

# Theology of Church Music

## Music doesn't enable us to enter God's presence, or bring the Holy Spirit down to us

- The rites of the tabernacle took place in silence. Music played no part in atonement.
- The "sacrifice of thanksgiving" (Psalm 107:22; 116:17) or "sacrifice of praise" (Hebrews 13:15) is not a sacrifice of atonement, but probably linked to the peace offering that comes *after* atonement. See e.g. 2 Chronicles 29:20-30).
- It is the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus that enables us to draw near to God. We don't need another High Priest, and we mustn't give a music leader this role (Hebrews 8-10).
- Since Pentecost, people have received the Holy Spirit the moment they believe in Jesus (Acts 2:38) and he lives within the temple of his church (John 14:23; Ephesians 2:22; 1 Corinthians 3:16). We don't bring him down by music (2 Kings 3:15 isn't normative).

## Music enables us to praise God

- It should be led by skilful musicians (Psalm 33:3; 1 Chronicles 25:7)
- It should be exuberant (Psalm 33:1-2)
- It should be motivated by truth about God (e.g. Psalm 92:4; Psalm 33:4-5; even Psalm 150)
- Something is wrong if we don't want to sing (Exodus 15; Revelation 5:9-10; Acts 16:25)

## Music enables us to teach and encourage each other

- It is horizontal as well as vertical. In the Psalms, God is sometimes "you" and sometimes "him". See also Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19.

- So we should be conscious of God and conscious of one another.
- We need to be "filled with the spirit" (Ephesians 5:19) which means treating one another in a godly and Christ-honouring way. It's about empowerment for serving Jesus, not about a special feeling.
- We need to be filled with the word of God (Colossians 3:16) not least because songs teach us theology, and stick in our minds.

### PSALM 92

- <sup>1</sup> It is good to give thanks to the LORD,  
to sing praises to your name, O Most High;
- <sup>2</sup> to declare your steadfast love in the morning,  
and your faithfulness by night,  
<sup>3</sup> to the music of the lute and the harp,  
to the melody of the lyre.
- <sup>4</sup> For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work;  
at the works of your hands I sing for joy.

### PSALM 33

- <sup>1</sup> Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous!  
Praise befits the upright.
- <sup>2</sup> Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre;  
make melody to him with the harp of ten strings!
- <sup>3</sup> Sing to him a new song;  
play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.
- <sup>4</sup> For the word of the LORD is upright,  
and all his work is done in faithfulness.
- <sup>5</sup> He loves righteousness and justice;  
the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.