bodies in a sensual way that we need to help un-train them and we need to teach them sanctified dance. I think that's really what God wants to return to His people because just as God's people are sanctified, we're set apart for His glory, in the same way our dances should be expressions that are sanctified and set apart for His glory. And the honour and dignity that God created us to be as His children*."[448 (6:32)]

PART 8

LYRICS


תהלים
מזמור לדוד:
יהוה רעי לא אחסר.
בנאות דשא ירביצני;
על מי מנוחות ינהלני;
נפשי ישובב;
ינחני במעגלי צדק
למען שמו.
גם כי אלך בגיא צלמות,
לא אירא כי כי אתה עמדי;
הבטך ומשענתך המה ינחמני;
תערך לפני שלחן
נגד צוררי דשנת בשמן ראשי
כוסי רויה;
אך טוב וחסד ירדפני
כל ימי חיי;
ושבתי בבית יהוה
לארך ימים.

Chapter 25
Lyrical Content of Psalms

One of the first songs that appears in the Bible was requested by God. He asked Moses to write a song of law for the Children of Israel to remind them that it was He that would lead them into the promised land and that, when they forsook Him, His anger would be aroused (Deut 31:14-30). This song, inspired by God, contrasts the greatness, justice and life-giving power of God with the perverseness and corruption of His people. The message of the song is that He would prove by their rebellion that He is the only rock who can provide refuge. He would bring disaster and calamity upon them and His sword would devour the flesh of His enemies, but He would have compassion on His servants and provide atonement for His people (Deut 32:1-47). God holds no punches when it comes to the lyrical content of His songs.

The bulk of the songs in the Bible, however, are found in Psalms which is in the heart of the Bible. The late Walter Russell, former professor of Bible exposition at Talbot School of Theology, describes how, if Psalms is a book of poetry set to music, then it becomes lyrics.[449] Therefore, Psalms is a great resource to turn to as an example of lyrical content. Unlike the style of music, we have a great wealth of information in the Bible about what God expects of the lyrical content of our songs. The depth and breadth of the topics covered in Psalms is striking. A few examples will be presented briefly in this chapter.

Lament

The largest category of psalms is the laments which express sadness to the Lord. There are at least 60 lament psalms, which is 40% of the total content of Psalms. Some are personal, while others are communal laments. We can all relate to them in our own lives from time to time, either individually or collectively. Psalm 3 is a personal lament of David's when he fled from his son Absalom:

> "*O Lord, how many are my foes!*
> *Many are rising against me;*
> *many are saying of my soul,*
> *'There is no salvation for him in God.'*" (v1-2)

How often have we also felt like this! But he does not leave us in despair:

> "*But you, O Lord, are a shield about me,*
> *my glory, and the lifter of my head.*

I cried aloud to the Lord,
and he answered me from his holy hill." (v3-4)

And the outcome:

"*I lay down and slept;*
I woke again, for the Lord sustained me.
I will not be afraid of many thousands of people
who have set themselves against me all around." (v5-6)

How often do we have restless nights because of our worries and concerns! The answer to our sleepless nights is to turn to the Lord in faith. But first we have to acknowledge our laments to God - songs help us to achieve this. If only we sang and listened to more sacred lament songs at church and on our earbuds, we might all get a better night's sleep. There is much healing in songs of lament.

When was the last time we lamented over our sins? Our songs these days tend to deny God's wrath, but David acknowledged God's rebuke and openly expressed his sorrow for his own foolishness in Psalm 38:

"*O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger,*
nor discipline me in your wrath!
For your arrows have sunk into me,
and your hand has come down on me.

There is no soundness in my flesh
because of your indignation;
there is no health in my bones
because of my sin.
For my iniquities have gone over my head;
like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me." (v1-5)

Our sins do not only affect our relationship with God, but they cause others to shun us, as David experienced:

"*My friends and companions stand aloof from my*
plague,
and my nearest kin stand far off." (v11)

However, he does not leave us to wallow in despair:

"*But for you, O Lord, do I wait;*
it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer.…" (v15)

"*Do not forsake me, O Lord!*
O my God, be not far from me!
Make haste to help me,
O Lord, my salvation!" (v21-22)

What harmony there is in this psalm between the despair of our sins and the grace of God! Whereas contemporary songs tend to emphasise God's forgiveness without acknowledging the extent of the effect of our sins and God's anger toward wrongdoing.

How often have we as a church felt increasingly oppressed by a secular world that wants to erase Christianity from every aspect of our lives? This is not a new experience for God's people. But what is new is that we no longer sing songs of regret over the torment of our foes as expressed by Asaph in Psalm 83, a song:

> "*O God, do not keep silence;*
> *do not hold your peace or be still, O God!*
> *For behold, your enemies make an uproar;*
> *those who hate you have raised their heads.*
> *They lay crafty plans against your people;*
> *they consult together against your treasured ones.*
> *They say, 'Come, let us wipe them out as a nation;*
> *let the name of Israel be remembered no more!*' (v1-4)

The psalmist calls on God to put to shame their enemies:

> "*so may you pursue them with your tempest*
> *and terrify them with your hurricane!*
> *Fill their faces with shame,*
> ***that they may seek your name, O Lord.***
> *Let them be put to shame and dismayed forever;*
> *let them perish in disgrace,*
> *that they may know that you alone,*
> *whose name is the Lord,*
> *are the Most High over all the earth.*" (v15-18)

Notice that the desire is for the enemy to be put to shame so that they may turn to the Lord and seek after Him.

Today, Christian songs with substantive content of lament is virtually absent. The lyrics of our tunes are out of harmony with Psalms as equally as the constant triumphant beat of our tunes and the lopsided emphasis on upbeat celebration. As discussed in a previous chapter, science has shown that happy occasions can make us sad. The absence of lament in Christian song betrays the reality of our lives. Science has also demonstrated that sad emotions expressed by instruments such as the harp, flute and guitar can actually be quite soothing and has the paradoxical effect of lifting us up and making us happier. The harp (or the lyre) was the primary instrument of the musical culture of ancient Israel, which naturally expresses the emotions of the psalms of lament. Songs that express sadness to God in the lyrics and tunes bring spiritual, emotional and physical healing to our souls. Therefore, we should sing more spiritual songs like Louis Armstrong's, Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen:

"*Nobody knows the trouble I've seen*
Nobody knows my sorrow
Nobody knows the trouble I've seen
Glory, Hallelujah

Nobody knows the trouble I've seen
Nobody knows but Jesus
Nobody knows the trouble I've seen
Glory, Hallelujah

Sometimes I'm up
Sometimes I'm down
Oh, yes, Lord
Sometimes I'm almost to the ground
Oh, yes, Lord…"

Diet & Self-control

Another thing that affects our spiritual, emotional and physical health is our diet. Psalms touches on the topic of gluttony. It teaches us to be carefully selective and self-controlled in our actions:

"*Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth;*
keep watch over the door of my lips!
Do not let my heart incline to any evil,
to busy myself with wicked deeds
in company with men who work iniquity,
and ***let me not eat of their delicacies****!*" (Ps 141:3-4)

God gave the Children of Israel manna to eat (Ex 16:15) but they grumbled about His diet plan (Num 11:4-6). They craved the meat; therefore, God's wrath was kindled against them as recorded in Psalms (Ps 78:17-31). This story of God's anger toward the Children of Israel for their lack of control over cravings is a warning to us also. Mrs White spoke much about what she claimed to be God's diet plan for Christians in our time. God's anger toward the Israelite people in the wilderness who rejected His diet plan ought to be a sobering warning for those of us today who reject His counsels on diet as found in Scripture. Perhaps this is a reason for also studying Mrs White's writings carefully. If her visions and inspiration were from God, as she claimed, then we would be neglecting God's instructions for us if we ignore what she says. Psalm 78 suggests that this is not something we should take lightly and hence the reason why this book has tried to examine the genuineness of her prophetic gift. According to Mrs White, we are to return to the diet God originally intended for us:

> "*Again and again I have been shown that God is trying to lead us back, step by step, to His original design – that man should subsist upon the natural products of the earth. Among those who are waiting for the coming of the Lord, meat eating will eventually be done away; flesh will cease to form a part of their diet. We should ever keep this end in view, and endeavor to work steadily toward it*."[280 (p450)]

The very first sin involved yielding to appetite because "*the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes* (Gen 3:6)." Even for those who do not believe in Mrs White's prophetic gift, knowing that our bodies are the temple of God should be motive enough to put the purest and most healthy foods into our bodies. From the ceremonial laws given to Israel, we know that God cares deeply about the diet of His people. Do we care?

We also know from the Old Testament that sacrificial animals were to be without blemish. Paul says our bodies are for the Lord (1 Cor 6:13-15) and that we are to offer our 'bodies as a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1).' That means we should offer the healthiest body we can possibly give to God for His service. Science is increasingly demonstrating the health benefits of a plant-based diet – the diet God originally designed for humankind. Jesus gave up His life for us, why would we not want to give Him our very best? Besides, as with any of God's rules, when we live a life according to the way He designed, we receive much benefit in physical, mental and spiritual health, instead of living a life of gluttony.

When we put our full trust in the Lord, we no longer crave food:

> "*Oh, **taste and see** that the Lord is good!*
> *Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!*
> *Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints,*
> *for those who fear him have no lack!*
> *The young lions **suffer want and hunger**;*
> *but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.*" (Ps 34:8-10)

There it is, the health message in the song book of the Bible! How long since we have sung about caring for the body God has blessed us with?

The Poor & Needy

While the focus of contemporary lyrics tends to be on what God has done for us, Psalms often focuses on what God is doing for others and on our duties to God and others. Psalm 82 petitions God on behalf of the needy:

> "*God has taken his place in the divine council;*
> *in the midst of the gods he holds judgment:*
> *'How long will you judge unjustly*
> *and show partiality to the wicked? Selah*
> *Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;*

maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.
Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.'" (v1-4)

Apparently, God wants us to intercede for the poor in song. But how often do the poor in our neighbourhood come to mind, let alone the needy on the other side of the world? Psalm 41 reminds us of the many blessings received by those who serve the poor:

"*Blessed is the one who considers the poor!*
In the day of trouble the Lord delivers him;
the Lord protects him and keeps him alive;
he is called blessed in the land;
you do not give him up to the will of his enemies.
The Lord sustains him on his sickbed;
in his illness you restore him to full health." (v1-3)

When we consider the poor and determine to help them, we are being like-minded with Christ, for he also is concerned for the afflicted:

"*I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted,*
and will execute justice for the needy." (Ps 140:12)

"*Praise the Lord!*
Praise, O servants of the Lord,
praise the name of the Lord!
Blessed be the name of the Lord
from this time forth and forevermore!
From the rising of the sun to its setting,
the name of the Lord is to be praised!" (Ps 113:1-3)

And why should we praise the Lord? Because:

"*He raises the poor from the dust*
and lifts the needy from the ash heap,
to make them sit with princes,
with the princes of his people." (Ps 113:7-8)

When was the last time God's people broke forth in praise to God because of His concern for the poor? Since almost half the world lives on less than $6.85 per day and since almost 700 million people live in extreme poverty of less than $2.15 per day,[450] this is a message the world needs to hear.

The Law

God's law is another major theme covered throughout the book of Psalms. In fact, the opening stanza of the song book of the Bible reads as follows:

> "*Blessed is the man*
> *who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,*
> *nor stands in the way of sinners,*
> *nor sits in the seat of scoffers;*
> *but* ***his delight is in the law of the Lord,***
> ***and on his law he meditates day and night***." (Ps 1:1-2)

How wonderful is God's love and how beautiful His law! Jesus said:

> "*As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.*" (Jn 15:9-10)

There is perfect harmony between obedience to God's law and abiding in God's love. But we seem to have developed a discordance here: we sing and talk a lot about Jesus' love for us, but little about our love for His law. If God's law is in our hearts and minds (Jer 31:33), it should flow out of us in song as it did with King David.

Psalms and hymns of old sung often of the law of God. The first stanza of hymn 198 in The Seventh-Day Adventist Hymn and Tune Book published in 1886 reads as follows:

> "*O law of God! blest and divine! Penned by the Everlasting Hand! Long shall thy sacred precepts shine, Firm as the eternal hills shall stand.*"[451]

If sung with a dreary tone, this would not be an inspiring hymn. But if the singer truly believes that God's law is blest and divine, it will be sung with joy emanating from the heart. Martin Luther wrote a hymn titled The Ten Commandments Are the Law. Each verse sings of a different commandment. The eleventh verse reads as follows:

> "*God gave these laws to show therein, O child of man, your life of sin, And help you rightly to perceive How unto God you should live. Have mercy, Lord!*"

The longest Psalm and chapter in the Bible is Psalm 119 and is all about God's law and righteous living. The first stanza of this Psalm reads as follows:

> *"Blessed are those whose way is blameless,*
> *who walk in the law of the Lord!*
> *Blessed are those who keep his testimonies,*

who seek him with their whole heart,
who also do no wrong,
but walk in his ways!
You have commanded your precepts
to be kept diligently.
Oh that my ways may be steadfast
in keeping your statutes!
Then I shall not be put to shame,
having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.
I will praise you with an upright heart,
when I learn your righteous rules.
I will keep your statutes;
do not utterly forsake me!" (Ps 119:1-8)

God said: "*I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* (Jer 31:33; Heb 8:10)." In the light of the reality of Jesus' death and resurrection, God's law should be embedded in our hearts. It is to be a primary characteristic of God's people. They are in love with His law, constantly dwelling on it. It guides their thoughts and actions and the motives of the heart.

By contrast, if we disregard or treat indifferently God's law, His commands, statutes and counsel, we are in danger of incurring His wrath. This is an important message of Psalms, the song book of the Bible, yet it is conspicuously missing from most contemporary Christian music (CCM). Psalms does speak much of the blessings we receive from God, including blessings that come from obedience. However, blessings are always contrasted with warning and judgement for disobedience. For example, the first Psalm continues with a promise of blessing to those who delight in the law of the Lord and meditate on His law day and night:

"*He is like a tree*
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers." (Ps 1:3)

If we obey God merely out of a desire to win his favour, it becomes a burden. But if our obedience flows from love and appreciation for our creator and saviour, it is a blessing and a delight. However, as we see throughout Psalms and the Bible as a whole, the blessing of obedience is immediately contrasted with judgement against disobedience:

"*The wicked are not so,*
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish." (Ps 1:4-6)

This is something missing from CCM, which sings much of the blessings of following God but essentially never warns of the consequences of disobedience. If the theology of our worship is a constant message of unconditional grace to all who are believers, we can be living an ungodly life and not even realise that the warnings in the Bible are directed against us. We think of the ungodly and the sinners as a different group of people than ourselves who do not go to church and who commit sins far greater than our own. Eventually, we can drift out of church thinking we are good enough - we are not hurting anyone and Jesus loves us unconditionally so what is there to be afraid of. We feel our eternity is secure though we are not truly living for God. However, if we are not living according to God's commands, we are counted amongst the wicked unless we sincerely repent. Repentance is a genuine repugnance of sin and a deep conviction of the need to live righteously. Psalms makes it very clear the consequence of unrepentance:

"*God is a righteous judge,*
and a God who feels indignation every day.
If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword;
he has bent and readied his bow;
he has prepared for him his deadly weapons,
making his arrows fiery shafts." (Ps 7:11-13)

Contemporary Christian songs almost never talk of the flip side of mercy. A message of blessing which is not balanced with warning is a false message – a message of false hope for those living in unrepentant sin. God's method in Scripture is to balance promises of grace and mercy with warnings of severe judgement against the disobedient. God's method is fair and just – He gives clear and unambiguous warnings so that nobody should be caught unaware.

Psalms is filled with many warnings of God's wrath. We must love fellow sinners as Jesus loved, showing compassion and mercy, while never condoning sin but urging all to turn to God in deep repentance for the suffering that our sin has brought on others and for the sacrifice that our creator had to make for us. The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Position Paper states:

> "*However sincere love may appear, it is not love if it stands silently watching a blind man walk toward a precipice. Love runs! Love shouts a warning! Love leads him safely away from peril*."[452 (p19)]

As with the watchman, the trumpet is to be sounded to warn the people! Isaiah declared, "*Cry aloud; do not hold back; lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to my people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins* (Is 58:1)." We are to say with a loud voice, "*Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come* (Rev 14:7)." This warning should be pronounced from

the pulpit, from the written Word, from the internet and from the lyrics of our music for all the world to hear.

Prophecy

Fortunately, despite the warnings of God's wrath and judgement and the consequences of sin, Psalms is balanced with much hope of God's forgiveness and protection. Jesus told His followers that he was fulfilment of that which was written in Psalms:

> "*These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the* ***Psalms*** *must be fulfilled.*" (Lk 24:44)

Psalm 22, for example, is a messianic prophecy with striking parallels to the crucifixion of Jesus, set to 'The Deer of the Dawn' by the Chief Musician:

> *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*
> *Why are you so far from saving me, from the words*
> *of my groaning?... (v1)*
>
> *But I am a worm and not a man,*
> *scorned by mankind and despised by the people.*
> *All who see me mock me;*
> *they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;*
> *'He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him;*
> *let him rescue him, for he delights in him!'… (v6-8)*
>
> *I am poured out like water,*
> *and all my bones are out of joint;*
> *my heart is like wax;*
> *it is melted within my breast;*
> *my strength is dried up like a potsherd,*
> *and my tongue sticks to my jaws;*
> *you lay me in the dust of death.*
>
> *For dogs encompass me;*
> *a company of evildoers encircles me;*
> *they have pierced my hands and feet—*
> *I can count all my bones—*
> *they stare and gloat over me;*
> *they divide my garments among them,*
> *and for my clothing they cast lots… (v14-18)*
>
> *You have rescued me… (v21)*
>
> *From you comes my praise in the great congregation;*

my vows I will perform before those who fear him.
The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the Lord!
May your hearts live forever!... (v25-26)

Posterity shall serve him;
it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;
they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn,
that he has done it." *(v30-31)*

Jesus even repeated part of this psalm as He hung on the cross and portions of this song were written into the gospels. No doubt, some of the Jews who were familiar with this Psalm, who had perhaps sung it many times previously, might have recognised Jesus as the promised Messiah because of the lyrics of this Psalm. Prophecy in Psalms put to music pointed to Jesus' first coming as the sacrificial lamb. We should also sing of the prophecies which point to Jesus' second coming! In song, we can let the world know that He will come as King to rule all nations of the earth and crush the unbelieving rulers:

"*I will tell of the decree:*
The Lord said to me, 'You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.
Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.
You shall break[a] them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.'

Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.
Serve the Lord with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him." (Ps 2:7-12)

The Complete Gospel

Psalms proclaims the gospel message – the whole gospel. The messianic prophecies, for example, include the Messiah's lineage and divine nature, His suffering and rejection, His death and resurrection, His universal reign and glory and also His judgement. As discussed in a previous chapter, trumpets, shouting and loud music in the Psalms and in the sanctuary service symbolises proclamation of the gospel. Therefore, in our songs, it is primarily the lyrics which is doing the

trumpeting and shouting, because it is the lyrics which clearly communicate the gospel message. We usually simplify the gospel to the death and resurrection of Jesus – the heart of the gospel message – but the good news is even more than that – much more!

Does Jesus only deserve our praise because he died for us? The angels were praising Him long before He gave up His life for anyone. Mark said that Jesus came "*preaching the **gospel of the kingdom of God*** (Mk 1:14 NKJV)." When Jesus began His ministry, He said to the people "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand* (Matt 4:17)" and He "*went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom* (v23)." As with any kingdom, God's kingdom includes a King (the Ruler), a Conqueror (the Saviour), Laws (God's commands), Citizens (God's people) and Land (the Promised land).[453] Proclaiming the gospel means proclaiming the good news of God's kingdom, which includes all of these elements. The book of Psalms harmoniously balances all of these aspects of God's kingdom. It is not only good news that Jesus died for us. It is also good news that God is King. It is good news that there is a promised land awaiting His people and it is good news that His magnificent law will be the rule in that land.

One of the first things Jesus did when He came to preach the gospel of the kingdom was to re-establish His law when He gave the sermon on the mount (Matt 5-7). He declared that whoever keeps and teaches His commandments would be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:19) but He characteristically follows up with a warning: "*unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven* (v20)."

Having said that, because of the temple imagery and the focus on mercy and salvation, Christ's work of redemption is interwoven throughout all of Psalms. Despite the emphasis in Psalms on law and justice and on righteousness and lament, the reader or singer of Psalms is left without any doubt where their salvation comes from. From the beginning to the end of Psalms we are repeatedly reminded that our protection is in the Lord:

> "*The Lord is my light and my salvation;*
> *whom shall I fear?*
> *The Lord is the stronghold of my life;*
> *of whom shall I be afraid?*" (Ps 27:1)
>
> "*God is our refuge and strength,*
> *a very present help in trouble.*
> *Therefore we will not fear though the earth give way,*
> *though the mountains be moved into the heart of*
> *the sea,*
> *though its waters roar and foam,*
> *though the mountains tremble at its swelling.*" (Ps 46:1-3)
>
> "*He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High*

will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.'" (Ps 91:1-2)

"*I lift up my eyes to the hills.*
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth." (Ps 121:1-2)

Praise & Thanksgiving

Scattered throughout Psalms are bursts of praise. Lament is perfectly balanced with thanksgiving. Sorrow never ends in despair but in hope. Psalms teaches us the depth of our sin and the intensity of God's wrath which is poured out against sinners. Yet, He has mercy on the repentant. Therefore, we shout for joy:

"*Oh come, let us sing to the Lord;*
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!"
(Ps 95:1-2)

Yet, we praise Him, not only because He has rescued us, but also because He is the great God above all gods:

"*For the Lord is a great God,*
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land." (Ps 95:3-5)

And we praise Him because He is our Maker and He has made us His own:

"*Oh come, let us worship and bow down;*
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand." (Ps 95:6-7)

Psalm 107 tells us to give thanks to the Lord because He is good, His mercy endures forever. He delivers His people out of their distresses and brings them forth by the right way. We give thanks to the Lord for His wonderful works because He satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness. We thank the Lord because He brings His people out of darkness, breaks their chains in pieces and cuts the bars of iron in two. Fools are delivered from their destructions when

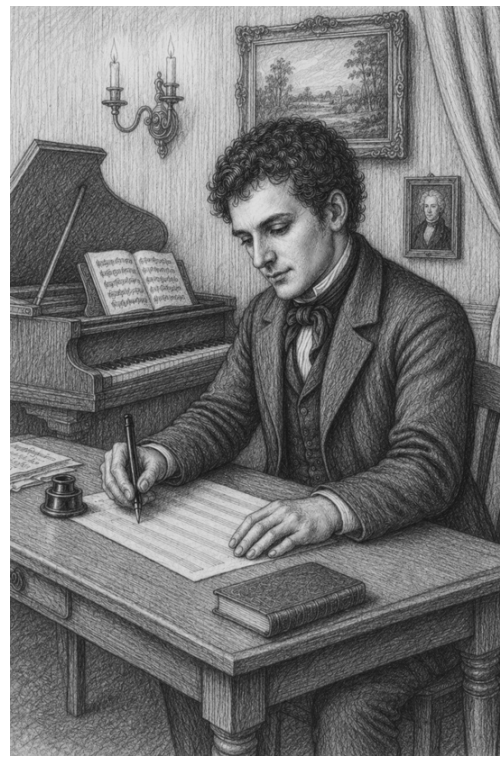
they cry out to the Lord. We thank the Lord because He brings His people out of the stormy sea, stills the waves and guides them to their desired haven. He turns a wilderness into pools of water and dry land into water springs and makes the hungry dwell with blessings. He brings low the oppressors and sets the poor on high, far from affliction. In this one Psalm alone, we are given many reasons to thank and praise the Lord! God is wonderful in so many ways, therefore:

> "*Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!*
> *Serve the Lord with gladness!*
> *Come into his presence with singing!*
>
> *Know that the Lord, he is God!*
> *It is he who made us, and we are his;*
> *we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*
>
> *Enter his gates with thanksgiving,*
> *and his courts with praise!*
> *Give thanks to him; bless his name!*
>
> *For the Lord is good;*
> *his steadfast love endures forever,*
> *and his faithfulness to all generations.*" (Ps 100:1-5)

That is just a small taste of the broad content of Psalms. Other topics of Psalms, include: our wretchedness, God's glory, creation, God's sovereignty, wisdom, guidance, trust, petitioning God, enemies, justice, righteousness, repentance, peace, holiness, and many other topics. It is a complete message, the whole story, found in one song book. Psalms is in perfect symphony with all Scripture, revealing Jesus and harmonising with God's character and the condition of fallen humanity. It uncovers the work of the enemy and how God is dealing with sin and evil. It is an example of how we should write our songs today. Yet, the lyrical content of our songs today has changed significantly. We sing very little about laments, self-control, the poor, God's law, the wicked, judgement, our wretchedness and many of the other topics covered in the lyrical content of Psalms. In fact, some themes are completely absent in CCM. In the next chapter, we will explore some reasons for this change.

Chapter 26
The Origin of Lyrical Change

Psalms is the song book of the Bible and, therefore, a template for modelling the content of our music. Research, however, has shown that the lyrical content of contemporary Christian music (CCM) is quite different to Psalms. For example, there is much less emphasis on judgement, the law and obedience. How did it get this way? We know, also from research, that Charismatic megachurches have had a major influence on contemporary Christian worship. Therefore, to explain the change in lyrical content of CCM, it is helpful to go back to the roots of Holiness theology from which Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations emerged. It is well recognised that Holiness teachings and practices, including that of the Salvation Army, flowed through to the Charismatic movement and, therefore, has likely had at least some influence on the lyrical content of our music today.



General Booth had no problem preaching, teaching and singing about judgement in line with Psalms. The Booths certainly believed in the importance of obedience to God. This is reflected in General Booth's statement:

> "*…neither do we mean by the atonement, as is maintained by some theologians, that Jesus Christ by his sacrifice met and satisfied the claims of the law man had broken so as to render any further obedience to that law by the entire human race unnecessary*."[232]

Having said that, it is suggested that Army converts did not often speak of sins of the mind, such as false beliefs or pride, but preached and taught more often of bodily sins, such as worldly leisure activities, drinking and gambling, which con-

verts frequently spoke of in their testimonials.[2 (p76)] Holiness theology taught that entire sanctification from these sins could be achieved in an instant. Perhaps this had an influence on the evolution of the personal empowerment emphasis in Charismatic megachurches of promising immediate, personal benefits like wealth, happiness and health.

Emphasis on Experiencing the Holy Spirit

The theology of Charismatic megachurches has less focus on traditional doctrine and law and a greater emphasis on personal experience and the active presence of the Holy Spirit in believer's lives, including exercising spiritual gifts such as prophesying and healing. This emphasis on the Spirit can also be traced back to the Holiness movement. When Methodism was emerging, there was deeply held superstitious belief in spirits, fairies, witches and conjurers amongst many of the working class in parts of Britain. Historians have partly accredited Methodism's striking success in these regions to these superstitions, as "*Methodism did not so much replace folk-beliefs as translate them into a religious idiom*."[454 (p177)]

Converts of Wesley's revivals did not always totally disconnect themselves from former understandings of the spirit world. Sarah Williams, author of Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark, c.1880-1939, said, "*individuals could insist on the regular attendance of their child at Sunday School and still cut a lock of the hair of that same child, place it between two slices of bread and give it to a passing dog as a cure for the child's whooping cough*."[455 (p181)] Salvationists inherited aspects of this spiritual worldview. It placed significant emphasis on the influence of the spirit world.

Of note is the disproportionate emphasis on the Spirit in much of the early Salvationist writings. For example, in George Scott Railton's book, The Authoritative Life of General William Booth, the words 'Bible,' 'Scripture,' 'God's Word' and 'Word of God' are only mentioned 10 times, whereas the words 'Holy Ghost' and 'Spirit,' in the context of Holy Spirit, are referred to 41 times.[57]

Salvationists placed much emphasis on the prompting of the Holy Spirit to guide their soul-saving work.[2 (p38)] Mrs Booth said in one of her sermons:

> "*I maintain that the only qualification - **the only indispensable qualification - for witnessing for Christ, is the Holy Ghost**… The Lord is going to demonstrate in this land, that He is not going to evangelize it by finished sermons and disquisitions, but by the simple testimony of people saved from sin and the devil, by His power and His grace. He is going to do it by witnessing, as He began*."[130 (p63)]

Reduced Emphasis on the Pursuit of Truth

While her motive was to push back against dry spiritless discourses, it removed the emphasis on the Bible and the pursuit of truth.

On another occasion, Mrs Booth said:

> "*There will be thousands of sermons preached to-day - the truth, and nothing but the truth. Nobody will pretend to say they were not in perfect keeping with the Word of God; and yet they will be perfect failures, and nobody will know it better than they who preach them!*" She then asks the question, "*what is the matter? The truth is preached. The people hear it, and yet they remain as they were. Where is the lack?* Her answer is the want of power – the want of "*the power of the Holy Spirit of God in the soul of the speaker accompanying His word, making it cut and pierce to the dividing asunder soul and spirit*."[130 (p164-5)]

While Mrs White also believed that sermons preached without the Spirit are tame and pointless,[47 (p36)] the premise of the Booths' Holiness teaching was that excitement brings about manifestations of the Spirit. Music and emotional preaching were tools to achieve this end. That is why General Booth said the "*beating and blowing is to get people first into the barracks and then to the Penitent Form*."[3] In other words, he was using music as a primary means to lead people to conviction.

As already discussed, General Booth was very literal in proclaiming the gospel with a loud voice. He always made use of loud commotion to get people's attention – loud instruments, loud preaching and anything that would shock the senses and cause people to turn their eyes and ears to listen. The Army was renowned for parading down the street and for their open-air performances, drawing attention by their singing and music. Once he got their attention, General Booth delivered to them a very simple but exuberant and often terrifying message, reminding listeners that they are sinners destined for the eternally burning flames of hell unless they repent and give their hearts to Jesus. He did not care much about the details of what the person believed, as long as that person accepted the blood of Jesus and was saved. George Railton said of Booth:

> "…*he always* ***refused to allow any such use of the Bible*** *in connexion with Penitents as has been usual in Inquiry Rooms, where the people have been taught that if they only believed the words of some text, all would be well with them*."[57 (p35)]

In other words, unlike mainstream denominations at the time, he did not care if converts did not have a depth of understanding of what they were confessing before they said, 'I believe' and were accepted into the Salvation Army.

If he could only get people to repent, General Booth felt he had fulfilled his duty and saved them from 'the jaws of hell' as he put it.[57 (p40)] He often spoke of people being saved after attending his evangelistic meetings. For example, of one young woman early in his ministry, he said, "*I urged her to come to the communion rail at night. She did so, and the Lord saved her*."[57 (p32)] For General Booth, he did not care very much what the person believed – whether they truly knew what they were confessing or who Jesus was and what he taught.

Determining the fitness of Salvation Army converts for ministry was not determined so much by Biblical knowledge but by sincerity to service, as stated by George Railton:

> "*As to those whom we take away from their secular calling to become our Officers, I will only say here that we judge of their fitness not alone by their ability to speak, but by their having proved themselves to be so devoted to the poor that we can rely upon their readiness to act as servants of the very neediest in any way that lies within their power*."[57 (p21)]

There is no mention of any need to have a sound knowledge of Scripture. As long as they could preach a heartfelt sermon and were passionate to help the poor, they were deemed fit for service. By having ability to preach, Railton meant to "*take one line of thought and make enough of it to fill half an hour with anecdotes such as fit the subject.*"[2 (p101)]

Unlike his wife, Catherine, who had read the Bible cover to cover eight times by age 12 and read spiritual books widely,[2 (p8)] General Booth was not a deep Bible student himself. He acknowledged the importance of knowledge to increase his power of usefulness and he prayed that God would enable him to acquire it, but books and study interested him little and he could not see the point of studying Latin or Greek.[57] He rarely spoke in-depth on doctrinal issues and, though he valued Scripture, he did not care much for study or formal qualifications, but rather he valued mingling with the people, meeting them at their level and bringing them a simple gospel message, to repent of their sins and accept the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[57 (p20)] He felt there was so much to do and so little time, so why waste time in studying books when the Lord could teach him?[14] That is why Phoebe Palmer's teachings on immediate entire sanctification and baptism of the Holy Spirit appealed to General Booth, as explained by Roy Hattersley in his biography on the Booths:

> "*The whole idea was ideally suited to William Booth's theological position. Since her theory relied on feelings rather than thought – and by implication, dismissed scriptural study as a barrier to conversion — it appealed to his essentially anti-intellectual attitude towards theology. It was the perfect vehicle for the conversion of working, and often illiterate, men and women*."[456 (p105)]

A striking difference between General Booth and Mrs White's writings is the frequency in which they refer to the Bible. For example, General Booth published a book, Purity of Heart, which is a compilation of letters to Salvationists on living a holy life. It has a word count of approximately 16000 words and mentions the words 'Bible,' 'Scripture,' 'Word of God,' and 'God's Word' only 7 times. By comparison, in Mrs White's book 'Steps to Christ,' which has a word count of approximately 31000 words, the words 'Bible,' 'Scripture,' 'Word of God,' and 'God's Word' are mentioned 78 times. This is almost 7 times the rate of use of these words compared to General Booth. This is a reflection of their depth of use of Scripture and anyone who has read books from both authors will notice how much more Mrs White's writings are saturated with quotes and references to Scripture.

This is not to say Mrs White disregarded the importance of the Spirit. As with Mrs Booth, she regards the presence of the Spirit as essential for empowering the believer, as she describes here:

> "*The promise of the Spirit is a matter little thought of; and the result is only what might be expected—spiritual drought, spiritual darkness, spiritual declension and death. Minor matters occupy the attention, and the divine power which is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in its infinite plenitude.*
>
> *It is the absence of the Spirit that makes the gospel ministry so powerless. Learning, talent, eloquence, every natural or acquired endowment, may be possessed; but, without the presence of the Spirit of God, no heart will be touched, no sinner won to Christ. On the other hand, if they are connected with Christ, if the gifts of the Spirit are theirs, the poorest and most ignorant of His disciples will have a power that will tell upon hearts. God makes them channels for the outflowing of the highest influence in the universe.*
>
> *Why do we not hunger and thirst for the gift of the Spirit, since this is the means by which we are to receive power? Why do we not talk of it, pray for it, preach concerning it? The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to us than parents are to give good gifts to their children. For the baptism of the Spirit every worker should be pleading with God. Companies should be gathered together to ask for special help, for heavenly wisdom, that they may know how to plan and execute wisely. Especially should men pray that God will baptize His missionaries with the Holy Spirit.*"[47 (p21)]

The difference, however, between the founders of the Salvation Army and the Adventists was their emphasis on seeking truth. General Booth instructed preachers to avoid controversial topics and never to speak disapprovingly of any particular form of error. David Earnshaw said that after reading five biographies of William Booth, he still really didn't know what the General believed.[149] Consequently, the Salvation Army message was simple and light on theology. They valued spon-

taneous preaching over preaching that required education and preparation that most clergy relied on.[2 (p102)] Railton, giving advice to one of their female preachers, wrote:

> "*Now all you need is to try and take one line of thought and make enough of it to fill half an hour with anecdotes such as fit the subject. You will find it an easy plan to take for your subjects at first the parables or miracles of Christ. You can find in any one of these a number of different points which will help you to a good sermon*." [2 (p101)]

There is much to be admired about General Booth and his enthusiasm to preach the gospel message in a way that people would understand and he had a lot of success at winning converts. He had a heart for the people, especially the poor, and was passionate like King David. However, just as we have learned many lessons from David's mistakes, we can learn from General Booth's mistakes. David's enthusiasm in moving the ark did not make him right. Instead, we learn from David's mistake that the most important measure of our success is not our enthusiasm, though that is part of it, but our allegiance to God and His Word. God expects us to study Scripture carefully and to be obedient to it – something the General was not always careful to do. No doubt, he often did things as he was moved by the Holy Spirit, but he was as human as David was human and, therefore, made mistakes.

Jesus said:

> "*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to* ***observe all things that I have commanded*** *you*." (Matt 28:19-20)

General Booth made disciples and did this exceptionally well in terms of numbers converted. However, he was not a careful Bible student and he did not teach converts to carefully observe all that Jesus commanded us. He had an almost indifferent approach to Scripture at times and avoided controversial subjects. Though Jesus commanded us to baptise new disciples and to observe the communion service in remembrance of Him, General Booth abolished these institutions without giving a well thought through scriptural reason for doing so, even admitting that he was not certain on these matters. Paul said, "*stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle* (2 Thes 2:15)." We must make every effort to cling to what is taught in Scripture.

This is one of the reasons why Mrs White warned not to adopt the Salvation Army method. What we think of as the Salvation Army today is not what it was in the late 19th century. In the early years it was characterised by a non-conventional sensationalist method of conversion.[175] It was a prominent branch of the Holiness Movement from which the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions emerged.[59] Of the Salvation Army, Mrs White wrote:

"*They follow impressions and claim to be taught of the Spirit… they place these impressions above the written word of God, while they* ***trample upon the divine law*** *because their hearts are not in harmony with its precepts. The Spirit and the word agree. The Spirit of Christ leads into all truth; but there is in these spirit-taught ones an enmity against the plainest statements of the Bible. The spirit that guides them leads to the believing of lies rather than the truth, showing that their teacher is the great master spirit that 'worketh in the children of disobedience*.'"[56]

Her bluntness was not intended to denigrate them but to warn Adventists, for she said, "*There are in the Army honest souls, who are sincerely serving the Lord and who will see greater light, advancing to the acceptance of all truth*."[47 (p184)] There is no doubt the Booths, for example, were sincerely serving the Lord with greater zeal than the majority of us today. Adventists were not to judge Salvationists, but neither were they to imitate their ways. As harsh as Mrs White's words may sound, it is a fitting warning to any churches who take lightly the words of Scripture and, consequently, "*call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness* (Is 5:20)."

Many Christians believe, for example, that churches are starting to compromise our beliefs on homosexuality, calling evil good and good evil. The Salvation Army,[58] along with some other denominations, has officially embraced the LGBT lifestyle. In 2018, the Uniting Church of Australia was the first of the three major Australian Christian denominations to endorse same-sex marriage.[457] Those opposing homosexuality refer to the numerous references to homosexuality as a sin and an abomination in the Bible:

"*If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an* ***abomination***." (Lev 20:13)

"*And they called to Lot and said to him, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally.' So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, and said, 'Please, my brethren, do not do so* ***wickedly***.'" (Gen 19:5-7)

"*as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual* ***immorality*** *and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*." (Jude 1:7)

"*For this reason God gave them up to* ***vile passions****. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is* ***shameful****, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due*." (Rom 1:26-27)

> "*Do you not know that the **unrighteous** will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God*." (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

Commentators affirming same-sex relationships argue that these passages address different ancient assumptions and practices than the committed same-sex relationships we see today. Unlike passages in the Bible that give authority to women to speak, allowing wriggle room for reinterpretation of Paul's 'silencing' of women, there are no exceptions concerning homosexual practices. All passages discussing same-sex relationships are strictly negative. Therefore, though Progressive theologians have provided novel interpretations for these passages, the conservative Christian view is that there is no room to budge on this topic. They believe homosexuality is a sin no less than adultery, and those who persist in unrepentant sin will feel the full force of God's wrath. A conservative Christian and a Progressive Christian may be equally concerned about the welfare of the LGBT community, but from very different perspectives.[458] In addition to this, Jesus affirmed the marriage institution between a man and a woman established at creation (Matt 19:4-6). For this reason, many denominations still maintain that same-sex practice is immoral, despite shifting sentiments in society. Ellen White spoke in no uncertain terms of the sins of Sodom:

> "*Indulgence in unlawful things has become a power to deprave mankind, to dwarf the mind and to pervert the faculties. Just such a state of things as exists today existed before the flood and before the destruction of Sodom. Dissipation is on the increase in our world. Handbills on which indecent pictures are printed are posted up along our streets to allure the eyes and deprave the morals. These presentations are of such a character as to stir up the basest passions of the human heart through corrupt imaginings. These corrupt imaginings are followed by defiling practices like those in which the Sodomites indulged. But the most terrible part of the evil is that it is practiced under the garb of sanctity. Our youth will be defiled, their thoughts degraded, and their souls polluted unless they are barricaded with the truth."*[459] (p169)

Mrs Booth argued that if we speak truth without the spirit, it will lack power and fail to move the people to action. Mrs White believed the same. However, the way she measured the presence of the spirit was different to Mrs White. Mrs Booth believed that the presence of the Spirit was determined largely by the outward demonstrations of the preacher – perhaps waving the hands in the air excitedly, speaking loudly and banging the pulpit. Music helped to facilitate the fervour. She found that excitement moved people. The way she measured the success of a preacher was the response of the people.

It is certainly Biblical that truth must always be combined with the Spirit. But how should we measure the working of the Spirit? Noah preached for 120 years, but it fell on deaf ears. Jesus spoke truth but it failed to move many of his listeners. Paul preached the truth and was beaten, stoned and cast into prison. Though they spoke truth in the power of the Holy Spirit, their messages failed to move the masses – the majority of listeners remained steadfast in unbelief. Therefore, the response of the people to hearing a message cannot necessarily be used to measure the presence of the Holy Spirit in the message or the speaker.

Certainly, a dull, monotone discourse will not help with the imparting of truth – it puts people to sleep. The message has to be interesting to ensure the message is heard. There has to be some effort to make worship interesting to keep the mind engaged, but excitement and enthusiasm by no means demonstrates the presence of the Holy Spirit. David and the Israelites danced and sang exuberantly in the name of the Lord, yet their worship was rejected by God. Therefore, the presence of the Holy Spirit is not determined by the excitement of the music or the forcefulness of the preaching. Real power is in truth imparted by the Spirit. In the parable of the sower, Jesus said:

> "*Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear*!" (Matt 13:3-9)

Truth itself is from the Spirit. Truths are spiritually discerned "*but the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God* (1 Cor 2:14)." When truth is proclaimed, the success of the message is largely dependent on the hearer. They will either accept it or reject it as they are guided by the Spirit. Even if they accept it, they have to decide if they will maintain it. If truths are only received when coupled with emotionalism, it likely will not be sustained. It will be choked out by trials and tribulations and by the cares of the world.

Mrs Booth argued that we need the power of Pentecost, we need to "*make haste back to those days of simplicity and power*?"[130 (p62)] By power, she primarily meant the power of the Holy Spirit. The early church truly was given power from the Spirit to achieve great things. We can achieve nothing without God's Spirit. But Jesus said, "*true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth* (Jn 4:23)." God did not only impart the Holy Spirit, but He raised up apostles well versed in Scripture. The most prominent missionary and evangelist of all was Paul, a theologian, who often preached the gospel with simplicity but also used his scholarship to confront and defend every controversy.

Paul said to "*Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy… he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men* (1 Cor 14:1,3)." The Benson Commentary says that the word 'prophesy' here means to open and apply the Scriptures and discuss divine things.[225 (p210)] Therefore, it is the preaching and teaching of truth from Scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit which is to be elevated. Jesus said, "*he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty* (Matt 13:23). In other words, it is the Word of Truth that moves us to action – to correct and lasting action.

According to Paul, even the singing is to be with 'understanding' and not just with 'the spirit (1 Cor 14:15).' This can be achieved by having theologically rich lyrics as well as by using music to lead people into a state of mind to receive truths from Scripture. Rather than dominating the church service, the music should help to prepare us for the most important part of the service – the opening up of Scripture, for God's Word is the source of life. Truth is what leads to true conviction. Much emphasis in Scripture is on the depth of understanding and truth. John said, "*do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God* (1 Jn 4:1)." Paul said to "*Test all things* (1 Thes 5:21)." If we have a feeling or a thought, how can we discern its source – whether it be of ourselves, of the Holy Spirit or of some other spirit? It is only by a thorough and continual abiding in God's Word, prayerfully comparing Scripture with Scripture, that we can know we are being guided by truth. Paul said:

> "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*." (2 Tim 3:16-17)

If we want to be led by the Spirit, we must read the words that were inspired by the Spirit in Scripture. It is true, as Mrs Booth suggested, that the Holy Spirit is essential for witnessing for Christ, but the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (Eph 6:17). The Bible is a central component of the working of the Holy Spirit.

Though they were sincere in their Christian faith and worked tirelessly for the salvation of others, the conclusion of this chapter is that the Booths emphasised the presence of the Spirit above the importance of scriptural integrity. The measure of the presence of the Holy Spirit was determined by physical demonstrations of enthusiasm and by numbers converted, rather than by commitment to prayerful Bible study and preaching of the whole truth in the Spirit. Without a firm and resolute commitment to faithfulness to every word of Scripture, the messages we share in our discourses and in the lyrics of our songs eventually lose harmony with the Bible.

Chapter 27
Lyrical Content of CCM

The Salvation Army practice of using dynamic but theologically light discourses filled with anecdotes, interwoven with lively music to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit and lead people to conviction, has flowed through to contemporary Christian worship. The extent to which the practices of the Salvation Army and other Holiness movements have influenced contemporary Christian worship is hard to say. What is certain, however, is that contemporary Christian music (CCM) lacks the breadth and the depth which is found in Psalms. Like the Salvation Army in the early days, the purpose of CCM is to attract people by copying secular styles of music as well as helping the audience feel the moving of the Holy Spirit. The feelings, emotions and thoughts produced by the music are believed to be from the Holy Spirit, guiding them and motivating them to action.

While inspirational music is an enjoyable and effective way to experience the transforming power of conversion and motivate us to action, Jesus primarily motivated His followers to action by His words and example. He instructed us to teach others to observe all things that He commanded us (Matt 28:20). How can we do this if we do not delve deeply into Scripture? We are to teach, preach, pray, sing and worship in spirit and in truth (Jn 4:23-24, 1 Cor 14:1-18). A 20-minute sermonette is generally not long enough to delve deeply into Scripture, or one line of thought to then fill with half an hour of anecdotes – as Railton advised Salvation Army preachers. This can be effective and appropriate on occasion, but may not be enough to give the members adequate depth of understanding if done on a regular basis.

As with the Salvation Army, rather than stressing scriptural integrity and the importance of God's law, Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions emphasise the personal, therapeutic and emotional dimensions of faith. They facilitate this by a charismatic style adopted from popular culture, such as pop music.[46] This method is precisely the concern that Mrs White had with the Salvation Army in the late 1800s: "*There is the Salvation Army, the Holiness Band with their cheap Christianity, and yet it pleases because there is no warfare*."[44 (p309)] This emphasis on outward adorning - forms, objects, sounds, images and bodily sensations - as seen in charismatic worship, is also what the reformers were trying to throw off when they separated themselves from the Roman Catholic Church during the reformation. If Mrs White was concerned about the Salvation Army methods, she would be doubly concerned about the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements which have, in some ways, intensified and expanded on Holiness teachings and practice.

Why is this important for non-Charismatic and Pentecostal churches? A study found that the most popular worship songs come from a handful of megachurches with a knack for writing pop songs about what God will do for you. Four churches - Bethel, Hillsong, Passion City Church and Elevation - are churning out one hit after another and have been dominating the worship charts, the research found. The worship music most likely to be heard in many churches is written by just a handful of songwriters from a small number of churches. Researchers say that these churches have changed the spiritual practices and theology of congregations from many traditions. Shannan Baker, a postdoctoral fellow at Baylor University, said few of the popular songs even talk about the cross or salvation, instead focusing on what God is doing for me now and what God has promised to do for me in the future.[81]

Charismatic megachurches have considerable influence over Christianity globally, setting the tone for how churches should appeal to young people. Their worship style has become a template for other churches, including increasing numbers of Seventh-day Adventist churches around the world.[46] By comparison, Mrs White states that:

> "*True ministers know the value of the inward working of the Holy Spirit upon human hearts. They are content with simplicity in religious services.* ***Instead of making much of popular singing, they give their principal attention to the study of the Word****, and render praise to God from the heart. Above the outward adorning they regard the inward adorning, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit*."[168 (p453)]

In the Charismatic tradition, which has influenced almost all other Christian traditions in modern times to a certain degree, there tends to be disharmony between love and obedience. The issue of obedience has been focused on us and, therefore, made into an issue of works which we shun. General Booth abolished baptism and communion because some members were treating these rituals as mere forms by which to gain salvation. Instead of educating members how to view the ordinances correctly, he did away with them. Likewise, because some people treat obedience to the law as a means to salvation, church leaders discourage members from striving to be obedient to God's law, instead of educating members to obey the law for the right reason.

It is true that obedience without love leads to a cold works-based Christianity. With the emphasis on truth and obedience to the law in their teachings, Seventh-day Adventists tend to be more prone to legalism. Logically minded people are often attracted to Adventism because of the systematic reasoning behind its teachings and prophecies. Therefore, some may join the church because it makes logical sense but without having a personal relationship with God. They worship God in truth but not in spirit. Mrs Booth was very much concerned about the effect of head knowledge on children when there was not heart religion:

"*In the early part of my married life, when my dear husband was travelling very much from place to place, I was frequently thrown into the houses of leading families in churches for three or four weeks at a time, and I used to say to myself, 'How is it that these children seem frequently to have a more inveterate dislike for religion and religious things, than the children of worldly people who make no profession?'*

Subsequent observations and experience have shown me the reason. It is because such parents ***inform the head without training the heart****. They teach what they neither practice themselves nor take the trouble to see that their children practise, and the children see through the hollow sham and learn to despise both their parents and their religion.*"[14 (ch8)]

One of the criticisms of Mrs White is the emphasis on obedience in her writings. Some of her views and comments have been interpreted as works oriented. She often confronted people over their errors and it was not uncommon for pastors and other members of the church to receive a letter from their prophet reproving some apparent wrongdoing. Mrs White has, therefore, often been viewed as stern and cold-hearted. Reproofs received from Mrs White ranged from soft admonitions to sharp reprimands. Members received reprimands for being too overbearing in their relationships or too judgmental toward other members. She confronted people who were spreading false teachings, such as spiritualism. She rebuked people for envy and pride as well as hypocritical or immoral behaviours. She was very stern toward those who misused her writings, such as quoting her out of context to promote personal agendas. She rebuked preachers if their sermons were not pointed, direct and focused on biblical truth but also lamented when sermons were dry and Christless. She urged that Christ be the centre of every doctrinal teaching.

In the 19th century, it was not uncommon for sermons to be very lengthy by today's standards, sometimes continuing for hours. For example, William and Catherine Booth generally preached for one to one-and-a-half hours.[151] Mrs White did not approve of excessively long sermons and, therefore, a particular preacher who was regularly preaching for one-and-a-half hours or more, was a recipient of one of her chastening letters.[293] Addressing church leaders at the opening of the General Conference session of 1901 she said, "*Do not quote my words again as long as you live until you can obey the Bible… When you make the Bible your food, your meat, and your drink, when you make its principles the elements of your character, you will know better how to receive counsel from God*."[90 (p33)] When the preacher, John Byington, became depressed and quit his ministry, she said in a letter to him, "*You love this world, and your heart is altogether too much wrapped up in the things you possess.. There must be an entire change in you in these things*."[460] He did not receive the advice and became more unhappy but soon after, he humbled himself and heeded the admonition given him. He returned to his ministry and eventually became the church's first General Conference president.

However, not everyone accepted her rebukes. When Dr John Harvey Kellogg was reproached for his pantheistic teachings, he refused her advice and became estranged from the church. Another church member, Stephen Smith, refused to even open her letter and left the church. After opening the letter for the first time 28 years later, he said his life would have been much better if he had opened it and heeded its advice immediately.[460]

Many of these rebukes are recorded in Testimonies for the Church, with recipients generally de-identified, and are to be a guide to all members. Mrs White's defence for these harsh rebukes was that she was relaying messages given to her by God. She was dealing with serious realities in people's lives that have serious consequences. The prophet is commanded to "*Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins* (Is 58:1)." If she was a true prophet, she was doing her duty in calling people to repentance.

Strict discipline was a typical characteristic of 19th century evangelicals. Salvationist and author, Cathy Le Feuvre, states: "*The Booth children, though clearly loved, were raised in a strict home where there was discipline from a very early age. As did most households of the time, the Booths firmly held to the principle of 'spare the rod and spoil the child*.'"[14 (ch8)] Though the Booths were strict, they demonstrated the love of Christ to their children, especially in their work for the poor. Many have imagined that the White household must have also been one of strict discipline – and by today's standard, it probably was. They also imagine Mrs White as a domineering, dogmatic and hard to get along with person. However, transcripts and video recordings from those who knew Mrs White in person give a very different picture. She was known as a warm-hearted, friendly and cheerful person who had a deep love for her saviour and a caring concern for the spiritual and physical welfare of others. Her rebukes were embedded with encouragements and many expressed gratitude for the lifesaving reprovals they received from Mrs White which turned them from a course of destruction. Those who accept Mrs White's prophetic gift have found the counsels in the testimonies helpful advice in their own lives.[293,461]

If this is true, why is she seen in such negative light? One reason is that Adventists have often used Mrs White's writings as a stick to beat people with.[141] For example, they might take snippets of her writings to uphold rigid rules, such as prohibiting children from running around on the Sabbath. However, on one particular Sabbath when Mrs White's daughter, May, told her children to stop running, Mrs White told May that children are going to run, therefore, they should be told something they can do, like don't run too far ahead. In other words, it is natural and normal for children to run around and unrealistic to expect them to sit still all day. Mrs White advised that rules should be made easy for children to keep. Her grandchildren recall Sabbaths with grandma being a high point of the week. The house was decorated nicely with flowers and they would often go for picnics on the Sabbath. It was a hard working family, and the children were expected to

help out around the house. Apparently, in the White family, they did not have many don'ts because they had so many dos. The grandchildren were asked to do things with a smile and to respond with a smile. Arthur White said he couldn't have had a better upbringing than to be raised around Mrs White.[293,461]

According to her granddaughter, Grace, Mrs White did not want members to take her writings as a straitjacket - they were there to assist in different activities in life but not for rigidly defining our every behaviour.[462] Though Mrs White strongly encouraged a healthy diet and lifestyle, she was moderate in her own household and not extreme. For example, as food was passed around the table, children did not have to take everything. If there was something they didn't like, they were not to say 'yuck' but to try a small sample and then simply pass it along. Nothing unpleasant was ever to be discussed at the meal table. If anyone had a problem, they could talk about it after the meal. If children were misbehaving, they were not corrected in front of everyone at the table but after the meal. Grace said her grandmother was very understanding with children and her psychology with them very good.[293,463]

Apparently, there was often humour and laughter at the table. For example, one time before they ate, a guest was telling his wife only to eat the brown bread. As soon as grace was said, Mrs White, without a word, picked up the white bread and handed it to the wife which everyone found amusing! Though Mrs White encouraged a plant-based diet in her writings, they still had cow's milk at the table and sometimes they ate eggs and cream. But certainly, most of the food served up was healthy. Today, it is a lot easier in many parts of the world to eat a balanced, fully plant-based and appetising diet than it might have been in the 19th century.[462]

Mrs White was an ordinary fun-loving and caring mother and grandmother. Though she was absolutely dedicated to the mission of the church, she had many family responsibilities, such as caring for her children and other parent's children, sewing, knitting, cooking, shopping and washing dishes; though in her older age, she employed an executive secretary, Sara McEnterfer, to manage her household operations and travel arrangements. Mrs White enjoyed the outdoors, including camping with family and friends. She was an enthusiastic gardener and grew flowers, vegetables and orchards. She loved animals and owned horses, chickens, cows, dogs and birds and cared for them well.[462,463]

Mrs White was little and never seemed in a hurry, but she got things done. Because of her busy schedule, Miss McEnterfer required appointments to see Mrs White and barred children from disturbing her as she worked. However, unknown to her secretary, Mrs White made a secret agreement with her grandchildren to sneak up to her writing room via a back passage whenever they liked. Miss McEnterfer called Mrs White mother and the two were known to enjoy flying around corners in the horse and buggy. Mrs White always greeted people with a smile, she used humour to make a point, she treated children like her own grandchildren and did not weigh people down with her own burdens and aches and pains.[461,463,464]

Though her writings do contain a lot of warnings and harsh rebukes, this is balanced with much love and mercy – much the same as we find in the Bible. It is clear that she was in love with Jesus. Mrs White's eldest grandchild, Ella, who was in her thirties when her grandmother died, recounted her favourite memory of Mrs White. It was a memory of her grandmother preaching a sermon on the matchless love of Jesus. During the sermon, Mrs White stopped and looked up as if to heaven and said, "*Oh Jesus, how I love you, how I love you, how I love you*."[461]

Rather than giving a picture of a cold and harsh legalist, anecdotes from Mrs White's life give a picture of a much loved, caring human being who loved her saviour and longed for her fellow human beings to avoid sins that separated them from their saviour. Mrs White was constantly trying to lead people to Jesus. She demonstrated that it is possible to be strictly obedient to God while at the same time seen by others as warm, loving and caring. Strict obedience does not have to mean cold, stern and unloving.

Unfortunately, not all Adventists have had the balanced understanding of law and grace as Mrs White did. Many young people have been turned away from Christianity due to overbearing parents who were strict with rules but failed to show them the love of Christ, as Mrs Booth had noticed and had concerns about. Equally as bad as obedience without love, however, is love without obedience which is a selfish relationship or 'cheap Christianity.' In cheap Christianity, there is more emphasis on what God can do for me rather than what I can do for God. Evidence of cheap Christianity reveals itself in poor lifestyle choices. Unfortunately, examples could be cited in any denomination, but there seems to be a disproportionate number of public scandals coming out of Charismatic mega-churches, including allegations of sexual abuse, concealment of child-sex crimes, marital affairs and money laundering. Much effort goes into producing fine-tuned and polished performances, but less effort goes into perfecting godly characters. If the need for obedience is constantly being downplayed through man-centred song lyrics and theology, eventually people will start to misbehave. Obedience is less about us and more about giving honour to the one who created us and died for us. Perfect harmony with God exists when there is proportionate emphasis on love and obedience.

The legitimacy of the contemporary music industry hinges on General Booth's argument that the style of music does not matter, as long as the lyrics are in tune with Scripture. One reason why sincere Christians might draw this conclusion is the belief that instrumental music primarily affects our emotions only. However, in previous chapters, we discussed how even the emotional influence of music alone can be a problem if used in the wrong way. Science has also shown that, apart from the effect on emotions and apart from the lyrics, music can have profound effects on the listener in many different ways – both good and bad.

Commercialisation of Worship Music

Even if this was not true and music apart from the lyrics has no significant influence on us, **the irony is that even the lyrics of CCM is terribly out of balance with what we find in Scripture**. Paul said, "*I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding* (1 Cor 14:15)." This was in the context of his counsel on speaking in tongues. If we speak a language in church that nobody understands, we just edify ourselves; however, he argues that we ought to be edifying, exhorting and comforting each other. The Cambridge Dictionary describes 'exhorting' as strongly encouraging or trying to persuade someone to do something. Singing is not just for edifying ourselves, but for increasing the understanding of fellow believers. Understanding is critical for obedience. Keith Getty, author of one of the most popular worship songs of all time, In Christ Alone, argues that "*The western church has really messed this subject up… in the sale of church music to Wall Street*."[465]

Sean McDowell, author, speaker and Biola University apologetics professor has also expressed concern, not just for CCM, but for churches and speakers that value competence and giftedness over character and depth of theology. In his interview with Newsboys, he queried them on how much the drive to sell albums in the CCM industry might influence the selection of artists. In reply, Jeff Frankenstein, keyboardist for Newsboys since 1994, said that "*especially in CCM and churches, when you mix business with theology… that's a ripe place for hypocrisy*." He said a lot of artists come in with incredibly good intentions with a call from the Lord and they're greeted with a business with a lot of Industry people. The pure thing that they bring to the table now has to be marketed and manipulated and put into the system with these gatekeepers controlling it and profits have to be made. It kind of loses its innocence he said.[187]

Keith Getty goes on to explain how the majority of worship songs in the top 2000 today are administrated or owned by companies that

are owned by Wall Street. This is the first point in history in which the songs we sing are not being decided by the leadership of the church, he said. Throughout church history until recently, it has been a combination of Psalms and liturgical singing, localised singing worked out by the leadership of the community and, with Luther and the advent of the printing press, singing from hymn books. With the best will in the world, at the end of the day, companies have profit targets to reach. It is a different motive altogether than church leadership selecting Psalms or hymns which include singing about God's wrath and about laments, Getty said. This cannot be part of the commercial world. There is a different principle guiding selection and a natural falling away from a balanced teaching of Scripture. He says modern songs are not supposed to touch on anything which is too much about the uniqueness of God, especially the dark judgemental or tough things. That doesn't square with the model.[465]

An earlier chapter of this book demonstrates that, traditionally, church leaders, such as Martin Luther, directly influenced the lyrical content of church songs, which supports Getty's claims. By contrast, the results of a study released by WorshipLeaderResearch.com in 2024 substantiates Getty's assertion regarding the influence of the most popular worship songs today. The study revealed that almost 80% of songs and artists on the Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) Top 100 lists between 2010 and 2024 were controlled by three major corporations: Capitol CMG, Essential Music and Integrity Music. Bethel Music is the only major church organisation that publishes and administers its own music. The other three top suppliers of worship songs - Hillsong, Passion City Church and Elevation - are all dependent on commercial enterprises.[466]

Numerous studies have also highlighted imbalance in the lyrical content of the top worship songs, as suggested by Keith Getty. For example, research findings by Daniel Jesse suggest that there is an overemphasis on joy in the top worship songs, whereas, unlike in Psalms, sadness and sorrow are rarely expressed.[467] Another example is Shannan Baker's analysis of the Trinity in the lyrics of the top worship songs. She concludes that, while the lyrics are appropriately Christ-centred, they fail to represent the Father and the Holy Spirit proportionate to Christ. Though all three persons of the Trinity appear in Christian worship songs, the 'overwhelming' references to the second Person cannot be ignored, she said.[468] For Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians, encountering the Holy Spirit through the emotional experience of contemporary praise is an important part of worship;[469] therefore, they might perceive a strong presence of the Holy Spirit even if His name is not mentioned in the lyrics. God the Father is therefore exclusively forgotten in many of the top worship songs, while Jesus and the Holy Spirit always have a strong presence.

Whether or not these and other imbalances are due to commercialisation of Christian music, as suggested by Getty, is hard to prove, but it certainly needs to be seriously considered as a significant factor. Christians often perceive God the Father as more severe and less willing to forgive than Jesus, whom they believe to

be warmer and less stern.[470] Rather than understanding the Trinity as a united God who is love (1 Jn 4:7-11) and who is one (Deut 6:4), some may mistakenly believe that the loving Jesus saves us from the hostile Father, instead of believing atonement is a united act of love. Therefore, companies that are trying to sell more music to increase profits might consciously or unconsciously favour songs with lyrics that exclude the Father or anything that might reinforce this negative perception of God, such as God's wrath.[471] In the medical field, we are wary of drug research which is sponsored by a company that owns the patent for the drug, since bias will more likely taint the results of the study in favour of the drug. Why should we not also be wary of the songs promoted by companies that make large profits from the sale of those songs, since bias might influence the selection of lyrics that favour enhanced sales?

Topic	Top 25 Christian worship songs	Psalms
Justice	Mentioned once in one of the songs	The Hebrew word for justice 'Mishpat' alone can be found 65 times in 33 different Psalms
The poor	Completely absent	Uses varied language to describe the poor on nearly every page
Widow, refugees and the oppressed	Completely absent	The Psalter bleeds the cries of the oppressed
Enemies	Rarely, and only in a spiritual sense	The third most common character in the Psalms
Questions posed to God	Completely absent	Frequently pleads with God to act

Figure 5: The lyrics of the top 25 Christian worship songs compared with Psalms[472]

Warning people of their wickedness and calling them to repentance does not sell well. It is much easier to sell albums and concert tickets if we tell people only what makes them feel good. Jeremiah was unpopular because he preached about judgement while false prophets preached what was soothing to the ear:

> "*Saying, 'Peace, peace!' When there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed, Nor did they know how to blush. Therefore, they shall fall among those who fall; In the time of their punishment they shall be cast down, says the Lord*." (Jer 8:11-12)

The constant message singing out from our churches is peace and safety. There is little call to deep soul searching and deep repentance, no calling out of sins. Profess the name Jesus and you will be saved - that is all that is required. But this message is out of harmony with Scripture.

Old Testament scholar, Michael J. Rhodes, tweeted a summary of his research on the top 25 Christian worship songs, comparing them with the Psalms. For example, justice was mentioned only once in the top 25 worship songs, while the Hebrew word for justice (Mishpat) is found in almost a quarter of the Psalms. Also, while the poor, the widow, refugees and the oppressed were completely absent in the top 25 Christian worship songs, the poor and the oppressed are described on practically every page of Psalms. (Figure 5 outlines the main insights).[472]

An Example of the Lyrical Content of CCM

Newsboys is a Christian rock band founded in 1985 in Queensland, Australia and now based in Tennessee, United States. It is one of the most successful and iconic Christian music bands of all time. With a YouTube search of 'Newsboys', one of the first songs to pop up was Magnetic, the lead single released in 2021 for its fall project. Let us have a quick look at this song as an example of the lyrical content of their music. The key phrase of the song is, "*Your love keeps pulling me back, pulling me back, it's magnetic*." It is clearly a love song. However, it does not say who the love song is directed to. There is no mention of God or Jesus or any other title for our Lord. The middle stanza reads as follows:

> *"Your goodness won't give up on me*
> *It's a fountain flowing so deep*
> *You're so patient and so gracious*
> *It's* ***unconditional***
> *Even when I try to go my own way*
> *Even when my heart is in the wrong place*
> *You bring it back around like a boomerang*
> *Just like a boomerang."*[473]

The song gives the sense that God's grace has no limit. We are passive spectators in the relationship. It does not even matter if we are doing the wrong thing because God will pull us back. It is true that God's grace has no limit if we genuinely repent and unite ourselves with Him. It is true that His Spirit is always trying to lead us back to God. When we return to Him, all past sins are forgiven and every time we stumble, if we turn our face to Him, He graciously accepts us back with open arms. In that sense, God's grace is unconditional and limitless. However, we should never presume upon God's mercy and love. Our "*adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour* (1 Pet 5:8)" and whenever we stray into enemy territory, we are vulnerable. If an antelope calf strays from the herd, it can easily be taken down by the predator. Peter cautions us to be

sober and vigilant (v7), resisting the devil, steadfast in the faith (v9). Why the need for such vigilance if God always brings us back around like a boomerang? The reason is that, if we 'try to go our own way,' there is no guarantee we will ever make it back.

Mrs White says that "*We cannot for one moment separate ourselves from Christ with safety*."[474 (p93)] This is scriptural. The Newsboys song is deceptively reassuring. We have to put on the armour of God to protect ourselves from the fiery darts. God's grace is not unconditional - no healthy relationship is. Every covenant that God made with His people had conditions. There are always rules in a relationship and when rules are broken, the relationship suffers. If we think that God's love is unconditional, we may be prone to letting our guard down. God promised the children of Israel great blessings, but, He said, "*if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you in fury* (Lev 26:27-28)." They did walk contrary to God and they were taken into captivity by Assyria and by Babylon. The ten northern tribes never made it back to the promised land.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God promised great prosperity for Israel:

> "*But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying*." (Is 65:18-19)

Many Christians, such as Zionists, are still waiting for God to fulfil all of His promises to the nation of Israel – they are waiting for Israel to rise to glory and for the temple to be rebuilt. But these promises came with conditions:

> "'*If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword'; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken*." (Is 1:19-20)

Likewise, God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah:

> "*And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it*." (Jer 18:9-10)

And again, through the prophet Zechariah, God promises to restore the temple. But He warned:

> "*And this shall come to pass **if** you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God*." (Zech 6:15)

The Jews were not faithful to God and they rejected the Messiah when He came. In the New Testament, God makes Jesus judge over all (Jn 5:22) and Jesus pronounces judgement on Israel when he prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans. The God of the New Testament is just as harsh as

the Old Testament toward those who disobey Him. Not because He is a vindictive God, but because He is Holy. Sin causes suffering and a Holy and just God cannot stand for this. Consequently, instead of receiving the blessings promised, the Romans crushed Israel in 70 AD and destroyed the temple. The Jews were scattered to the ends of the earth without another promise of redemption for their nation. God's mercy does have limits.

The good news is that the nation of Israel is only a type representing spiritual Israel, which is the antetype. Spiritual Israel includes all true followers of Christ, his church:

> "*For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God*." (Rom 2:28-29)

The promises that were given to Israel in the Old Testament, now belong to us, the gentiles as well as all Jews who believe in Christ:

> "*And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*." (Gal 3:29)

The promises to literal Israel did not come true due to disobedience, but for those of us who are faithful to Christ and who have been grafted into spiritual Israel, these promises have and will come true in spiritual blessings but also, literally, in physical and material blessings. The blessings that were for the nation of Israel that they missed out on due to disobedience will be received by faithful spiritual Israel:

> "*For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind*." (Is 65:17)

> "*Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*.'" (Rev 21:1-4)

However, as with the nation of Israel, the promises to spiritual Israel are conditional. Jesus said:

> "***If** you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you*." (Jn 15:7)

Therefore, our prayers are answered only if we abide in Jesus and in His words – which includes His commands. God's faithful church, the remnant, the bride of Christ, keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev 12:17); whereas the unfaithful church in the last days is referred to as the harlot dressed in purple (Rev 17:3-6) because it is unfaithful, just as the nation of Israel was called a Harlot for its unfaithfulness. One of the characteristics of the

unfaithful church is that it would attempt to change times and laws (Dan 7:25). We do not get to pick and choose which laws to keep and which not to keep. Just as God was serious about His law in the Old Testament, He is still serious about His law today.

We have lost the balance between mercy and justice as found in the Bible. Our songs and sermons speak much of God's grace - which is wonderful. We need to be repeatedly reminded of God's love and grace. But we have been failing to adequately elevate and revere God's law and warn of the consequence of disobedience. We must give people assurance of salvation but remind them that this assurance is only while they are abiding in Christ. Jesus said:

> "*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven*." (Matt 5:17-20)

Chapter 28
Doctrinal Deficiency in Our Lyrics

If we really want to know Jesus and teach about Him to others – to spread the gospel - we must know and understand our doctrines and sing about them accurately and clearly with joy and enthusiasm. A survey of Seventh-day Adventist pastors showed that 59% of them believe the mission of their church is to lead someone into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, while only 16% believe the mission of the church is sharing the Adventist message, including their distinctive doctrines.[77]

Can we even have a personal relationship with Jesus without knowing and living our beliefs? If the mission of any church is solely to lead people into a personal relationship with Jesus, what does that mean? Without an emphasis on teaching distinctive doctrines, we have failed the commission of Christ which is to "*make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you* (Matt 28:19-20)." Everything that Jesus commanded us is found in the Old and New Testaments. The things that Jesus has taught us in His Word is the foundation of our beliefs and our understanding of who Jesus is. What Jesus taught us makes up our doctrine, our fundamental beliefs. All of what Jesus taught and commanded us is a blessing. It gives light, it is all good news. Therefore, teaching doctrine is an essential requirement of spreading the gospel – it was commanded by Jesus.

The central most beautiful doctrines for us as fallen humanity teach of Jesus' death and resurrection. But the other doctrines are also vitally important for our relationship with Him. Even Jesus' teaching about judgement is good news because our King is going to rid the universe of the cancer of sin! Jesus is central to every doctrine; therefore, we cannot lead people into a personal relationship with Jesus without teaching doctrine. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6). We discover truth in God's Word; therefore, we can only know Jesus by knowing truth which is found in all of Scripture. One of the fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is that the Holy Scriptures - the Old and New Testaments - are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration.[28]

The early Adventists spent much time discussing doctrine with each other and with others outside their movement. Their written materials are saturated with discourses and debate over doctrine. Peter said, you must "*always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear* (1 Pet 3:15)." Our hope does not only come from our belief in

the risen Christ. The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture gives us hope that the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament is the risen saviour. How blessed we are that God chose to reveal Himself through Scripture! The doctrine of the Trinity, which tells us that Jesus is God, gives us hope that his death has the power to save us. The doctrine of the second coming gives us hope that our risen saviour will:

> "*…descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord*." (1 Thes 4:16-17)

Therefore, the doctrine of the resurrected Jesus is incomplete without all other doctrines. True doctrines teach us of the character of God and false doctrines misrepresent God's character. For example, some denominations who believe in eternal conscious torment for the wicked believe that, because God is infinite in nature, He is "*infinitely worthy of obedience, and crimes committed against Him warrant an infinite penalty—eternity in hell*."[418] Adventists, on the other hand, believe that this understanding of God has caused many people to profess Christianity insincerely out of fear of torment or to reject Christianity because they see the contradiction between a God of love and a God of brutality. This is a very different God to the one who blots out any consciousness of those who reject Him so that they will no longer suffer the consequences of their own wilful sins. For Adventists, God is just because he does not torment the wicked for eternity. For Christians who believe in eternal conscious torment, God is just because he does torment the wicked for eternity. Their respective doctrines on hell give a very different perspective of God's character. Therefore, our doctrines do matter.

Getting doctrines wrong or not having a clear understanding of them can have serious consequences - it can distort the perfect character of our merciful God. If we do not get our doctrines right, we are open to the devil's deceptions and we can lead others astray. Think of the Jews who misapplied Scripture and, consequently, rejected the prophets that God raised up for them and did not even recognise their own Messiah when He came. The mistake they made was to lay aside the commandments of God and put their confidence in the doctrines and traditions of men (Mk 7:6-8).

From the very beginning of Christianity, there have been constant attempts to distort the teachings of Jesus. The disciples relentlessly guarded against heretical teachings. Chief among the heretics in the early church included the Gnostics. Gnosticism was a religious and philosophical belief system which emerged in the first and second centuries AD. It often presented itself as a form of Christianity, but it diverged greatly from the pure doctrines and teachings of the church. Gnostics believed they had access to esoteric (secret) knowledge. The early Christians

effectively suppressed the influence of Gnosticism to a large degree in the early church.[475,476]

Martin Luther accused the Roman Catholic church of distorting doctrine. In opposition to Luther's 95 theses, Roman Catholic theologian, Sylvester Prierias, wrote:

> "*He who does not accept the doctrine of the Church of Rome and pontiff of Rome as an infallible rule of faith, from which the Holy Scriptures, too, draw their strength and authority, is a heretic*."[477 (p193)]

In other words, he asserts that the authority of the Bible is subordinate to the Pope and Roman Catholic Church doctrine. No less, if we **treat lightly** Bible based doctrines which get their authority from Scripture and not from man, we make them subordinate to human wisdom.

When Jesus came, he brought light into a dark world:

> "*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it… That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world*." (Jn 1:4-5,9)

Light, therefore, is symbolic of truth and it directs our paths.

Concealing the Light of Truth

When Bible-based doctrines are concealed, the light of truth fails to shine which leads to darkness. If we are not diligently teaching the fullness of our doctrines via the pulpit and song, we are effectively concealing them. During the Dark Ages, the common people did not have access to the Bible – they were forbidden from reading it. It was a dark time in the history of Europe.

The fourth trumpet of Revelation signalled a time of darkness (Rev 8:12) and symbolises a period of suppression of the truth which Jesus had brought into the world. When Jesus' teachings are distorted, it leads to darkness – the light He brought into the world is dimmed. The Dark Ages is a term used to describe a dark time in the history of Europe from about the 5th to the 15th century. And what a dark time in the history of this world it was! There was much poverty and abuse.

Protestant reformers blamed the darkness of this time on the corruption of the Catholic Church and identified the Papacy as the antichrist. Daniel 7 describes this power as one that "*shall speak pompous words against the Most High… And shall intend to change times and law* (Dan 7:25)." Martin Luther identified this little horn power speaking pompous words as the papal antichrist.[360] As quoted above, the Catholic Church elevates the doctrine of the Church of Rome and pontiff above the written Word of God, thus, many of the reformers reasoned, it was 'speaking pompous words against God.' Also, the Catholic Church allowed statues of Mary and other saints into the church which they pray to for intercession.[478] This has been seen as an example of changing the law of God. As already dis-

cussed, Seventh-day Sabbath keepers see the attempt to 'change times and law' as a reference to the Sabbath commandment – the only part of God's law with a time component. The Catholic Church claims that they have the authority to change the day of worship to Sunday because the Pope is God's representative on earth and Scripture is secondary to the authority of the Pope.

The Protestant Reformation was a 16th century European movement with the purpose of reforming doctrines and practices of the church. Church doctrine at the time was enforced by the state and disobedience was punishable by severe penalty. Reformers risked their lives to help bring doctrine back into harmony with Scripture. Luther taught absolute obedience to the Scriptures over any authorities, including popes or councils.[479] However, he did not encourage sudden radical reform which could lead to upheaval but, rather, gradual education of people in new understanding of Scripture and worship.[8] He soon set about finding ways to effectively teach church doctrine to the masses. He did this by preaching, writing and translating the Bible into German so common people could read the Bible for themselves.

Another important method Luther used was to teach fundamental beliefs through song. His primary motivation was to preach the gospel and to teach theology - music was clearly subordinate to it, though he recognised the significant role that music can play in teaching theology. Though musically gifted himself, Luther enlisted the help of professional musicians to ensure that his music was both musically cohesive and grounded in theology. He respected historical musical practices and built on them, employing song forms familiar to the people, so that God's Word was most effectively proclaimed. Lutheran hymns were clearly expressions of the Word of God in song that allowed people to learn fundamental beliefs as they sang. Robin A. Leaver, General Editor of the Yale Journal of Music & Religion, said:

> "*…early Lutheran hymns were thus clearly and self-consciously the Word of God in song that would allow the people to learn and experience fundamental theology as they sang*."[480 (p108)]

Luther's hymn, Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word, is an appeal to God to help us to remain grounded in His Word and to defend against those who tear down the work of Christ:

> "*Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word;*
> *curb those who by deceit or sword*
> *would seek to overthrow your Son*
> *and to destroy what he has done*."[481]

Luther's reform, however, was not complete. Though he had disagreements with the theology of the Catholic Church, he was not anti-Catholic and had no intentions, at least initially, of overturning Catholic tradition.[8] For example, he did not object to religious images which were regarded by some reformers, such as

Andreas Karlstadt, as forbidden idols.[482] Andreas Karlstadt was a professor at Wittenberg. He was an early supporter of Martin Luther but later dissented from Lutheran views by pressing for more extensive reforms.[8,483] Anabaptists also called for strict reform, some of whom reverted to seventh-day Sabbath keeping, including Oswald Glait and Andreas Fischer, two scholars and theologians who were former Catholic priests.[484] Trevor O'Reggio, professor of church history at Andrews University, says:

> "*A cursory comparison of Anabaptist theology and practices show striking similarities with those of Adventism. Adventists are kindred spirits to the Anabaptists' theology on baptism, communion, salvation, Sabbath, eschatology, the human will, and separation from the world*."[363]

Though most Christians since the 6th century have been worshipping on Sunday, until relatively recently, the fourth commandment was still regarded by the majority of Protestants as binding – it was only the day that had been changed. Sunday was referred to as the Sabbath and devout Christians refrained from working on Sunday, including General Booth. Eric Liddell, the champion Olympic sprinter who refused to race on Sunday, is a classic example.[485] Fanny J. Crosby was a prolific hymn and gospel writer during the time of General Booth and Mrs White. One of the hymns she wrote was called Don't Forget the Sabbath:

Don't forget the Sabbath,
The Lord our God hath blest,
Of all the week the brightest,
Of all the week the best;
It brings repose from labor,
It tells of joy divine,
Its beams of light descending,
With heavenly beauty shine.

Refrain
Welcome, welcome, ever welcome,
Blessed Sabbath day,
Welcome, welcome, ever welcome,
Blessed Sabbath day.

Keep the Sabbath holy,
And worship Him today,
Who said to His disciples,
"I am the living way;"
And if we meekly follow
Our Savior here below,
He'll give us of the fountain
Whose streams eternal flow.

Day of sacred pleasure!
Its golden hours we'll spend
In thankful hymns to Jesus,
The children's dearest Friend;
O gentle loving, Savior,
How good and kind Thou art,
How precious is Thy promise
To dwell in every heart![486]

Through song, Fanny Crosby reminded Christians to keep the Sabbath day (Sunday) holy. According to her song, it is a blessed day, the brightest and best, a day of pleasure, the song reads. But churches no longer sing these doctrinally rich songs and anything goes on Sunday now - sport, work, entertainment and renovating the house. Sunday is no longer called a Sabbath day by most Christians. One of the primary purposes of singing was not just to elevate moods, but to teach vital truths.

We must never be ashamed to share our beliefs, our doctrines, the whole gospel – for it is the "*power of God to salvation for everyone who believes* (Rom 1:16)" – in love and meekness and not in pride and arrogance. Paul advised Timothy, "*a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility* ***correcting those who are in opposition*** (2 Timothy 2:24-25)." When we fail to share our doctrines by singing, teaching and preaching about them, we begin to lose them.

Adventists were drawing the same conclusions as former Sabbath reformers and started keeping the Sabbath themselves and, eventually, became known as Seventh-day Adventists. Like the Protestant reformers who studied Scripture carefully and changed their doctrines if they found the church to be in error, the early Adventists also studied Scripture carefully, seeking new light. The Roman Catholic Church had become deficient in its doctrine and the reformers set about to restore doctrinal integrity. It was partly because of this deficiency in doctrine and their unscriptural practices that many prominent reformers, such as Martin Luther, believed the Roman Church was the antichrist, the beast of Revelation.

Along with doctrinal deficiency came problems with religious practices, including their worship, therefore, the reformers also set about to restore proper worship in church. But some reformers, such as the Anabaptists, believed that the reform had not gone far enough and, like the Anabaptist Sabbatarians, Adventists also believed the reformation was not complete. Comparing Scripture with Scripture, they became convinced that the church was in error concerning the Lord's Day. It was a significant discovery for the Adventist. After analysing all of the arguments for Sunday keeping, they came to the conclusion that the arguments were all based on human reasoning and tradition rather than any plain command from God. Jesus said that He is Lord of the Sabbath. God said He blessed the seventh day and made it holy. He called the Sabbath His holy day. Whereas Jesus never said He is Lord of Sunday. God never blessed the first day and He never

referred to it as His holy day. They could not find any plain statement or command in Scripture that the seventh day is no longer holy and, until God tells us otherwise, they felt we should continue to honour His holy day, the Sabbath. Before we disregard any law of God, we must be guided by the plain teaching of Scripture, preferably from direct command from God, so there is no room for error on our part.

If Sabbatarians have studied Scripture diligently and believe that there is substantial Biblical support for Sabbath keeping, why should they not sing about it? Commands of God are forgotten when Christians fail to commit them to heart. All of our doctrines should be founded on Scripture alone. In the 19th century, Seventh-day Adventists set about to expand on the reform effort. Like Luther, who wrote doctrinally rich hymns, Adventist pioneers wrote numerous hymns about their doctrines, including the Sabbath. The Seventh-day Adventist hymnal includes songs about the Sabbath, such as hymn 388 which is Fanny Crosby's hymn about the Sabbath.

In many Seventh-day Adventist Churches, this hymn is rarely, if ever, sung even though the Sabbath is in their name! Very few contemporary Christian songs speak of the Sabbath. We are no less forgetful than former generations and, therefore, we also need to be reminded frequently in song of our beautiful doctrines that ground us in the teachings of Jesus. Just as people in Luther's time were ignorant of the Bible because it had been kept from the common people, many Christians today are equally ignorant of the Bible, not because the Bible is kept from them, but because it is simply not being read and studied. Lack of knowledge, especially of God's law, had serious consequences for the Northern Kingdom of Israel:

> "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children*." (Hos 4:6)

If we are not focused on preserving doctrine, we end up influenced by those around us – perhaps the majority, the status quo. For example, as was General Booth's custom, Sunday was once kept as a Sabbath day of rest by many devout Christians. Popular hymn and gospel writers, including Fanny Crosby, wrote songs about the Sabbath. But now, none of the popular Christian tunes sing of the Sabbath. If Christians are not continually reminding themselves in their music and discourses, to set aside the Sabbath as a special day of worship and rest, it just becomes like any other day. If we do not set our minds on observing all things that Jesus commanded of us (Matt 28:20), we default to the next thing that gets our attention.

However, just as many modern-day Salvationists have lost the fervency for preaching the gospel and warning people of the coming judgement, many modern-day Adventists have lost the fervency for proclaiming the three angels' message, including the gospel, the advent (second coming) and Sabbath messages.

They are not singing about the Sabbath or going into the community to preach about it as the early Adventists used to. They are content to just let their neighbours believe their own thing without any sharing of doctrinal beliefs. Like General Booth, they do not like to discuss contentious issues. Just as the Jews failed to prepare the world for Jesus' first coming, Christians today are failing to prepare the world for His second coming.

Society has become increasingly busy, including on the weekends, to the point where most Christians do not even regard Sunday as a Sabbath. Though it was the early church's tradition of Sabbath keeping that created the weekend in the first place, in modern times, the church's neglect of the Sabbath has led to society becoming obsessed with work. The weekend is becoming more like the rest of the week. The shops never shut. Businesses keep operating seven days a week. Entertainment continues 24-7. Instead of being an example to keep society in balance, the church has been moulded by society. Because the rest of society is busy and rushing around on Saturday and Sunday, Christians also end up busy on those days, going to work, doing chores or attending sports events. Consequently, Christians, and the world, miss out on the blessing of the Sabbath rest.

Seventh-day Sabbath keepers argue that there is an even greater blessing that we miss out on due to the neglect of the seventh-day Sabbath because God blessed that day and made it holy. There is something intrinsically special about that day that the other days of the week do not possess. However, because so few Christians honour the seventh-day Sabbath, unless seventh-day Sabbath keepers are constantly reminded of this blessing, it would be easy for them to abandon it, to play sport, to do house renovations, to go to work or do other chores on that day like everyone else. The less Seventh-day Adventists sing about the Sabbath, the more likely their members will start to neglect it.

Bias in our interpretation of Scripture - such as the influence of tradition, our own likes and dislikes and the dominant worldview - can distort our interpretation of Scripture. The popular song, So Will I, produced by Hillsong United, suggests that God's creation kept evolving after He spoke it into existence:

> "*And as You speak*
> *A hundred billion creatures catch Your breath*
> ***Evolving in pursuit of what You said***
> *If it all reveals Your nature so will I*
> *I can see Your heart in everything You say*
> *Every painted sky*
> *A canvas of Your grace*
> *If creation still obeys You, so will I*"

This was either an unfortunate choice of words or a deliberate rejection of the Biblical account of creation. Either way, it teaches the singer to doubt the full veracity of the Biblical story and to place more confidence in science. The song declares that evolution reveals the nature of God – that would be a god of imperfec-

tion, survival of the fittest and death and disease. When we start doubting the Biblical record, the lyrics of our songs become distorted, either consciously or subconsciously distorting the nature of God.

Pride and self-centredness are often at the heart of bias that puts more confidence in human wisdom and tradition than in God and His Word. It causes people to be persuaded by false doctrines, trusting what the majority says, what their peers say, what society says, what scientists say or what everyone is singing. They fail to hear the voice of God. "*Seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand* (Matt 13:13)." Those who are emptied of selfish ambition, seeking to understand every word of God in Scripture and are spiritually discerned will hear God's voice and follow the lamb wherever He goes. They recognise His voice, including the voice of His prophets.

When we do not hold firmly to our doctrines, heresy can subtly creep into the church. Peter Jones is a theologian and expert on the subject of Gnosticism. He believes that, since the 1960s and 70s, Gnosticism has been emerging as a major force to be reckoned with both inside the church and outside. He says that Gnosticism is really a Christianised form of paganism, a very serious ancient and now modern spiritual view of existence. At the core of all religions, it is taught, there is a deep level of agreement and the intent is to bring all religions together as a united whole.[476]

Rev. Dr Lauren Artress, a female Episcopal priest of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, said:

> "*We mistakenly thought that the intellect was the avenue to experiencing the Sacred, to nourishing the soul. We discounted the imagination and our other faculties of knowing* ***mystery***."[487 (p8)]

This has throwbacks to a central tenet of ancient Gnosticism – that internal personal experience is a higher authority than sacred texts and external religious authority. Peter Jones says that this mystical line of thinking is affecting the evangelical church through the emergent movement.[476] Holiness theology, which also relies heavily on experience rather than theological knowledge, has flowed through to Pentecostal and Charismatic thinking and now to Christianity more broadly - it has helped pave the way for the acceptance of mystical thought which is creeping into leading Charismatic churches that provide much of our contemporary Christian music. In his book, The Future of Faith, Harvey Cox argues that doctrines are giving way to social justice and spiritual experience,[488] which, as will be discussed in a later chapter, has roots in Gnostic thinking.

To protect ourselves against heretical philosophies, we must study Scripture diligently. We must put the words of Scripture into song. We must keep studying and growing and wrestling over Scripture, becoming ever more complete in our understanding but never fully grasping all that there is to understand, for we see only dimly as in a mirror (1 Cor 13:12). We must join a church that lives and

teaches truth according to Scripture as we understand it from our own earnest grappling with God's Word.

The website, Christianity Today, titled one of its podcasts, Keith Getty Is Still Fighting the Worship Wars. Though humble in his approach, Keith is unapologetic in his desire to get church leaders to keep wrestling over worship music. If we are always worried about offending people, our singing and preaching will be watered down and diluted - flavourless. If song writers and their agencies are concerned about sales, they will include only the most universally agreeable doctrines at the cost of all the others.

General Booth, though ridiculed initially, was able to win the hearts of all people and all nations, the religious and irreligious – Catholics and every Christian denomination, Agnostics, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Jews and Muslims. But it came at a cost. George Scott Railton, first Commissioner of The Salvation Army, describes how Salvationists were able to instantly convince influential men that they were Bible believers. Their enthusiasm and care for the poor won the admiration of these influential people. They won the hearts of the people by living the gospel – this is Biblical. However, they did not go the next step to teach all that Jesus commanded us. They won friends without any desire to discuss doctrines, as described by George Railton:

> "*But a remark [General Booth] once made respecting the reported scepticism of some highly-placed Colonials… How natural for them to sink into scepticism! But the moment they encounter men who convince them instantly that they believe the Bible they carry, scepticism retires in favour of joyous surprise, and* ***without any desire to discuss doctrines, they become our lifelong friends***.
>
> *The General's ability in securing the assistance of all sorts of men, including those whose religious opinions widely differed from his own, or who had got none at all, was remarkable*."[57 (p112)]

Railton and Booth saw it as a virtue not to discuss doctrines. It helped them to win friends and raise funds. In a speech reported by the Hamburg Press, General Booth said, "*The Army wants to come into competition with nobody, only to be a friendly helper - nobody's enemy, but the friend of everybody*."[57 (p230)] If we avoid unpopular beliefs, we will win friends, draw crowds, raise lots of money and sell lots of songs. Discussing General Booth's establishment of a constitution and rights for the Army, George Railton said:

> "*Another Deed Poll, enrolled January 30, 1891, similarly safeguarded The Army's Social Work, so that persons or corporations desiring to contribute only to the Social funds could make sure that they were doing so*."[57 (p81)]

This enabled their organisation to secure funds from diverse sources. Unfortunately, this approach muzzled the spread of the gospel.

Though we are called to help the poor, Jesus' ministry to the physical needs of the people was never separated from ministry to their spiritual needs. Mrs White said that as we help people with their physical needs, "*the truth for this time should be presented*."[16 (p259)] Despite her view, it is not only the Salvation Army that has been muzzled due to internal and external restrictions on proselytising. The Seventh-day Adventist aid and development arm of the church, ADRA, along with many other Christian aid organisations have been similarly restricted from combining spirituality with their aid work. On the FAQs page of the ADRA Website, it states: "*ADRA does not proselytize. God's love in ADRA's programs is expressed when it reaches out to those in need regardless of race, gender, and political, or religious affiliation*."[489]

Mrs White emphasised the importance of discussing doctrines, even if controversial:

"*The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people, should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition and worship they know not what*."[490 (p39)]

General Booth focused on that which would excite and startle the audience. Preaching about Christ weeping over sinners did not stir the hearts like hellfire and judgment. "*When I preached about the harvest and the wicked being turned away*," he said, "*numbers came. We must have that kind of truth which will move sinners*."[186 (p19)] Today, unlike in General Booth's time, focusing on God's love, personal healing and prosperity is what draws the crowds. This is the focus of our lyrics. But it is not the whole story. Our lyrics must accurately reflect the harmony of Scripture, otherwise we are telling a distorted story. How do we lead people into a personal relationship with Christ if we do not first teach them who He is? If our music only teaches of a saviour who saved us and our sermons are teaching the same, we end up with a distorted understanding of Jesus. Distinctive beliefs

and doctrines show us who Jesus is and how to have a personal relationship with Him.

Noah preached an unpopular message. Jeremiah was scorned for the message he preached. Jesus lost many followers by teaching unpopular truths. He did draw a large crowd and won over many disciples when He fed the five thousand. The next day, as he taught deeper truths in the synagogue, He said:

> "*He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven - not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever*." (Jn 6:56-58)

Many of his followers found this too hard to swallow and "*From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more* (Jn 6:66)." Jesus did not manipulate people to His side by telling the people what they wanted to hear. He told the plain truth, knowing that His true followers would accept it: "*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out* (Jn 6:37)." "*For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him* (Jn 6:64)." Likewise, it is our job only to teach and preach the truth in calmness, meekness and love in the fear of the Lord and God's people will accept the truth as they are guided by the Spirit. Songs may not sell as well when they focus on a broad range of doctrinal beliefs, but this is the cost of being true to Jesus' teachings.

Keith Getty and his wife, Kristyn have made it their life goal to produce modern hymns with lyrical density and breadth and depth. The aim is to push values into the global church through hymns that teach the Bible and build deep believers for the global church. Luther faced a population that was theologically illiterate. Scripture and hymns had previously been in Latin.[8] Jonathan T. Knight describes how, "*From the beginning, Luther's goal as a musician and a reformer was not musical distinctiveness but theological integrity*."[8 (p51)]

Getty says we are in a world of first, second and third generation Christians who have no Christian hymn heritage. He goes on to say:

> "*We are now in a phase that we're being told that young kids that don't know that much should lead the singing out the front because it's all about sincerity and because they can sing and the church has to look young because otherwise all the kids are going to go out and smoke and leave the church. So, you get this combination of immaturity leading it with no theology of why you sing and then the pressures of Wall Street putting stuff to them on the internet and saying this is what you've got to sing next*."[465]

While we should involve young people in worship programs and get them up the front in church, there is wisdom in Getty's concern that there is too much focus on image rather than Scriptural integrity. Church leaders with theological training

or experience should be the ones vetting worship songs to ensure they are theologically sound, balanced and convey an appropriate message for the congregation.

Chapter 29
Defending Our Beliefs

Though it is important that we focus on doctrines and sharing our beliefs with others, it must be kept in the right context. If we are not careful, we can come across as proud and combative toward those who believe differently to us. Sharing our beliefs with each other must be done with meekness and fear (1 Pet 3:15) and with the realisation that truth is revealed by the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:13, 1 Cor 2:14). When pride is the motive, the goal is to win the argument rather than to discover truth. Mrs White advised Adventists not to start with controversial doctrines but to first connect with others on common ground. She believed we should build respectful relationships before sharing with them our unique position. She said, "*no tirade is to be made against the doctrines held by others*."[47 (p155)] Bible bashing does much harm. Worse still is when doctrines are used as a political weapon. During the wars of religion in Europe, much evil was committed in the name of religion and defending doctrine. This likely played a part in the emergence of secularism because people were tired of the conflict in religion. Though Jesus was strict about upholding God's law, he was harsh against those who forced their religious rules onto others, yet patient toward gentiles and merciful to those entangled in sin. That is why music with peaceful tunes and sound lyrics is such a great way of sharing our beliefs. It is a gentle and pleasant way for people to learn about and know God.

But what do we do when our beliefs are attacked and ridiculed? How should we respond when persecuted for our religious convictions? Some choose to avoid conflict by keeping their beliefs to themselves. Unlike the Adventists who spent much time in discussion about doctrine, General Booth avoided discussing doctrine and discouraged Salvation Army members from debating controversial beliefs and practices, such as baptism. For example, in his New Year address to officers in January 1883, the General made the following statement:

> "*I think you will perceive that any order from me for the general administration of the Sacraments would be likely to produce grave dissensions. There is a very great and widespread difference of opinion with regard to the modes of administration – one half of the religious world denying in toto the efficacy of the Sacraments as administered by the other half*."[491 (p135)]

Therefore, though General Booth was willing to be ridiculed for his controversial methods, he tried to avoid theological controversy.

The apostles, on the other hand, constantly wrestled with conflicts in the church over theology. They spent much time grappling over doctrine with each other and with the church community. They immediately dealt with anyone who was deviating from Jesus' teachings and from Scripture. They strove to maintain unity in truth and they cautioned against neglecting the traditions they had been taught (1 Cor 11:2). Paul advised Timothy:

> "*Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine… Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you*." (1 Tim 4:13,16)

Doubt in the Face of Opposition

The Advent movement arose out of a belief in the soon coming of Jesus. As they studied Scripture more, Adventists soon started to accept the seventh-day Sabbath as well. These messages were proclaimed boldly by Adventists from the pulpit, in big tent meetings and through printed materials. They wrote pamphlets and books about it and distributed them widely. They also sang hymns about the Sabbath and the second advent of Christ. If warning people of hell was a central message of the Salvation Army, the Sabbath became an important message of the Seventh-day Adventist movement. But telling people that a well-established Christian tradition was in error was not a popular message!

Though the teaching attracted much criticism, there were still a considerable number of converts and faithful Adventists were determined to preach what they considered to be present truth. They believed it was part of the third angels' message which was to be a loud warning to the world not to follow after the first beast of Revelation - a corrupted religious system which had established a counterfeit day of worship. The three angels' message was about restoring true worship.

Should Christians allow outside pressures and influences to mould their behaviours and practices? Should they doubt and neglect their beliefs because few others agree? Not necessarily. There are innumerable examples throughout history of the majority of people believing something to be true that was later found to be false. Bias distorts people's reasoning ability. Those involved in scientific studies know just how powerful bias is at distorting our judgement. Many factors can twist our understanding. For example, self-interest is a common element in bias. That is why scientists are supposed to declare any conflict of interest when involved in scientific studies. If a researcher is employed by the company that produces the product they are researching, that scientist will be biased toward finding a favourable outcome for the product. The research pyramid ranks research according to quality of evidence. The higher a study is on the pyramid, the less bias affects the outcome and, consequently, the more reliable the results (see Figure 6).

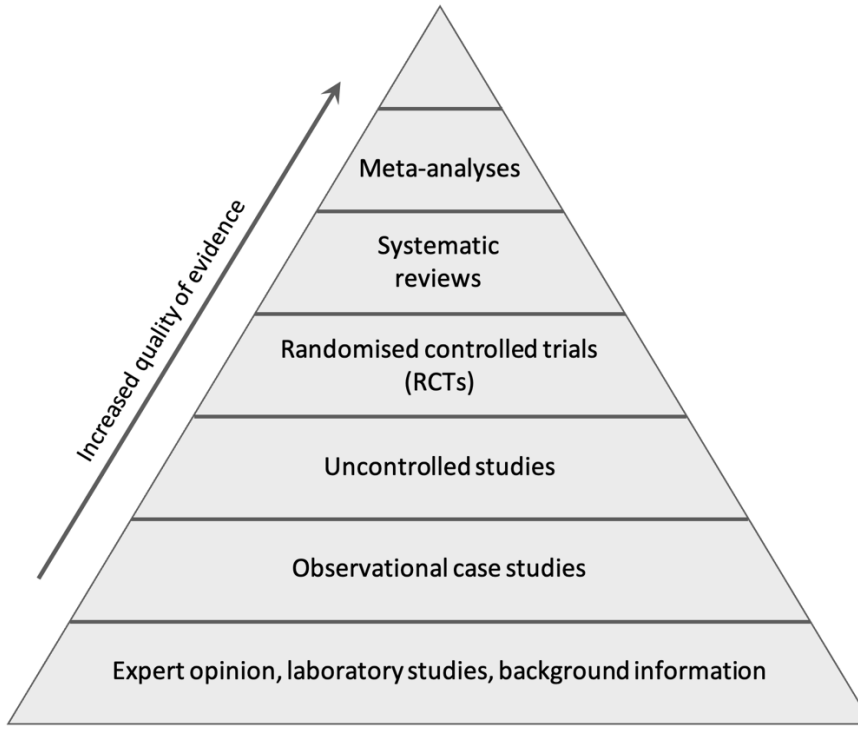


Figure 6: Hierarchy of evidence pyramid

One reason why so many people have rejected the Bible is because they believe science has refuted the Biblical account of creation. However, the weakness of origins science is that it is not possible to do high quality bias free research. Origins science is restricted largely to observational studies and expert opinion which are at the base of the research pyramid and, hence, fraught with all kinds of bias. In a peer reviewed secular research article looking at the accuracy of research in ecology, **evolution** and behaviour, the authors conclude that "*Much research remains infused with unconscious biases… It is unclear how much published science is affected by bias and might therefore be false*." Blinding is an important method used to improve the accuracy of scientific research by helping to remove bias. However, the authors of the study conclude that "*While blinding is routine in medical and psychological research, blinding is unfortunately not a universal practice in biology*." They make the point that:

> "*No one would trust a novel medical treatment or drug unless the clinical research had been conducted blind… yet the field of ecology, evolution, and behavior appears to overlook a habitual lack of reporting blind observation in published methods*."[492]

In another study, scientists reviewed the literature for bias in scientific research and found widespread biases across diverse topics in evolutionary studies. "*Biases in ecological and **evolutionary studies***," the authors said, "*may be a particularly*

vexing problem but have not received rigorous consideration."[493] The scientist who makes major discoveries in evolutionary research receives much accolade and commendation. Without adequate measures to remove this and other kinds of research bias, results cannot be trusted. Therefore, people are rejecting the accuracy of the Biblical creation account based on interesting yet unreliable scientific research.

Bias is usually subconscious; therefore, we are not even aware that our thinking is being erroneously persuaded in a certain direction. It can affect even the highly educated. Just as bias can distort the understanding of highly educated scientists, bias can also distort the understanding of highly educated theologians. One-and-a-half millennia of Sunday keeping and 2.3 billion adherents is a great bias in the direction of Sunday adherence instead of seventh-day Sabbath keeping. Let's face it, how many people would want to go against such a widely held and deeply entrenched tradition? How could so many Christians get it wrong?

The same could be said of other Christian traditions. It was bias that distorted the thinking of the Pharisees, causing them to put confidence in the traditions of men. How can we tell if a Christian tradition is from God or if it is manmade and against God? How do we safeguard ourselves against bias in our Christian practices? There is only one sure method – that is, total surrender to God. We have to constantly put self aside, never looking to others, but seeking only to find God's will. That is what taking up our cross is all about.

The Protestant reformers faced not only the seemingly insurmountable opposition of the Roman Catholic Church structure and tradition, which was the centre of all social, political and religious life, but an even greater bias – the threat of death. Many Anabaptists, for example, were martyred simply for rejecting infant baptism. Cruelly, they were often executed by drowning in mockery of their belief in water baptism. The reformers gave up everything for their doctrines – beliefs that we so take for granted that we do not even care to sing about them. Sabbatarians have also been persecuted down through the ages. For example, many of the Waldenses were Sabbath keepers and found refuge in the wilderness from the oppression of the church. In 1487, Pope Innocent VIII ordered the

extermination of the Waldenses. In 1655, about 1700 Waldenses were put to death by Catholic forces commanded by the Duke of Savoy. In 2015, Pope Francis asked forgiveness for the Roman Catholic Church's inhumane treatment of the Waldenses in the past.

Why have there been so many Sabbath keepers over the centuries willing to defend the Sabbath to their death? This book has discussed a number of reasons Sabbath keepers give for keeping the Sabbath, but can they be so certain that it is worth laying down their lives for? Didn't the disciples even start worshipping on the first day? What is the big deal? John the Revelator says that he was "*in the Spirit on the **Lord's Day*** (Rev 1:10)." There are a couple of key verses that seem to indicate that Sunday was being observed by the apostles, inferring that Sunday is the Lord's day:

> "Now on the **first day** of the week, when **the disciples came** together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight." (Acts 20:7)

> "On the **first day** of the week let each one of you **lay something aside**, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.." (1 Cor 16:2)

It is concluded that because the disciples met together on Sunday and because they collected donations on Sunday, that it must have been regarded as the Lord's Day in honour of Jesus' resurrection. Sabbath keepers, on the other hand, point out that believers were accustomed to coming together and breaking bread on any day of the week (Acts 2:46), just like believers do in our time for various reasons, including Bible study, prayer meetings, training and so on. They also insist that laying aside a collection on the first day does not infer that it was a revered day. On the contrary, Jews never handled or collected money on the Sabbath, including tithes or offerings[494]; therefore, it would make more sense that Paul requested that the funds be gathered on the first day to avoid taking up a collection on the Sabbath.

Moreover, the Bible only ever refers to the seventh day as the **Lord's day**, the day that He sanctified or set apart as special that belongs to Him and, therefore, a day in which we can receive rich blessings:

> "***God blessed the seventh day*** *and sanctified it*" (Gen 2:3)

> "*…the seventh day is **the Sabbath of the Lord your God**.*" (Ex 20:10)

> "*You made known to them **Your holy Sabbath.***" (Neh 9:14)

> "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on **My holy day**, and call the Sabbath a delight, **the holy day of the Lord** honorable..." (Is 58:13)
>
> "Therefore the Son of Man is also **Lord of the Sabbath**." (Mk 2:28)

This was proof enough for seventh-day Sabbath keepers to uphold the Sabbath in honour of their Lord who they believed to be Lord of the Sabbath. Yet, so powerful is the influence of the bias of tradition that even though the whole of scripture, from Genesis onward, establishes the seventh day as God's holy day, virtually all of Christendom has rejected God's holy day, putting their confidence in tradition based on a few ambiguous passages. Sabbath keepers just could not see evidence enough to disregard the day God made holy in the beginning. Since they believed it is a serious matter to ignore God, numerous Christians have been so convicted of the Sabbath that they have been willing to give up Sunday keeping, lose their jobs, face rejection by their communities and even die for their belief.

"*The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart* (Ps 19:8)." Therefore, let us sing, sing, sing of the law of God for it is sweeter than honey and more precious than the finest gold (v10). Gold is not worth dying for, but God's law is. The reformers died to uphold God's law and so did Jesus, yet we treat it so lightly. If it is worth dying for, then it is worth singing for. "*Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him* (1 Jn 2:3-5)."

Challenging Our Own Beliefs

While martyrdom might prove our sincerity, it does not prove us right. What a shame it would be to make a great sacrifice for something God does not even require – worse still, for something that God opposes. Many Jews died defending the temple in 70 AD thinking they were fighting the cause of God, but to what avail? Though we must sing, teach and preach about our doctrines, it does not mean we must never question them. While our beliefs should not be shaped by outside pressures, we must always allow God's Word, studied with careful and prayerful contemplation, to mould our beliefs and doctrines. If we truly love God's Word, then we must share our understanding of it with each other, grapple with it, delve into Scripture and pray about it until our understanding is more complete. Mrs White said:

> "*There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years*

by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation."[490 (p35)]

God has clear teachings, and less clear teachings. It is the difficult ones that force us to study His Word carefully, until we have a deeper understanding of His Word. We must never stop wrestling over our beliefs. That is why Seventh-day Adventists call their doctrines fundamental beliefs. Doctrine gives the sense that our beliefs are set in concrete. We over emphasise the infallibility of our forefathers who helped to establish our doctrines. But they were as human as we are, as was General Booth, C. S. Lewis, Mrs White, Martin Luther and King David and other great minds that have gone before us. They were fallible.

We can trust God's true prophets because they are more fully guided by direct revelation from God – but even they are fallible. Nathan told David to go ahead and build the temple, only to be told by God that David was not to build the temple (2 Sam 7; 1 Chr 22:8). A prophet's own opinion is not always correct. But when God sends a message to a prophet to give to His people, we can trust that message. That is why we can trust Scripture because it was written by God's messengers under divine inspiration. We have to put less trust in ordinary men and women – as mighty as they may be – and more trust in God's Word. Everything must be tested against the Bible. Scripture says that God's end time people are commandment keeping people (Rev 12:17) who follow the lamb wherever he goes (Rev 14:4). They love Christ. They also have the testimony of Jesus which is the spirit of prophecy (Rev 12:17; 19:10) – in other words, they listen to and proclaim Jesus' instructions through His Word and His prophets. Jesus said, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me* (Jn 13:20)."

When Laws Oppose Our Beliefs

In the time of the reformers, infant baptism was legislated by civil law. When the founding Anabaptists studied Scripture, they concluded that believer baptism was Biblical and not infant baptism. Jesus said:

"*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of* ***water*** *and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of* God (Jn 3:5)." He also said, "*Go therefore and* ***make disciples*** *of all the nations,* ***baptizing them*** *in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*." (Matt 28:19)

Then, in Acts, we find examples of the apostles baptising converts in water (Acts 8:38, 10:47), confirming their understanding of literal baptism of believers by submersion in water. There is not a single Biblical example of infant baptism. Therefore, the founding Anabaptists felt they had a solid scriptural foundation for defying the law and were prepared to die for it.

How should we respond when the law clashes with our beliefs? How do we remain in harmony with God if the community is against us? If we are going to be faithful commandment-keeping Christians when we are compelled to act contrary to our religious convictions, we may have to defy governing authorities, like the Anabaptists and other Protestants did. This may result in great hardship and persecution, even death. For example, the second beast of Revelation 13:

> "*…causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name*." (Rev 13:16-17)

This will cause great hardship for those who are faithful to God's commands. In fact, those who will not worship the image of the beast will be killed (v15). If we are not singing theologically rich songs now, we may end up deceived by the great signs performed by the second beast which he was granted to do in the sight of the first beast, "*telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived* (v14)."

If we are going to rebel against the law of the land, however, it must be in reaction to clear and explicit defiance of the commands of God. Our Lord is a God of law and order. Disobedience to civil law is disobedience to God, unless the law of the governing authorities causes us to clearly violate God's law:

> "*Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.* ***Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king***." (1 Pet 2:13-17)

This was said despite the fact the ruling authority, the Roman government, was pagan and restricted the liberty of minority religions, such as Christianity. The Roman government put our Lord to death, yet Christians were advised to submit to its authority. Mrs White cites this passage when cautioning church members not to misrepresent their liberty by becoming indignant when their freedom to work on Sunday is taken away. Adventists are not to 'fly into a passion over this matter,' she said.[365 (p193)] Losing one's personal religious liberty is not necessarily cause for disobedience. Neither is knowledge of corruption in the leadership alone grounds for disobedience. Jesus expected Jews to pay tithe to the temple, even though he knew the temple system to be corrupted (Mk 12:41-44). Knowing the leadership is bad or corrupt does not necessarily give us freedom to neglect our duties to them, otherwise no earthly government would be worthy of respect. God expects order. We are not a law unto ourselves. We are accountable for our own actions, not for the actions of governing authorities. David refused to kill Saul

when he had opportunities to do so because Saul was the anointed King (1 Sam 24:6). The very act of disobedience to authority without just cause is disobedience to God:

> "*Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves*." (Rom 13:2)

Throughout history, leaders of movements have often used music to incite anger toward the enemy and to spread propaganda. By contrast, as Christians, our music should incite peace and goodwill toward others. Paul said, "*Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace* (Rom 14:19)." At the heart of the rebellion in heaven was rebellion against authority. Disobedience to government is a serious matter and must have good reason and we must be able to make ourselves accountable to God.

Some have suggested that Paul is only referring to submitting in the sense of not resisting arrest; however, he uses paying taxes as an example. We are simply required to pay our taxes (something many Christians are guilty of not doing). He says nothing about refraining from resisting arrest when we do not pay our taxes. Peter reminds us that Jesus is our example. Not only are we to submit to overseers that treat us well, but also to those who treat us harshly:

> "*Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But* ***when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God****. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 'Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth'; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness - by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls*." (1 Pet 2:18-25)

The third most common character in Psalms is the enemy, as pointed out by Michael J. Rhodes (see Figure 5).[472] Often, the Psalmist calls on God for revenge. Should we take revenge against our enemies? How do we reconcile this with Paul's statement above and Jesus' command to love our enemies as we love ourselves? One way to harmonise this apparent contradiction is to recognise that revenge in the hands of God is justice. The psalmists call on God to take revenge against their enemies. When David had the opportunity to take revenge against King Saul, he chose not to harm Him. Paul suggests that it is better to be cheated than to take out legal action against a fellow Christian:

> "*Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated*?" (1 Cor 6:7)

There is an important principle in these passages. We are not to retaliate when we are wronged. That is why it is so critical to get the balance right in our music. There needs to be a perfect balance between love for our fellow human beings and justice for wickedness – this must be reflected in our lyrics. Our tunes and lyrics must express love for others but a longing for justice to put an end to wickedness.

Of course, submission to authority does not mean we do nothing about corruption and mistreatment, especially when we see others being oppressed. We are to be a light on the hill, shining the love of Jesus across the land, influencing leaders to make wise choices. We must be diligent in writing to our politicians and church leaders, raising concerns and lobbying peacefully for justice and morality to be upheld. Unlike modern worship songs, Psalms describes the poor on nearly every page and cries out for the plight of widows, refugees and the oppressed (see Figure 5). When we are doing our job right as Christians, the government is more likely to act wisely, according to Biblical principles. If the government of a Christian nation is acting authoritarian and enforcing immoral laws, we can be certain that the majority of Christians are not being faithful in their duties to God.

A very important Biblical principle is that of meekness and humble submission. Even when, in the last resort, we must be disobedient, we do it with meekness and humility. By their tunes and lyrics, our songs should be flavoured with meekness. Jesus was led as a lamb to the slaughter – not kicking and screaming. If a law conflicts with our liberty but there is no clear violation of God's law, then we have a duty to submit. We must be very cautious in judging the motives of our leaders, for it is only God who knows the hearts of people. God is the judge. Those in leadership positions are judged more harshly by God (Heb 13:17; Jam 3:1) and He will bring retribution on the unjust.

Whether they realise it or not, the governing authorities have been given a divine mandate to protect their citizens and maintain law and order. If there is no specific law from God concerning a certain issue, they are bound only by God's broader laws and principles. Do God's laws allow for infringement of liberty? Of course – all laws, by definition, restrict our freedom. Quarantine laws in the law of Moses, for example, restricted the movement of contagious people in Israel.

Why is it that Christians are so often seen to be most hostile toward leadership? Are we not singing, preaching and teaching enough about peace? Jesus said, "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God* (Matt 5:9)." We sing much about the blessings that God gives to us but are we singing about the attributes that will make us a blessing to the world? In her Hymn, To the Work! Fanny Crosby sings of our obligation to serve, as follows:

"To the work! to the work! we are servants of God,

Let us follow the path that our Master has trod;
With the balm of His counsel our strength to renew,
Let us do with our might what our hands find to do."

This hymn was so popular that it was published in at least 247 different hymnals.[495]

When Christians break the law, we get a reputation for being troublemakers and not caring for the common good of others. Paul said, "*by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men* (1 Pet 2:15)." Without the authority of 'thus saith the Lord,' we are no better than common criminals when we disobey the law. Commenting on this verse, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary says:

> "*Maintain such a walk that they shall have no charge against you, except touching your faith; and so their minds shall be favorably disposed towards Christianity*."[496 (p506)]

That's why Mrs White said when Sunday laws are first enforced, Seventh-day Adventists must not break the law by working on Sunday in the name of liberty. They should do their best to remain at peace with the community. Though this would be an infringement of their liberties, and it would have religious motives, we can still work to share the gospel on that day. We can be obedient to the civil law without breaking God's law. It is only when a ban on seventh-day Sabbath keeping is brought into effect that an Adventist should disobey the law of the land because it is a clear defiance of 'God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.'

True Vine Music produces songs which, according to their website, "*is singable, Christ-centered, Biblically based, and doctrinally sound*."[497] One of the songs on their website is, Blessed are the Peacemakers. The second verse reads as follows:

"*When the talking turns to shout*
Left alone or just left out
Some are feeling that they don't belong
Others hurting deep inside
With tears they've never cried
Oh, why can't we all get along?
Hey! Hey! I say
Blessed are the peacemakers."[498]

If we complain about every infringement of liberty, our impact is diminished – like the boy who cried wolf – and we are seen as merely a nuisance to society. It is when liberty is threatened, but God's law not fully overturned, that we should take time to use the law to our advantage to lobby for protection of our religious liberty and for the preservation of morality, but this is not yet the time for civil disobedience. Before we disobey, there must be clear precedence, preferably from direct command from God, so there is no room for error on our part. One of the problems is that Christians have been virtually silent on moral issues, such as

pornography and sexual promiscuity in the media; therefore, when we then protest against infringement of religious liberty, we are seen as merely looking out for our own self-interest.

With the world quickly drawing to an end, now is not the time to fragment as Christians but to unite. We must be on our toes and ready. We should be peacefully and humbly lobbying our leaders to stay away from religious rights. If we break the law and use an aggressive approach, we lose favour with leaders and the community and usher in laws that infringe on religious liberty, hindering our ability to proclaim the gospel message. If governments force people to abstain from work on Sunday, they will be dancing around the edge of religious liberty, enticing Seventh-day Adventists to anger and rebellion. There are some political leaders today calling for a Sunday rest for the environment and for the common good. Even if there is an ulterior long-term motive by some leaders, Seventh-day Adventists must not yield to the devils' devices. They must be self-controlled rather than driven by a motivation for retaliation. This would not be reason to engage in civil disobedience.

Although Anabaptists were defending doctrine and most were pacifists, some of them became militant in their cause, such as during the Münster Rebellion, when a group of Anabaptists seized control of the city of Münster and attempted to create a biblical utopia through violence and coercion. Many reformers, such as Ulrich Zwingli, at least initially, advocated for peaceful reform, lobbying religious leaders for change. If Seventh-day Adventists are right in their interpretation of Scripture and Sunday rest is enforced and Sabbath worship is again outlawed, many Sunday keepers may recognise this as infringement against religious liberty and defiance against God's law and come out of Babylon. Likewise, may Sabbath keepers stand firm and say:

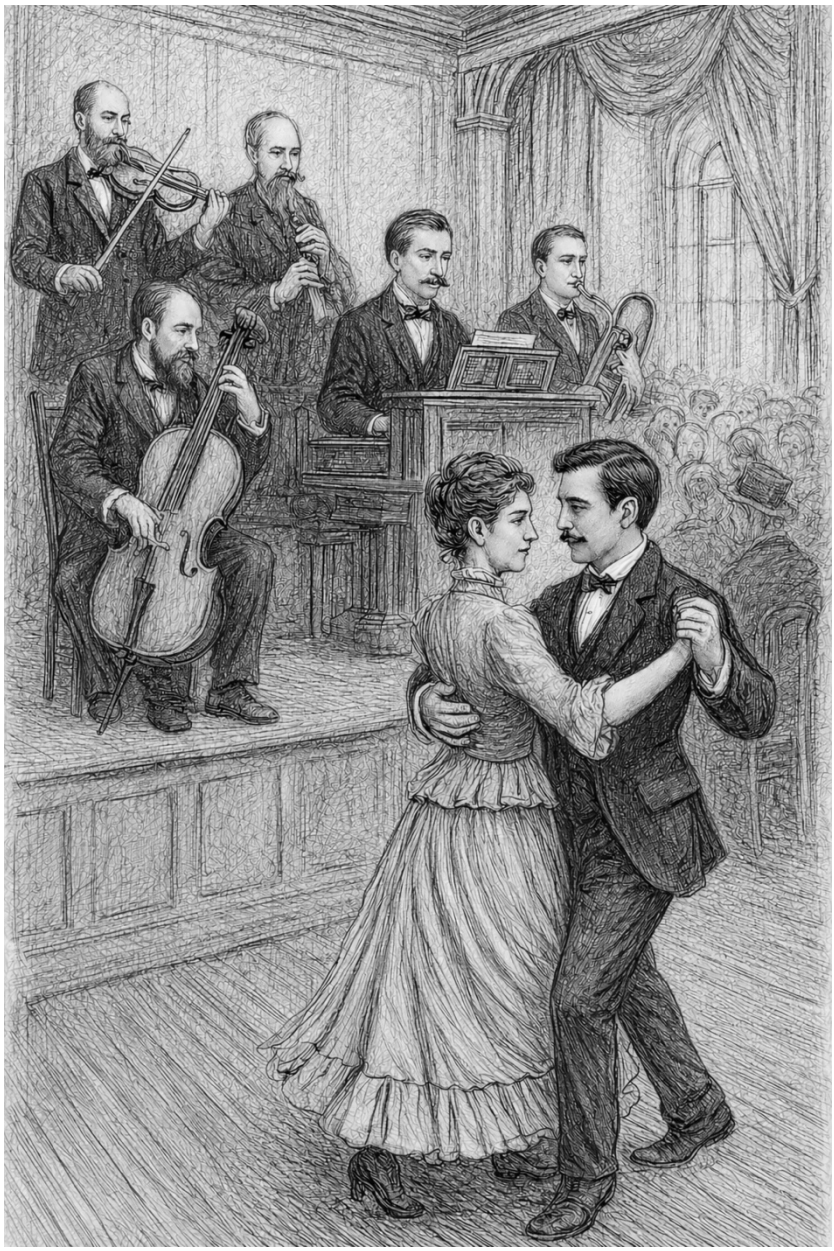
> "*My allegiance is with 'Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water*.'" (Rev 14:7)

Luther's popular hymn, A mighty fortress, gave comfort to Protestants who were facing persecution. For Christians facing persecution today, it brings comfort. In the future time of trouble, it will bring comfort. The last stanza reads as follows:

> "*That Word above all earthly powers*
> *no thanks to them abideth;*
> *the Spirit and the gifts are ours*
> *through him who with us sideth.*
> *Let goods and kindred go,*
> *this mortal life also;*
> *the body they may kill:*
> *God's truth abideth still;*
> *his kingdom is forever!*"

PART 9

NON-SACRED MUSIC



Chapter 30
Secular Music

When Joshua came down the mountain with Moses, he heard what sounded like the noise of war in the camp. It was, actually, the sound of singing and merrymaking as the Israelites danced before the golden calf. Apparently, there was something distinctive about the sound that aroused Joshua's curiosity. What was the source of this unusual sound? As they approached the camp, the cause of the commotion was revealed. The reason it sounded out-of-place is because the activity they were involved in was out-of-place. Holiness cannot dwell with wickedness (Ps 5:4). We are either with God or against Him (Matt 12:30). Paul says:

> "*Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God*." (2 Cor 6:14-16)

When we worship idols, we are worshipping demons (1 Cor 10:20). Paul said that fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness is idolatry (Col 3:5), therefore, when we participate in these things we are uniting with evil spirits. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. By contrast, "*out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness* (Mk 7:21-22)." The wise man is guided by God's Word and His Spirit, whereas, a fool is guided by his own heart. Paul says, "*the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned* (1 Cor 2:14)." That is why "*It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise than for a man to hear the song of fools* (Ecc 7:5)." It is why everything we do must be guided by the Holy Spirit. Job lamented that the wicked sing with instruments as they prosper yet reject God (Job 21:12-15).

Anything that does not come from wise people who are led by God's spirit will be tainted with evil. God should be included in everything we say and do, including what we listen to. Jesus did nothing apart from the will of God (Jn 5:19). By definition, secular music dwells on topics without including God. In secular music, God's laws are continually attacked, including: promiscuous sex and lust, covertness, drunkenness and intoxication, taking God's name in vain, dishonouring of parents, lying and cheating, idolising a person, materialism, pride, envy and re-

venge. Paul Hamel, former chairman of the Music Department at Andrews University said, "*An individual cannot invite into his body temple both the Holy Spirit and the kind of music dominated by non-Christian ideals*."[9 (p61)]

Hamel stressed that "*There are no Biblical records of the Israelites' singing any songs other than those that would serve to strengthen their connection with God*."[9 (p116)] This is true when they were being faithful to God, but in a time of unfaithfulness, one of the sins God rebuked the Israelites for through the prophet Amos was the singing of idle songs for themselves, instead of making music for the glory of God, as David did (Amos 6:5). John wrote:

> "*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever*." (1 John 2:15-17)

The music of this world gratifies the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

Having said that, secular music comes in many forms and some types of secular music may put us in a frame of mind to contemplate God. There were a few occasions in which Mrs White attended secular professional music performances which impressed her.[9 (p34)] Paul Hamel says that she did not condemn music simply because it was secular. She enjoyed listening to a variety of secular music, particularly classical music. "*She readily recognised that music could be relaxing and entertaining*," Hamel describes, "*and that music other than church music was worthy of a Christian's time and attention*."[9 (p63)]

However, popular music, by definition, appeals to the masses, often by its crudeness and lack of sophistication. Popular songs have always been a problem for those who are concerned with moral principles. Popular and dramatic arts have a history of being at the cutting edge of immorality, constantly pushing the boundaries and getting away with whatever sponsors and consumers will allow. Ancient popular songs were often as indecent as pop songs today - even the images attached to songs found in ancient manuscripts.[9 (pp34-35,49,72)]

Down through the ages, even before Christ, there have been political and religious leaders who were concerned about the effects of popular music on their societies. Mrs White was appalled by the popular music of her day. Martin Luther was another religious leader who was determined to lead young people away from love ballads and carnal songs:

> "*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 ballads and carnal songs and to teach them something of value in their place*."[7 (p316)]

Popular music of the late 1800s, including ragtime, led to the jazz music of the 20th century.[9] Though General Booth was in favour of secular style music when put to Christian lyrics, he was opposed to worldly leisure – Salvationists were horrified with most forms of working-class amusements, even more so than many of their contemporary Christians.[2] He worked amongst the poorest people of London and saw the outcome of the secular entertainment industry and strove to pull people out of that world. General Booth criticised not only alcohol and gambling because of the poverty, neglect and violence it brought on individuals and families, but he also criticised the wider culture of leisure that gloried in drinking and gambling – including theatres and music halls. The culture taught men that drinking and gambling was masculine and made them real men. Salvationists strove to convince men that drinking made them dependent and foolish[2] and that worldly leisure had to be discarded if they were to properly care for their families.

The lyrics of popular music, including ragtime, in General Booth and Mrs White's time was just as crude as it is today. There were few inhibitions and a plethora of popular songs were circulating which were openly pornographic. Lyrics spoke of the stupidity of morals, heroines were praised, alcohol glorified and black people slurred.[9] Hamel explains that:

> "*Those who influence popular musical programming for monetary reasons are chiefly interested in attracting as large an audience as possible – and the masses to which their entertainment appeals are not generally concerned about eternal values as contained in the Bible*."[9 (p65)]

Of the opera, Mrs White commented:

> "*The opera, with its fascinating display and bewildering music, the masquerade, the dance, the card table, Satan employs to break down the barriers of principle and open the door to sensual indulgence. In every gathering for pleasure where pride is fostered or appetite indulged, where one is led to forget God and lose sight of eternal interests, there Satan is binding his chains about the soul*."[195 (p459)]

What could be so harmful as to incite such condemnation of opera? Hamel helps us out here with some context:

> "*In general, one finds in operas an emphasis on violence, passion and love – the latter often illegitimate. It is upon these ingredients that the opera depends for its appeal and very few operatic works have had lasting success unless they have had generous amounts of these unfortunate elements.*
>
> *Opera is the most highly communicative of the arts. In it are combined music, drama, poetry, literature, dancing, staging and costuming, representing an impact upon the human senses that is overwhelming in its totality… An impression tends to be more lasting when it is intensified by such a brilliant setting. To see an opera is to always remember it…*

…Some of the plots revolve almost entirely around marital infidelity and sexual freedom. For purely comic effects, many of the emotional scenes are grossly exaggerated. Comparably, the operas of Richard Wagner were largely based on Germanic myths…"[9 (pp68-9)]

What more needs to be said? This sums up convincingly why any Christian should be concerned with this type of performance. It might be added that live pop and rock performances with overwhelming sensory assault from amplified music, lights, smoke, video, dance, lewd costume, bright colours and theatrics with often sexual, violent and passionate themes, might have a similar profound and lasting effect on those present.

Mrs White felt a very special concern for the effect of secular music on young people. Of the youth, she wrote that they:

"*…have a keen ear for music and Satan knows what organs to excite to animate, engross and charm the mind so that Christ is not desired… I was shown that the youth must take a higher stand and make the word of God the man of their counsel and their guide. Solemn responsibilities rest upon the young, which they lightly regard. The introduction of music into their homes, instead of inciting to holiness and spirituality, has been the means of diverting their minds from the truth. Frivolous songs and the popular sheet music of the day seem congenial to their taste. The instruments of music have taken time which should have been devoted to prayer*."

She does not divide popular music into categories but makes a blanket statement against frivolous songs and popular sheet music. She goes on to explain how music can be a great blessing, but when put to wrong use, it is a terrible curse:

"*It excites, but does not impart that strength and courage which the Christian can find only at the throne of grace while humbly making known his wants and with strong cries and tears pleading for heavenly strength to be fortified against the powerful temptations of the evil one. Satan is leading the young captive. Oh, what can I say to lead them to break his power of infatuation! He is a skilful charmer, luring them on to perdition*."[193 (p497)]

For amusements in general, Mrs White advises that they should be decidedly influenced by our religious beliefs:

"*Young men and young women should not think that their sports, their evening parties and musical entertainments, as usually conducted, are acceptable to Christ. Light has been given me, again and again, that all our gatherings should be characterised by a decided religious influence.*"[499]

Amusement is often used as a means to attract young people to church events. However, Mrs White warns of the devil's cunning:

"*Oh, what art, what skill, what cunning, is exercised to lead the professed followers of Christ to a union with the world by seeking for happiness in the amusements of the world, under the delusion that some good is to be gained!*"[188 (p143)]

During Jesus' time, Herod had built theatres for entertainment in Palestine. Jesus did not counter legalism and dry formalism by encouraging His followers to attend amphitheatres or other secular entertainment. Neither did he suggest that joy should be sought from popular amusements or sports events.

Mrs White said we should never enter a place of amusement if we cannot invite the presence of the Lord, even to witness for Him:

"*You will be invited to attend places of amusement, and then it will be that you will have an opportunity to testify to your Lord. If you are a true Christian then, you… will plainly and modestly declare that you are a child of God, and your principles would not allow you to be in a place, even for one occasion, where you could not invite the presence of the Lord*."[500]

Elsewhere, she provides a helpful test for the appropriateness of a venue of entertainment:

"*By the frequenters of the ballroom God is not an object of thought and reverence; prayer or the song of praise would be felt to be out of place in their assemblies. This test should be decisive. Amusements that have a tendency to weaken the love for sacred things and lessen our joy in the service of God are not to be sought by Christians*."[195 (p707)]

Mrs White insists, instead of spending time in unhealthy amusements, we should be using the time for God's service:

"*The hours so often spent in amusement that refreshes neither body nor soul should be spent in visiting the poor, the sick, and the suffering, or in seeking to help someone who is in need*."[16 (p276)]

Likewise, James advises that "*Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world* (Jas 1:27)."

Three Examples: Pink, Coldplay & U2

One of the most popular touring singers of 2023-24 was Pink, grossing almost US$700 million and selling over 4.8 million tickets across three continents, including North America, Europe and Oceania. The Summer Carnival tour was the second-highest grossing tour in history among women, and she was No. 1 on Billboard's monthly Top Tours chart for October 2024.[501] Much of Pink's early recognition was gained from her part in the 2001 version of Lady Marmalade, famous for the French refrain of 'Voulez-vous coucher avec moi, ce soir?' which translates

as 'Do you want to sleep with me, tonight?' The song was accompanied by a sexually explicit video clip. She is described as Pop Royalty, and her pop rock style is popular amongst children, teens, youth and adults alike.[502] She has sold over 135 million records worldwide, making her one of the world's best-selling music artists.

Pink was influenced by pop stars such as Madonna, Janis Joplin and Linda Perry and, in turn, has inspired numerous artists, including Katy Perry, Christina Aguilera, Demi Lovato, Adele, Julia Michaels and Dua Lipa. Her influence is extensive. Glamour Magazine wrote of her: "*Pink changed the game. Without her, the last 13 years of big-voiced, tough chick music is hard to imagine*."[503] Children, preteens and teenagers are aware of Pink – they have seen and heard her on magazines, radio and MTV and in the remake of the film Rollerball. According to The Center for Parent Youth Understanding, she has become a poster girl for millions of her young peers. Rolling Stone's Rob Sheffield calls Pink's Can't Take Me Home a sexy teen-pop disco cruise.[502] The message that Pink is giving all of these people is worldly, promiscuous and ungodly. Regardless, Mark Powell, theology professor at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, thinks that rock and roll, including secular and Christian rock, "*has done a lot more for the good of humanity in the last thirty-plus years than all the theologians on the planet*!"[5 (p7)] In Blow Me (One Last Kiss), Pink sings:

> "*I'll dress nice, I'll look good*
> *I'll go dancing alone*
> *I will laugh, I'll get drunk*
> *I'll take somebody home*"[504]

One of Pink's most popular songs, which she sang during her 2024 Summer Carnival Tour, is the number one hit from 2008, So What. The first three stanzas of this song reads as follows:

> "*I guess I just lost my husband*
> *I don't know where he went*
> *So I'm gonna drink my money*
> *I'm not gonna pay his rent (Nope)*
> *I got a brand new attitude*
> *And I'm gonna wear it tonight*
>
> *I wanna get in trouble*
> *I wanna start a fight*
> *Na-na-na-na, na-na, na*
> *I wanna start a fight*
> *Na-na-na-na, na-na, na*
> *I wanna start a fight!*
>
> *So, so what?*
> *I'm still a rock star*

I got my rock moves
And I don't need you
And guess what?
I'm having more fun
And now that we're done
I'm gonna show you tonight"[505]

Her attitude to breaking up with her husband is to get drunk, get into trouble, look for a fight, boast about her fame, to not care and just have fun. This is typical of the kind of advice that we receive from secular music artists. It is foolish. What we should do in this situation is to turn to God for wisdom and support, seek godly counsel and find out what went wrong and how to repair the broken relationship.

In his interview with the Christian band, Newsboys, Sean McDowell gives an example of a friend who was a musician who gave up his faith in Christianity, partly because he realised he could have the same experience of God at a Coldplay concert as a Christian rock or pop concert. In reply, lead singer of Newsboys, Michael Tait, said, "*Coldplay, I believe it is worship, for me. I love Coldplay*." He agrees that they are not Christian and their music is not suitable for church, but he still believes their music is a form of worship and that it is amazing music. He goes on to say:

> "…*worship to me is you loving your wife… hearing a song - it could be a U2 song – that could put your eyes and thoughts on God. Who's to say what worship is*."

Keyboardist of Newsboys, Jeff Frankenstein, adds:

> "…*there's no denying that, whether you're a Christian artist or non-Christian artist, the gifts of music and bringing it together, that creativity comes from the Creator. You can't deny it. Some songs are just so beautiful and so well done and so well put together - if it's good art it's good*."[187 (38:27)]

To these Christian artists, if the music sounds good, whether it be Coldplay or U2, then it must be from God and it is good for us, even for worshipping God.

Let's take a closer look at these two secular rock bands – Coldplay and U2 – as examples to see if they are truly good and if they are likely inspired by God, as suggested by Tait and Frankenstein. Coldplay was the highest-grossing rock tour of 2024, while U2 was ranked fourth on Billboard Boxscore's top 10 rock tours that year.[506] At first glance, they both seem to be decent bands, supporting charities, promoting peace and goodwill in the world and even making numerous references to God. Lead singer of Coldplay, Chris Martin, does not drink alcohol or use illicit drugs. One of the songs he sings is called We Pray. Much of the lyrics of this song would make a good hymn for church. For example, halfway through the sixth stanza, it goes:

"*Pray that we speak with a tongue that is honest*

And that we understand how to be modest"

So far, you could say this song is good. It would be great if we upheld God's law by singing more about honesty in church. Unfortunately, the song is not all good. The very next two lines goes:

"*Pray when she looks at herself in the mirror*
She sees a queen, she sees a goddess"

As we dig deeper, we will see that spiritualism is a strong theme of Coldplay's music. Elsewhere in the song, he sings:

"*Pray I speak my truth*"[507]

Unfortunately, this is unacceptable for Christians. We are not to speak my truth but God's truth. Only Jesus is the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6). Chris describes himself as an alltheist, meaning that God is present in everything and everyone. God is found in love and in every molecule, he believes. As we dig deeper into Coldplay's music, much is discovered that is against God and His law. In their first hit album Viva La Vida and All His Friends, the sixth song in the album is called Yes, and is about someone's desire to have promiscuous sex:

"*Sin, stay gone…*

If you'd only, if you'd only say yes
Whether you will's anybody's guess
God, only God knows she won't let me rest
But I'm just so tired of this loneliness
I've become so tired of this loneliness"[508]

Newsboys lead singer feels that Coldplay's music is worship for him. The keyboardist for Newsboys defines good music as music which is good art. However, with just a cursory look at the lyrics of Coldplay's music, it appears that this criterion is not satisfactory. Hamel provides an alternative criterion. When it comes to the appropriateness of musical entertainment, he suggests asking several questions:

"*Can Jesus and the holy angels accompany me while I am listening to this live or recorded musical performance?*

Are the words those that could comfortably be repeated by a Christian in the presence of Jesus?

Do the words suggest only thoughts and actions that are wholesome?

Does the music cause a physical excitement that seems to be incompatible with the life a Christian should be leading?

In what kind of places is this type of music generally found?

What has been the influence of this music and of the groups performing it?

What about the design and pictures on the record jacket?"[9 (p63)]

After answering these questions, you should have a pretty good idea of the spirit behind the music. The spirit that inspires the artist to take illicit drugs or to design an album cover with crude or satanic imagery is likely to be the same spirit that inspires the artists lyrics and music.

Coldplay's albums are very thematic. The very next song in the album after Yes is Viva La Vida, by which the album is titled. The artwork on the album cover is the 1830 painting Liberty Leading the People by Eugène Delacroix. The prominent figure in the image and looming larger than life is the Goddess of Liberty. The painting depicts the French revolution of 1830 which, like the 1789-99 revolution, was designed to harm the political and religious systems. The song, Viva La Vida, is filled heavily with spiritual themes. Here are some examples:

"*I used to rule the world*
Seas would rise when I gave the word
Now in the morning, I sleep alone
Sweep the streets I used to own…

Oh who would ever wanna be king?

I hear Jerusalem bells a-ringin'
Roman Cavalry choirs are singin'
Be my mirror, my sword and shield
My missionaries in a foreign field

Revolutionaries wait
For my head on a silver plate
Just a puppet on a lonely string…

I know Saint Peter won't call my name
Never an honest word
But that was when I ruled the world"[509]

There is much speculation about the meaning of these spiritual references. However, the reference is to someone who used to rule the world, who controlled the seas and had missionaries in foreign fields – all have strong parallels to Jesus Christ but He is depicted as a defeated foe. The implication is that Jesus lost his sovereignty which was one of the goals of the French revolution. The age of reason was established and the people liberated from religion. Is this inspired by God? If not, where did the inspiration come from?

Spiritual references in the arts often give Christians the impression that it must be okay to watch or listen to. We justify watching movies filled with violence, materialism, immorality and misuse of God's name, by citing the Christian themes. However, what may appear to be Christian on the surface is actually often Gnostic,

New Age or occult themes teaching a distorted view of God. More and more, we see Gnostic concepts coming through in movies and music. Marvel movies is a classic example. In Avengers: Infinity War, the tyrant, Thanos, is referred to as 'I AM,' a title for God in the Bible (Ex 3:14). To save humanity, Thanos has to destroy half of them. To achieve this, he has to kill his adopted daughter, Gamora. Before her father kills her, this is what Gamora says to him:

> "*You kill and you torture - you call it mercy. The universe has judged you… You failed. Do you want to know why? Because you love nothing, no one… No, this isn't love.*"[510]

There are clear parallels between Thanos and God: they are both called 'I Am'; God will destroy the wicked and save the righteous; Thanos is to destroy half of the inhabitants of the world to save humanity; to save humanity, God sent His son to earth to die; Thanos killed his adopted daughter in order to achieve his purpose of saving humanity; God's actions are considered an act of mercy; Thanos also believes his actions are an act of mercy. However, Gamora argues that Thanos is the villain who loves no one. The implication is that God is not really loving and merciful for destroying the wicked and allowing His son to die on the cross to save the righteous – He is actually an evildoer who loves nobody. There are strong Gnostic themes coming through in the film here.

Movies that contain what appears to be Christian themes, often bring deception into the home. Likewise, when Christian content is found in secular music, it often misrepresents God or gives a distorted understanding of Him. Secular artists usually get their inspiration from sources contrary to Christian beliefs and this flavours the content of their work.

Paul said, "*do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God* (Rom 12:2)." Secular entertainment produced by people opposed to God and His moral code is certain to be tainted with evil. We are to be in the world but not of the world (Jn 17:15-16). Bringing worldly music and entertainment into the church allows opportunity for the devil to wedge his way in.

In 1902, the Seventh-day Adventist Church learned a powerful lesson from mixing church work with worldliness. By this time, the Review and Herald Publishing Company had grown very large and prosperous. Much of the profit, however, was coming from the publishing of secular materials. Messages of warning were repeatedly sent to the managers of the printing house of the evils and dangers of bringing worldliness into the printing work. In January 1898, Mrs White wrote to Uriah Smith, editor of the Review:

> "*The publishing house has been turned into desecrated shrines, into places of unholy merchandise and traffic. It has become a place where injustice and fraud have been carried on, where selfishness, malice, envy, and passion have been borne sway. Yet the men who have led into this working upon*

wrong principles are seemingly unconscious of their wrong course of action."[270 (p232)]

She said that she received testimony from God and that the office must be purged of the objectionable matter. A few years later, in November 1901, she wrote:

"*I have been almost afraid to open the Review, fearing to see that God has cleansed the publishing house* ***by fire***."[47 (p91)]

The 'objectionable matter' was not removed and, in fact, 1902 was one of the most prosperous years for the publishing company. Consequently, as Mrs White slept restlessly in her Elmshaven home 4.5 thousand kilometres away, her worst fear, the prediction of that cleansing fire, came true:

"*On December 30, 1902, the publishing house was totally destroyed by fire of an unknown origin. Within an hour of its discovery, at 7:25 p.m., by employees working the night shift, the entire four-story structure was a mass of blazing ruins. Nothing of value was saved. The machinery, furniture, printed books and periodicals, paper stock, and other materials were a total loss*."[511 (p7)]

The publishing house that James White and other pioneers had worked so tirelessly to build up all those years earlier had been reduced to a pile of rubble. This is a lesson to us all that we must work tirelessly to keep worldliness out of the church.

As with Pink, Coldplay promotes promiscuous sexuality and is symbolic of their rejection of God's law. Society's obsession with sex has distorted our understanding of marriage. Attraction is only a superficial aspect of relationships. Whatever it is we think in today's world is important for relationships, it is not working. The high divorce rate is testament to that. The emphasis in the media on physical attraction, sexual compatibility, cohabitation, premarital sex and the liberated lifestyle has not strengthened relationships but weakened them. Our culture overemphasises and overvalues sexual fulfilment.

A healthy loving relationship is primarily based on a deep care for one another and an appreciation for each other's character and godly lifestyle. Wonderful examples include successful loving marriages which begin by parental arrangement and elderly couples who adore each other despite the effects of ageing. There is also the partner who continues to care for his loved one through major illness or injury. What keeps these people thriving in their relationships? It's a deep and loving concern for one another and determination to make the relationship work despite all the obstacles – and a commitment to following God's way.

Not all Seventh-day Adventists agree with the church's official position on sexuality. For example, the editor of Pulse magazine is a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, and he calls for Seventh-day Adventists to embrace homosexuality. One of the contributors of 'Pulse', an author and employee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, admires the Irish rock band U2, stating that it has been a formative part

of his life, faith and activism. He was introduced to U2 by a traveling preacher who visited his public high school. There is no doubt that this author is sincere in his Christianity, and he is passionate about serving people; however, an examination of U2 and its lead singer Bono will quickly reveal why shepherds of our church should not be getting inspiration for their life and faith from worldly entertainment.

In the last two stanzas of U2's hit song, I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For, Bono sings of Jesus as follows:

> "*You broke the bonds*
> *And you loosed the chains*
> *Carried the cross of my shame*
> *Oh my shame, you know I believe it*
>
> *But I still haven't found what I'm looking for*"[512]

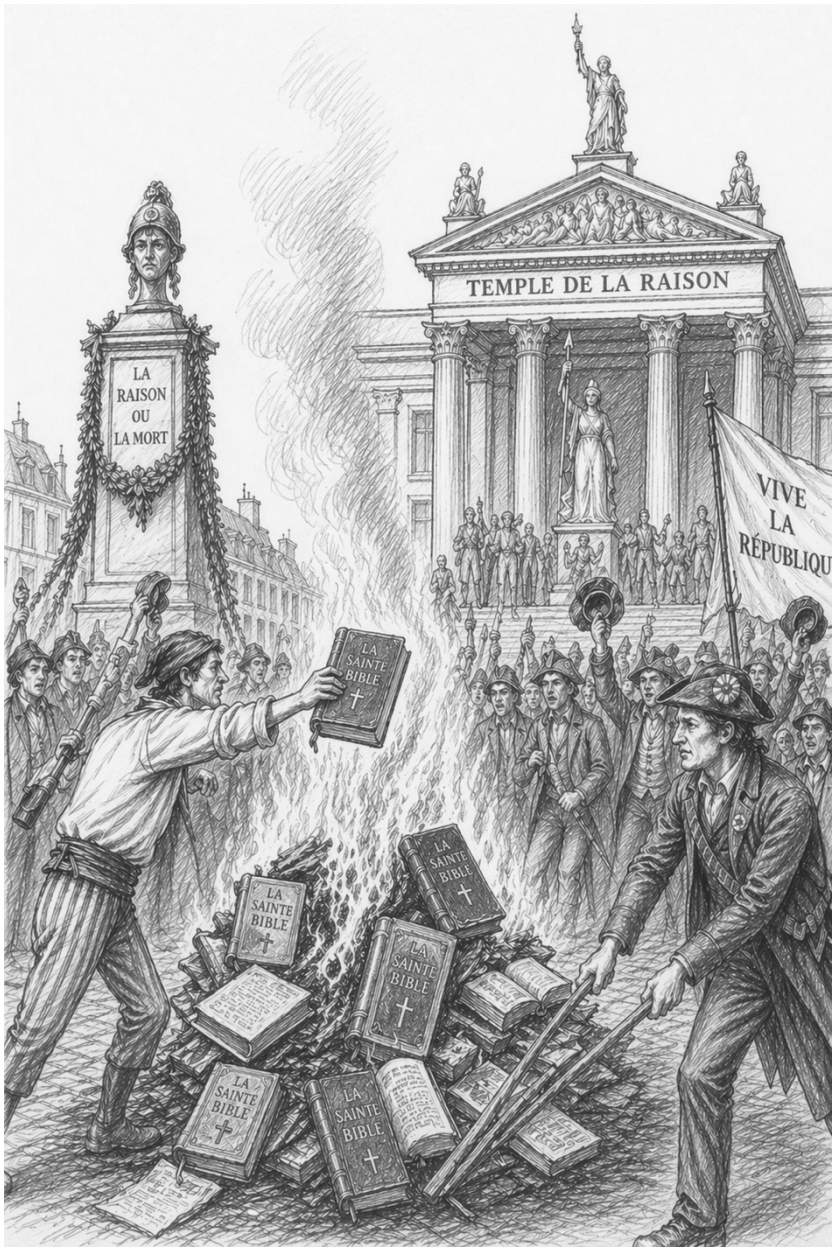
Bono believes Jesus died for Him, but, sadly, he 'still hasn't found what he is looking for.' Bono, a married man, will frequently pull up a girl from the audience onto the stage, dance and embrace intimately with her, even lie down with her on stage and kiss her on her lips.

Before pointing the finger at others, we must scrutinise our own lives. What immorality are we allowing into our lives? If we're watching, listening to and thinking about ungodly things, we're at great risk of being guided by a spirit that will lead us to misinterpret Scripture. Only God knows the true heart and intentions of Bono, but his lifestyle does not reflect a truly converted heart. Bono should not be our source of inspiration any more than Donald Trump, also a professed Christian, should inspire our faith and life (Jas 4:4).

Pastors, teachers, authors and other spiritual guides in our church should not be receiving inspiration from the world. We must remain pure, unadulterated, true followers of God – true to His Word, true to His commandments, true to his commission – everything else must be rejected. Our inspiration must come from none other than Jesus Christ. If we are single, Jesus challenges us to put aside lustful thoughts. If married, we are to remain faithful to our spouses. If our spouse has a sexual impairment, we are still to remain faithful. If we have gay tendencies, we are to remain faithful to Jesus. If we are to be put in prison for our faith and lose all our freedom, we must take up our cross and accept imprisonment. It's not about us but about Jesus and His will, for He laid down His life for us all.

PART 10

CONSEQUENCES OF POOR MUSIC CHOICES


TEMPLE DE LA RAISON
LA RAISON OU LA MORT
VIVE LA RÉPUBLIQU
LA SAINTE BIBLE

Chapter 31
God's Character Rejected

Part 10 of this book is a trumpet warning concerning the consequences of poor music choices, one of which is the rejection of God's character. The content of most worship songs, as described by songwriter Keith Getty, is now driven by commercialism rather than by spiritual leaders. There is a natural falling away from a balanced teaching of Scripture, he says. Tough topics, such as judgement, are not touched on. Consequently, we have become used to a different flavoured God and, when we pick up the Bible and read parts of it that are unfamiliar to us, it can taste bland and foreign and even bitter and harsh. We feel we have to make excuses for God's behaviour, especially in the Old Testament. Instead of associating divine law with beauty, we associate it with legalism. Instead of connecting God's judgement with justice, we connect it with maleficence. We turn Bible stories into allegories to make them more palatable. Sexual promiscuity transitions from an abomination to tolerated, welcomed and even celebrated in the church. Anything in God's Word that clashes with our sentiments has to be challenged and adjusted for fear of chasing people out of the church or offending people. Like the little horn of Daniel, we attempt to change God's law (Dan 7:25) to make it easier for people to accept God.

Andy Stanley, son of evangelist Charles F. Stanley, is an influential speaker, author of more than 20 books and the founder and senior pastor of North Point Ministries, a so-called non-denominational evangelical Christian church. Andy said he would like Christians, including pastors and teachers everywhere, to adopt his method to try to "*make it easier and easier and easier*" for people to embrace Faith. This includes avoiding things that make the church unnecessarily resistible. They have embraced new styles of worship, teaching, communication, children's ministry and architecture to make the setting more appealing and easier for people.[513]

This is not a new concept. According to Eusebius, as described by John Henry Newman, the 19th century Catholic theologian and historian:

> "*Constantine, in order to recommend the new religion to the heathen, transferred into it the outward ornaments to which they had been accustomed in their own*."

He lists examples of the pagan ornaments brought into the church in the 4th century, including:

> "*…branches of trees; incense, lamps, and candles; votive offerings on recovery from illness; holy water; asylums; holydays and seasons, use of calendars, processions, blessings on the fields; sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure, the ring in marriage, turning to the East, images at a later date, perhaps the ecclesiastical chant, and the Kyrie Eleison*."

These are all of pagan origin and sanctified by their adoption into the Church, he says.[514 (p373)] By adopting pagan ornaments and rituals, the Catholic church leaders made it easier and easier for pagans to join the church.

General Booth also embraced new styles of worship, teaching and communication to make it easier for people to be saved. He could not accept that salvation was difficult. When given the opportunity to enter college and become a Congregational minister, he declined over doctrine: "*I would sooner starve than preach such doctrine, one special feature of which was that only a select few could be saved*."[57 (p31)] George Scott Railton, the first Commissioner of The Salvation Army, argued that the compulsion of people to reject God is strong. He reasoned that the methods Christians had been using throughout the ages up to that point had not been strong enough to overcome that compulsion to reject God; hence, many souls were in danger of hell. Therefore, he proposed, Christians should make it easier for people to accept God:

> "*To check and overcome that very palpable compulsion on the wrong side, the most desperate action of God's servants in all ages has never been found strong enough. Hence there has come about another sort of compulsion, within the souls of all God's messengers. It could not but be more agreeable to flesh and blood if the minds of men* ***could more easily be induced*** *to turn from the things that are seen to those which are invisible. But this has never yet been the case. Hence all who really hear God's voice cannot but become alarmed as to the manifest danger that His warnings may remain entirely unheeded. When once any soul is truly enlightened, it cannot but put forth every devisable effort to compel the attention of others.*"[57 (p37)]

George Railton goes on to explain how the Army was such an organisation that used extreme methods to achieve this end of more easily inducing people to turn to God, despite the fierce competition. He argued, "*Who complains of the compulsion of railway servants, who by bell, flag, and whistle, glaring announcements, or in any other way, urge desiring passengers to get into their train, before it is too late*?" The Salvation Army's sensational methods, including tambourines, drums, shouting in the streets, loud preaching and ecstatic prayer to bring people to repentance, were all justified because it made it easier for people to accept Jesus. And so, he concludes, "*The General's organisation of compulsory plans for the Salvation of souls will not only be approved but regarded as one of the great glories of his life*."[57 (p37)] In order to reach those who were unmoved by the words of the

preacher, the Army borrowed from popular culture to make it easier to get their attention and bring conviction.[2 (p200)] Pamela Walker said:

> "*The Army not only wanted to widen the appeal of Christianity but also strived to convey that God's love was so immense, so utterly transformative that anyone could be saved in an instant*."[2 (p191)]

Contemporary Christian worship has attempted to do the same thing. By combining watered down theology with worldly entertainment methods, it is easier for people to come to church. Charles H. Spurgeon, a contemporary of General Booth, said in one of his sermons:

> "*The new plan is to assimilate the church to the world, and so include a larger area within its bounds. By semi-dramatic performances they make houses of prayer to approximate to the theatre; they turn their services into musical displays, and their sermons into political harangues or philosophical essays - in fact, they exchange the temple for the theatre, and turn the ministers of God into actors, whose business it is to amuse men…*
>
> *…This, then, is the proposal. In order to win the world, the Lord Jesus must conform himself, his people, and his Word to the world. I will not dwell any longer on so loathsome a proposal.*"[515]

Jesus never promised that salvation would be easy. As much as we might wish for our fellow human beings to be saved, only a select group will make it, even of the professed Christians. Jesus said, "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven* (Matt 7:21)." This is a sobering thought. He also said, "*narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are* ***few who find it*** (v14)." Those who avoid the torment of hell are those "*who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus* (Rev 14:12)." Those who love God and His law have no fear of the law because Jesus has paid the price of transgression of the law. Thankfully, by the grace and mercy of God, many of the select few who will make it to heaven will be Salvation Army converts, Catholics and Seventh-day Adventists. Hopefully, Andy Stanley will be amongst them too. But only God knows the hearts of each individual - He knows His sheep. It is not for us to judge the motive of our fellow Christians.

Despite all of this, people like General Booth and Andy Stanley have felt the need to remove Biblical practices from church that they believed were unnecessary hindrances. For example, General Booth removed the requirement to participate in ordinances and baptism. He said that the sacraments shut out "*a multitude of men and women who have been and are today sincere followers of the Lord Jesus Christ*." He also argued that the sacraments create division because of differing opinions as to the proper mode of delivering them – such as baptism by immersion, baptism by sprinkling and infant baptism. He felt that these rituals had become mere forms by which people felt they could gain salvation – they would

participate in the sacraments on Sunday but then forget about their saviour the rest of the week.[491]

While these are all sensible arguments, it is of a similar mindset to David when he attempted to carry the ark to the new city the first time. He sincerely did what was most convenient and practical, but it was not what God had asked for. To avoid controversy, General Booth got rid of the very institutions that our Lord initiated. Sabbath keepers would argue that it is the same kind of reasoning that Justin Martyr and other church fathers in Rome used when they decided to worship on Sunday in celebration of Jesus' resurrection in place of worshipping on the seventh-day Sabbath. It is of a similar mindset to the church of the 5th and 6th centuries when it was decided to convert the Roman gods into statues of Mary and the apostles.

All of these people – General Booth, the early church fathers, Catholic priests – they were all likely sincere in their motives and had sensible arguments for their actions. They were convenient changes, making it easier and easier for unbelievers to join the church and it helped the church to grow. However, in each situation, they ignored the clear commands and institutions of God. If God lays down an institution, we must be faithful in maintaining it until God clearly and unambiguously changes the institution.

God told Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But "*when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate* (Gen 3:6)." God instituted marriage between a man and a woman but, because humans did not glorify God and were not thankful (Rom 1:21) they dishonoured their bodies among themselves (v24). Cain and Abel both brought offerings to God, but only Abel's was accepted because it was according to God's command. At the foundation of the world, God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; therefore, the seventh day is holy until God says it is no longer holy. God said, "*You shall not make for yourself a carved image - any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them* (Ex 20:4)." Unless God says we can now pray to statues, we must not do it. Jesus said "*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to **observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age* (Matt 28:19-20)." Therefore, we must observe all things that Jesus commanded us and teach others to do likewise.

If people are just going through the motions as they follow the rituals given to us by Jesus, the problem is with the worshipper rather than the ritual. Therefore, we should not abandon the ritual but teach people how to have a genuine heartfelt relationship with their saviour as they observe His ritual. When believers dispute over how to observe a ritual, deep prayerful study of Scripture is called for until the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth. If people are keeping the law to win

salvation, the problem is with the observer rather than with the law. Instead of doing away with the law, we teach people how to keep the law for the right reason – out of love for God and for each other.

Unless we are continually and firmly committed to God's character as revealed in Scripture, we can come adrift. That's what happened to Andy Stanley. When we put human wisdom above God's wisdom, it leads to apostasy. Human wisdom finds faults in God's Word and His character and attempts to modify it to make it more appealing to the masses. The most significant change Andy made in his church was to deny the foundation of our faith which, he said, for most Christians 'unfortunately is the Bible'. He said that the Achilles heel of Christianity is our faith in the Bible. He believes the Scriptures have been successfully dismantled by the new atheists, particularly Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and Daniel Dennett. He describes these men as extraordinarily intelligent – not evil or bad, just having a different worldview.[513]

Richard Dawkins is infamous for his statement that, "*The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser…*"[516 (p51)] Sam Harris said, "*It is time that we admitted that faith is nothing more than the license religious people give one another to keep believing when reasons fail*."[517 (p67)] Though Richard Dawkins admits that much of the Bible is not systematically evil, he argues that it is "*just plain weird, as you would expect of a chaotically cobbled-together anthology of disjointed documents, composed, revised, translated, distorted and 'improved' by hundreds of anonymous authors, editors and copyists, unknown to us and mostly unknown to each other, spanning nine centuries*."[516 (p268)] What he is saying is that the Bible is an incoherent mess - and Andy Stanley is willing to concur.

Instead of defending our faith in Scripture against the onslaught, which now permeates our culture thanks to the internet, Andy abandons the Bible. He retreats solely to the resurrection story, saying that this is the only solid ground for our faith. Scripture is not the foundation of our belief but the resurrected Christ, he argues.[513] Stanley is willing to give up his faith in the Bible because, like the new atheists, he also does not like the God of the Old Testament. He believes that God, as revealed in the Bible, is too hard to accept and is an obstacle to embracing Christianity. He says:

> "*If Genesis isn't true, well then, the Bible isn't true. If all of it isn't true, then you can't say the Bible is true and if the Bible isn't true then why would I depend on it? Why would I look to it as a source of Faith or, really, as a source of anything*."[513]

In order to 'keep the doors wide open', we have to make it easy for people, Andy says. We have to throw off the Achilles heel (the Bible). That way, we no longer have to wrestle with the creation story and the wrathful and jealous God of the Bible. Instead, he says "*Christianity can stand on its own two nail scarred*

resurrection feet, the foundation of your faith and mine is not a book, it is an event that the Bible did not create."[513] Andy Stanley believes that Jesus died and rose again, but he does not believe that the Bible is divinely inspired. He rejects the truth of the Bible because he does not like the God of the Bible. Therefore, the saviour in his mind that he believes in, is very different to the saviour that is found in Scripture, because Jesus is the 'I Am' (Jn 8:58) of the Old Testament.

Sadly, Andy Stanley is not alone with these heretical sentiments. A growing number of Christians, though not always as extreme as Andy, are conceding to this line of thinking. Some liberal Christian scholars believe the first century theistic understanding of God is archaic. They have described the creator God of the Old Testament using similar terms as Richard Dawkins, such as 'insane' and 'pathologically violent.'[476] New Zealand theologian, Sir Lloyd Geering, said, "*The time for glorifying the Almighty (male) God who supposedly rules is now over*."[518] He admits that he was looking for a concept of God that he and others could be comfortable with.[519]

If we grow up with only hearing and singing about the love and mercy of God, the Old Testament God becomes foreign to us and has to be disbanded and rejected. Stanley accepts the risen Christ, but denies Him by his disregard for the Scriptures which reveals Christ and His character. Modern-day Christian leaders and evangelists are deviating from a literal reading of the Bible because, by human reckoning, they believe there is a greater good to be served. Increasingly, though professing belief in the Bible, Christianity as a whole is retreating solely to the resurrected Jesus. This is considered the 'gospel message' and everything else is peripheral. Anything other than the resurrection story is too hard, too controversial and too exclusive – so we had better not sing about that part of God's kingdom or His character. When church leaders elevate human wisdom above the Word of God, in vain they worship Jesus, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men (Matt 15:9; Is 29:13).

Chapter 32
God's Law Rejected

Another consequence of poor music choices is the rejection of God's law. The first Psalm contrasts delight in God's law with walking in the counsel of the ungodly. Because we have been inadvertently 'standing with sinners' and 'keeping company with scorners (Ps 1:1),' God's law is no longer more 'precious than gold' or 'sweeter than honey' to us (Ps 19:10). We have been singing the songs of those in the religious world who do not delight in God's law and the songs of those in the secular world who mock His law.

It is important to remind ourselves here that, although Paul referred to the law as a curse (Gal 3:13), he also said "*the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good* (Rom 7:12)." The psalmist said, "*Great peace have those who love Your law* (Ps 119:165)." This is only true for those who are forgiven. The law is a curse to those who are not under grace, for "*the wages of sin is death* (Rom 6:23)" and sin is transgression of the law (1 Jn 3:4). Fortunately, Jesus cancelled the debt owing to us, "*having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us* (Col 2:14)." Therefore, we can enjoy the benefits of the law without the penalty owing to us due to transgression. David understood this. He knew that he was under grace due to the sacrificial system and, therefore, the law was sweeter than honey, perfect and holy, making us wise and rejoicing the heart (Ps 19:7-11). Because of God's mercy, though we deserve death because of our transgression of the law, we no longer have to fear the law, but we can rejoice in the bountiful blessings it brings to us.

Unfortunately, this is not what we see in practice. We rarely rejoice in God's law anymore. New Testament scholar Gordon D. Fee once said, "*Show me a church's songs and I'll show you their theology*."[520 (p222)] As Mark Noll puts it, "*We are what we sing*".[521] If we rarely sing of God's law, then our theology and teachings will undervalue God's law. The gospel message becomes skewed disproportionately toward God's grace, and we lose a healthy fear of God. Sinful behaviours become acceptable behaviours.

Following is a section from the song by the Gaither Vocal Band, Loving God, Loving Each Other:

> "*They pushed back from the table*
> *To listen to His words*
> *His secret plan before He had to go*
> ***It's not complicated***
> ***Don't need a lot of rules***

This is all you'll need to know

Loving God, loving each other
Making music with my friends
Loving God, loving each other
And the music never ends

We tend to make it harder
Build steeples out of stone
Fill with explanations of The Way
But if we'd stop and listen
And break a little bread
We would hear the Master say…"

According to this song, Jesus removed the rules and teachings, making it easier for us. Perhaps the author of the song had in mind rigid man-made rules, but the song gives the impression that all rules are a hindrance and a burden. Since God's law is a reflection of His character, if we teach that His rules are demanding and harsh, God becomes unattractive to us, so we modify His commands to make Him more appealing and easier to accept.

If, on the other hand, we teach as David did that God's law is more desirable than fine gold and sweeter than honey from the honeycomb (Ps 19:10), His character becomes attractive. We desire Him, not just because Jesus died for us, but because His statutes are right, rejoicing the heart (v8). Of course, overly rigid man-made rules are burdensome, but God's rules are not:

> "*By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith*." (1 Jn 5:2-4)

Loving God and loving each other does not negate the rest of God's rules. In fact, apart from the law, we do not even know how to love. Mrs White said:

> "*Men and women and youth need to see the law of God with its far-reaching requirements. It is not hardship, toil, or poverty that degrades humanity; it is sin, the transgression of God's law.* ***The efforts put forth to rescue the outcast and degraded will be of no avail unless the claims of the law of God and the need of loyalty to Him are impressed on mind and heart***."[16] (p259)

Far from minimising the law, Jesus magnified it. We are not just to love God, but we are to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. We are not to just love others, but we are to love them as ourselves (Mk 12:30-31). If you think about it, Jesus set a very high standard here – far higher than the Jewish law of

His day. One of the first things Jesus did when He began His ministry was to broaden the meaning and application of the law in His sermon on the mount. For example, Jesus said:

> "*You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment*." (Matt 5:21-22)

If we are to harmonise with God, we must harmonise with His law. The world is becoming increasingly accepting of sexual immorality which is against God's law. The second greatest commandment is to love our neighbour as ourselves. As much as we may want to show love to others by 'liberating' them from the law, we would be breaking the first and greatest commandment to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Though we may not understand the reasons why He made certain laws, we must trust God. God's commands are so binding that just one sin has led to 6000 years of separation from God, resulting in endless suffering and the crucifixion of Jesus. Why didn't God simply elevate grace above the law and forgive Adam and Eve without Jesus having to pay the penalty? Wouldn't this have prevented all the suffering? It is because righteousness has to be upheld – at all cost – because sin is the cause of suffering. General Booth had a clear understanding of this:

> "*Christ's sacrifice was devised to maintain the dignity of the law man had broken and at the same time to rescue man from the penalty he had incurred. So far, therefore, from the atonement being a reflection on the justice and benevolence of God, it is perhaps the greatest evidence we possess both of* ***his unswerving Justice and of his boundless love***."[232]

So steadfast is God's law that even His Son, the eternal second person of the Godhead, had to pay the cost of disobedience by His own death. So powerful is His love for us that He was willing to pay that price. That's how important the law is to our Lord. He would rather lay down His own life than bend His law. Love is at the heart of His unyielding commitment to His law because His law embodies unselfish love and shields us from the oppressiveness of sin. Therefore, if we truly love our neighbour, we will uphold the law of God because that is the loving thing to do. On this subject, General Booth also said:

> "*We must hold on to the doctrine of the atonement because it forms a strong incentive to us to love God in return as I kneel before his bleeding form and remember who he was and why he came there… We must hold on to the doctrine of the atonement because of the picture it presents of the majesty of the Divine law and the importance of its maintenance as I look upon the suffering Christ*."[232]

In getting out of harmony with God's love and justice, James White saw present day Christians making an equally serious but opposite mistake to the Jews:

> "*The Jews boasted of God, of Abraham, and of the law, but despised and rejected Jesus. The great facts connected with his resurrection were soon to be so convincing that many would believe. And as the Jews were to reject and crucify the Son, while boasting in the law, Christians would run to the opposite and equally-fatal heresy of trampling upon the authority of the Father, and* ***despising his law, while receiving Christ*** *and glorying in the gospel. It has ever been Satan's object to separate, in the faith of the church, the Father and the Son. With the Jews was the cry, The Father, Abraham, the law; but away with Jesus and his gospel. With Christians the cry was to arise, Christ, the cross, the gospel; but away with the law of the Father*."[32] (p315)

The genius of God is that, at the cross, He was able to uphold every jot and tittle of the law while remaining a God of love and mercy. Consequently, we can and must embrace both and, because of His magnificent majesty and love, strive to maintain His law.

God's law is central to His government. He dwelt amongst His people on earth and governed them from the sanctuary. The Hebrew sanctuary housed the ark which contained the 10 commandments (Heb 9:4) and the earthly sanctuary was a model or pattern of the heavenly things (Heb 8:5). On a much grander scale, God governs the universe from His sanctuary in heaven. John the Revelator saw the temple of God opened in heaven, "*and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple* (Rev 11:19);" therefore, God's commandments are also central to His government in heaven. Following this scene, God's followers are identified as commandment keepers (Rev 12:17, 14:12).

Throughout the Bible, God's people are marked by their faithful observance of His law – it is stamped on their foreheads and hands. In other words, God's law is written on their hearts, governing their thoughts and actions. God instructed the Hebrew people to bind His commands to their hands and foreheads:

> "*And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a* ***sign on your hand****, and they shall be as* ***frontlets between your eyes****. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates*." (Deut 6:6-9)

The forehead is where the frontal lobe is situated – the part of the brain used for conscious thoughts, reasoning and moral judgement. It is where we choose to either disobey or to obey and love God. With our hands we put into action our thoughts. In Ezekiel's time, those who esteemed God's law were given a mark: "*put* ***a mark on the foreheads*** *of the men who sigh and cry over all the abomina-*

tions that are done within it (Ez 9:4)." In the Bible, violations against God's moral and ritual laws are often labelled abominations (e.g. Lev 18:22). Those who lamented over the breaking of God's law received a 'mark' which protected them from God's judgement (v5-6). In the same fashion, the earth is not to be harmed in the end time until God's people are sealed: "*Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have* ***sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads*** (Rev 7:3)."

As discussed previously, Martin Luther identified the Roman Catholic Church with the little horn power of Daniel 7 - the antichrist or the apostate church. That does not mean that individuals in the Roman Catholic Church are necessarily opposed to Christ, but Luther certainly believed that some of the teachings of the Catholic church contradict the Bible. Unlike God's people, who are commandment followers, the antichrist power opposes God's law by thinking "*to change times and law* (Dan 7:25)." In other words, the apostate church thinks that it has the authority to change God's law, thereby speaking pompous words against the Most High (v25). The Roman Catholic Church openly and assertively claims to have such authority over Scripture through the rights given to it by apostolic succession. For example, according to the Convert's Catechism, the Catholic church asserts the right by the authority of Christ to substitute Sunday for Saturday.[267] Protestants do not accept the Pope's claim to authority over Scripture.

Like the little horn power of Daniel 7, Martin Luther also felt that the Roman Catholic Church was fulfilment of the beasts of Revelation 13.[360] Of the second beast, Revelation 13 says:

> "*He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a* ***mark on their right hand or on their foreheads****, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name*." (Rev 13:16-17)

If the mark of God's people is love for and allegiance to His commandments, then it would stand to reason that everyone else is marked by their rejection of God's law, at least in part, or by their submission to a different authority. Those who receive the **mark of the beast on their right hand or on their foreheads** must be those who conform to the beast power and reject God's law. Those who choose not to break God's law will be prohibited from buying and selling and participating in business and commerce.

The third angel's message of Revelation 14 is a loud cry – a shout, a trumpet call, a warning – not to worship the beast:

> "*If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives* ***his mark on his forehead or on his hand****, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation*." (Rev 14:9-10)

Similar to Martin Luther, Seventh-day Adventists interpret the first beast as the Roman Catholic Church which united with secular powers to enforce religious law

on civilians, especially during the dark ages. The Catholic Church lost its political power after the pope was imprisoned by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798 - this is recognised by Adventists as the deadly wound which would be healed (Rev 13:12). The second beast is depicted in Revelation 13 as a politico-religious power which restores authority back to the first beast. Seventh-day Adventists have always taught that the second beast is the United States of America which, like the Roman Church in the dark ages, will enforce religious law on its civilians. They believe the second beast will become a persecuting power when separation of church and state is abolished in America. One of the laws they believe it will enforce is Sunday observance. If Adventists are correct about this, if we neglect to praise and uplift the law of God in our worship, we are setting believers up to give allegiance to the beast power – to receive the mark of the beast.

In contrast to worshipping this false religious system, the first angel's message of Revelation 14, also a loud cry, a trumpet blast, calls us to worship the true God. The true God is identified as the creator:

> "*Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him* ***who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water***." (Rev 14:7)

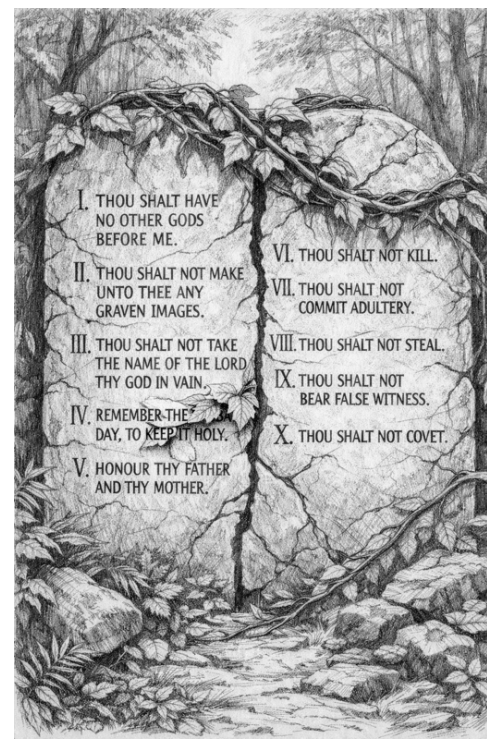
Why does it call us back to the creator and not back to the saviour? At creation, God set up a special day in honour of His creation, a mark of His authority – the seventh-day Sabbath. In the Old Testament, God said that the Sabbath was a sign between God and His people "*for in six days the Lord* ***made the heavens and the earth****, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed* (Ex 31:17)." God links this phrase, which is also echoed in Rev 14:7, with the Sabbath which marks His people. Since Christians are "*Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise* (Gal 3:29)," the sign of the Sabbath as God's people also applies to Christians. Therefore, Seventh-day Adventist theology teaches that the **Sabbath is a seal or mark** of God's authority and His people.

Conversely, the Catholic church claims that Sunday worship is proof of its authority, as follows:

> "*There is no authority in the New Testament for the substitution of Sunday for Saturday… For Catholics there is not the slightest difficulty… We have in the authoritative voice of the Church the voice of Christ Himself. The Church is above the Bible; and this transference of Sabbath observance from Saturday to Sunday is proof positive of that fact*."[522]

In other words, **the Roman Catholic Church is saying that Sunday observance is a mark or sign of its authority**, since Protestants continue to observe Sunday though it is not authorised in Scripture. Those who worship the beast and his image receive the mark of the beast on the hand and forehead. That is to say, they think and act like the first beast and accept the authority of the beast, including Sunday worship (see Figure 7).

According to Seventh-day Adventist theology, Sunday worship undermines God's authority as creator. There is a growing rejection today of God as creator. One of the core teachings of Gnosticism also undermines God as creator. It teaches that God does not create anything - true existence cannot be created.[476] The creator of the material world, the Demiurge (i.e. Yahweh of the Old Testament), is an inferior and ignorant being, distinct from the true, transcendent God who resides in a perfect spiritual realm, the Pleroma.[523,524] The first angel's message, on the other hand, acknowledges God as the supreme God who created the heavens and the earth. Seventh-day Adventist theology also teaches that apostate Protestant Christians will unite with Roman Catholicism to oppose God's true followers in the time of the end. Today, numerous religious leaders are calling for an end to the protest.



Is it really possible that something as innocent as worship music could lead multitudes of believers into deception? Well, King David, Martin Luther and Fanny Crosby all sang of God's law, yet now we never do. How did that happen? If Keith Getty is right, that the content of the most popular worship songs is driven by commercialism – by the mighty dollar – then pride, envy, covetousness and other sinful human traits can wedge their way in. Though individual artists have noble intentions, the industry is driven by an ignoble undercurrent. This has provided a channel for the devil to work out his cunning schemes. Consequently, God's law has been erased, and we didn't even notice it.

Which Laws Are We to Follow?

If this is all true and we need to get back to praising God's law more than we have been, how do we know which commands are applicable to us today? There is a distinction in the Bible between the ten commandments and the Mosaic or ceremonial law. The ten commandments were written by God's own finger and placed inside the Ark of the Covenant (Deut 10:2), whereas the ceremonial law was written by Moses and placed beside the ark (Deut 31:24-26). The ceremonial law pointed to Jesus and was fulfilled in His death and resurrection, whereas the moral law, the 10 commandments, had its foundation in creation. Paul made a

distinction between the ceremonial law and the commandments when he said, "*Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters* (1 Cor 7:19)." In other words, he is saying that it was no longer important whether a believer was circumcised or not, for circumcision was part of the ceremonial law which was fulfilled in Jesus' death. Therefore, we discard what is no longer relevant, the ceremonial law, but obey what is relevant, the commandments of God.

	Passage	**Significance**
Genesis 2:1,3	*Thus the **heavens and the earth, and all the host of them**, were finished… Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it*	The Sabbath is a memorial of creation
Exodus 20:8,11	*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy… For in six days the Lord made the **heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them**, and rested the seventh day.*	The Sabbath is the seal of God's authority
Exodus 31:16-17	Therefore, the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the **heavens and the earth**, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.'	The Sabbath is a seal between God and Israel
Revelation 14:7	Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made **heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water**	The Sabbath is a sign of true worship

Figure 7: Passages that point to the Sabbath as a mark or seal of God's authority as creator and also identify His people

While Mrs Booth recognised the distinction between circumcision and the 10 commandments, she extrapolates from Paul's statement to assume that all rituals have been spiritualised and no longer necessary:

> "*That circumcision is nothing, and that uncircumcision is nothing; baptism is nothing, and being unbaptized is nothing; the Lord's Supper is nothing, and abstaining from the Lord's Supper is nothing, in itself as a form, for he embraces under circumcision all mere outward forms and ceremonies; and all these are nothing, but 'keeping the commandments of God*.'"[130 (p53)]

Therefore, the Salvation Army does not practise baptism or communion. However, we are specifically told that physical circumcision is no longer required but baptism and the Lord's Supper were commanded by Jesus and, therefore, they are not nothing – we must continue to practise these institutions. Paul said, "*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes* (1 Cor 11:26)." Some Christians have also spiritualised the Sabbath, insisting that it is no longer required. However, Adventists maintain that God instituted it before the fall, it is part of the commandments which He wrote with His own finger and God has never given us permission to discontinue it.

The devil would prefer we abandon God's laws and rituals. Just as when Eve partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you can be sure that whenever God's law is disregarded, the devil is behind it. The two largest religions in the world – Islam and Christianity – both worship on Friday and Sunday respectively, either side of the day God made holy in the beginning. If Sabbatarians are correct, there is a mastermind making a mockery of God's law and we have fallen for it. We have "*worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator… For this reason God gave them up to vile passions* (Rom 1:25-26)."

At the heart of sin is a lack of love for God and for others. Paul said, "*he who loves another has fulfilled the law* (Rom 13:8)." Therefore, if we break the law, we hurt others. If a person commits adultery, it shows that they love themselves more than their partner and Jesus said that even lust is equivalent to committing adultery. God likens the disobedience of His people to adultery because it demonstrates unfaithfulness or a uniting with the world and a false religious system. Revelation identifies the apostate church in the last days as a harlot (Rev 17:1-6) because it has been unfaithful to God. Does that mean, according to Adventist theology, that all Christians who worship on Sunday have the mark of the beast? Fortunately, regardless of whether we accept Adventist theology or not, by God's grace, He gives His people the opportunity to come out of Babylon. He gives a loud cry for His people to return to true worship.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the largest modern seventh-day Sabbatarian denomination and it is growing rapidly around the world. There are numerous other modern-day seventh-day Sabbatarian church denominations, such as Seventh Day Baptists and Sabbatarian Pentecostalists, but the overall proportion of seventh-day Sabbath keepers is small. However, the majority view on any given topic is not always the correct view. When Martin Luther stepped out in faith to reform the Roman Catholic Church, he was one amongst just a few voices. He and those who followed in his footsteps were taking on a giant, attempting to overthrow a system that had established itself as the authority on Christian doctrine over many centuries – doctrines that the reformers were convicted were in error and belonged to a system that had been corrupted.

Even today, Protestant churches are in the minority amongst Christians and the majority of people in the world do not even believe in Jesus. The vast majority of people on earth did not believe Noah. The vast majority of Israelites ignored

the prophet Jeremiah and believed false prophets instead. The majority of Jews did not believe Jesus was the Messiah when He came. That is why, instead of first striving to harmonise with humankind, first and foremost, we must strive to harmonise with God, including delighting in His law.

Chapter 33
Immorality Disregarded

Another consequence of poor music choices is a rejection or distortion of morality. Brace yourself, because this chapter is a loud trumpet warning. As we have seen, two of the dominant messages communicated by the rhythm, display and lyrics of pop and rock music are sex and rebellion against social norms. Traditional moral values have been challenged and overturned, especially those relating to sexuality. Though many would agree that the Holiness movement of the late 1800s did get some things wrong, they did emphasise a moral lifestyle – especially abstinence from alcohol and gambling, offering men and women a new way of conducting themselves[2 (p1)] – and they warned of God's judgement. All too often, today, these components of the gospel message are missing. Emphasis is often placed, instead, on feel-good messages, such as the power of prayer to bring prosperity and health to our lives. When felt convenient, Scripture is ignored or altered to make it more appealing. For example, the scientific view of origins might be accepted over the Biblical story of creation; rules for marriage and sexual relations may be adjusted to align with secular views or the flood story allegorised so that God fits better with our own understanding of what a loving God should look like.

The good works of charity and outreach to the less privileged in society was a notable focus of the Holiness movement and they played a significant role in social reform, which is commendable. Likewise, charity is highly esteemed in modern Christianity, as it should be, and considered a sign of a true Christian. However, because of this emphasis, when a person does good works of charity, their openly practised sins are sometimes disregarded. If a pop star, like Bono, professes belief in Jesus, for example, but lives a lifestyle contrary to His teachings, such as materialism and sexual promiscuity, we look past that and even idolise them, as long as they are supporting worthy charities. This type of good works is considered admirable; while the good works of keeping God's law is regarded as legalism and is frowned upon. However, works of charity do not save us any more than keeping God's law. Even wicked people can show acts of kindness and love. We are not saved by any type of works, whether works of charity or works of obedience to the law because we are all sinners. Only the blood of Jesus saves us. If we are truly converted, we will have no desire to continue in sin.

The pop artist, Pink, is involved with several charities and campaigns, yet the content of her music is highly immoral. Love is the fulfilment of the law; therefore, the only way to truly be charitable is to obey and uphold God's law in a loving way

in our lives to ensure we do no harm to others. Though pop stars and other famous people in the entertainment industry are often involved in charities, the irony is that poverty is very often caused by the immorality they embrace.

Being the salt of the earth, we should be showing the world a better way to live, however, our influence as Christians on society is so lacking that, when a father took legal action against his ex-wife for taking their 11-year-old daughter to a Pink concert, the judge said "*So what*?"[525] This was said out of sarcasm, since one of her songs is called So What. In just the couple of Pink songs we reviewed in a previous chapter, the content of Pink's songs included promiscuous sex, getting drunk, having an attitude, getting into trouble and causing a fight. This is absolutely inappropriate for adults, let alone an 11-year-old, but it is seen as normal viewing for children by much of society nowadays.

Objectionable content – such as violence, alcohol and drug use, profanity, nudity and sexual content – has been gradually increasing in TV shows, movies and other entertainment.[526] For example, one organisation estimated a five-fold increase in sexual content, nudity or immodesty in movies and TV shows between 1980 and 2022 and a nine-fold increase in profanity, blasphemy and foul language during the same period.[527] A US study has found that the TV content rating system has failed. Parents are finding it increasingly difficult to accurately monitor what children are viewing.[528] Few Christian voices are pushing back against this enormous problem.

John Piper, theologian and author of the classic book, Desiring God, describes in a podcast how Christians unwittingly assimilated to the patterns of the world by filling their spare time with secular media and entertainment. This began at a time when Christians still shared many of the same moral constraints as the broader community. Unfortunately, Piper said, "*God was absent. And we scarcely noticed, let alone were heartsick or offended*." Now, even the superficial overlap with Christianity has virtually vanished from the entertainment industry. Restraint is absent and sin is celebrated in all its different forms. Rather than objecting to this godless depravity, Christians continue to seamlessly adapt to the change as morality increasingly retreats to a previous era. Piper describes the disturbing consequences of this adaptation to the world:

> ***Sin is consistently destigmatized and normalized in what Christians watch with pleasure…***
>
> *The church that regularly makes the world the source of its relaxation and enjoyment must become a worldly church. And* ***a worldly church is a powerless church***."[529]

If the church has lost its power of influence on the morality of society, it has probably contributed more to poverty due to turning a blind eye to immorality, than it has to relieving it by its charity work. Mrs White said:

> "*The efforts put forth to rescue the outcast and degraded will be of no avail unless the claims of the law of God and the need of loyalty to Him are impressed on mind and heart*."[16 (p259)]

Though the church, including the Salvation Army, may have contributed much to social reform in the past, perhaps Christianity's disregard for growing immorality has contributed to the unravelling of much of this good work. Though large Christian charities have been channelling billions of dollars from government and secular sources into aid and development projects, because the work is decoupled from the gospel, the effectiveness of the work is impaired. We might think that Christian charities are doing much good for the downtrodden, while ignoring the evils in society that have led to much of that poverty. Bono, lead singer of the Irish rock band U2, is another example of a popular artist who is known for his works of charity and social activism. The content of U2's performances even contain openly Christian themes. Unfortunately, Bono has twisted the understanding of Christian morality and anyone who follows them will develop a distorted view of Scripture.

Peter Jones believes that since the 1960s, a new ideology has been emerging with paganism at the heart. Gnosticism, he says, which was defeated in early Christianity, has re-emerged and is the essence of this revival of religious paganism. The goal is to create a new global pagan civilisation which will snuff out the Christian message. It is a massive movement, he warns, driving itself through our culture under the guise of doing good. He said, "*there was a time when the sacred canopy was the Christian worldview. Now that canopy is being ripped away and another kind of canopy is being put in its place*."[476] Just as Gnosticism brought pagan ideology from the outside world into the early church, the same is true today - what is happening in the church is a reflection of what is happening in the culture at large. "*Progressive Christianity*," he believes, "*is catching on to a pagan reordering of our life in a new form*." Peter said, "*I believe that homosexuality is actually the tip of the spear of this new civilization*."[476] The influential New Testament scholar, James Robinson, who collected and published the Gnostic texts unearthed in 1945, said that these Gnostic texts have much in common with Eastern religions and with the counterculture movements which arose in the '60s. Peter said that Gnostics like James Robinson and Carl Jung "*saw the value of these texts as fitting the Progressive culture that has been developing since the '60s*."[476] If Peter Jones is correct, then bands like U2, which is openly supportive of the gay movement, would be a major influence in propagating this new pagan ideology and a conduit between the world and the church. But is homosexuality against God's will? We will discuss more on this topic later in the chapter.

Lust & Secret Vice

People constantly struggle with immoral lifestyles – the type of lifestyles glamourised by popular artists and secular entertainment such as movies and pop songs. The most corrupt Catholic Popes in history were known for their highly immoral lifestyles, including such acts as bribery, brutal murders, lavish lifestyles and adultery.[530] Bad habits, addictions and poor lifestyle choices adversely impact ourselves and those around us. Most people have an unhealthy affinity to something. Obesity is of epidemic proportions.[531] More frequently than ever, teenagers are being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and other chronic illnesses, once considered adult diseases, due to sedentary lifestyles, overindulgence of bad food and other unhealthy habits.

People struggle to maintain a balanced healthy diet, which leads to chronic illness and often premature death. The Western diet typically contains large proportions of meat and processed foods and not enough fresh fruit and vegetables. Mrs White promoted a plant-based diet and claimed that meat eating can cause cancer. The Cancer Council states:

> "*Experts from the International Association for Research on Cancer reviewed the evidence and concluded that there is strong evidence to suggest that excess red meat consumption increases the risk of bowel cancer. For this reason, they concluded it was a probable carcinogen, but couldn't conclude exactly how much it increased your cancer risk by – or say how much needed to be consumed to increase the risk. However, there did appear to be an association with increased cancer risk when more than 100g a day was consumed*."[532]

This is equivalent to just over one sausage per day. The evidence is clear, yet we still struggle with appetite and ignore clear counsel. Medical evidence has shown Mrs White's health claims to be far more accurate than other health reformers of her time.[119,533,534] Rejecting the counsel of God's messengers can prove fatal (1 Ki 20:35-36, Matt 23:29-36) and that is why it is important to determine if she is truly in harmony with God. We should strive to be obedient in all things - not in a pharisaic way but in a practical sense out of love for God.

Interestingly, Mrs White states:

> "*A religious life can be more successfully gained and maintained if meat is discarded, for this diet stimulates into intense activity lustful propensities, and enfeebles the moral and spiritual nature*."[282 (p277)]

Likewise, indulgence of appetite, in general:

> "*…strengthens the animal propensities, giving them the ascendancy over the mental and spiritual powers*."[280 (p67)]

This makes sense. Anything that adversely affects our physical health will impact on our spiritual health. Who would not want to do everything they can within their means and with the power of God to optimise their spiritual health? This may be another reason why, apart from rock and pop music, with the over-abundance of meat and rich foods in the modern western diet, that our society has become so sex driven. It is these kinds of statements that make it difficult for some people to accept Mrs White's writings as genuinely from God. Especially her statements on the consequence of 'secret-vice' seem to border on absurd: "*catarrh, dropsy, headache, loss of memory and sight, great weakness in the back and loins, affections of the spine, the head often decays inwardly*."[535 (p27)] Some parts of her writings are just as difficult to swallow as some of the stories recorded by Moses, such as "*the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods* (Num 16:32)."

In a previous chapter we discussed Dr Don McMahon's findings which are documented in his book, Acquired or Inspired. He argues that Mrs White was shown in vision what health practices were important for us but was not shown why. He believes that this is consistent with Biblical authors who were shown through inspiration ***what*** to do, but were not given scientific reasons ***why***. Therefore, he divided all of Mrs Whites health claims into two categories: the ***whats***, or what health principles we are to follow, and the ***whys***, or the science behind the health principles. He concludes that Mrs White's *what* statements were highly accurate, while her *why* statements were no more accurate than any other author of her time. Dr McMahon argues that Mrs White was not shown in vision why certain health practices were important and was reliant on the known science of her day for an explanation.[119 (p27-35)] If he is correct, and if Mrs White was a prophet, even though she was instructed in vision that we should not practice 'secret vice,' (the what), her statements on the effects of secret vice (the why) are based on the scientific understanding of her day.

Modern research suggests that solitary sexual activity may have health benefits. However, due to logistical and ethical constraints, medical consensus relies on relatively small pilot studies and observational data. No large-scale, randomised controlled trials assessing the benefits or harms of masturbation have been conducted. Therefore, it is still possible that indulging in solitary sexual activity could actually have quite detrimental effects on health, not contrary to what was described by Mrs White and other commentators of her day. For example, expert medical opinion suggests that excessive emissions in men could lead to zinc deficiency (hypozincaemia).[536,537] In turn, zinc deficiency can lead to copper toxicity.[538] Hypozincaemia can cause: hair loss, frequent infections, vision impairment, delayed wound healing, stunted growth in young people, reduced appetite, reproductive problems, adverse birth outcomes, interference in taste and smell, depression and psychotic disorders.[539] Copper toxicity can cause liver disease, cardiomyopathy, cataracts, arthritis, depression, insanity and death, including sudden cardiac death.[538,540,541]

Studies are revealing that zinc deficiency could be a common cause of depression and other neuropsychiatric conditions.[542] Dr David Horrobin from Oxford University said:

> "*It is even possible, given the importance of zinc for the brain, that 19th-century moralists were correct when they said that repeated masturbation could make one mad!*"[536]

The late Carl C. Pfeiffer, physician and biochemist who researched schizophrenia, in his book Zinc and Other Micronutrients, said:

> "*We hate to say it but in a zinc-deficient adolescent, sexual excitement and excessive masturbation might precipitate insanity*."[537]

Though modern research has not linked masturbation with these serious adverse effects, studies are limited and likely have not adequately factored in the potential effects of malnutrition.[543] Populations in low- and middle-income countries have high rates of zinc deficiency[544] and this could well have been the case in America during Mrs White's time, predisposing those who also lose zinc through frequent emissions to more significant consequences. Perhaps the so-called 19th century 'moralists' were simply describing what had been observed in their time.

Doctors rarely ask patients how often they ejaculate and many patients would likely underreport anyway if it was excessive. The cost and complexity of testing for nutrient derangements makes routine testing prohibitive. Coupled with this the masquerading effect of such a diverse range of presentations would cause the link with any of these conditions to go almost universally unnoticed in medical practice, even in modern times, especially in areas where zinc deficiency is common.

None of this yet proves Mrs White right on this subject, but given her track record, it is wise to keep one's mind open, since she did say this was revealed to her in vision. Science falls far short of an in-depth understanding of the human body and health. We have been too quick to disregard Mrs White's health concerns when they sound too outrageous or far-fetched, like the parting of the red sea or the creation story, only to learn years later, as science catches up, that she was right. Note, these biochemical effects, as discussed, are apart from the well-documented direct psychological effects of pornography and lustful thoughts, which are associated with masturbation, and which can be significant in themselves and detrimental to our spiritual walk. Jesus put lust on the level of adultery (Matt 5:27–28). Also, although research has suggested benefits from solitary sexual activity, some studies and commentators have reported associations or concerns such as the development and maintenance of paraphilias,[545] lower life satisfaction in men and negative effects on sexual and relationship satisfaction among both men and women.[543]

Instead of heeding the advice of God's prophets and the Scriptures, we follow our own wisdom and the counsel of the world, oblivious of the damaging effects it is having on our physical and spiritual health. Mrs White counselled:

> "*Let none who profess godliness regard with indifference the health of the body, and flatter themselves that intemperance is no sin, and will not affect their spirituality. A close sympathy exists between the physical and the moral nature*."[280 (p67)]

Immoral Lifestyle Choices

Even more dissenting is the ever-increasing acceptance by Christians of a broad range of behaviours and lifestyles denounced in the Bible. Psalms says "*I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me. A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will not know wickedness* (Ps 101:3-4)." Many times over, we are reminded in the Psalms to flee from wickedness. However, these admonitions are largely missing in contemporary Christian songs. Consequently, we forget what wickedness is and the seriousness of dabbling in it. But what about homosexuality? Is it a sin? Is it truly the tip of the spear of a new pagan ideology permeating society as suggested by scholar Peter Jones. Same-sex relationships have become a hotly debated issue within Christianity in recent years; therefore, we must have respectful and open dialogue about this important issue. Throughout the ages, the majority of Christians have believed that homosexuality and adultery are clearly defined in the Bible as sins, based on passages such as Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:8-11. However, as society has changed, some denominations have changed their interpretation of scripture.

In 2024, issue one of a digital magazine produced by an organisation of Seventh-day Adventist members, was released. On page 10, pastors and church members are invited to join them in a statement of apology and to share the statement in their churches. Within the statement, the authors "*affirm the right for LGBTQ+ people to belong in our churches, participate in our worship, and serve in our mission*."[546] Notably, a few prominent members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have signed the petition, including a well-known author and retired pastor, as well as current pastors and employees of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. These members clearly have a deep concern for the welfare of those who identify as LGBT. Christians supportive of LGBT lifestyles reason that the Bible's condemnation of homosexual practice is in reference to exploitative forms of homoerotic behaviour only and is not applicable to consenting partners. Though this is not explicitly stated in the Bible, they infer it from the context. However, the majority of members worldwide still believe that the LGBT lifestyle is sinful and, therefore, it remains the official position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which holds that sexual intimacy belongs only within the marital relationship of a man and a

woman and that sexual acts outside the circle of a heterosexual marriage are forbidden.[28]

The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Position Paper reads:

"*All persons, including practicing homosexuals, should be made to feel welcome to attend our churches while* ***non-practicing gay*** *persons should be welcomed into membership and church office. All should receive spiritual care from the Church*."[452] (Gal 6:1)

Adventist Family Ministries states:

"*The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes that every human being is valuable in the sight of God, and we seek to minister to all men and women in the spirit of Jesus. We also believe that by God's grace and through the encouragement of the community of faith, an individual may live in harmony with the principles of God's Word*."[547]

The Salvation Army approach to the interpretation of Scripture has allowed it to accommodate evolving social norms on issues such as sexual identity and maintain its public status as a leading welfare agency.[175] For example, the Salvation Army, at least in certain regions, no longer regards homosexuality as blameworthy, and nobody is excluded from membership in the Army solely on the basis of sexual disposition. Salvationists are encouraged to help people explore their identity by, for instance, praying that God will affirm their authentic identity.[58] Note, however, that the Salvation Army has a hierarchical organisational structure with regulations being issued under the General's authority;[154] therefore, the majority of the membership will not always necessarily agree with the official statements of the church.

Seventh-day Adventists who oppose this view of the Salvation Army and Progressive Christianity argue that, like the Sabbath, union between a man and a woman was instituted in the beginning (Gen 1:27, 2:18) and Jesus affirmed this institution (Matt 19:4-5). Adam didn't choose his partner; she was a gift from God. Devout Christians generally believe we should allow God to choose our marriage partners for us. God created men and women with very different physiological composition producing significant distinctions. Our brains are anatomically and physiologically different,[548] and our endocrine systems produce hormonal make-ups unique to each gender giving rise to substantial functional but compatible variance[549] designed by God to form a single unit when combined. Therefore, when a godly man and woman are joined together as one, it produces a wholesome relationship designed by God.

In the Bible, sexual union outside that of marriage between a man and a woman is always associated with sinful acts, such as fornication, violence and idolatry. Nowhere in the Bible does it explicitly affirm same-sex relationships. On the contrary, quoting various verses, those who oppose homosexuality argue that the

Bible condemns consensual same-sex relations, for men are not to burn with desire for one another and likewise the women:

> "*For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman,* ***burned in their lust for one another****, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due*." (Rom 1:26-27)

In this same chapter, Paul echoes back to creation: we receive our understanding of God "*by the things that are made* (Rom 1:20)," which includes the creation of the image of God in man and woman. Therefore, it is argued, Paul is not referring only to exploitative forms of homoerotic behaviour, but all forms of immorality and sexual deviancy which is contrary to "*the things that are made*," hence, they "*changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man* (Rom 1:23)*.*"

Regardless of who is right concerning homosexuality, since we are all sinners, we should remind ourselves that heterosexuals, simply by greater number, do the vast majority of the sinning, and we have largely tiptoed around sexual sins, in general, in our churches. Scripture sets a very high standard and condemns all forms of sexual immorality, including lust. We must try our best to uphold this standard in the church and encourage members to do the same, but every individual must give an account to God for their own beliefs and practices (Rom 14:12). It must be remembered that we are all part of fallen humanity and that Christ came to die for all. We must pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ, that we may have unity in truth and remain focused on our primary mission.

Of much greater concern is the disregard for all kinds of immorality that we turn a blind eye to. For example, Christians may point the finger at gay people while at the same time, regularly watching movies filled with lewdness, adultery and other forms of promiscuous sexuality. A person may continue in sin without any repentance or remorse, blaming it on their sinful nature or on their genes. As already discussed, people are attracted to numerous unhealthy lifestyles, such as overeating, a sedentary lifestyle, substance use and pornography, and these tendencies can sometimes run in families, suggesting a genetic link. Indeed, research has demonstrated that genes are responsible for about half of the risk for Alcohol Use Disorder.[550] Research has failed to meaningfully predict an individual's sexual preference from their genetic makeup;[551] therefore, it could well be that lifestyle choices and environmental factors play a major role. Regardless, if God instituted marriage between a man and a woman before the fall, then any genetic predisposition to other sexual attractions, including adultery, that has occurred subsequently would be due to corruption of the human nature (Rom 3:23). Likewise, it can be assumed that God did not create humans with the genetic makeup for alcoholism but that it has come about due to the fall. Adulterers and paedophiles gain little sympathy from the claim that their genes made them do it –

though, that may change in the future. Just because someone has a strong attraction to a sin of whatever type, does not make it any more legitimate than alcoholism, even if it is inherited.

In the Bible, quarrelling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, wild parties, greed, idol worship, theft (Gal 5:19-21; 1 Cor 6:9-10) and many other vices are considered sins no less than the abuse of alcohol. Maybe your bad habit is gossip, bad temper or pride. It is all immoral and God does not want it in our lives. Some people think if it feels good, it must be right; however, how natural or intense a behaviour or attraction to something feels, how young the person was when it began, or how difficult it is to overcome, is not a test of the legitimacy of the behaviour. Immoral behaviour as defined in the Bible is an abomination to God and we owe it to every individual to warn them of the consequences of sin, including the effect it has on themselves, on others and on their spiritual lives – even potentially causing them to forfeit eternal life.

Thoughts and sensory stimuli can produce a dopamine surge that is habit-forming.[552,553] These thoughts can turn into actions that become part of a person's lifestyle that can be extremely difficult to overcome. One of the symptoms of dependence can be a loss of attraction to healthy habits or relationships.[554] When a person attempts to give up an unhealthy habit, they often become depressed or anxious and may even develop suicidal thoughts, causing them to turn back to the habit.[555] Even once overcome, the person may continue to experience surges in dopamine every time they see, smell or think of the thing they are attracted to. That is why relapse is so common.

The person may become so disillusioned with their repeated failures to give up the bad habit that they start to make excuses for the behaviour. They may even convince themselves that it is good for them and that God accepts the behaviour. When they indulge in the habit, it makes them feel good – how could it be wrong? For example, a drug addict may believe the substance enlightens them spiritually and brings them closer to God. They may believe that, even if God disapproves of their behaviour, He will forgive them anyway, since God's mercy has no limit (they have been taught).

Despite all this, alcoholics, drug addicts and those caught in promiscuous lifestyles, should never give up their fight against their habit, no matter how difficult it is or how long it takes, even if it means fighting it for the rest of their lives. An adulterer who keeps giving in to temptation, should never stop looking for ways to overcome their sinful obsession. Yes, if we sincerely repent, Jesus will forgive us every time we fail because He loves us, but that should not stop us from trying. Just like the alcoholic or drug addict, the person struggling with lust or pornography should never give in to their addiction. Why? Because Jesus is worth it and in His Word He asks us to "depart from iniquity" and to "flee also youthful lusts (2 Tim 2:19,22)." The world calls evil good and good evil, wrapping sin in the garb of morality. Unless we are on our guard, continually harmonising with God's Word, we will fall for it. All cherished sin leads to destruction – it draws us away from Jesus, the only source of salvation. Instead of giving in to the pressure of the world, we must take up our cross. We must give up that cherished thing that we enjoy if it is contrary to God's will, and we must warn others to do likewise.

Giving up a bad habit requires a deep and abiding relationship with Jesus, as He is the only one who can give us the strength to persist against the odds and, ultimately, to attain true victory (Gal 5:16-25). Understanding the gravity of sin and the enormity of the sacrifice that Jesus made because of sin helps to provide the incentive to turn to Jesus for healing. Some have argued that we must not wrestle with our sins but just come to Jesus. However, Jesus is not like a genie in a bottle, magically giving us every desire of our heart the instant we ask for it. It is true that we cannot obtain real victory without Jesus, and it is true that He can miraculously transform lives. However, if we are to become physically fit, we do not just come to Jesus and wait for Him to make us fit. We have to get out there and do some exercise and change our diet. Likewise, as discussed in a previous chapter, if we are to improve our moral and spiritual lives, we do not only come to Jesus, but we also have to make an effort and do something about it. Paul said to "*run with endurance the race that is set before us* (Heb 12:1)." Mrs White said, "*When we lay hold of Christ by faith, our work has just begun. Every man has corrupt and sinful habits that must be overcome by vigorous warfare.*[12 (p20)]

We must be careful not to discourage those who are struggling with bad habits. Jesus had compassion on the woman caught in adultery and gently encouraged her to sin no more (Jn 8:1-11). Mrs White advises that we should be especially kind and considerate of those from disadvantaged backgrounds who have been brought up in communities surrounded by all kinds of immorality. "*We cannot expect that, in all things, they will be as firm and clear in their ideas of morality*," she says. She reminds us that, "*even those who have had great advantages in many things often feel hurt if their errors are unduly noticed and if words of counsel and admonition are spoken in an unsympathetic manner*." She goes on to say that "*Christ demands from His servants tender compassion for the suffering, sympathy for the unfortunate, and a generous consideration for misdemeanors.*"[196 (p223-4)]

Some might argue that Christianity is too rigid and that expressing sexual freedom is harmless compared to alcoholism and drug addiction. However, it used to be thought that cigarettes were not only harmless but good for us! Apart from the obvious consequences of drugs, alcohol and other unhealthy habits, worldly lifestyles may be unhealthy for us in ways we are not even aware of. We just don't know all the real consequences of disobedience to God's commands. That is why we must trust God's Word and not mould the Bible to the shape of our desires but rather allow His Word to mould our character to His likeness. Experience has shown that if we want to minimise harm to others and ourselves, we should stick to God's wisdom and not human wisdom. If we sang more often, as David did, of the beauty of God's law, we may be less inclined to abandon His moral standards in favour of worldly wisdom. Paul says to "*Flee sexual immorality* (1 Cor 6:18)." When the Bible gives such plain and unambiguous teachings on the immorality of promiscuous sexual activities, we should flee from any thought that it might be pardonable to participate in or condone any form of sexual immorality.

Mrs White says that Moses directed the Israelites to set the words of the law to music. We have failed to sing of God's law and commit it to heart, just as the Israelites did, and consequently went into Babylonian captivity. The deep crisis of failed families in Western society, and the untold suffering it has caused, should lead us back to an appreciation of God's ideal and not further from it. In the Bible, God demands strict, selfless union between a man and a woman for life, without lustful thoughts (Matt 5:27-28), let alone adultery, because that is how strict the union is between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. That is love. Perfect, selfless unity is what God wants us to strive for. Anything less than this ideal falls short of the glory of God. Fortunately, He forgives us when we fall short, but He expects us to strive for better.

We look with contempt at the disloyalty of the Children of Israel because the Bible clearly lays out their rebellion. We flatter ourselves that we are not as they were and comfort ourselves that God's love will cover every unrepentant sin. Our songs teach us that God's mercy has no limit and almost nothing could cause us to lose our salvation as long as we sing of our belief in Jesus' love. But we are just as prone to perverseness and corruption as the Israelites were and God's wrath is no less aroused when we deliberately persist in sin and the lusts of this world. According to the Dunning–Kruger Effect, because we sing almost exclusively of God's love and mercy, we fail to recognise the wrath of God against those who do not take seriously His mercy and justice and, instead, persist in unrepentance and neglect to submit fully to our Lord. For want of knowledge and a balanced understanding of love and obedience, we may be over-estimating our chance of salvation.

How could it be that commandment-keeping Christians reject such a fundamental belief? How could they think that God's wrath will not be against those who wilfully indulge in sin of any kind? If we never sing of it, we forget. But the

song book of the Bible is fair because it gives us adequate warning, such as we find in Psalm chapter 7:

> "*God is a just judge,*
> *And God is angry with the wicked every day.*
> *If he does not turn back,*
> *He will sharpen His sword;*
> *He bends His bow and makes it ready.*
> *He also prepares for Himself instruments of death;*
> *He makes His arrows into fiery shafts*." (Ps 7:11-13)

Mrs White discusses the case of a Seventh-day Adventist believer who was living in adultery:

> "*This man embraced the unpopular doctrine that the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, in order to give to his religious experience a semblance of honesty. Our views have been clearly defined in our publications, but, concealing this fact, he mixed with truth his own defiling heresies and tried to make others believe that God had given him new light upon the Bible. By thus professing to have great light for the people on the Sabbath of the fourth commandment and kindred truths, he had, to the unsuspecting, an appearance of really being led of God. But when once the confidence is gained,* ***he commences his satanic work of wresting the Scriptures from their true meaning by seeking to show that adultery condemned in the law of God does not mean what it is generally understood to mean****. He really tries to make sensible women believe it not offensive to God for wives to be untrue to their marriage vows. He will not even admit that this would be breaking the seventh commandment. Satan rejoices to have sinners enter the church as professed Sabbath keepers while they allow him to control their minds and affections, using them to deceive and corrupt others*."[197 (p140)]

Error is almost always introduced subtly. When Andy Stanley decided to reject the Bible as the foundation of his faith, he later said openly that:

> "*I changed the way I talked about the Bible in my message, in my sermons… I didn't get up and announce it. I didn't get up and say 'From now on I'm not going to say this, I'm not going to say that. I'm going to begin using this terminology.' I just made the change. I didn't tell anybody and year after year after year I've been doing this. In fact, I don't think anybody has really noticed but I think it's helped me remove some of the obstacles to Faith for people who are outside the faith looking in*."[513]

When pastors or other church leaders are influenced by worldly opinion to adjust their doctrine, it infiltrates into the church, sometimes in subtle ways, including in our music. If a pastor of a church does not agree with a certain fundamental belief, it will change the way he preaches and teaches. Many Christians,

including song writers, may not believe as you do, and this can influence the message given in the songs they write.

If we do not have a sure foundation in Scripture, we are more likely to be persuaded by secular reasoning. Increasingly, we are seeing more and more Christians accepting worldly lifestyles. Because of the disharmony between love and obedience in modern theology, our understanding of what true love is has been distorted. Contemporary Christian music tends to elevate God's mercy while remaining mostly neutral or silent about morality. Abandoning God's law leads to oppression, the very thing it endeavours to eliminate. When we are at one with God, we are at one with His law for it is written on our hearts (Jer 31:33). This is liberating, for it emanates out of love. Jesus, who did nothing of His own accord (Jn 5:19), is our role model. Sexual sin is an abomination to God because it is the antithesis of selfless love – it is seeking after something for our own desires that God has not given us. Though it feels loving and right to relax God's rules, the only way we can obey both the first and second greatest commandments is to learn how to help people feel both loved and convicted. That can only be achieved if we have a close walk with Jesus.

As a church, when God's moral code is written on our hearts, we gain power. We do not need to relax the rules or bring worldliness into the church to attract the world. Mrs White said:

> "*The Lord has revealed to me that when the heart is cleansed and sanctified, and the members of the church are partakers of the divine nature, a power will go forth from the church, who believe the truth, that will cause melody in the heart. Men and women* ***will not then depend upon their instrumental music but on the power and grace of God****, which will give fullness of joy. There is a work to be done in clearing away the rubbish which has been brought into the church*."[168 (p512)]

Church pews are empty and we see the decay of society which has come about due to our neglect, and now church leaders are scrambling to bring back control. Rather than achieving this by the power of changed hearts and turning back to true godliness, instead, through Christian nationalism, church leaders are seeking support from government to give its authority back. Also, sermons are getting shorter, theology lighter and the singing lengthier and louder in an attempt to try to draw crowds into church.

Data from recent research into sources of worship music in churches has been provided by Mike Tapper, religion professor at Southern Wesleyan University. His colleague, Marc Jolicoeur, said:

> "*…any concerns about the theology of the four megachurches, or the recent troubles at Hillsong, which has had several pastors resign in scandal, don't seem to affect the demand for their music*."[81]

This speaks volumes about the attitude to morality when all that counts is how good the music sounds, despite it being produced by churches with questionable theology and lifestyles.

Our Moral Duty to the Poor

Just as the Charismatic megachurches became popular due to its 'prosperity gospel' and pop music style, the Salvation Army became popular due to its social gospel and attracted large audiences amongst the working classes due to its music style. According to Roland Robertson, the Salvation Army used its uniforms and brass bands to attract attention, rather than holding conventional worship services.[175] Its initial evangelistic focus was only relatively short-lived, however, and though it attracted large crowds at the beginning, it never succeeded in converting the majority of working-class women and men.[2 (p5)] General Booth began with the ideal of going for souls and going for the worst of them. He believed if you only saved them, the changes would come naturally. But poverty had proven a more powerful foe than anticipated and for all its effort, the Salvation Army had not managed to convert as many of the very poor as it had hoped. General Booth began to shift His focus to first addressing the social needs and, over time, the evangelistic focus was lost.[151] The Salvation Army grew universally popular across all segments of society as it became increasingly recognised as a charitable organisation – including working with military personnel during the war, service to the police and emergency personnel, childcare, youth centres, drug and alcohol rehabilitation and aged care.[175]

Though welfare work is an essential part of our Christian duty and morality, social reform and welfare came to dominate the Salvation Army as time progressed.[2 (p xiii),175] This has required increasing dependence on financial support, including government funding.[175] Even General Booth's right-hand man became disillusioned with all the focus on charity and fundraising. David Earnshaw describes how George Railton on many occasions would take General Booth to one side and say to him that **all they were doing was basically getting involved in meals and in music and they were losing the gospel**. Sadly, General Booth really did not take that on board, he said.[149 (36:55)] The Army was selling anything from summer underwear and soap with pictures of the Booths embossed on it, to shares in a building society. David Earnshaw says that George Railton:

> "…*was getting quite tired of all these money raising efforts and so at a public meeting at the Exeter Hall he turned up wearing sackcloth and ashes. In front of a huge crowd of Salvation Army people he had some Salvation Army document in his hand about buying this and investing in that and he just ripped it up in public and stamped on it to let people in the Army know 'I've had enough of these silly gimmicks*.'"[149 (44:45)]

In 1890, with a change in leadership, the organisation was divided into two, with a social services wing that came to dominate.[2 (p234)] The Salvation Army's social services elevated it to public prominence, gradually gaining it increasing respect from the government, secular organisations and the broader Christian community.[2 (p240-1)] Some people offered to donate funds only if all religious and propagandist motives were eliminated.[57 (p192)] Theology and religious practices no longer permeated all aspects of the Army's work. Few people today even think of the Salvation Army as a religious organisation or a church.

Instead of focusing primarily on just one segment of society, such as the poor or downtrodden, Mrs White encouraged work amongst all classes of society:

> "*And while working for the poor, we should give attention also to the rich, whose souls are equally precious in the sight of God. Christ worked for all who would hear His word. He sought not only the publican and the outcast, but the rich and cultured Pharisee, the Jewish nobleman, and the Roman ruler. The wealthy man needs to be labored for in the love and fear of God… Men of different vocations and different stations in life have been overcome by the pollutions of the world, by the use of strong drink, by indulgence in the lusts of the flesh, and have fallen under temptation. While these fallen ones excite our pity and demand our help, should not some attention be given also to those who have not yet descended to these depths, but who are setting their feet in the same path? There are thousands occupying positions of honor and usefulness who are indulging habits that mean ruin to soul and body. Should not the most earnest effort be made to enlighten them*?"[16 (p255)]

Mrs White and the early Seventh-day Adventist pioneers developed broad areas of ministry to the community, including health ministries, such as health food, sanitariums and hospitals; education, such as schools and universities; humanitarian work; and publishing, including literature evangelism. Much of this work has retained a spiritual and evangelistic focus, although larger institutions, such as large health food companies and hospitals, have been accused of losing the spiritual focus and the primary goal of the church to spread the three angel's message. Mrs White said:

> "*The Lord has instructed us to consider the work in all its bearings, that it may have a proportionate, symmetrical, well-balanced development*…
>
> *The Lord's work is one, and His people are to be one. He has not directed that any one feature of the message should be carried on independently or become all-absorbing.*"[16 (pp290,292)]

She also said:

> "*Never, never build mammoth institutions. Let these institutions be small, and let there be more of them, that the work of winning souls to Christ may*

be accomplished… The sick are to be reached, not by massive buildings, but by the establishment of many small sanitariums, which are to be as lights shining in a dark place."[282 (p323)]

Sanitariums, unlike hospitals which tend to focus on acute care, were to help people recover from chronic illness through a focus on lifestyle and natural therapies. The idea of small sanitariums, however, has largely fallen by the wayside in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and mammoth hospitals and factories have been established.

In her time, Mrs White felt that the most important area of neglect by Adventist members was that of helping the suffering. Though we are good at pointing the finger at the immorality of the secular world, neglect of the poor and marginalised is a significant moral failing of church members to a large extent. Helping the poor and widows is an important part of Christian morality emphasised in the Bible. The Israelites were instructed to care for the poor:

"*If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs*." (Deut 15:7-8)

While the Salvation Army was overemphasising welfare work, Mrs White was concerned that not enough was being done by Seventh-day Adventists for the downtrodden:

"*The spirit of the good Samaritan has not been largely represented in our churches. Many in need of help have been passed by, as the priest and Levite passed by the wounded and bruised stranger who had been left to die by the wayside…*

… In neglecting this work which is within their own borders, in refusing to bear these burdens, the church is meeting with great loss. Had the church taken up this work as they should have done, they would have been the means of saving many souls."[16 (pp294-5)]

Mrs White said that churches should be welcoming to the poor:

"*No church should become so lifted up that its members shall feel above the poor, and the poor feel that they cannot enter freely into the house of God. A church that is too rich for the poor to feel at home in is too aristocratic for Jesus to make one in its assembly. This narrow exclusiveness that shuts man away from his brother is an abomination in the sight of God*."[556]

According to Mrs White, helping the needy is essential for developing godly characters:

> "*he who neglects the poor, who ignores the needs of suffering humanity, who is not kind and courteous, is so conducting himself that God cannot co-operate with him in the development of character*."[16 (p262)]

Even more bluntly she said:

> "*many who profess to be Christians are wrapped up in their own narrow interests, and they selfishly withhold God's blessings from their fellow men…*
>
> *Many who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ are spending His money for selfish pleasure, for the gratification of appetite, for strong drink and rich dainties, for extravagant houses and furniture and dress, while to suffering human beings they give scarcely a look of pity or a word of sympathy*."[16 (pp274-5)]

Seventh-day Adventists then, as now, though they identify themselves as 'people of the Book' and proudly uphold God's law, have probably failed to truly love their neighbours and live out the practical aspects of the gospel to the extent that Jesus would expect of His followers. Likewise, the Booths felt that, in general, the Christian church had failed the people in the street and, therefore, had failed to do their Christian duty. On one occasion at a gathering of well-to-do people, as they sang "*Rescue the perishing, care for the dying…*" Mrs Booth interjected, saying "*You have no desire to rescue the perishing or care for the dying so why are you singing it*?"[31 (30:20)]

Mrs White said:

> "*Love is the agency through which God works to draw the heart to Him, for 'God is love.' In every enterprise of mercy this principle alone can give efficiency; the finite must unite with the Infinite. This work for others will require effort, self-denial, and self-sacrifice. But what is the little sacrifice that we can make in comparison with the sacrifice which God has made for us in the gift of His only-begotten Son*?"[16 (p283)]

Chapter 34
Spiritualism Embraced

The Occult in Secular Music

The great concern is that a rejection of God's character and His Scriptures has opened the way for spiritualism. Spiritualist themes are quite open and blatant in the lyrics and cover designs of various secular bands, especially hard rock and heavy metal. A common example includes Pan, the half-man, half-goat god from Greek mythology often depicted on album covers. The pentagram, a five-pointed star, associated with the occult, especially Satanism, is another symbol often seen in secular music artistry such as what is seen on album covers. Though not always this obvious, evidence of spiritualism can be seen across many segments of the music industry. Much could be said on this topic and many examples given, but for brevity, we will just take a quick glimpse at a couple of the artists already discussed in this book as examples.

Chris Martin, lead singer for Coldplay and song writer for the album Viva La Vida, in an interview with Zane Lowe said that he has been following the muse more and more purely for his inspiration for song writing.[557] What is the muse? According to the Collins English Dictionary, a muse is someone who gives an artist ideas or a desire to create art, poetry, or music.[558] In classical Greek and Roman mythology, the muse refers to each of nine goddesses, the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, who preside over the arts and sciences.[559] Though commentators often describe the modern use of the term muse as the unconscious mind or as a person or thing that provides inspiration, when artists use this term, they are sometimes referring, in a classical sense, to a divine attendant spirit or a creative spirit genius.[560]

Elizabeth Gilbert is an American journalist and author of the international best-selling book Eat, Pray, Love. Her book was made into a movie, of the same title, starring Julia Roberts. In a TED talk, Gilbert describes in some detail what artists are sometimes talking about when they refer to the muse. She explains how ancient Greek and Roman people did not believe that creativity came from human beings. Rather, they believed that creativity was a divine attendant spirit that came to humans from some distant and unknowable source. The Romans called this sort of disembodied creative spirit a genius - a sort of magical divine entity who was believed to literally live in the walls of an artist's studio and who would come out and invisibly assist the artists with their work and would shape the outcome of that work. If an ancient artist's work was brilliant, he could not

take all the credit for it because everybody knew he had a disembodied genius who helped him. Conversely, if an artist's work bombed, it was not considered entirely his fault.[560]

According to Gilbert, when the Renaissance came, rational humanism began and, for the first time in history, artists start being referred to as a genius rather than having a genius. However, Gilbert recommends we go back to the ancient understanding of the creative genius. She describes her own experience with this so-called creative mystery: "*Even I have brushed up against that thing… I have had work or ideas come through me from a source that I honestly cannot identify*."[560]

She goes on to explain how she got her inspiration to follow her creative genius from musician, Tom Waits. She said it saved her when she was in the pits of despair while writing Eat Pray Love. Following Tom's advice, she lifted her face up from the manuscript and directed her comments to an empty corner of the room and said aloud:

> "*Uh, listen, you thing, um, you and I both know that if this book isn't brilliant, that is not entirely my fault, right? Because you can see that I am putting everything I have into this. You know I don't have any more than this, so if you want it to be better, then you've got to show up and do your part of the deal, okay*."[560]

Gilbert's description of the creative genius explains a lot about Chris Martin's interview with Zane Lowe. Chris explains what he means by 'following the muse': "*when you close your eyes, you're sort of told what to do*." Later in the interview he expands on this thought by describing how:

> "*…we have just cared less and less what anyone else thinks and more and more about what is coming through, what are we being told to do by whatever you call those powers that be*."

From these comments, it appears that Chris believes there is some kind of higher power, a spiritual force, guiding his thoughts – and it is not the Holy Spirit. He describes how a song arrived in the hotel room in Buenos Aires that he wrote down on his phone. He describes how "*with good songs at least, they are just like their own things that you happen to catch*." When Zane Lowe asked how he knows when they are there, Chris replied "*because you just know there's nothing to do with you*." He said there are probably 15 songs where that has happened, where it basically just lands.[557] Viva La Vida was one of them, which is filled with anti-Christ sentiments.

Chris has fully embraced the whole concept of the creative genius as described by Gilbert. He recognises that he cannot take full credit for any of his success because there is a mystical divine creature, his personal muse, who is assisting him:

> "*You don't want to get any delusions of grandeur or think that you're better than you, that you're better because you're famous or you're better because you're whatever. I just feel like this is the gift I got given and that's what I*

do and I don't think any more about 'did we make it,' 'are we famous'… I think this is what I'm supposed to be doing whether anyone's listening or not…"

He goes on to say:

"*I want to play to loads of people because it's so fun and there's part of me that loves the fact that we made it and stuff but the main part of me is like well everything has been given to you… the songs are given even that was given to you, so you can't really take credit for anything. At this point I just feel so blessed and lucky to be doing what I'm doing and I want to do as much and as well as possible*."[557]

Chris was brought up in an evangelical family but has since renounced his Christian faith and now considers himself an all-theist – believing that God is present in everyone and everything. He said he finds it difficult to deal with his strict religious upbringing, which taught that, "*if you even think about boobs, you're going to hell*." An example of the effect of the strictness, he said, was that he couldn't sing Sympathy for the Devil by the Stones, because he thought he would be punished by God.[561,562] Like many rock and pop artists who were brought up as Christians, Chris misrepresents God's rules as stifling and strict.

It is true that Jesus said, "*But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart* (Matt 5:28)." It is true that Paul tells us that adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-10). It is true that rules without love is cold and legalistic. And it is true that some Christian parents are legalistic – too rules focused without balancing it with acts of love. The good news is that God's rules are loving because they protect us from harm and heartbreak. God also gives us the opportunity of forgiveness for our lustful thoughts if we genuinely repent. But if a person has sympathy for the devil, they simply do not want to repent because they do not like God's rules – they are burdensome to them. God's rules are too strict and rigid for them and they would prefer to reject God's love so they can keep breaking the rules without feeling guilt.

Chris' muse sounds a lot like a counterfeit to the Holy Spirit. In his article, 5 Reasons Why You Need a Muse, Mark McGuinness says:

"*Your muse is responsible for providing the ideas and energy, the fundamental fire of the work. You are responsible for 1) waiting when your muse says wait, 2) acting when your muse delivers the inspiration, and 3) making yourself a fit conduit for your muse by doing whatever kind of practice work is necessary to keep your chops up*."[563]

Chris believes he can take no credit for his success because it was given to him by his muse. This is parallel to a Christian's relationship with the Holy Spirit. In fact, Chris Martin's whole belief system is a counterfeit. Paul said, "*For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light* (2 Cor 11:14)." Mrs White says:

"*Satan frequently appears as an angel of light, arrayed in the livery of heaven; he assumes friendly airs, manifesting great sanctity of character and high regard for his victims, the souls whom he means to deceive and destroy. Perils lie in the path which he invites souls to travel, but he succeeds in concealing these and presents the attractions only*."[132 (p456)]

Though he rejects Christianity, Chris still believes in and longs for life after death. Part of the Coldplay song, We Pray, reads as follows:

"*I know somewhere that Heaven is waitin'*
I know somewhere there's something amazin'
I know somewhere we'll feel no pain"

His music gives the false assurance to his listeners that heaven is waiting there for everyone, no matter if they believe in Jesus or not. This is the deception of spiritualism.

In summary, Chris's faith, which reflects the faith of many artists, rejects the rules of God, rejects his wrath and punishment, but still seeks guidance from his muse to take the place of the Holy Spirit to provide him with inspiration, to lift his burdens and to give him peace. He gives all credit to his muse for his success. He also believes there is a glorious heaven without pain waiting for him. Yet he denies the God of the Bible and His law. He believes in what his god can do for him but denies the cross of Calvary.

Chris Martin's worldview is not dissimilar to the worldview that is promoted in a lot of contemporary Christian worship songs. Perhaps this is one reason why Sean McDowell's musician friend, who gave up his faith in Christianity, felt he could have the same spiritual experience at a Coldplay concert as a Christian rock or pop concert. Chris' pantheistic-type belief may have parallels in a lot of contemporary Christian worship music. Kenneth H. Wood, editor of the Review and Herald from 1966 to 1982, suggested even back in 1972 that modern religious music contains semi-pantheistic expressions. In the Bethel endorsed book, The Physics of Heaven, the ancient monism philosophy concept of 'all is one,' which is the foundation for most forms of pantheism, is brought out.[35] (Remember Bethel is one of the top four suppliers of the most popular worship songs). Pantheistic ideas are found in the Gospel of Thomas. Saying 77 reads, "*It is I who am the all, says Jesus. Split a piece of wood, and I am there. Lift up a stone, and you will find me there*."[564,565] Scholars of Gnosticism have argued that Gnosticism is dualism on a monistic background – it's just another form of monism. Pagan pantheism is at the heart of the kind of Gnosticism which has re-emerged in our world today.[476]

As described by Shannan Baker, few of the popular worship songs even talk about the cross or salvation, instead, focusing on what God is doing for me now and what God has promised to do for me in the future. Their songs almost never talk about God's wrath or punishment. And like Chris' worldview, heaven is just waiting there for anyone to take it, with few strings attached. It is easy for almost anyone to accept. But it is not reality. In contrast, Jesus said:

"*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it*." (Matt 7:13-14)

When secular artists talk about God, we automatically think they are referring to the God of the Bible. However, they are often actually referring to the source of their inspiration. In an interview with Fox News, the late Ray Bradbury, American author and screenwriter and one of the most celebrated 20th century American writers, said:

"*All of my writing is **God-given**. I don't write my stories - they write themselves. So out of my imagination, I create these wonderful things, and I look at them and say, My God, did I write that?... Everything comes to me. Everything is **my demon muse**. I have a muse which whispers in my ear and says, 'Do this, do that,' but it's my demon who provokes me.*"[566]

Ray Bradbury, Elizabeth Gilbert and Chris Martin may or may not literally believe there is a divine attendant spirit guiding them, as the ancient Greeks and Romans believed. It's hard to say. Even if it is only figurative imagination, it is so close to the real thing that it may as well be. They feel indebted to their muse for their success. They get great comfort from externalising their experience, imagining that a supernatural entity is telling them what to do and providing their inspiration. It relieves them from anxiety and the fear of failure and gives them a sense of higher purpose. It is their saving grace, the source of their inspiration. It so resembles faith in the spirit world that it becomes indistinguishable from it.

Spiritualism is seen across the board in the secular music industry, even amongst professed Christian artists. For example, U2 lead singer, Bono, made numerous appearances on stage as his 'alter ego,' Mr MacPhisto, named after Mephistopheles, the devil's representative in the Faust legend - the story of a German necromancer who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge and power. Why do rock bands keep identifying themselves with occult figures? There has to be more to it than just creative expression. Some Christians argue that it is just art and, therefore, it is harmless. Even if it is just art, and not actual demon worship, it is open mockery of Jesus, which is satanic.

Despite the band's indifference to the dangers of associating with such characters, U2 is respected by many Church members and pastors as Christian friendly because of its use of Christian themes and the good works that it does. But U2 is heavily mixed with the vices seen in the majority of secular rock bands. Worldly entertainment in our day and age - not just music but practically all forms of worldly entertainment - has both hidden and overt messages that lead our minds away from God. Sam Smith and Kim Petras received loud applause for their enactment of a devil-worshipping ritual at the Grammy Awards in 2023. Those in the audience who were cheering are the singers, songwriters and musicians producing the world's entertainment. We do not know what spirit might be evoked by this

music, regardless of the lyrics, when those producing the music are mesmerised by such satanic performances.

It is not just the song writers and artists that are influenced by the spirit world. West Africans used specific drum rhythms to communicate with spirits, such as the Orisha, which they believe would enter into and possess some of the listeners as they danced to the music. West African drum rhythms were introduced to America via the slave trade and heavily influenced Jazz, the blues and Rock and Roll music.[210] Drummer, Mickey Hart, describes the reaction of the crowd, as their band plays, as if the audience is possessed by an inexplicable force:

> "*In Africa, musicians are never possessed by the spirits they call down with their rhythms, so what possesses our audience I can never know. But I feel its effects. From the stage you can feel it happening - group mind, entrainment, find your own word for it - when they lock up you can feel it; you can feel the energy roaring off them*."[210 (p173)]

In other words, he is saying, when African drummers call down spirits by their drum rhythms, the drummers do not become possessed but those dancing to the music do. Similarly, drummer Mickey Hart concludes that, when he plays drums in his rock band, the audience has the appearance of being possessed. Some have a scientific explanation for it, such as entrainment, but Micky Hart is inviting the reader to put two and two together – he is suggesting it is spirit possession. This was the conclusion he drew after years of spending time with and studying Shaman and African drummers.

When we open the door to worldliness into our lives, our families and into our churches, morality becomes blurred and we no longer recognise God's will. A spirit of rebellion begins to set in. Evil becomes good and good evil (Is 5:20). Consequently, church members are led astray. God declares of His wandering sheep:

> *"For the household gods utter nonsense,*
> *and the diviners see lies;*
> *they tell false dreams*
> *and give empty consolation.*
> *Therefore, the people wander like sheep;*
> *they are afflicted for lack of a shepherd."* (Zech 10:2)

> *"My people have been lost sheep.*
> *Their shepherds have led them astray;*
> *They have turned them away on the mountains.*
> *They have gone from mountain to hill;*
> *They have forgotten their resting place"* (Jer 50:6)

For leading His sheep astray, God declares "*My anger is kindled against the shepherds, And I will punish the goatherds* (Zech 10:3)." Leaders in the church must not be indifferent to worldly influence in our church that leads members away from God and from truth. On this topic, Catherine Booth said:

"*Alas! alas! this is generally the case when those in high places give their influence on the wrong side and against God. What an awful reckoning-day is coming for wicked kings and rulers, in fact for all people in places of influence and authority who use it against God! It will be bad enough for a man to have to answer for the damnation of his own soul; but, oh! what will it be to have to answer for the damnation of thousands of others? You who are influencing others - your wives, your children, your husbands, your friends, your servants, those who live in the same house with you - there is a reckoning-day coming, and an awful reckoning-day it will be*."[45]

Mrs White says:

"*Angels are hovering around yonder dwelling. The young are there assembled; there is the sound of vocal and instrumental music. Christians are gathered there, but what is that you hear? It is a song, a frivolous ditty, fit for the dance hall. Behold the pure angels gather their light closer around them, and darkness envelops those in that dwelling. The angels are moving from the scene. Sadness is upon their countenances. Behold, they are weeping…*"

She goes on to describe how music is an idol which many professed Christians worship. Paul describes idol worship as demon worship (1 Cor 10:20). Sacred music is not congenial to their taste, Mrs White says of these youth. Music is a channel through which Satan gains access to the minds of the youth and it is often made one of Satan's most attractive agencies to ensnare souls, she says. It is a terrible curse when it takes the place of devotion and prayer.[193 (p585-6)]

She then gives a most solemn warning: "*In the judgment all these words of inspiration will condemn those who have not heeded them*." Is her comment here Biblical? In the Bible, there is always severe consequence for ignoring prophets; therefore, if she is a prophet, then her statement is scriptural. She then advises young people to "*pray for souls; come near to Christ, close to His bleeding side… **Pray more than you sing**. Do you not stand in greater need of prayer than of singing*."

New Age in Christianity

Unfortunately, spiritualism is not only seen in the secular world. So distorted is the theology of the top four megachurches who provide the majority of our worship music - Bethel, Hillsong, Passion City Church and Elevation - that Bethel has openly brought New Age beliefs into their church.[567,568] According to Christian apologist and former New Ager, Melissa Dougherty, New Age and New Thought practices have influenced the theology of numerous Charismatic churches, especially Word of Faith and New Apostolic Reformation movements, which includes Bethel.[569]

In keeping with the spiritual worldview of its predecessors, Bethel has even unthinkably endorsed the use of destiny cards which some commentators have argued are just another form of tarot cards.[570 (27:20, 1:52:30)] Bethel Church has publicly denied that destiny cards are a form of Christian tarot cards;[571] however, numerous Christian commentators, including former New Age practitioners, have warned of the dangers of destiny cards because of their resemblance to tarot practice. Doreen Virtue, former psychic and popular New Age author who has since renounced her New Age beliefs, is highly outspoken against Bethel's New Age practices. Dorothy used tarot cards personally and professionally for 20 years and says that the way destiny cards are being used is the same as the way she did tarot readings before she was saved. She warns that destiny cards "*are not tarot cards in the literal sense but the usage… is oracle and divination which is a condemned practice… in both the Old and in the New Testaments*."[572] It might be argued that Bethel is an extreme example. However, their influence is very widespread, with their ideology seeping into churches globally through their music and through the Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry.

Bill Johnson, senior leader of Bethel, is a contributor to the book, The Physics of Heaven, which candidly discusses many New Age practices. For example, it talks a lot about new age principles of sound and light. In the introduction, it reads, "*The Lord is ready to use sound, light and energy in ways we never dreamed*."[567 (pviii)] This is the undertow of much of Bethel worship. They want to create such a sound that changes atmosphere because they believe that sound has to influence people. This is New Age practice. A former Bethel student says that Bethel uses sound teams and light teams and put "*hundreds of thousands of dollars into engineering a killer sound. Having a certain lighting on the stage that makes you feel a certain way, creates a certain atmosphere. This is just par for the course*."[573 (21:10)] In chapter one of The Physics of Heaven, Judy Franklin said, "*The next thing the Lord told me was that soon He would release a sound from heaven that will literally change the structure of how we think*."[567 (p2)] These megachurches teach a particular theology packaged with highly engineered music which hooks listeners in and can dominate worship programs.

New Age thought emerged especially in the 1960s and '70s along with the sexual and spiritual revolution, of which rock and pop music has been one of the driving forces. Since that time, spirituality has been influenced by a merging of Eastern philosophies with Western mysticism and other pagan practices.[574,575] New Age in Christianity merges New Age teachings with Christianity.

Authentic Christianity teaches that spirituality is a relationship with God through worship and obedience to His will as revealed in Scripture. The focus is to praise and adore our creator, which is reflected in a godly lifestyle and practices. Truth is revealed in Scripture. The Bible portrays sin as rebellion against God and the fundamental reason why humans are condemned to death, but Christ's sacrifice is sufficient for sins - salvation cannot be obtained through works. True spirituality condemns pagan practices and exposes false doctrine. The Bible teaches that we can have direct encounters with God through prayer, His Word and the Holy Spirit, and true divine encounters align with Scripture. In true Christianity, music is for thanksgiving and praise and for reinforcing truth as found in Scripture.

The New Age, on the other hand, teaches that spirituality is oneness with the universe and awareness of one's own inherent divinity, which is obtained through mystical knowledge. The focus is on one's own divinity and power and obtaining personal desires. There is no such thing as absolute truth – it is a personal, internal experience. New Age theology typically holds that humanity is innately good, not inherently sinful or evil. 'Sin' is essentially ignorance of one's innate divinity or true potential. Through a lifetime of transcendent experiences, people can become enlightened to the truth. Spiritual growth or ascension is accomplished through various works, including rituals and practices as well as material sacrifice, such as time, money, skills or work. Spiritual understanding is gained through experience. The New Age accepts and embraces beliefs and practices from a variety of religions. Encounters with God are obtained indirectly, such as through mediums. Divine encounters and mystical experiences reveal new truth and doctrine. In the New Age, music is used to induce a state of spiritual openness and transcendence.[575,576]

Enlightenment is achieved by seeking mystical or inner knowledge (gnosis), which is **attained through personal experience** and intuition rather than from sacred texts, such as the Bible. Some examples of rituals and practices in the New Age include necromancy, mediumship, spiritism, astrology, channelling, meditation, crystal work and visualisation. Physical phenomena, such as trances and hearing voices, are often involved. Channelling is a method of obtaining esoteric knowledge by inviting a spirit into the body.[576]

When Christianity merges with the New Age, it undermines the sufficiency of Scripture and seeks truth from extra-Biblical sources. It looks to cultivate transcendent spiritual experiences through 'Christian' yoga, mystical experiences, the Enneagram and **immersive worship experiences facilitated by repetitive melodies**.[576 (p145)] It becomes all about experience. Experience supersedes scriptural

knowledge. Leonard Sweet, a theologian and prominent figure in the Emergent Church movement, said:

> "***It's not your job to teach people what is 'good church music.' It is your job to help people have an experience of God***." He goes on to say: "*Churches in postmodern communities will be built, not around great preachers, but around great experiences. Preaching must cease to be… the representation of arguments that can be verbalised; rather, it must become a rushing mighty wind that blows through the congregation and makes it glow with an incandescence that cannot be ignored*…"[577 (p199)]

Leonard disparages the use of words and intellect, reasoning that "*Postmoderns rely on emotions for evidence, metaphors for truth and myth for direction*."[577 (p200)] In fact, he says, "*It is not your job to help people decide what is right and wrong. It is your job to help bring people to Christ, who through the Holy Spirit can reveal to them what is right and wrong*."[577 (p199)]

While it is absolutely true that it is our job to bring people to Christ to be taught by the Holy Spirit, it does not abrogate the minister's charge to "***Preach the word****! Be ready in season and out of season.* ***Convince, rebuke, exhort****, with all longsuffering and teaching* (2 Tim 4:2)." Mrs White said, "*Those whom God has set apart as ministers of righteousness have solemn responsibilities laid upon them to reprove the sins of the people. Paul commanded Titus: 'These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority'… If those who are placed in important positions never reproved, never rebuked, there would soon be a demoralised condition of things that would greatly dishonour God*."[132 (p358)]

Though Leonard fixes these ideas in a 'postmodern' context, they have deep roots in the Holiness movement of the 1800s. Like Leonard, the Booths disparaged intellectual discourses and encouraged emotional experience through music and energetic preaching. Though the Holiness movement was not espousing New Age philosophy, denominations influenced by Holiness theology are more vulnerable to New Age influence. In his dissertation on the use of New Age practices by the church, Professor Chris Berg said:

> "*The Pentecostal and Charismatic Church have been a special target for NAM [New Age Movement] infiltration and have had to fend off incursions throughout their short histories. Holiness theology played a major role in the theological foundation of the Pentecostal church…*"[576 (p311)]

Therefore, seeds for the merging of Christianity with the New Age were sown in the Holiness movement. Chris Berg's research revealed that American Christians are susceptible now more than ever to New Age influence "*due to their inherent distrust of Church authority, rejection of doctrine and distaste for Scripture*."[576 (p310)] As discussed in previous chapters, music lacking depth and breadth has contributed to rejection of doctrine and Scripture.

Chris Berg said, "*The pressure to guarantee physical healing and other signs and wonders cultivated the temptation to look outside of Scripture and the Christian Church to secure new miracles as contemporary ministries dried up*."[576 (p18)] Bethel Church has been at the forefront of looking to the New Age and through its music and ministry has considerable influence on Christianity around the world, especially due to its affiliation with the Word of Faith movement and the New Apostolic Reformation. Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry trains thousands of people globally, spreading its practices worldwide.[578]

The Removal of Distinctions

A central tenet of the New Age removes the distinction between God and His creation. The Bible teaches that God is distinct from creation in that He is eternal and He brought everything else into existence, whereas, in New Age thinking, God, the universe, humanity and nature are all one interconnected essence. Humans are inherently divine and the self becomes one with the universe. Mother earth is highly esteemed and worshipped as part of the divine reality.[575] Paul said that unbelievers: "…*worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator… For this reason God gave them up to vile passions* (Rom 1:25-26)." God made many distinctions at creation, but when societies cease to worship God and turn to the worship of nature instead, one of the consequences is the loss of the unique divisions and roles given by God.

New Age non-duality of opposites teaches that apparent opposites such as good/evil, life/death and male/female are not truly separate but arise from and point back to a single, unified reality. The perceived world of separate things is an illusion. Peace is obtained when we transcend these distinctions.[579]

Gnosticism also teaches that divisions, such as male and female, have to be transcended to obtain salvation. Saying 22 of the Gospel of Thomas reads:

> *"…Jesus said to them, 'When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same, so that the male not be male nor the female… then will you enter the kingdom*.'"[564,565]

In a similar vein, saying 114 of the Gospel of Thomas states that "*every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven*."[564,565] This is a radical rejection of sexual differentiation as presented in the Genesis account. The god of Gnosticism, often revealed as the goddess Sophia, wants to join the opposites, bringing everything together as one and everything emanating from the divine spirit.

Contemporary Paganism also generally blurs the distinctions between male and female.[580] Apparently, this is not new. Androgyny (mixing of male and female), for example, has been an integral element of pagan spirituality around the globe

throughout the ages. Other distinctions in creation may also be blurred, such as the separation between humans, animals and plants. All contraries are collapsed and a person may identify with any creature.[580,581]

Therefore, pagan and mystical spirituality has always attempted to remove the distinctions that God set in place at creation, blurring the lines of morality. This brings about a sense of freedom from the constraints of creation. When the uniqueness of God and His creation are removed from our dialogue and music, Christianity begins to look more like pagan spirituality, and it becomes easier for Christians to embrace the philosophies and practices of pagan mysticism and the surrounding culture without even necessarily realising it.

In 1992 Peter Jones said, "*The New Age has a coherent agenda orchestrated from a diabolical center, moving and reproducing ineluctably like algae in a lake*."[582 (p97)] More recently, Peter said instead of New Age, the new term is now 'Integral Spirituality' or 'Progressive Spirituality.' The agenda has now become worldwide rather than self-focused. Unlike the ancient Gnostics who were supposedly endowed with secret or esoteric knowledge only available to a select few, in modern Gnosticism, there is a great unveiling - secret knowledge is brought to the surface and made available to everyone, becoming normal spirituality.[476]

Unfortunately, Bethel Church is not the first and only example of New Age in Christianity. It is just the tip of the iceberg. While Bethel openly and unapologetically embraces the New Age, reflecting the great unveiling which is occurring in mystical spirituality, there is a vast amount of New Age practice in Christianity which remains concealed in cloaked language. A 2017 survey of American adults found that 60% of Christians believe in one or more of four common New Age beliefs, including: belief in reincarnation, astrology, psychics and the presence of spiritual energy in physical objects like trees.[583]

New Thought

New Thought has been embraced by many Christians. New Thought is a New Age philosophy adapted by Mary Baker Eddy from Phineas Quimby when she founded the Church of Christian Science in the 1870s. Quimby argued that it was possible for the mind to heal the physical body and Eddy combined his healing techniques with her understanding of the Bible and spirituality, which included monistic and pantheistic concepts. Her teachings laid the foundation for current New Thought philosophy, which combines positive thinking with success, prosperity and physical health. It teaches people that they can manipulate the physical world through the power of thought. This is one reason why Christians who have been influenced by a New Age worldview tend to focus on present self-improvement more than eternal life and salvation issues. Though Christian Science was largely rejected by mainstream Christianity, New Thought practice was later adopted by large portions of Christianity, especially Pentecostals and Charismat-

ics, though most of these people probably have no idea of its New Age roots. The Word of Faith movement was founded by Kenneth Hagin in the 1960s who adapted the teachings of E. W. Kenyon. Key doctrines came from Christian Science, New Thought and the Holiness Movement.[576 (p10-3, 27, 171-4)]

The Holiness roots of Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations opened the way for New Thought and Word of Faith teachings. Phoebe Palmer, one of the founders of the Holiness movement, said in The Guide to Holiness to those who were seeking Christian perfection, "*Resolve that you WILL HAVE IT NOW* [capitals in original]*, and it may be yours at once*."[584 (p241)] Catherine Booth said, if you have faith and obedience:

> "*Then you can just put your hand out to God and have what you want. He won't give His Spirit by limit unto you then. He won't hold you back from any of the glorious enterprises to which your soul gushes out*."[45 (p199)]

This is the origin of name it and claim it theology. General Booth was of the opinion that every tune of secular music is divine simply by plundering it for ourselves:

> "*Not allowed to sing that tune or this tune? Indeed! Secular music, do you say? Belongs to the devil, does it? Well, if it did, I would plunder him of it. ... Every note and every strain and every harmony is divine and belongs to us*."[585]

Likewise, Rick Warren's statement that "*It is the words that make a song sacred, not the tune*,"[223 (pp65-6)] does not necessarily make it so. Chapter 5 of The Physics of Heaven (a book promoted and co-authored by leaders of Bethel Church) teaches that practices, such as spirit guides, trances, meditation, auras, power objects, clairvoyance and clairaudience have been 'stolen' by the New Age and have to be reclaimed for the church.[567 (p49–50)] Unfortunately, we cannot claim something for the church just by stating it or desiring it to be so. Claiming or wishing for something to be holy does not make it so.

Progressive Christianity

Even within the Seventh-day Adventist Church there are members and pastors who align themselves with Progressive spirituality which, according to Peter Jones, is just new terminology for the New Age. Adventist Today is a website run by Seventh-day Adventist members and pastors who promote Progressive Christianity. On their website ProgressiveChristianity.org is recommended to readers.[586] On this Progressive Christianity website, theologian and practicing pastor, Bruce Epperly, says "*We are all mystics, or mystics in the making*." He also says:

> "…***there is a mystical streak in progressive Christianity****. Historically, liberal and progressive Christians have affirmed the continuity of all life and the immanence of God in the world. The continuity of life points, first, to the*

> *reality of life's interconnectedness. We are part of the evolutionary process, finite and incomplete, but brothers and sisters with all life forms. We are star stuff, but we are also companions to dolphins, whales, monkeys, and fireflies. We share in the energy of air, earth, fire, and water, and experience the winds of the spirit blowing through all creation, including our own spiritual lives. Second, the immanence of God in the world points to the holiness of all things…*"[587]

Therefore, Progressive Christianity evidently does have firm roots in New Age mysticism. In Bruce Epperly's statement we see communicated the interconnectedness of God, humanity and nature as expressed in the New Age. This does not mean Progressive Christianity accepts New Age in its entirety, but it resembles a New Age tenet in some way. The infiltration of New Age philosophy into the broader Christian community has led to the erosion of foundational distinctions in God's creation, such as the embrace of feminist ideals which has blurred the unique roles between males and females in the church.

Gnosticism has heavily influenced the New Age movement, sharing core beliefs. The seduction of Gnosticism, as with the New Age, is that we are like God – eternal, uncreated and divine. There is a divine spark in all of us according to Gnostic teachings. This fragment of divinity is believed to be trapped within a material world created by a lesser, ignorant divinity known as the demiurge who is intent upon keeping men and women ignorant of their true nature and destiny. When the divine spark achieves gnosis (knowledge) it can escape the material realm and realise its divine potential. It allows us to see the truth about everything. According to Gnostic texts, the true God is the spirit behind everything, but the false God is the creator of heaven and earth. He is a malevolent God who mistakenly thinks He is the supreme and only God. He is unaware that the goddess Sophia is the mother of the universe.[476,588] Gnostic teachings are at the heart of what the devil told Eve: "*You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil* (Gen 3:5)."

Caitlin Matthews, author as well as priestess of Isis, explains that the character of the pagan goddess, Isis, became Sophia, the goddess of Gnosticism.[589] This demonstrates how Gnosticism serves as a bridge for paganism to infiltrate Christianity.[476] Duncan Greenlees, a modern Gnostic, said "*Gnosticism…In the early centuries of this era, amid a growing Christianity, it took on the form of the Christian faith, while rejecting most of its special beliefs. Its wording is therefore largely Christian, while its spirit is rather that of the latest paganism of the West*."[590 (pvii)]

The goal of the New Age is to bring all religions and nations together, not in uniformity of beliefs, but **a shared spiritual experience and collective service**. Peter Jones believes these are the two things driving occult spirituality, namely interfaith mysticism and social justice.[476] One of the core values of Progressive Christianity is to "*Seek community that is inclusive of all people, **honoring differences in theological perspective**, age, race, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, class, or ability*."[591] On September 16, 2024, addressing an interfaith crowd

during a visit to Singapore, Pope Francis said "*all religions are a path to God*." In response to backlash due to his comment, the pope said, "*If you start to fight, 'my religion is more important than yours, mine is true and yours isn't', where will that lead us?... There's only one God, and each of us has a language to arrive at God. Some are Sikh, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, and they are different paths [to God]*."[592]

However, though God can reach people of all faiths and we should respect people who differ from us, there is only one path to God (Jn 14:6). We must not honour beliefs and practices which oppose God. Anything that teaches a way that is contrary to God's Word is anti-Christ and belongs to a system which opposes God. It is our duty to call people from a false system of belief to the true God.

The Threefold Union

Paul said, "*Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons* (1 Tim 4:1)." Evil spirits work through any medium to deceive people and lead them away from truth. In Revelation we read:

> "*I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty*." (Rev 16:12-14)

Paul counselled Timothy, "*remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine* (1 Tim 1:3)." There is a constant battle behind the scenes being waged by demons to lead us away from truth. Mrs White said:

> "*Remember that the nearer we approach the time of Christ's coming, the more earnestly and firmly we are to work; for we are opposed by the whole synagogue of Satan. We do not need feverish excitement, but that courage which is born of genuine faith*."[16 (p475)]

Mrs White believed that spiritualism would become a significant issue in the end times. She stated that spiritualism would unite with Protestant churches and the Church of Rome to bring about religious persecution:

> "*Through the two great errors, the immortality of the soul and Sunday sacredness, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of* ***spiritualism****, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome. The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience*."[159 (p588)]

Fifty years after her death, certainly since the 1960s, spiritualism has been infiltrating into Protestant and Catholic churches. Also, Protestant denominations have been growing more sympathetic toward the Roman Church, even making preliminary calls to 'end the protest.'[593] If Mrs White's prophecy is correct, this will eventually lead to infringement of religious liberty, then persecution will follow. Revelation warns, come out of her my people (Rev 18:4). Whether or not you believe Mrs White or not, we must separate ourselves from New Age thought, including avoiding the music of churches that have been affected by spiritualism.

In The Great Controversy we read:

"*Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and to the whole world, to fasten them in deception, and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and subjects will be alike deceived… As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ… In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: 'Christ has come! Christ has come!'… In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Saviour uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth…*

…But the people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false Christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures."[159 (p623-5)]

There will come a time upon Jesus' true second coming that those who thought they were right with Jesus will say, "*Lord, Lord*," but Jesus will declare to them, "*I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness* (Matt 7:21-23)!" Mrs White says of these at Jesus' second coming:

"*The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now, in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception. The multitudes are filled with fury. 'We are lost!' they cry, 'and you are the cause of our ruin;' and they turn upon the false shepherds. The very ones that once admired them*

most will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels will be raised for their destruction. The swords which were to slay God's people are now employed to destroy their enemies. Everywhere there is strife and bloodshed."[159 (p655)]

God said to Ezekiel, if the watchman on the city wall:

"…*sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be on his own head*." (Ez 33:3-4)

Seventh-day Adventists believe that Mrs White is God's last day prophet who has sounded the trumpet warning. Whether we believe this or not, God's message of warning has been watered down from the pulpit and in our music. We have been preaching and singing peace and safety when destruction is about to come upon us. Our people are not receiving the warning message. The spirit world is leading Christians into a false sense of security. We are not ready for the fierce and dreadful day of the Lord.

PART 11

CONCLUSION

Chapter 35
Restoring Harmony with God

General Booth believed that music in and of itself has no moral force and, therefore, any style of music is fine as long as the lyrics are appropriate. Mrs White, on the other hand, who claimed to receive direct inspiration from God, opposed the Salvation Army method and believed the style of music does matter. This book has investigated what the Bible and science say about music, comparing it with General Booth's and Mrs White's ideas. The conclusion is that there is indeed moral force in music and that the style of music does matter. Consequently, poor music choices – including the style of music and the content of the lyrics – have had detrimental effects on the theology and practices of the church. Every individual, however, must make up their own mind where the harmony lies. What is most important is that we press together, despite each other's differing views, and be mindful of each other's convictions and respect each other – this will help to avoid extremes in any one direction. We should also continue to be open to discussion and debate on this topic, to ensure that we continue to grow in our understanding of God's will.

As we have seen throughout this book, the uniqueness of God and the distinctions He established at creation have gradually eroded – such as the distinctions between good and evil, God and people, regular days and the Sabbath day, male and female, and animals and humans. Poor music choices are one factor that has led to this erosion - for example, we no longer sing of the beauty of the Sabbath as Fanny Crosby did. Consequently, there is now little distinction between the days of the week other than the remnants of a weekend, which, instead of being a time set apart for God, is now a time for work, recreation, sport and caring for our material possessions.

This book has also found fault in Holiness teachings, of which William and Catherine were proponents. Does that mean they were heretics? Only God knows the heart of each individual, but the Booths were very likely sincere Christians who, like the rest of us, did not get everything right. When genuine Christian individuals and churches start heading too far to the right or to the left in any belief, over time they will self-correct as they see the result of the error and as they study Scripture guided by the Holy Spirit. In hindsight, we can see the dangers of the Holiness way of thinking, and many Christians moved away from it. However, some individuals and denominations embraced Holiness ideas, developing them further and incorporating these ideas into their music. Unfortunately, as a result, it opened the way for Christianised Pagan ideology to filter into the church. One

of the main suppliers of contemporary Christian music is Bethel Church, who has openly integrated New Age with their practices. Gnostic, New Age, New Thought and Word of Faith ideology is now widespread across Christendom. Peter Jones believes a new term for the New Age movement is Progressive Spirituality and the driving forces of occult spirituality today are interfaith mysticism and social justice.[476] He believes Progressive Christianity is bringing pagan ideology into the church, further eroding the distinctions God established at the beginning. This will create disharmony between our practices and God's Word. If that is the case, how do we correct the imbalance? How do we find harmony with God?

Harmony with God requires humble submission to Him and faith in the assurance of our salvation. When we lack humility and faith, we rely on self and we remain under the curse of the law, burdened by fear of God's condemnation. But when we let go of self and accept the blood of Jesus, we are freed from the curse of sin and we rejoice in the beauty and blessings of God's commands. Perfect symphony is achieved when our music and practices honour Jesus as both loving Saviour and as sovereign King. As God is merciful, we are merciful. As Jesus submitted Himself to His Father, we submit. As Jesus offered up His body as a sacrifice for sinners, we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God rather than conforming to this world (Rom 12:1-2).

Instead of conforming with the world, the early church strove to maintain purity in the church. Paul lovingly counselled church members to turn from sin (Rom 6:12) but quickly dealt with **unrepentant** sinners by removing them from the congregation (1 Cor 5:13). In fact, church members are not to keep company with immoral Christians, such as "*sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner - not even to eat with such a person* (1 Cor 5:9-11)." Mrs White's counsel is in line with Scripture:

> "*Choose poverty, reproach, separation from friends, or any suffering rather than to defile the soul with sin. Death before dishonour or the transgression of God's law should be the motto of every Christian. As a people professing to be reformers, treasuring the most solemn, purifying truths of God's word, we must elevate the standard far higher than it is at the present time. Sin and sinners in the church must be promptly dealt with, that others may not be contaminated. Truth and purity require that we make more thorough work to cleanse the camp from Achans. Let those in responsible positions not suffer sin in a brother. Show him that he must either put away his sins or be separated from the church*."[197 (p147)]

Sounds harsh! But by saying nothing and doing nothing, we become complicit in sin (Eph 5:11, Gal 6:1, 1 Tim 5:20, Jam 4:17). Even more importantly, James said:

> "*…if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins*." (Jas 5:19-20)

What if a drug user starts attending our church? Our response should be to look past the sin and welcome him with open arms and treat him with love and respect. If he starts Bible studies, we would also provide support and encouragement to quit drug use. If he accepts our doctrines or fundamental beliefs and tries his best to quit drugs, we would baptise him, even if he is still struggling with drugs because sanctification is a process - though we would not yet make him an elder or a Bible teacher. However, if he was openly using drugs without any remorse, we would be very concerned about his influence, especially on young people. Worse still, what if an elder or pastor condoned his drug use? We would be horrified and the elder or pastor's position would become untenable unless they retracted their position. Likewise, to Paul, other forms of immorality are unacceptable, but we have become so accustomed to immorality in the world around us and in secular entertainment that it no longer horrifies us. Moreover, it has come to be seen as unloving to rebuke sin. Mrs White said:

> "Sins exist in the church that God hates, but they are scarcely touched for fear of making enemies. Opposition has risen in the church to the plain testimony. Some will not bear it. They wish smooth things spoken unto them. And if the wrongs of individuals are touched, they complain of severity, and sympathize with those in the wrong."[594 (p283)]

Sin and heresy have to be promptly dealt with and stamped out before it corrupts and divides the church. That includes removing music and practices which are not in harmony with God's character and His teachings. It would also include avoiding music produced by churches that are out of harmony with God and His teachings. The prophet Nathan confronted King David about his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam 11-12). A whole Psalm is dedicated to David's prayer of repentance (Ps 51). Confronting sin in the church must be done in the context of our own fallenness. We must first be deeply convicted and repentant, overcoming our own sins by drawing close to Jesus. We must blend justice and grace and emphasise God's provision of forgiveness as outlined in David's prayer of repentance.

As with Psalms, which perfectly balances mercy and justice, our songs in modern times should perfectly balance blessings and warning. In that way, people will see their need for repentance without being crushed by guilt. Even though Jesus has set a high standard for us, the story of the penitent thief on the cross gives us much hope in the mercy of God. Mrs White said of this thief:

> "*He had seen and heard Jesus, and had been convicted by His teaching, but he had been turned away from Him by the priests and rulers. Seeking to stifle conviction, he had plunged deeper and deeper into sin, until he was arrested, tried as a criminal, and condemned to die on the cross*."[87 (p749)]

The heartbreaking story of Stephanë Anthon, affectionately known as Effie, is stored in the archive of Queen Mary University of London.[595] Effie's experience

illustrates how the ideals of holy Christian living do not always work out, even in those who sincerely seek it. Effie was the daughter of a woman rescued by the Salvation Army and adopted by a middle-class supporter of the Army. The Salvation Army thrived on success stories of transformed lives, but there were many stories of defeat. Effie was one of them. She failed to achieve any lasting change in her spiritual life, continuing in sexual and other sins. At one point she wrote to her adopted mother:

> "*I always have been a failure and I suppose always will be. I don't care now what happens to me. I shall never again try to be good, it is all rubbish. I shall just please myself and go my own road. I don't care what becomes of me now. Your wretched, Annie*."[2 (p159)]

She soon picked herself up again and returned to the Army's meetings, but this was a regular cycle for Effie. Life is hard and that is why we must be gentle with each other. Mrs White said, "*Let us remember that we are struggling and falling, failing in speech and action to represent Christ, falling and rising again, despairing and hoping. Let us beware of dealing unkindly with those who, like ourselves, are subjects of temptation and who, like ourselves also, are the objects of Christ's unfailing love*."[196 (p222)]

The story of the cross gives us hope that, though we are caught in the cycle of sin, we have hope, as long as we cling to Jesus. There is hope, even for those like Effie, who feel hopeless. Though Mrs White challenges believers to "*lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us* (Heb 12:1)," she repeatedly brings her readers back to the cross and God's merciful love. She goes on to tell of the story of the thief as he hung on the cross:

> "*When condemned for his crime, the thief had become hopeless and despairing; but strange, tender thoughts now spring up. He calls to mind all he has heard of Jesus, how He has healed the sick and pardoned sin. He has heard the words of those who believed in Jesus and followed Him weeping. He has seen and read the title above the Saviour's head. He has heard the passers-by repeat it, some with grieved, quivering lips, others with jesting and mockery. The Holy Spirit illuminates his mind, and little by little the chain of evidence is joined together. In Jesus, bruised, mocked and hanging upon the cross, he sees the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. Hope is mingled with anguish in his voice as the helpless, dying soul casts himself upon a dying Saviour. 'Lord, remember me,' he cries, 'when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.'*
>
> *Quickly the answer came. Soft and melodious the tone, full of love, compassion, and power the words: Verily I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with Me in paradise.*
>
> *For long hours of agony, reviling and mockery have fallen upon the ears of Jesus. As He hangs upon the cross, there floats up to Him still the sound of*

jeers and curses. With longing heart He has listened for some expression of faith from His disciples. He has heard only the mournful words, 'We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.' How grateful then to the Saviour was the utterance of faith and love from the dying thief!"[87] (p750)

It was the sincere repentance of a desperate sinner that helped sustain Jesus on the cross, but self-interest brought Him discouragement!

Now, more than ever, the world needs to hear the three angel's message. The world needs to hear the good news of salvation and the trumpet sound of warning. The devil is working overtime to block this message from going to the world. If we fail to act by resisting evil, including the influence of unrepentant sinners, then we are working on the side of evil.

Mrs Booth said:

"*The great effort of the Devil is to keep people indifferent, and nothing does he dread so much as awakening and arousing preaching, or other instrumentalities calculated to awaken and alarm them.*

Oh that the Church understood this! Oh that Christians understood it! It seems to me sometimes, instead of understanding it, they appear to be partners with the Devil in trying to keep people asleep. They shrink away from any direct, personal, earnest, thorough dealing with souls that would be likely to awaken them to a sense of their danger.

They do not recognise the fact as they ought, that Satan has got men fast asleep in sin, and that it is his great device to keep them so. He does not care what we do, if he can do that. We may sing songs about 'the sweet by-and-by,' preach sermons, and say prayers, and go the jog-trot round and round, barrel-organ fashion, till Doomsday, and he will never concern himself about us if we don't wake anybody up; but, if we wake anybody, he will gnash on us with his teeth. This is our work - to wake people up. That is your responsibility, you Christians. If that man with whom you are coming in contact dies, and is damned, in his sleep, and you never went the common-sense, reasonable way to wake him, God will demand his soul of you. Wake him! Wake him!"[45] (p6)

In other words, she is saying to sound the trumpet warning loud and clear. James White gives wise counsel which helps to get matters of doctrine and Christian practice into perspective: "*In the divine law, and in the gospel of the divine Son, are the tests of Christian character*." These are matters of primary importance if we are to harmonise with God. He criticised those who were splitting up into sects:

"*…over forms of church government, matters of expediency, free and restricted salvation, trinity and unity, whether we may sing any good hymn in*

church, or only the Psalms of David, and other matters which constitute no test of fitness for Heaven."[596]

Though music style is not a matter of salvation in and of itself, in his dissertation on the use of New Age practices by the church, Professor Chris Berg concluded "*there is a strong linkage between proper worship and proper ritual or practice*."[576 (p313)] Getting our worship right is important, and that includes getting our music right. Mrs White warns:

"*Satan will make music a snare by the way in which it is conducted. God calls upon His people, who have the light before them in the Word and in the Testimonies, to read and consider, and to take heed. Clear and definite instruction has been given in order that all may understand*."[12 (p38)]

Some of the clear and definite instruction she is talking about, includes:

"*…not loud singing… but clear intonation, correct pronunciation and distinct utterance*;"[196 (p144)] "*like the music of the birds - subdued and melodious*;"[168 (p510)] "*conducted with solemnity and awe*;"[197 (p493)] "*not funeral notes, but cheerful, yet solemn melodies. The voice… modulated, softened, and subdued*."[168 (p508)]

Are her instructions in harmony with the Bible? The late H.M.S Richards, well-known Seventh-day Adventist evangelist and author, became convinced of Mrs White's sincerity at age 15 years after hearing her pray for the first time. As she preached, he said, she was just a good earnest Christian mother, but as she prayed, a change came over the place. It was as if she was in the presence of the Lord, and the congregation wept as she prayed. He decided the best way to know if a prophet is who they claim to be is to read their writings. So, he studied dozens of her books. Mrs White said that we should test her writings against the Bible, which is what he did. His conclusion was that her writings are indeed in harmony with the Bible.[464]

H.M.S. Richards said there are plenty of critics of Mrs White, but nobody should listen to them until they have read her writings for themselves. He advised, if we only took the hard passages of the Bible, we would lose faith in it. We have to read the Bible as a whole. It's the same with Mrs White, he said. He advises we read her writings for ourselves and see how they fit in with the end time picture.[464]

That is sound advice. We should not listen to anyone until we have tested them against Scripture. Regardless of our opinion of Mrs White or General Booth, as discussed throughout the book, God has given us definite principles to guide our selection of music. We have no excuse.

Keith Getty says:

"*The big challenge for pastors, senior pastors and also for parents of families is that we have to, more than ever, take control of the songs we sing. God's people have always learned their faith in significant part through*

what they sing, so if we don't take control of it right now, somebody else is and it's not the right person."[465]

Steve Camp, is an American contemporary Christian music artist and pastor, responsible for 22 albums, 15 No. 1 songs and 40+ Top 10's. On his website, the following statement is made:

"*In 1997, Camp released his unprecedented document entitled The 107 THESES: A Call to Reformation for the Contemporary Christian Music Industry, the clarion call for all in the Contemporary Christian Music Industry to reformation in returning to the authority of Scripture, the accountability of the local church, the ascendancy of the glory of God, and not being unequally yoked with an unbelieving world*."[597]

Steve Camp recognises our need to return a balance to our music so that we are in harmony with Scripture. This will require us to get on our knees. But even before we do this, General Booth said:

"*Before we go to our knees to receive the Baptism of Fire, let me beg of you to see to it that your souls are in harmony with the will and purpose of the Holy Spirit whom you seek*."[598]

How do we ensure we are in harmony with God? First and foremost, we must know we are saved. This comes by faith. From then on, we have to stop thinking about how to be saved because we already know we are saved by Jesus' blood. Rather, the next step is to start living as saved people - obedient to Christ, loving God's commands and making disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey all that Jesus commanded us.

To get harmony back into our music, it will require musicians and theologians working together, without the influence of fame and of the music industry driving profits. We need musicians who will write songs for us that tell the right story – both in the music and in the lyrics – a story of peace and hope, mercy and justice and everything else that Jesus has taught us in the Old and New Testaments and in His death and resurrection. This is a clarion call to the musicians and song writers out there to continue to give us new songs about God's mercy and grace and also to give us songs of lament, songs about the poor and songs that sing of the beauty of God's law.

A final word from General Booth:

"*Faith and works should travel side by side, step answering to step, like the legs of men walking. First faith, and then works; and then faith again, and then works again – until they can scarcely distinguish which is the one and which is the other*."[599]

A final word from the pen of Mrs White:

"*Oh, what can I say to open blind eyes, to enlighten the spiritual understanding! Sin must be crucified. A complete moral renovation must be wrought by the Holy Spirit. We must have the love of God, with living, abiding faith. This is the gold tried in the fire.* ***We can obtain it only of Christ****. Every sincere and earnest seeker will become a partaker of the divine nature. His soul will be filled with intense longing to know the fullness of that love which passes knowledge; as he advances in the divine life he will be better able to grasp the elevated, ennobling truths of the word of God, until by beholding he becomes changed and is enabled to reflect the likeness of his Redeemer*."[197] (p105)

If we sincerely believe in Jesus, we have assurance of Salvation; therefore, let us praise our Lord in song. Let us lift up His name in praise as David did, according to the law and the prophets. Let the sound of our music perfectly harmonise with the character of God. Let the lyrics of our songs perfectly harmonise with the commands and teachings of Jesus. Let us give our all to our creator and saviour for His great mercy and "*Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all* (Eccl 12:13)."

Oh, that we could sing as the psalmist did:

> *"Let my cry come before You, O Lord;*
> *Give me understanding according to Your word.*
> *Let my supplication come before You;*
> *Deliver me according to Your word.*
> *My lips shall utter praise,*
> *For You teach me Your statutes.*
> *My tongue shall speak of Your word,*
> *For all Your commandments are righteousness.*
> *Let Your hand become my help,*
> *For I have chosen Your precepts.*
> ***I long for Your salvation, O Lord,***
> ***And Your law is my delight.***
> *Let my soul live, and it shall praise You;*
> *And let Your judgments help me.*
> *I have gone astray like a lost sheep;*
> *Seek Your servant,*
> *For I do not forget Your commandments."* (Ps 119:169-176)

A final word from Paul:

"*And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.* ***Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me – everything you heard***

> ***from me and saw me doing****. Then the God of peace will be with you*." (Phil 4:8-9 NLT)

A final word from our King, who lives in perfect harmony with His Father, arising out of selfless devotion:

> "***He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him***." (Jn 14:21)

This is perfect harmony.

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