

## Chapter 9: Conclusion

Since their beginnings in 1864, Christadelphians have discussed the use of music in worship and its significance. This has been shown through examining the historical records of the publication of Christadelphian hymnals and the editorial decisions that affected these books. Hymns and similar styled music have been the main choice of music for worship in the past, but this is now changing, as can be seen in contemporary views that were outlined in an ecclesial survey. Through examining the history of music in Christadelphianism; who wrote the music; who compiled the hymn books; what their aims were; what types of music were favoured; the format these were presented in; and the issues that arose from these; conclusions can be made as to what music is favoured for use in worship. All matters arising from the use of music in Christadelphianism can be classed under the term 'singing with the spirit and with the understanding', showing how Christadelphian principles are applied in practice. John Carter, who was once editor of *The Christadelphian*, states:

"Acceptable praise is a mental exercise as well as a musical one. The finest rendering of a hymn or anthem can fall short of praise in the absence of worship in spirit and in truth. Understanding of what is sung must accompany the desire to sing."<sup>220</sup>

Singing with the spirit is a term that is related to the process of worshipping God. If an individual is singing with the spirit, then they are singing in God's presence. Therefore certain decisions in regards to worshipping practices must be made so that the worshipping will be acceptable. This affects the types of music chosen, the way it is presented, who and what presents it and how the congregation is influenced by it. Music for worship must be in a form that the congregation can identify with, so that they can express who they are and appropriately communicate to God. When Christadelphianism first began, members took hymns from other religions. The diverse origins of these hymns represented the diverse origins of the Christadelphian community. Today, the music is just as diverse, as some congregations opt for modern forms of text and music, while others continue to use the traditional forms. Hymn books have been published containing a range of music styles, for example the *Christadelphian Hymn Book* and *Praise the Lord*, to cater to these needs. The various forms of music that are contained within these editions can be classed as being either psalms, hymns or spiritual songs and some of these include anthems, chanted Psalms in Scottish or Authorised versions, hymns, Taize pieces and modern songs.

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<sup>220</sup> Carter, John. *Singing with the understanding*. *The Christadelphian*. Vol 71, No 843, September 1934, 408.

To be able to sing with the spirit, individuals must have the right motivations in their actions, so that the worship will be acceptable. Music cannot be presented as a performance to the congregation because this detracts from the focus of worshipping, as does the use of certain instruments for accompaniment, such as those linked to popular music. The associations of the style of music must not bring immediately to mind anything that is considered ungodly. Yet, if hymns, texts and instruments associated with other churches and popular styles of music are used within a Christadelphian setting, the fact that the community is using them makes them sacred and appropriate for use in worship. The context of the music changes its meaning, as well as the subject matter of the texts. It was shown in chapter eight that some ecclesias and writers disapprove of the use of popular music, but they cannot deny that it appeals to the younger sector of the community. The use of popular styled music in worship, is increasing with the publication of *Praise the Lord* and the general acceptance of the use of other repertoires in some ecclesias, as detailed in Appendix E.

Giving glory to God must be one of the main aims for worshipping, so musicians, composers and authors should not draw attention to themselves in the process of providing a means for the congregation to achieve this aim. Compilers of Christadelphian hymn books have kept this in mind and suppressed the names of composers and authors in their publications. The only issue of the *Christadelphian Hymn Book* that acknowledged the origins of the hymns, in 1964, caused many problems, so a compromise between copyright laws and Christadelphian ideals has had to be reached for the 2000 edition of the hymn book. This compromise consists of placing the acknowledgments in an index at the back of the hymn book, rather than on the actual hymn pages. Musicians do not need to bring glory to themselves through extra training or through skilful playing. All that is necessary for musicians is that they provide a suitable musical accompaniment that will enrich the singing, so that the congregation may sing with the spirit.

The music used needs to be accessible to the entire congregation, so that they can sing their best, including singing in parts. This has been shown through the various formats of hymn books that have appeared, including those that contained tonic sol-fa notation, and staff notation, making the music manageable to learn. Dynamics and tempos were introduced into the publications so that praise would be further enriched. Four-part singing has been encouraged in the Christadelphian community from its beginnings in 1864, where Leaders of Song taught the parts to their congregations, especially when no printed music was available. The *Christadelphian Youth Hymnal* of 1952 had some hymns, which were arranged into three

parts for children's voices. Any congregations wishing to sing with the spirit must present their best, so that their motives are genuine.

The music must not be difficult to sing, as this also detracts from the aim of worship. The compilers of the 1903 *Christadelphian Hymn Book* considered chanted Psalms to be appropriate for congregational use, as the text taken from the Authorised version of the Bible structured simpler than the Scottish paraphrases of the Psalms. This reasoning did not meet everyone's approval, and the current preferred Psalms are those of the Scottish version, because the music is easier to sing.

It is preferred that all ecclesias use one hymn book so that the Christadelphian community is further united in practises. For this to occur, the books need to contain enough variations in styles to allow for differing tastes, as well as being cheap enough for all members to purchase. Having a united community aides worshipping in spirit, as all members agree with each other and can worship without any distractions in regards to schisms existing between ecclesias. The music used in worship also has various functions to help members worship with the spirit. Meditations before a Memorial Meeting help to focus the congregation's mind on the service. Some hymns that are sung have the function of being a prayer, some to teach and admonish and some as praise. These different types of music have appeared in Christadelphian hymn publications such as the Taize pieces for meditation, and the pieces found in children's hymnals for teaching biblical principles. All of these varying factors in music help the worshipper to sing with the spirit, so that God's presence is felt in the worshipping.

Singing with the understanding is also necessary for the music to be suitable for worship. The term understanding refers to the knowledge a believer has of the truths that are held within the Bible. This idea affects the choice of texts, who writes the texts and tunes and who sings them. Many of the hymn texts that were brought from other religions have had to be altered to fit in with Christadelphian understandings. The fact that a new hymn book was needed for the community in 1864 indicates how the understanding of other religions was at odds with the understanding of Christadelphians. Editors and compilers of hymnals preferred to use their own members for the musical editing process as well as original works, so that others would not think the hymn books were a result of monetary transactions with unbelievers, therefore tainting the books. This often favoured good intentions over quality of music and resulted in many mistakes being published and sung. However, knowing that the work was

done by fellow Christadelphians who had the understanding was the overriding factor in these decisions.

Today, many want to know which of the composers and authors were Christadelphian, so that they may know that these people's intentions were godly as well as sharing the same understanding. Some composers, such as Ian Hyndman, have issued their own hymn publications so that congregations who wish to pursue this ideal are able to, regardless of the quality of music. Others wish only to sing direct biblical quotes so that they can worship freely, without having to think about whether the content of the material used is appropriate or inappropriate. The use of anthems and Psalms are examples of this.

Non-members, such as children and the youth, who do not have the knowledge of a believer, need to have suitable hymn books, so that they are able to sing with the understanding. This can be seen in the publications of specific styles of texts that can be understood in the various childrens hymnals, such as *Sing to the Lord*, *Christadelphian Youth Hymnal* and *the Sunday School Union Christadelphian Hymn Book*. For some Christadelphian members, texts have had to be converted into the modern language or have been chosen for their everyday speech, so that the words are accessible and easily understood, therefore aiding with the worshipping in understanding. Hymn texts that help to sing with the understanding, are those that can be used to teach and admonish the believer, as well as hymns of praise.

In whatever style of music presented in worship, regardless of its origins, it must be sung by a congregation that has good intentions for praise. If the congregation's intentions are pure, if they are singing with the spirit and with the understanding, then this makes the music sacred and favoured for worship. The type of music that is considered appropriate for worship in Christadelphianism is that which is composed with pure intentions in truth, and with the understanding of the correct doctrines, yet with all the glory given to God.