

Music Philosophy

Welcome to the music ministry of Catawba Springs Christian Church! All of us in leadership appreciate the sacrifice of your time and talents to the Lord's work. We desire that music be a unifying activity in our services, something that all our people can effectively use to ascribe eternal worth to our great Savior.

Your example and contributions are important, and we want to give you as much support and help as possible to assist you in this ministry. Catawba Springs Christian Church stands unashamedly for a Biblical approach to music and worship. Though we are intentionally distinctive in both our musical style and performance practices, it doesn't follow that our music must be boring or dated. We are doing our utmost to engage the congregation each week as they come to worship the Lord--we desire to use music that is both doctrinally rich and heartfelt in its presentation. We are excited that you are joining the music team, and have prepared this document to help acclimate you to our program, and also to explain our philosophy and policies. Please take some time to read and carefully consider our direction. We all need to be in "perfect unison" for our program to accomplish all that God wants to do through us.

Above all our music program is a sacrifice of praise (Heb 13:15) to the Lord. This necessitates that we understand not only what the Bible specifically states about worship and praise, but also that we discern other Scriptural principles that affect this important part of our ministry. We do not exist simply to provide exciting special music, or to "give a good show" each Sunday. We have a much higher calling! We are leading our congregation in the important

activity of praise. This is an activity which must be accomplished in the Spirit and through the power of prayer. Nothing else will ever substitute for Spirit-led worship. Please understand that our music program is based on participation, not on passive spectatorism. The most important thing we can do is to encourage our people to sing "with the spirit and with the understanding also" (I Cor. 14:15). The main purpose of the choir is to model whole-hearted participation and encourage congregational singing. As our orchestra grows, it is another means of involving our people and supporting the congregational singing. We also use the children's choirs and teen choir to involve those younger members of our church in musical praise. Yes, we also have other ministries in music, but that is secondary to congregational involvement. Therefore, it is important that all of our musicians realize the valuable testimony that they present to our congregation on a weekly basis.

We also want you to know that we value faithfulness over musical proficiency. All the talent in the world cannot replace dedication to the ministry. And while we do believe in practice--honing our skills to offer the very best sacrifice of praise possible--we cannot accomplish this if our people do not show up on a regular basis for rehearsals. With these two thoughts in mind, please look over the following document. We are open to your questions, and we look forward to serving together here at Catawba.

Worship

It is useless to approach a music philosophy without first discussing worship, because when we gather each week in church, worship is the primary activity in which we engage. Music is simply one way in which we worship. Therefore, we should take a little time here to remind ourselves what all of this is really

about: it is not about entertainment, it is not about fulfilling aesthetic goals, it is not about building the reputation of an individual or even the church. It is about giving glory to God.

The English word Worship means to "attribute worth." To worship God is to ascribe to Him supreme worth: Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power (Rev. 4:11). The Bible is the only authoritative source about the value of God, therefore, it is only in Scripture that we can find out what He is truly worth. In the Old Testament the primary Hebrew word translated worship is shachah, meaning "to prostrate oneself, to bow down or stoop before [the one worshipped]." In the New Testament the primary Greek word used is proskuneo, meaning "to crouch, to prostrate oneself in homage, to reverence and adore, with the added picture of kissing the hand." Both of these words communicate the idea of humility and submission. In order for us to worship God as we ought to, we need to see that He is to be exalted and we are to be humble.

To know God is to worship God; therefore our view of God will directly affect how we approach him. Ron Owens, *Return to Worship, A God-Centered Approach*, p. xi.

Colossians 3 gives us a proper perspective on worship. Paul opens the passage with verses 1-4:

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection [exercise your mind] on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

The phrase "set your affection on things above" is a Hebraism which could also be translated "to worship." Paul is telling us that

proper worship will be focused on the things of God, not on the things of this earth. This provides us with the first important principle of worship here at CSCC.

Our Worship is to be God-centered, not man-centered.

Just as we observe in Galatians 5, Paul again draws the line here in Col. 3 between the flesh and the spirit. He says we are to "set our affections" or, exercise our minds, on spiritual things rather than fleshly. In the following verses (5-10) he gives us another list of the works of the flesh, similar to what we read in Galatians 5:

Mortify [subdue] therefore your members which are upon the earth [i.e., parts of the physical body]; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection [passionate passions], evil concupiscence [worthless longings], and covetousness [greed], which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience [unbelief]: In the which ye also walked some time when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication [vile conversation] out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.

Paul then goes on to speak of the things which will accompany our walk in the Spirit in verses 12-15 (similar to the list of the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5):

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And

above all these things put on charity [love], which is the bond [uniting principle] of perfectness [completeness]. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful.

This passage is important, not only in the context of our music standards, but also because it is the only way we can truly honor the Lord. Once we know and are practicing these things, we are in a position where true biblical worship can take place, both individually and corporately. And that is where Paul takes us in the next two verses of this chapter (vs. 16-17):

Let the word of Christ dwell [inhabit, literally “house-down”] in you richly [abundantly] in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

We can see in this passage (as well as numerous other passages in Scripture) that worship consists of two elements:

1. God’s Revelation (vs. 1-4)

It is God’s gracious and loving desire to show himself to us. He has done this in His creation; He has done this in His design of nature; He has done this in our inner man through our conscience; and He has specifically shown Himself to us in His Word. God is faithfully revealing Himself to every one of us.

2. Our Response (vs. 5-17)

God is not worshiped when people simply see or even understand the truth. A believer must also respond to that truth. The believer hears, understands, and accepts truth

about God, and then he directs a response toward the God from Whom the truth came.

What does it mean to "respond" to truth from God? Let's consider some examples of responses in the Bible:

Ps. 7:17 — I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.

1 Chron. 16:29 — Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Ps. 68:4 — Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH [LORD], and rejoice before him.

Notice the verbs, or action words, in these three verses:

Praise, Sing, Give glory, Bring an offering, Come before Him, Worship [ascribe value], Sing praises to Him, Extol Him [exalt or raise up], Rejoice

Psalm 96 is another excellent passage describing worship for us in terms of our response to God's revelation:

O Sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth. Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; show forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens. Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth. Say among the

heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved; he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

Again, please note the action words in this passage:

Sing, Bless [show adoration to] His name, Show forth [announce, preach] His salvation, Declare His glory, Give glory, Bring an offering, Come into His courts, Worship the Lord, Fear before Him, Say among the heathen

So how then do we respond to God during our public services here at CSCC? We are to offer a proper response to God's revelation--this includes both our attitudes and our activities.

A. We respond with our Hearts

1. In Unity (this is best pictured in the temple dedication of II Chron. 5)

II Chron. 5:13-14 – It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.

I Cor. 12:12-13 – For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Jn. 17:20-21 – Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Unity isn't just "trying to get along"--it is always a by-product of submission. When we submit ourselves to God, unity will be the result. When we submit to each other, we are serving each other in love.

2. In Love

Col. 3:14 – And above all these things put on charity [love], which is the bond [uniting principle] of perfectness [completeness].

Jn. 13:35 – By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

As a congregation, we cannot worship together at CSCC until we are right with each other—not harboring grudges or bitterness. Our love and submission will be the bond that holds us and our worship together. Not only do we offer our responses from our hearts, but also by our actions.

B. We respond by our Actions

Remember the action words we saw above in Psalm 96 and other passages? These actions form the core of what we do in our public services here at CSCC. In this document we concentrate on one activity of our worship--and it is this activity which should be a great source of blessing for our church, or could also become a great source of controversy: our Music. "The most important and highest activity that a company of God's people could ever engage in, is to offer Almighty God acceptable worship." (Martin Lloyd-Jones)

Music and Worship

Singing is the primary action of worship which is regularly offered by the entire congregation of CSCC. This activity allows us to worship God through the offering of praise, while at the same time encouraging one another ("teaching and admonishing one another"--Col. 3:16) God tells us in His Word that this is something that pleases Him:

Ps. 147:1 – Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.

Ps. 33:1 – Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.

Ps. 50:23 – Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.

Ps. 54:6 – I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for it is good.

Ps. 61:8 – So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.

Ps. 69:30-31 – I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

We should not be hesitant with our praise, or allow our own self-consciousness (i.e., selfishness) to hinder our praise, because Christ desires to participate with us in this activity. Hebrews 2:12 explains to us "in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." Interestingly, this is a reference to Psalm 22, a Messianic Psalm. Christ is the one singing the praise in Hebrews 2:12, and He describes Himself as singing in the midst of the church, or "through the church." Every time we gather together to sing, Christ Himself participates in our praise to God. What an awesome responsibility! And what a sobering reminder that worship is not about us, rather it is all about God.

Not only is music offered by the entire congregation in our services, but also music is offered by the choir, soloists, or other musical ministry groups. Again, this is an activity of praise, as well as an opportunity to "teach and admonish one another." This response takes place from a smaller group (or soloist) on behalf of the congregation to the Lord. Just as a public prayer is offered to the Lord on behalf of the entire congregation, so is a special musical offering. There are two primary obligations here: first, the obligation of the choir or soloist to sing so that all can understand the message. While we admit that the minister of ministry music may not always get it right, that is, nonetheless, our goal. Second, the congregation has an obligation to listen to the revelation of God as the musicians praise Him--not just to be tickled by some pleasing sounds, but to get to know more about Christ and His love for us. The beauty of the singing or the popularity of the performer is not as important as the content of what is being sung. Our music in worship is not a beauty contest. Since our

music is a sacrifice, we should not give to the Lord that which costs us nothing. We practice, striving to do our best to offer to the Lord something that is worthy of His greatness. We will never bring to Him that which is perfect, but we are asked to "approve things that are excellent" (Phil.1:9). This is the guiding principle that we follow in choosing and preparing our music.

So both congregational singing and ministry music aid us at CSCC with our worship. Now we consider one of the most controversial subjects: musical style. Why do we choose the kind of music we choose here at Catawba. Is style important? And if so, why?

Musical Issues

Christian music is that music in which text, music, performers, and performance practices are conforming to the image of Christ.

Text

Each aspect of music as defined above needs to be carefully analyzed in the light of the Word of God. When considering the text of a song we must ask the following questions: 1) Is it Scriptural? 2) Is it clear and concise in its message, and is it an appropriate expression for worship? 3) Is it well-crafted and proper in its poetic form?

We are not seeking to manipulate the congregation with emotionalism nor are we satisfied with proclaiming truth in a light or flippant manner. It is not usually hard to determine whether or not a song is biblical, but we must not stop with that evaluation: we must also ask if it is a reverent expression consistent with biblical worship principles.

Musical Style

Many Christians have said in one way or another that "The Bible does not address musical style anywhere. Therefore any musical style is appropriate in a worship setting." And while it is true that Scripture does not condone or condemn any single style of music, there are important principles that should guide our thinking. The most basic principle to consider is the morality of music. Can the sound of music (apart from its text) influence me either towards Christlikeness or away from Christlikeness?

Morality of Music

Biblical Evidence--some verses to consider:

- a. *Is. 23:15 – And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot.*

There is a style by which a sensually-oriented person performs sensual or provocative music. The Scripture assumes this to be true and does not bother to explain the metaphor.

- b. *Eze. 33:32--And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely [sensual] song of one that hath a pleasant [beautiful] voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.*

"Sensual song" is a Hebrew expression which is literally translated "song of lusts, inordinate affections, sensualities." In this particular usage the song is characterized by sensuality. Note that the end result of this music is that people hear the words, but no action is taken. The musical style negates the message of the text!

- c. In some cases instruments themselves (such as the lyre and harp) are associated with positive emotional expression (Psalm 71:22; 81:2; 92:1-4; 108:2):

Duet. 31:19 – This song may be a witness

Duet. 31:21 – This song shall testify

I Chron. 25:3 – Prophesied with a harp

Jer. 48:36 – Mine heart shall sound like pipes

Job 30:31 – Mine harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weeped.

Ps. 49:4 – I will open my dark saying upon the harp

Ps. 71:22 – I will praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God

- d. Singing is a Divine activity implying moral value:

II Chron. 7:6 – The Levites also with instruments of music of the Lord

Zech. 9:14 – The Lord God shall blow the trumpet

Zep. 3:17 – The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing

Job 35:10 – God my maker who giveth songs in the night

Job 38:7 – When the morning stars [probably a reference to angels] sang together

- e. A specific example in Scripture:

I Samuel 16:23 – And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with

his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

We see in this verse that instrumental music offered by David affected Saul physically, mentally, and spiritually. The passage makes the effects very clear. But was this just a coincidence? Not according to the earlier verses in this same chapter. See how this story unfolds:

I Sam. 16:14-17 – But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me.

David's closest advisors knew that the right kind of music would bring the right kind of effect on King Saul.

They clearly understood the power of music to affect the king for good. Does anyone, therefore, doubt that music also has the power to affect someone towards evil? Satan is certainly not ignorant of those devices which he can use to draw our minds away from the Lord.

Our New Song

II Corinthians 5:17 states that “*if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*”

This principle is illustrated in the Old Testament by David's testimony in Psalm 40:1-3: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."

A look at any concordance will reveal that the phrase "new song" appears many times in the Bible:

Ps. 33:3 – Sing unto him a **new song**; play skillfully with a loud noise.

Ps. 96:1 – O sing unto the Lord a **new song**: sing unto the Lord, all the earth.

Ps. 98:1 – O sing unto the Lord a **new song**; for he hath done marvelous things; his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

Ps. 144:9 – I will sing a **new song** unto thee, O God; upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.

Ps. 149:1 – Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a **new song**, and his praise in the congregation of the saints.

Is. 42:10 – Sing unto the Lord a **new song**, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.

Rev. 5:9 – And they sung a **new song**, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Rev. 14:3 – And they sung as it were a **new song** before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

These verses define the character of music, not the kind of music. The Hebrew word translated “new” in these Old Testament references is chadash. The Greek word translated “new” in the New Testament passages is kainos. These words mean virtually the same thing: “new in quality and new in freshness as opposed to brand new or new with reference to time.” This is consistent with other usages of the word chadash in the Old Testament.

Is. 62:2 – And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a **new name**, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.

Eze. 36:26 – A **new heart** also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.

Lam. 3:22-23 – It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are **new every morning**: great is thy faithfulness.

Likewise, the meaning of “new in quality” is consistent with New Testament usage of kainos:

Gal. 6:15 – For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a **new creature**.

Eph. 4:24 – And that ye put on the **new man**, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

II Pet. 3:13 – Nevertheless we, according to promise, look for **new heavens and a new earth**, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Rev. 21:5 – *And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, **I make all things new**. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.*

When we are saved, God miraculously gives us a new nature, a new heart, a new name, a new spirit, new mercies, and He will one day let us experience His new heaven and new earth (which is characterized as the place where righteousness dwells). All these qualities are present in the new creature. They reflect the new nature of the new God that we worship and serve. Since the word new is used in connection with our music more frequently in Scripture than with any other concept in the changed life (nine of twenty-four references), we conclude that one of the most visible features of our new life will be our new song. Think about it! The most visible aspect of our salvation will be seen in the new quality of music in our lives! That music will reflect the nature and character of the new God that we serve. Our song should not be characterized by the old way of life or the way of our former master Satan.

Galatians 4:8-9 express this very thought:

Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after ye have known God, or rather or known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage?

Peter reaffirms this concept in I Peter 1:14-15:

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.

In several New Testament references, music is an outward manifestation of God's working in our lives. Consider these familiar passages:

Eph. 5:18-19 – And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.

Col. 3:16 – Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymn and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Ja. 5:13(b) – Is any merry? Let him sing psalms.

In the first two passages above, the context is clearly that of being filled with the Spirit of God (Eph. 5:18-19) and being under the control of the Word of God (Col. 3:16). Though there are several signs in each passage which characterize the victorious Christian's life, the first outwardly visible sign is seen in the believer's music. In James 5:13 the joyful believer is characterized by his song as well. Are these merely coincidences? Robert Berglund (A Philosophy of Church Music, p. 12) applies what he calls the changed life principle to music: "If any style of music...creates feelings, ideas, emotions, values, or moods that are of, by, or for the unchanged way of life, such music is out of place in the changed life experience." The verses quoted above teach us that a new convert's life will be characterized by a different quality of music than what immoral, unregenerate people enjoy in their worldly culture. This difference will be observable by those around him. In Christian experience and biblical logic, this is the first argument against the neutrality of music; for if music were neutral, there would be no need for a change in the character of our music after salvation.

Cultural and Historic Testimony

We have seen that the Bible does not support the neutrality of any musical style. Rather Scripture teaches us that music is a stewardship matter from a supremely moral God to His children, who are instructed to walk in His likeness and not according to the "lusts of this world", or the immorality of the age in which they live. Therefore, it is incumbent that believers discern those things in their culture that represent or promote the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" as explained in I John 2:15-17. This applies to our dress, our speech, our entertainment, and most certainly, our music!

History provides us with a consistent testimony about the dangers of immoral music. There are many books that can be referenced here to provide an endless amount of historical quotes and data (see *The Battle for Christian Music* by Tim Fisher, *Measuring the Music* by John Makujina, *Music in the Balance* by Frank Garlock and Kurt Woetzel, *Can We Rock the Gospel?* by Dan Lucarini). The fact is, no one has ever supported the idea that musical style is inherently neutral or amoral except one group of people: Christians during the past two generations who are trying to bring pop and rock styles of music into the church.

Pop musicians in our culture have been very open about the sensual and even rebellious nature of their music. They have never hidden their agenda, nor have they shied away from vividly describing the morality of their musical styles. The world has never interpreted pop genres as sacred or worshipful, but rather as self-indulgent and passion-inflaming. Even unregenerate music critics freely admit this: "It is ironic that, in this age of multiculturalism, so many people seem intent upon ignoring the fact that the West is the only civilization to have created a form of

art whose sole purpose is to attack morality." (Martha Bayles, *Hole in Our Soul*, p. 388)

The bottom line principle that comes to mind here is:

Music is always the expression of a culture--whatever that culture may believe.

With these thoughts in mind, it is therefore important for us at CSCC to make some clear applications about musical style and worship.

Application

It is our sincere desire at CSCC to utilize fresh, relevant, and appropriate music in all of our services. The "oldness" of music does not make it any better, nor does the "newness" of music make it any worse. However, realizing that music is always a moral expression of its culture, we have chosen at Catawba to avoid pop styles of music. Believing that the witness of Scripture and history are important guidelines for discernment, we do not want to unite the holy message of Scripture with the sensual or rebellious musical styles which are clearly promoted by our culture (Gal. 5:17). Therefore, we do not condone the use of rock styles, along with all of its attendant genres, including (but not limited to) hip-hop, adult contemporary, rap, funk, jazz, or country-western. What we do desire is a distinctively "Christian" style of music: which means that we want something that in its text and style presents no contradiction to any listener, saved or unsaved who might come to our services. We want the testimony of our music to be consistent with the testimony of every other facet of our worship, best stated in Exodus 23:24--Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. God's desire for His chosen people was that they not

pattern their worship after the pagan nations surrounding them. Every time Israel copied the pagan practices of the surrounding nations, they placed themselves under God's wrath. Therefore, at Catawba we desire a musical program that not only promotes quality, but also promotes distinctive music that sounds different from the music of pop culture, i.e., the pagan worship of our day. We also are opposed to the philosophy of Contemporary Christian Music, a movement which is based upon a reliance of pop musical styles and adapting them to church worship. As has been stated, we understand that musical styles are not inherently amoral or neutral; therefore, we do not follow after such a philosophy and practice for the same reasons. Earlier we stated that our worship here at Catawba is to be God-centered, and not man-centered. Our music is first and foremost an offering to God. It is not something that we use to draw in a crowd or manipulate people once they are in the building. Music is to unite our congregation in worship. Therefore we will not allow someone's preference to guide our choices when that preference could offend or alienate others within our church. Finally, we stress participation and not spectatorism. We never want our music to become something that people just come to hear. Music is an offering from the entire congregation at Catawba Springs Christian Church, and everyone's participation is not only necessary for worship, but it is commanded in Scripture. We will always strive to have a balanced approach between platform music and congregational music, realizing that participation is paramount.

Performers/Ministers

Participation begins with Church Membership

All participants in the music program at Catawba must be believers who are also members of our local assembly. Since God has given gifts to edify fellow believers in the local church, we do not hire professionals to do our music (this does not rule out that occasionally we have in outside musical groups for a special service or concert--this, too, is to encourage our people and give them an example of excellence). God has gifted members at Catawba with the talents that He wants us to have; therefore, we will utilize the talents of our members in all of our regular ministering groups. King David gives us a wonderful description in I Chronicles 28 of the attitude of a true worshipper. His eagerness to build the temple was tempered by his humility of spirit realizing that ultimately his talents and resources were given by God and were to be used for His glory:

Now therefore, our God, we thank You and praise Your glorious name. But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You. For we are aliens and pilgrims before You, as were all our fathers; our days on earth are as a shadow, and without hope. O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy name is from Your hand, and is all Your own. I know also, my God, that You test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things; and now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here to offer willingly to You. (I Chron. 29:13-17)

In this passage we can see four qualities that David possessed, all of which musicians at Bethany should strive to exhibit:

1) Obedience: Doing what God wants us to do

We try to be obedient to what God expects of us--this involves how we schedule, finance, prepare, and carry out our music program. As a church we have studied worship and what is involved. We understand the priority of our musical offering to the Lord and we take the necessary steps to keep it a priority

2) Creativity: Using the talents and materials that God gives us to use

Concerning our creativity, we are attempting to use the talents and materials that God has given to this church. We are not successful by being more "polished" than other churches--they are responsible for the talents and resources that God has given them. We want to utilize as many people as feel called to be part of our music ministry. This is why we have several different choirs for different age groups. This is also why we have an orchestra and use it on a regular basis--to employ and develop the talents that God has blessed us with. We will be content with the abilities that God has given to us as a church, and we will commit to work with those that God has sent our way.

3) Righteousness: Seeing the boundaries that God has established

Concerning righteousness, we will strive to teach the boundaries that God sets for our worship and creativity--i.e., we want to learn truth from Scripture and see it's "rightness." There are certain musical styles that are worldly--we avoid them. There is certain music which may not be worldly, but it is not excellent. We try to steer clear of that as well. Again, we are not always perfect in the decisions that we make, but we will do our best to be guided by the righteousness of Christ.

4) Submission: Surrendering my desires for God's perfect will

What allows so many different people, who have so many different opinions, to work together is our submission--not to the music pastor--but to the Lord. Catawba is blessed with some very talented people. While there are some strongly held opinions from person to person, we should never experience "infighting" when it comes to our music program. We strive for unity, and unity comes because dedicated and talented Christians understand the importance of submission. This is the beauty of the local church--how we harmonize all of our talents in the Lord's service.

Participation continues with Faithfulness

While no one would expect every musician to possess a high proficiency of technical skill in his musical discipline, we can expect every musician to be faithful in fulfilling his duties. Therefore, every choir/orchestra member is expected to be at all rehearsals consistently and on time (unless providentially hindered). While allowances will be made for those who have regular work obligations, we would not permit choir/orchestra members to continue if they are not faithful to rehearsals. Solos (either vocal or instrumental) will be done by those who are exhibiting faithfulness in larger groups such as choir or orchestra or if schedules require it, other ministries of the church. We do not want to foster or promote the mentality that anyone is "too good" for the choir or "too skillful" for a regular church group. In other words, if someone cannot take the time to be in the regular groups of the church, they cannot perform solos in the service. We want to place a premium on participation and not talent.

Dress and Deportment

As participants in the public worship life of the church, it is important that all musicians understand the spiritual example they are setting for the congregation of Catawba Springs Christian Church:

G. Section 7 - Christian Growth We believe that all who are born from above in salvation will be becoming like Jesus Christ as the Spirit and Word of God work in their daily lives (Romans 8:28,29); that each believer has the responsibility of growing in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18); and that this growth comes by a personal walk with Christ in the Word of God, in prayer, in obedience, in fellowship with other saints, and in service to Him (Acts 2:41-47).

J. Section 10 - Separation We believe that the Christian is to separate himself unto Christ in true holiness (Romans 12:1,2); to separate himself from any participation in or endorsement of sin or worldliness (1 John 2:15,16); from ecclesiastical organizations and religious personalities that deny the faith or compromise its message (2 Corinthians 6:14-18); and from brethren who walk disorderly or who unrepentantly continue in sin (2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 5:4,5; Titus 3:10-11).

Pastor would you like other aspects from the constitution added here? I wrote you an email 10/17 that suggested a consideration of more specific things that we expect from the general membership....just some thoughts

Not only does a performer's poor testimony render his music unacceptable to God (see Amos 5:23), it also hinders his ability to edify and encourage other believers. Even wonderful Christian music, when presented by musicians whose lives manifestly deny the truths they are singing, will provoke a reaction of cynicism,

not of worship. Therefore, demonstrating faithfulness to God and His service in the lives of those who participate in the music of the local church is essential.

The two guiding principles of dress for all activities at CSCC are 1) Modesty and 2) Appropriateness. Also, because of the high priority that we place on the necessity of worship, we want our dress not only to convey modesty, but also to communicate to all who attend the seriousness and importance with which we regard our services. Therefore, we ask that all ladies wear modest dresses or skirts, and that all men wear coats and ties. This is not intended to be a legalistic show of our spirituality, but rather a testimony of how seriously we regard the significance of our services. No musician needs to feel that expensive clothing is required or expected. We request that each musician do the best they can with their wardrobe in presenting themselves as public leaders of worship. There may be special occasions/services where more casual clothing is requested for an appropriate emphasis. In such cases the church leadership will give advance notice concerning such special services. However, at no time would we lessen our expectations concerning modesty.

Performance Practices and Policies

Although we do not make it a practice to check each individual piece that is performed in public services, it is still important to know that all numbers are subject to approval by the Music Pastor or someone that he designates. At times this may necessitate that the Music Pastor ask a musician to change pieces for a particular reason. The Music Pastor is ultimately in charge of all music ministered in all services. Therefore, if any musicians have a question regarding the acceptability or appropriateness of a particular piece, they should contact the Music Pastor. All

platform music should be prepared in the light of principles discussed in this document. Please keep in mind that special music is never performed for the purpose of displaying individual talent or for the satisfaction of personal interests. Soloists, both vocal and instrumental, are still leading the congregation in worship and praise.

Congregational Singing

Our practice at Catawba is to stress the importance of congregational participation: i.e, it is the congregation that forms the core of our music program. Therefore, we understand that congregational singing is the greatest opportunity to unify our people in worship and praise. We want to foster a worship environment where all who attend are encouraged to sing, and order our services in such a way that singing is given a prominent place. We want all musicians to model this example of participation in every service, realizing that the most important mission of the choir is to lead and be a good example to our congregation in music participation. John Wesley, in the preface to one of his own hymnals wrote these often-quoted words about the importance of congregational singing. We would do well to heed his admonition:

SING ALL. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up, and you will find it a blessing.

SING ENERGETICALLY, and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength.

SING MODESTLY. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation--so that you may not

destroy the harmony--but strive to unite your voices together so as to make one clear melodious sound.

SING IN TIME. Whatever time is sung, be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it; but attend close to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can; and take care not to sing too slowly. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from among us, and sing our tunes as quick as we did at first.

AND ABOVE ALL, SING SPIRITUALLY. Have an eye to God in every word that you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself or any other creature. In order to do this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve of here, and reward you when He cometh in the clouds of heaven.

In order to assist our congregation carry out this mission, we employ a variety of musical expression in our services. We desire to avoid sameness in congregational singing or uninvolved, dispassionate participation. We also recognize that public singing is always the outgrowth of private devotions. Therefore, we will not attempt to artificially stimulate our congregation to an emotional experience through musical means. We are instructed in Scripture to "come before His presence with singing" and to "enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise" – these passages emphasizing that the worshipper comes to worship with praise and thanksgiving already in his heart (Psalm 100). No musical manipulation (however "effective") can replace a lack of passion for God among the congregation. Public singing can only be strengthened by Christ's work in the "inner man," and that only through each individual's commitment to Christ and His Word.

Believing that our music is a spiritual expression of praise to God, and ordering our performance practices so as to minimize the performer while uplifting Christ, it therefore follows that we do not offer applause to express our gratitude for musical offerings. Secular culture readily admits that applause is an expression of thanks to the performer. Our practice at Catawba Springs Christiand Church is to offer thanks to the Lord for the message communicated, for the blessing received, and for the spiritual enlightenment given through the Spirit of God. We would encourage all within the church family to offer a heartfelt "Amen" when appropriate--affirming that God has ministered through the music.

Technology

Whenever needed, we will make use of audio/visual aids to encourage and enhance our congregational worship. However, at no time do we desire to replace our hymnals with technology. Music education is a vital part of stewardship within our congregation, and the most important aspect of that education will take place by teaching our people how to read music and sing together. Therefore, all technology that we use in congregational singing will be to enhance our use of the hymnal, not to replace it.

The same principle applies to our use of sound equipment and amplification. While it is practically necessary to amplify virtually all participants on the platform, we never want our sound system to give an unrealistic or false sound quality. Rather, we desire to enhance the natural tone of musicians and acoustics of the building in which we worship. Furthermore, because of the culture in which we live, avoiding a worldly appearance and projecting a spirit of humility are both difficult for a singer using a hand-held microphone. For this reason, hand-held microphones

will not be used except under special circumstances approved by the pastoral staff.

Vocal Music

Since the voice is the "human instrument" we want to be sure to stress a natural singing technique--emphasizing proper posture, correct vowel formation, and crisp, clear diction. Our choral singing will strive for a sound free from tension, and for a genuine blend by the subordination of individual voices to the choral "whole." Realizing that we have volunteer choirs, and that most singers have not had the luxury of private or group lessons, the choir directors of all groups will make it a point to emphasize proper technique as time and opportunity allows in rehearsals. Another aspect of our performance is body language. Since our music is presented with the intent of drawing the listener's attention to the Lord, we avoid gestures and movements which emphasize the performer over the message. While we understand that individuals have varying passions and gifts, we want to be sure that we are ministering in such a way as to include the entire congregation. We certainly want honest and heartfelt expression, and whenever possible, vocalists should make an effort to memorize the music, or else learn the song in such a way that they are free to give the audience maximum eye contact. "Singing from the heart" is something that we want to consistently practice, and that usually results from careful preparation, not from a lack of preparation. Finally, we would add that part of preparation--the most important part--is our spiritual preparation.

Instrumental Music

We want to encourage pianists and instrumentalists to use their God-given talents. Therefore, as a matter of stewardship we use a

rotation schedule of all our keyboard players who possess significant talent in accompaniment of congregational singing. Service schedules and keyboard assignments will be made by the Music Pastor or by someone whom he designates. While individual style and interpretation are important for all musicians, maintaining a separation from any identification or association with the sound of pop culture (worldliness) is mandatory. We also stress the need to arrange music in such a way that the message of the song being performed is enhanced and not obscured. Therefore, we would avoid showmanship or excessive ornamentation which lends itself to personal promotion rather than the clear communication of a message.

Recorded Accompaniments

We have stressed the concept of stewardship throughout this document. Since we believe that God has given Catawba all the resources that we need in order to properly worship Him, we will not artificially enhance our music with recorded accompaniments. Our ministry is to and for real people who have gathered for the praise and worship of God. Though we believe in the careful choice, preparation, and presentation of all our musical selections, we will not place unrealistic expectations concerning the quality of a final performance. Contrary to many arguments offered, recorded accompaniments offer little to either the performer or the audience in terms of authenticity or quality. We desire to be satisfied with the musical personnel and resources that God has provided.

Guest Musicians

Performances/Concerts by guest musicians are not a frequent occurrence at Catawba Springs Christian Church, primarily because we have more than enough talent to use from within our

own church. However, from time to time we will have guest musicians, and these people will generally be those representing ministries or institutions that our church supports. Though we will do our utmost to screen any outside ministry before the music is performed, at times they may present a selection which is not consistent with our church policies and practice. This is no way changes or amends our policies, and we would urge maturity and Christian charity in such cases. Although we do our best to avoid such conflicts, we cannot hold every other ministry to the same standards that we feel God would have us to hold here at Catawba.

Weddings and Funerals

Special services such as weddings and funerals are regular occasions at Catawba Springs Christian Church, and all of these are by nature guided by our worship philosophy. Special services of any kind held in our church facility will inevitably reflect on our church, and should therefore, be approached with care and planning. We request that all music for weddings and funerals be approved by the Music Pastor or someone that he designates. Sometimes this may not be possible because of shortness of time, or outside participation by family members who are arriving in town at the last moment. However, as much as possible when we are responsible for such services we will plan in accordance with the policies and standards discussed above. We also acknowledge that weddings and funerals express the sentiments and ideals of the family involved. We will make every effort to include performers selected by the families. We must insist, however, on a spirit of cooperation, on respect for our standards, and on a concentrated effort to follow these guidelines.

Questionable Music

This section addresses music which may be acceptable in its musical style and content, however may be associated with a questionable movement or individual. In other words, can we sing a "cleaned-up" version of a particular song as long as we do so in a correct manner? Though this issue does not arise often, it can, nonetheless be one of the most potentially dividing issues that we will face in our church music program.

The important questions we must ask ourselves in such an instance are:

1. Could using this song give the impression that I am approving of a questionable individual or movement from which the song came?
2. Could using this song offend people in our church?
3. Could using this song be a stumbling block to a weaker brother?
4. Is my desire to minister to the entire church or satisfy my own musical agenda?

While we realize that misunderstandings occur, we want to do everything we can to minimize those misunderstandings and use our music to unify rather than divide our church. From time to time certain individuals or movements may arise which deserve special consideration. If that is the case the pastoral staff will bring it to the attention of the musicians. It is not within the scope of this document to give a detailed Scriptural analysis of every principle presented in Scripture, but some general teaching is in order. Paul discussed questionable activities in both Romans 14 and I Cor. 8-10 (among other passages).

Romans 14:12-13 gives us Paul's bottom-line conclusion from this chapter:

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

In I Cor. 8:9-13 Paul ends his discussion of eating meat offered to idols with the conclusion:

9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak.

10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;

11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish [could be translated "lose," or "be marred"], for whom Christ died?

12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

Finally in I Cor. 10: 25-33 Paul ends up the entire discussion with the following course of action:

25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles [butcher shop], that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:

26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

27 If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

28 *But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:*

29 *Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?*

30 *For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?*

31 *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

32 *Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:*

33 *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.*

This final passage quotes the very familiar verse that we are to "do all to the glory of God." Please note that in the context of this passage, "doing all to the glory of God" (vs. 31) means not giving anyone offense (vs. 32). These passages all deal with meat that was fine in and of itself, but which was tainted because of its association with paganism.

There is a lot of music today which is associated with movements and individuals that we would not wish to promote in any way from the platform of Catawba Springs Christian Church. And while we do not make associations the first or most important standard of acceptability, we must at times conclude that although a particular musical piece may be legitimate to use, it may not be in our best interests. Christian liberty is a responsibility to look out for other believers, not a "blank check" to do whatever we think is not specifically prohibited in Scripture.

This is why Paul tells us in I Cor. 10:23 that All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. In Galatians 5:13 Paul describes Christian liberty: For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

When considering questionable music we must take into account the possibility that some members of our congregation could be confused or offended by a particular song--not because of what the song says, but because of whom it is associated with. This doesn't mean that we have to give into unreasonable complaints. In fact, Paul never commands that we yield to legalists or unreasonable men--saved or unsaved. Remember that Paul did not allow Titus to be circumcised even though some Jews demanded it. One commentator makes an excellent observation regarding this question: "Paul was inflexible in resisting the demands of false brethren, but always willing to accommodate himself to weak brethren" (Schaff)

If any musician at Catawba has a question about whether or not a number could cause a problem, please come first to the Music Pastor. He may be aware of certain issues and controversies that the musician is unaware of. If we are willing to work together in Christian love (which is the true basis for all such decisions), then we should be able to come to a conclusion that would best serve everyone. Although, the following is not a direct quote from Scripture, we would do well to be reminded that "if something is questionable, we may want to avoid it." The clearest parallel in Scripture is found in

Romans 14:21-23:

It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

Hast thou faith [conviction]? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned [condemns himself] if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Determining or defining the extent of associations is not an exercise in logical consistency—in fact it is an impossibility. Every individual has different knowledge, experience, background and opinions. We know which issues are potential offenses because of the questions, actions and attitudes of the weaker brethren. Our church family will give us all the information we need to understand what offends and what doesn't. Let me add this: as time passes, knowledge and association will sometimes lose their connection with questionable people or movements. That is why some music that would not have been performed 20 years ago could perhaps be done today without issue. This is not inconsistency, this is discernment--the ability to make sound judgments based on knowledge and experience. I am the first to admit that we might seem "inconsistent" in some people's eyes, but if we consistently exercise our Christian liberty out of a love for the brethren and a desire to edify them, are we not following the Biblical example?

Review

Specific Guidelines to Keep in Mind

Text

Is it Scriptural?

Is it clear and concise in its message, and is it an appropriate expression for worship?

Is it well-crafted and proper in its poetic form? Music: Is it singable and appropriate for the group singing it (either congregational or choral)?

Is the musical arrangement itself balanced (melody, rhythm, and harmony)?

Is the style employed free from pop culture and worldliness?

Is the musical expression appropriate for worship?

Performance

Does the testimony of the performer aid or detract from the performance?

Do the performance techniques enhance or diminish the message of the song or the spirit of worship in the assembly?