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Word Limit: 1000

Word Count: 1086

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Music has always been at the heart of church culture and while it may look different in different denominations, it plays a vital role. This essay will look at the role music plays in worship in the corporate setting in a church service, hermeneutical examination of a passage of scripture that will be used to write a song and the structure, lyrics and style of the song. For the purposes of this essay, musical worship is defined as the musical set list of the church service. Worship is understood to be the entirety of the Christian's life that is sacrificed daily to God.

At the core of Pentecostalism are the songs of worship¹. Musical worship forms the intimate part of the service inviting the congregation to "Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him and bless His name (Ps 100:4). The value of the songs sung is immeasurable as it shapes the individuals theology and gives it a melody making it more memorable². Wayne Johnson quotes Kevin Vanhoozer to say, "The quality of our worship is therefore an index of our theology (and vice versa)"³. The musical worship will shape how one sees God and it has the opportunity to allow the congregation to experience God in an intimate way individually and corporately. Therefore it is shaping not just the heart but the mind also. The benefit of Pentecostal/charismatic musical worship is that it creates a unity corporately as it is experienced together. As the Body of Christ, when Holy Spirit reveals God to us, our response is to worship Him. When we apprehend Him, we have a purpose in worshipping Him⁴. Our response to Him is empowered by Holy Spirit.

The passage of scripture chosen is Hebrews 11:1-3.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible".

Within the context of Hebrews, the writer is writing to people that had accepted the teachings of Christ but were being convinced to return to Judaism and its rituals. The writer in chapter ten has explained that Christ has paid for the sin of the world once and for all and that because those whom have accepted Him, have their consciences cleaned (Heb 10:22). At the pinnacle, he tells them that they can "...boldly enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb 10:19). In setting the stage for Hebrews eleven, the writer reaches down into their weariness and encourages them in one theme, their faith⁵. Richard Spencer says "Faith derives from an inner anchoring to things that are real beyond what is present and visible, to a reality that gives bearing in the chaos and pain of life"⁶. Faith calls us up out of pain and into

¹ Martina Prosén. "Worship: A Window Into Pentecostal Theology." *Svensk Missionstidskrift* 102, no. 1 (2014): 87.

² Wayne H. Johnson. "Practicing Theology on a Sunday Morning: Corporate Worship as Spiritual Formation." *Trinity Journal* 31, no. 1 (2010): 30.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 33.

⁵ Stephanie Nash. "An Example of the Traditional Bible Study Model Based on Hebrews 11:1-12:2." *Review & Expositor* 107, no. 2 (2010): 220.

⁶ Richard A. Spencer, "Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16." *Interpretation* 49, no. 3 (July 1995): 289.

purpose. As pain wears us down, our faith will lift us up and keep our eyes on Jesus. The writer then in Hebrews chapter eleven is a continuation which can be seen as “Now” linking Heb 10:39. The writer has their attention and they are starting to lift their eyes to see something more. Where we ourselves would retreat and draw back, Hebrews 10:39-11:1 is telling us to look beyond ourselves. In that moment previous our eyes were on ourselves and our faith was in ourselves, but in this moment there is a shifting happening. This is decision time. It is time to look up.

The writer tells us that faith is a tangible object. It has substance and it is closely linked with hope. Hope is defined as “A feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen” and “A feeling of trust”⁷. As the writer is reminding them that their forefathers that went before them believed and trusted God appealing to “logos, ethos and pathos”⁸, we can be assured that the generations of believers that have gone before us, had faith in someone that is worthy of it⁹. Hope enables one to “endure, to be diligent, to remain patient, to press forward, to look beyond”¹⁰. Faith is the precursor for hope that enables us to see beyond what our circumstances are. The evidence of our faith is a demonstration of our actions¹¹. It is only with faith that we can see what those before us have seen. Worlds created by the spoken Word of God and not an already existing substance.

The writer continues on into Hebrews chapter eleven by the using the most powerful tool especially in Jewish culture. He uses testimony. The testimonies of the generations that have gone before us take our perspective from narrow to broad view. Suddenly we realise that we are part of a plan that spans generations not just our lifetime. The lives of those that have been sacrificial have become our generation’s floor on which to stand. In our culture, we have isolated ourselves from the past and have not seen we too will be the next generation’s floor.

The structure of the song

According to Michael Hawn, there are two types of songs, cyclical and sequential¹². While cyclical songs are simple and repeated (eg. I Love You Lord), sequential songs are progressive taking the singer and listener on a journey. Modern day contemporary musical worship is more commonly sequential and generally consists of three elements being verses, a chorus and a bridge. Lyrically the verses tell a story, the chorus which is often repeated, is the culmination of the song and the bridge acts as calling out passage¹³. Melodically, the verses, chorus and bridge are different. The key of the song and the melody needs to be easy enough for the corporate body to be able to sing. The goal is for them is to worship God, not

⁷ Oxford Dictionary, Dictionary. <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/hope>

⁸ Stephanie Nash. "An Example of the Traditional Bible Study Model Based on Hebrews 11:1-12:2." *Review & Expositor* 107, no. 2 (2010): 220.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Adam G. Cooper, "Hope, A Mode Of Faith: Aquinas, Luther and Benedict XVI on Hebrews 11:1." *Heythrop Journal* 53, no. 2 (March 2012): 183.

¹¹ Robert G. Hoeber, "On the Translation of Hebrews 11:1." *Concordia Journal* 21, no. 1 (January 1995): 77-79.

¹² <http://seedbed.com/feed/new-sound-contemporary-worship/>

¹³ http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/music/popular_music/rock2.shtml

be focused on the screen reading the words. Musically the best songs will have a repetitive catchy hook that is remembered long after one has left church. The structure of this song is Verse 1, verse 2, chorus, verse 2, chorus and bridge.

Lord of Hope

Verse 1

Created by word

Created by breath

All things perfectly put into place

The earth and the Heavens

Rest in Your truth

They know You by Name

Verse 2

Though I can't see

Still I believe

I've heard Your whispers on the wind

Calling me into

Faith and not sight

I will walk by Your side

Chorus

Lord of the universe

Lord of Heaven and earth

Through the ages

The generations sing

Bridge

You're the Lord of hope

You're the Lord of all

You're the great I Am

You're the faith in me

Musical worship is an important way in which theology can be imparted to a congregation and long remembered after the initial encounter. It has the ability to plant the word deep in our hearts and transform us from the inside out.

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