

Church Effectiveness Nuggets: Volume 32

We Are Singing the Right Hymns...Aren't We?

By David Bales and Herb Miller

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Purpose of this Volume: Provides (1) in-depth answers to worship-hymn questions from readers of *The Parish Paper*; (2) A resource for music directors, worship leaders, and clergy in mainline Protestant congregations; (3) A 100-year overview of how and when the five primary hymn-type preferences evolved among Protestant worshippers; (4) A 1965-today overview of how hymn-type preferences have influenced worship attendance in mainline Protestant congregations; and (5) Examples of “the old gospel hymns” and “the great classic hymns”—plus a list of 116 praise songs from the three generations of “contemporary” hymn-type preferences—1960-1978; 1978-1995; and 1995-today.

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We Are Singing the Right Hymns in Worship...Aren't We?

By David Bales & Herb Miller

The rehearsal was coming to an end, but no one wanted to leave yet. The choir was rehearsing one of its favorite pieces. Singing the last phrases together was pure joy for everyone in the room.

“His eye is on the sparrow, and I know...”—they held their harmony, awaiting the choir director’s cue—“He watches...” Sustaining that word, they listened as the pianist played through the final passage they all knew by heart. As the phrase ended, they took a breath and voiced the final word in perfect unison—“me.”

The room was quiet until Helen leaned over to the other altos. Conveying her heartfelt sentiment in a low voice intended only for those closest to hear, she said, “I really love singing these old gospel hymns.”

Carol responded calmly from the soprano section, but she intended everyone in the room to hear her say, “I like them, too. Well, some of them...” She paused, searching for “tactful” words, then added, “The ones that aren’t...so theologically unsound.” Carol’s voice picked up a bit as she added, “But what I really love are hymns like ‘Holy, Holy, Holy’ and ‘A Mighty Fortress.’ The words are just so powerful.” (This wasn’t the first time the choir had heard Carol’s opinion on this subject.)

Bill—who never misses an opportunity to express his opinion—jumped in with, “I love to sing the praise songs!” In his own way, Bill was taking Helen’s side of the developing debate. Bill doesn’t always agree with her choice of music, but he definitely thinks it is better to sing something you feel passionate about than to express intellectual, abstract truth. “I’ll never forget the first time I sang ‘As the Deer,’” he said. “That song really speaks to my heart! I’ll take one of the new choruses over a centuries-old hymn any day.”

Amy interrupted Bill with, “New choruses?” A smile overtook her usual composed countenance. “I guess it all depends on what you mean by *new*!” Amy was totally unaware of how her abruptly candid remark affected Bill. Before he could respond, she added, “My son thinks all of my favorite ‘contemporary’ songs are *old*.”

Amy’s son, Jacob, is in his second year of college. The choir likes Jacob and often invites him to sing with them. Jacob is a good singer, and plays in a band with his friends. But the choir members rarely talk Jacob into singing with them. Why? He never says so, but he thinks *they never sing anything written during the last fifteen years*.

Why do people have so many different opinions about which music is best? Is there really a *best*? If you have been brave enough to ask that question in your own congregation, you know that there is no shortage of opinions—and no chance of finding a single hymn-type that satisfies everyone in your church. Almost everyone has a personal preference regarding the musical style and hymn-type used in worship. For each person, worship is better *when the music is right!* And, for many of them, worship loses much of its meaning when the music is not right.

Many factors—such as the denomination in which people grew up or their ethnic origins— influence hymn-type preferences. But more than any other *single* factor, the date people are born influences which hymns they find spiritually enriching.

Most Protestant congregations in the United States contain five types of worshipers, each of which prefers a different type of hymn. The primary exceptions to this five-type classification are (a) small towns whose congregations contain only older adults because, after high school, everyone leaves for college and/or employment elsewhere, (b) larger congregations located in age-restricted, retirement communities such as Sun City, Arizona, and (c) the more than one-half of mainline congregations of all sizes and locations whose attendance has been declining during the last few decades because fewer and fewer attendees are young-adults born between 1965 and 1990. Most of those three kinds of congregations sing *only two* hymn-types.

In what ways do the five hymn-type preferences influence the worship-attendance totals and the ministry effectiveness of mainline Protestant congregations? Finding the answer to that complex question requires a careful look at the last 100 years of hymn-type preferences in Protestant congregations in the United States.

Two Historic Worship-Hymn Preferences

Historic hymnody is a broad and rich subject. A wealth of material is divisible into dozens of sub-genres such as ethnic and national-heritage hymns. Thus, from a historical perspective, narrowing traditional hymnody into only two categories grossly oversimplified a very complex subject.

But when you ask *worshippers* born between 1910 and 1945 who presently attend mainline Protestant congregations in the United States about their preferences, the vast majority (over three-fourths) prefers one of the two broad hymn-types described below.

A high percentage of American Protestants born before 1927 prefer *the old gospel hymns* (predominantly written between 1870 and 1935). Why do so many people in this age range prefer this hymn-type? Research indicates that people “bond” to music, both sacred and secular, between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four. Thus, when many people born before 1927 sing *the old gospel hymns*, they experience a sense of God’s presence in a way that otherwise does not happen.

Many of today’s mainline pastors complain about the poor theology in *the old gospel hymns*: But such criticisms miss the point for many people born in the early 1900s. If the service contains none of those hymns, they feel that an essential expression of worship is missing.

A few examples of *the old gospel hymns*:

“The Church in the Wildwood,” 1857

“Tell Me the Old, Old Story,” 1866, 1867

“Onward Christian Soldiers,” 1871

“Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine!” 1873

“Wonderful Words of Life,” 1874

“I Am Thine, O Lord,” 1875

“Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus,” 1882

“Victory in Jesus,” 1900

“His Eye Is on the Sparrow,” 1905

“Dwelling in Beulah Land,” 1911

“In the Garden,” 1912

“Ivory Palaces,” 1915

At least three-fourths of American Protestants born from 1927 through 1945 prefer *the great classic hymns* (predominantly written between 1520 and about 1870). When World War II ended in 1945, sixteen million young Americans began taking off their uniforms and reuniting with their families. Between 1945 and 1960, Gallup Poll Surveys indicate that U. S. church attendance (as a percentage of the U. S. population) rose to levels never achieved before or since.

The sanctuaries that these people filled to overflowing—and the new suburban churches they built—resounded to *the great classic hymns*, accompanied by pipe organs and emboldened by great choirs. That generation’s “bond” to these hymns will never come unglued.

A few examples of *the great classic hymns*:

“A Mighty Fortress,” words and music, 1528

“O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing,” words 1739, music 1828

“Holy, Holy, Holy,” words 1826, music 1861

“The Church’s One Foundation,” words 1866, music 1864

The Big Shift in Hymn-Type Preferences

By the time the Vietnam War began in the mid-1960s, many age-18-to-44 young adults were developing radically new preferences in popular music. At the same time, new worship-hymn preferences began emerging.

As this new category of worship hymn appeared, the American Protestant general public began using the following words and phrases to describe the new hymn-type: “non-traditional,” “contemporary,” “praise songs,” “modern praise songs,” and “praise and worship songs.” As the next four decades unrolled, many mainline clergy, worship leaders, and worshippers viewed this new hymn-type as a *single preference*. But that description is far from accurate!

Between 1945 and 1965, failing to acknowledge the difference between the two historic hymn-type preferences noted above (worshippers who preferred *the old gospel hymns* and worshippers who preferred *the great classic hymns*) was a big mistake. In many small-town and open-country churches, failure to shift to *the great classic hymns* produced gigantic worship attendance declines.

Between 1965 and the present, many church leaders in communities of *every size* across the United States made an equally tragic error. They (a) assumed that all worshipers born after 1946 were in *one group* that prefers the “contemporary hymn-type” and (b) failed to recognize that *three groups* of worshippers prefer *three* types of “contemporary songs.” This error also produced worship attendance declines, and in some instances, the gradual disappearance of entire congregations.

Worship leaders, clergy, and lay leaders in American Protestant congregations with stable or growing worship attendance and ministry effectiveness acknowledge *three hymn-type preferences* among adult and teenage worshippers born since 1945.

Like approximately 25 percent of their parents and grandparents in young adulthood, some of *today’s* young adults and teenagers are quite eclectic in their preferences regarding the three types of contemporary praise songs. They enjoy a wide range of both traditional and contemporary worship hymns. “I like all of them,” they say.

But the flexible hymn-type preferences of people in that small, eclectic group of young adults and teenagers are the exception, not the norm. Most of these young adults and teenagers prefer *one* of the three types of contemporary praise songs far more than either of the other two types, and their preference is primarily birth-date determined.

At present, the breakdown of American Protestant worshipers regarding the five hymn-type preferences looks something like the following:

- **An estimated 12 percent of mainline Protestant worshipers of all ages—including young adults and teenagers**—prefer to worship in congregations that sing *ONLY the great classic* hymns—with an *old gospel hymn* occasionally thrown in to provide brief nostalgia trips. This “12 percent group” makes possible the survival of a short list of mainline congregations in large cities: They play a *niche role*—meeting the worship needs of that “12 percent group”—and still maintain a relatively stable worship attendance and membership. But in small towns, the people in that “12 percent group” total such a small number of worshippers within driving distance of the building that these *niche role* congregations inevitably decline in attendance and membership.
- **The majority of mainline Protestant worshipers born between 1946 and the present identify with one of the three “contemporary” hymn-types.**
 - **A sizable percentage of mainline Protestant worshipers born from 1946 through 1964** prefer the type of contemporary praise song composed between 1960 and 1978 and the words of old hymns set to contemporary tunes. Why? They bonded to those contemporary songs as teenagers and young adults.
 - **An even larger percentage of mainline Protestant adults and teenage worshipers born from 1965 to the present** prefer one of the two types of contemporary praise songs composed between 1978 and today.

Adequate names for each of those three contemporary hymn-types—names that accurately communicate among such a diverse-background group as mainline clergy, musicians, worship leaders, and worshippers—are perhaps impossible to find. Acknowledging the difficulty in finding a universally communicative name, subsequent sections of this discussion use the following names:

- *1st Generation Contemporary: Modern Praise Songs*
- *2nd Generation Contemporary: Restorational Praise & Worship Songs*
- *3rd Generation Contemporary: Missional Worship Songs*

Summary: approximately 75 percent of mainline Protestant adult and teenage worshippers born between 1946 and the present express a distinct preference for *2nd Generation Contemporary: Restorational Praise & Worship Songs* and *3rd Generation Contemporary: Missional Worship Songs*.

- If a congregation sings ONLY *1st Generation Contemporary: Modern Praise Songs* (written predominantly between 1960 and 1978), many younger worshippers feel uninspired, “wish we could sing something more contemporary,” and decide to visit other congregations where that happens.
- For most worshippers born after 1964, *2nd Generation Contemporary: Restorational Praise & Worship Songs* and *3rd Generation Contemporary: Missional Worship Songs* (both categories written from 1981 to the present) are as integral to the worship experience as were *the old gospel hymns* to worshippers born before 1927.

What happens when clergy and worship leaders in mainline congregations center on *only one of the three contemporary hymn-types*? Inevitably, failing to recognize the other two types limits the attendance and the ministry effectiveness of their worship services.

How do we explain this “only one type of contemporary” selectivity? A primary cause is the propensity of church people for holding on to something well past its natural and useful life.

But on a more practical level, most musicians experience difficulty in becoming proficient with new music styles. When the style is shifting rapidly and repeatedly, most church musicians simply can’t keep up. And encouragement from the majority of worshippers in musicians’ congregations to “keep doing what we already like” plays right into the insecurity that musicians already feel.

Those two tendencies produce a deadly result: denial that we need to consider new types of contemporary praise songs.

1st Generation Contemporary: Modern Praise Songs

In the late 1960s, some congregations began singing scripture choruses (songs in which the lyrics were drawn almost exclusively from Scripture). Other churches adopted songs from the “Jesus Movement” of the 1960s or new hymns by more mainstream songwriters like Bill and Gloria Gaither. During a time of major cultural upheaval in the country—from a variety of sources, in an uncoordinated way—*1st Generation Contemporary: Modern Praise Songs* appeared.

By itself, the fact that new songs were being written and sung is not particularly noteworthy. But, unlike traditional hymns, the praise songs were not primarily distributed in a hymnal or songbook. Much of this early contemporary music was disseminated from one musician to another by ear or with simple chord charts. Another distinction: these songs were part of the rising influence of church musicians who were not classically or traditionally trained, and much of this music reflected an affinity for the popular music of the time.

The Calvary Chapel congregations in Southern California became instrumental in championing this new music. In 1971, they founded Maranatha! Music. This company published many of the earliest praise songs that had become popular. Over the next two decades a handful of other publishing companies sprang up. Together, they led the way in developing and distributing these praise songs, and later, the 2nd and 3rd *Generations* of contemporary.

A Few Examples of the 1st Generation Contemporary: Modern Praise Songs.

“The Horse and Rider,” a.k.a. “I will sing unto the Lord,” based on Exodus 15:1–21, The Song of Miriam; (Author Unknown; Maranatha Music says the “modern” song was composed in 1950.)

“They Will Know We Are Christians by Our Love” (based on John 13:35; Peter Scholtes, additional words and music by Carolyn Arends, F.E.L. Publications, Ltd./ASCAP; 1925 Pontius Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90025, 1966)

“This Is the Day that the Lord Has Made” (From Psalm 118:24; Les Garret, Scripture in Song, 1967, 1980)

“Let God Arise” (Elizabeth Bacon, Date Unknown); can be heard on Integrity’s “All Hail King Jesus” with Kent Henry

“What a Mighty God We Serve” (Author Unknown, Date Unknown); can be heard on Integrity’s “Give Thanks” with Don Moen

“Be Exalted, O God,” a.k.a. “I Will Give Thanks to Thee,” (Brent Chambers, Maranatha Music, 1972)

“Father, I Adore You” (Terrye Coelho, 1972)

“Sing Hallelujah” (Linda Stassen, New Song Ministries, 1974)

“Our God Reigns” (Lenny Smith, New Jerusalem Music, 1974, 1978)

“Jehovah Jireh Cares for Me” (Merla Watson, Sound III Inc., 1974)

“Jesus Name above All Names” (Naida Hearn, Maranatha, 1974, 1978); can be heard on Integrity’s “Music Classics”

“The Steadfast Love of the Lord Never Ceases” (Robert Davidson, Celebration, 1974, 1975)

“Let There Be Glory and Honor and Praises” (James and Elizabeth Greenelsh, Gull Coast Fellowship 1975, 1976, 1978); can be heard on Integrity’s “All Hail King Jesus” with Kent Henry, and “God with Us” with Don Moen

“Open Our Eyes” (Bob Cull, Maranatha Music, 1976); can be heard on Maranatha’s “Classics”

“He Has Made Me Glad” (Leona Von Brethorst, Maranatha Music, 1976); can be heard on Maranatha Music’s “Classics 1”

“I Will Arise and Go Forth” (Leslie Brown, ZionSong Music, 1976); can be heard on Integrity’s “All Hail King Jesus” with Kent Henry

“Praise the Name of Jesus” (Roy Hicks Jr., Latter Rain Music, 1976, administered by EMI Christian Music Publishing)

“Glorify Thy Name” (Donna Adkins, Maranatha Music, 1976, 1981); can be heard on Integrity’s “Glorify Thy Name” with Kent Henry

“We Bring the Sacrifice of Praise” (Kirk Dearman, John T. Benson Publishing, 1976); can be heard on Integrity’s “Glorify Thy Name”

“I Exalt Thee” (Pete Sanchez Jr., Integrity, 1977); can be heard on Integrity’s “Celebrate Jesus”

“All Hail King Jesus” (Dave Moody, Tempo Music Publications, 1977)

2nd Generation Contemporary: Restorational Praise & Worship Songs

Significant changes began emerging when *2nd Generation Contemporary* began arriving on worship-service docks in the late 1970s. While many of the *1st Generation Contemporary: Modern Praise Songs* were direct quotations of Scripture, these later songwriters began taking greater liberty in using their own words in addition to or in the place of direct quotations.

New sounds in popular music were exploding during this time, and the new praise and worship songs were much the same. Unique and personal expressions of worship became the rule. Most song writers saw their role as uniting biblically orthodox expressions of worship with a contemporary musical vocabulary.

Two publishing companies (Integrity Music/Hosanna, founded in 1987, and Vineyard Music, founded in 1985) soon became the preeminent sources of *2nd Generation Contemporary: Praise & Worship Songs*. By the late 1980s, the majority of the songs commonly used were drawn from one of these two producers. While there were still regional favorites, churches throughout the United States increasingly tended to, almost simultaneously, adopt the same new songs that these two companies had just released on their latest recordings.

This “non-traditional” worship music increasingly found its home in churches that were NOT mainline or traditional. Influenced by the theology of the churches and denominations in which they found acceptance, the lyrics became increasingly militant. By the late 1980s, the phrase “praise and worship” didn’t just mean new worship songs; in the minds of most people, the term was synonymous with the theological term “charismatic.”

The early recordings from Integrity Music/Hosanna and Vineyard Music contained lyrics like the following:

Give thanks with a grateful heart,
Give thanks to the Holy One,
Give thanks because *He's* given
Jesus Christ His Son.

And now let the weak say, "I am strong."
Let the poor say "I am rich."
Because of what the Lord has done for us
Give thanks.

*"Give Thanks" by Henry Smith,
Integrity's Integrity! Music, 1978
Used by Permission*

Change my heart, oh God,
Make it ever true.
Change my heart, oh God,
May I be like You.

You are the potter,
I am the clay,
Mold me and make me,
This is what I pray.

*"Change My Heart, Oh God"
by Eddie Espinosa, Vineyard Publishing, 1982
Used by Permission*

The lyrics in later recordings exhibit a distinctly new content:

We do not bow our knee
To the prince of the air,
For we know the truth has set us free;
And unto our feet he will shortly be crushed,
And having done all we'll stand in victory.

Making war in the heavenlies, tearing down
principalities,
Standing firm in Jesus' victory;
Making war in the heavenlies,
Casting down every high thing
That exalts itself against the knowledge of
Christ.

*"Making War In The Heavenlies"
by George T. Searcy, Tourmaline Music, Inc., 1989
Used by Permission*

We will worship the Lamb of Glory,
We will worship the King of kings,
We will worship the Lamb of Glory,
We will worship the King.

And with our hands lifted high,
We will worship and sing.
And with our hands lifted high,
We come before You rejoicing,
With our hands lifted high to the sky,
And the world wonders why
We'll just tell them we're loving our King.

*"We Will Worship The Lamb Of Glory"
by Dennis Jernigan, Shepherd's Heart Music, 1989
Used by Permission*

This created an obstacle to many of the later songs finding their way into mainline churches.

Who could argue with early lyrics like "Change my heart, Oh God. Make it ever true"? The style might not be to everyone's liking, and the words might be overly passionate for some, but they were definitely orthodox. But when Integrity Music enthusiasts started singing, "We're making war in the heavenlies," that was a different story!

However, it is important to note that most of the young adults who identify with these songs show very little awareness or concern for whether the songs are lyrically progressive or conservative. The important distinction is that the songs are still drawn from Scripture. Many of the most beloved songs in this category of *2nd Generation Contemporary: Restorational Praise & Worship Songs* are not based on charismatic theological distinctives but on classic Christian themes that are historically orthodox.

A few examples of 2nd Generation Contemporary: Restorational Praise & Worship Songs.

“I Love You Lord” (Laurie Klein, House of Mercy -Music/Maranatha! 1978, 1980); can be heard on WOW Worship Blue with Worship Leader Kristina Hamilton, on Maranatha Music’s “Classics I,” and Maranatha Music’s “Hymns and Choruses I”

“My Soul Follows Hard after Thee” (Jeffrey Smith, Integrity’s Hosanna! 1978); can be heard on “Give Thanks” with Don Moen

“Give Thanks” (Henry Smith, Integrity’s Hosanna! Music, 1978); can be heard on “Give Thanks” and “God With Us” with Don Moen and on WOW Worship Blue

“Let There Be Glory and Honor and Praises” (James Greenelsh and Elizabeth Greenelsh, 1978)

“Spirit Song” (John Wimber, the author of this song, didn’t officially copyright it; Public Domain, Mercy/Vineyard, 1979)

“Oh Lord, You Are Beautiful” (Keith Green, 1980); can be heard on WOW Worship Yellow, as well as Keith’s album “The Ultimate Collection”

“He Is the King of Kings” (Virgil Meares, Scripture in Song 1980; Integrity/Hosanna, 1989)

“When I Look into Your Holiness” (Wayne & Cathy Perrin, Integrity, 1980); can be heard on “Glorify Thy Name” featuring Kent Henry; also heard on WOW Worship Cyan

“I Will Call upon the Lord” (Tom Lascoe, 1981); can be heard on Integrity’s “Forever Grateful” with Martin Nystrom

“In Him We Live” (Randy Speir, Integrity’s Hosanna! 1981); can be heard on “Glorify Thy Name” with Kent Henry

“Majesty, Worship His Majesty” (Jack Hayford, Rocksmith Music, 1981)

“There Is a Redeemer” (Melody Green, Sievight, 1982); can be heard on WOW Worship Red, as well as Keith’s album “The Ultimate Collection”

“We’re the People of God” (Wayne Watson, Singspiration Music, 1982); can be heard on Wayne Watson’s album “New Lives for Old”

“Change My Heart O God” (Eddie Espinosa, Mercy/Vineyard Publishing, 1982); can be heard on Integrity’s “Celebrate Jesus” Alleluia Music; can also be heard on Vineyard’s “Change My Heart Oh God, Vol. 2, as well as on “Change My Heart Oh God, Vol. 3. *According to the Vineyard Web Site, “Change My Heart O God” is the #1 worship song from Vineyard Music sung in churches of all denominations in the United States today.*

“We Will Glorify” (Twila Paris, 1982); can be heard on WOW Worship Red, as well as the album “House of Worship”

“Sanctuary” (Randy Scruggs and John W. Thompson, Full Armor Publishing/Whole Armor Publishing, 1982); can be heard on WOW Worship Red and on WOW Worship Yellow

“Holy Ground” (a.k.a. “We are Standing on Holy Ground”; Geron Davis, Meadowgreen Music Company/Songchannel Music, 1983); can be heard on WOW Worship Cyan CD featuring Geron Davis

“Oh the Glory of Your Presence” (Steven L. Fry, Birdwing Music/Cherry Lane Music, 1983); can be heard on Integrity’s “All Hail King Jesus” with Kent Henry

“I Worship You Almighty God” (Sondra Corbett-Wood, Integrity, 1983); can be heard on Integrity’s “Glorify Thy Name” and Integrity’s “Celebrate Jesus” Alleluia Music

“As the Deer Panteth for the Water” (Martin Nystrom, Maranatha! Music, 1984); can be heard on WOW Worship Cyan featuring the Maranatha Singers from “Praise 8 - As the Deer.”

“Fear Not” (Phil Pringle, Seal of Gold, 1984)

“Come into the Holy of Holies” (John Sellers, Integrity/Hosanna, 1984)

“Blessed Be the Lord God Almighty” (Bob Fitts, Scripture in Song, 1984); can be heard on Integrity’s “Such Joy”

“The Battle Belongs to the Lord” (Jamie Owens-Collins, Faithhill/Word Music, 1984)

“My Life Is in You, Lord” (Daniel Gardner, Daniel Gardner Music, 1985)

“Forever Grateful” (Mark Altrogge, People of Destiny Music, 1985); can be heard on Integrity’s “Forever Grateful” with Martin Nystrom.

“You’re Worthy of My Praise” (David Ruis, Maranatha Music, 1986)

“Blessed Be the Name of the Lord” (Don Moen, Integrity’s Hosanna, 1986); can be heard on “Give Thanks” with Don Moen, and WOW Worship Blue

“I Am the God That Healeth Thee” Based on Exodus 15:26 (Don Moen, Integrity’s Hosanna, 1986); can be heard on “Give Thanks” with Don Moen

“Great and Mighty Is He” (Todd Pettygrove, Hosanna/Integrity, 1987); can be heard on Hosanna Music Classics

“Shine Jesus Shine” (Graham Kendrick, Make Way Music, 1987); can be heard on Integrity’s “Amazing Love” with Graham Kendrick as well as WOW Worship Cyan CD

“Jesus Holy and Anointed” (John Barnett, Mercy Publishing, 1988); can be heard on WOW Worship Cyan

“I Stand in Awe” (Mark Altrogge, People of Destiny International/Pleasant Hill Music, 1988); can be heard on Integrity’s “The Lord Reigns” with Bob Fitts

“No Other Name” (Robert Gay, 1988); can be heard on Integrity’s “God with Us” with Don Moen

“He Is the King” (Tom Ewing, Don Moen, John Stocker, Integrity Hosanna! 1988)

“We Will Worship” (Dennis Jernigan, Shepherd’s Heart, 1988)

“Mighty Is Our God” (Eugene Greco, Gerrit Gustafson & Don Moen, 1989); can be heard on Hosanna Music Classics, and Integrity’s “Such Joy.”

“You Have Been Good” (Twila Paris, Arlose Music and Mountain Spring Music, 1988); can be heard on Integrity’s “Amazing Love” with Graham Kendrick

“I Sing Praises to Your Name” (Terry MacAlmon, Integrity’s Hosanna, 1989)

“Exalt the Lord” (Cindy Rethmeier, Vineyard Publishing, 1990)

“There Is None Like You” (Lenny Leblanc, Integrity/Hosanna, 1991); can be heard on Integrity’s “Celebrate Jesus” Alleluia Music as well as WOW Worship Cyan CD

The Transition from 2nd Generation to 3rd Generation Contemporary

With the late 1980s came the winds of a significant transitional period. Simpler, guitar-driven music slowly began taking prominence over the fully orchestrated and highly produced albums that Integrity had popularized.

Up to this time a worship leader on one of Integrity’s albums would likely have written some choruses; but the company invited musicians to front the album primarily because of their skill as lead vocalists, not because they had distinguished themselves as singers/songwriters. In other words, Integrity/Hosanna Music always strove to create the best production, using session players (often famous ones) and professional vocalists.

While Hosanna Integrity’s polished albums set the highest possible standard, Vineyard Music esteemed recordings of local songwriters singing their own songs with their own bands—and valued capturing the sound and style of a local church. Vineyard captured the new sounds of worship that were emerging in the churches and caught the first glimpses of the new era—driven by individual singers/songwriters.

The significant changes that took place during this time were, in large part, due to the influence of a handful of worship leaders who gained unprecedented prominence and name recognition. These include Darrell Evans (who started with the Vineyard, but eventually recorded with Hosanna); Dennis Jernigan (who refused to sign with any publisher, created his own publishing company, and in many ways pioneered the use of the independent label in praise and worship); and Kevin Prosch, David Ruis, Andy Park, and Brian Doerksen (all four of whom were part of Vineyard Music); and Graham Kendrick (who pioneered the March for Jesus and another new label, Kingsway Music).

Darrell Evans helped to start a new recording label for Integrity: Vertical Records. His background placed him in a unique position among worship leaders. Having originally been associated with the Vineyard, but later leading on a hit album with Hosanna, Evans was in a unique position to initiate change.

Darrell Evans started to bring songs together on a single album from both publishers. This and other similar efforts by other likeminded songwriters and producers began to reign in the more radical factions within the ranks of the praise and worship movement. The transition—from 2nd *Generation Contemporary: Restorational Praise & Worship Songs* (Charismatic) to 3rd *Generation Contemporary: Missional Worship Songs*—was in full swing.

A few examples of the transitional songs (2nd *Generation Contemporary* to 3rd *Generation Contemporary*):

“Lord I Lift Your Name on High” (Rick Founds, Maranatha, 1988); can be heard on Hosanna! Music’s “He is Faithful” with Paul Baloché, and on Maranatha Music’s “Hymns and Choruses I”

“He Is Exalted” (Twila Paris, Straight Way Music, 1988)

“Celebrate Jesus Celebrate” (Gary Oliver, Integrity, 1988); can be heard on “Celebrate Jesus” Alleluia Music, Integrity as well as WOW Worship Cyan

“Agnus Dei” (Michael W. Smith, Milene Music, Inc., 1990); can be heard on Michael W. Smith’s CD, “Worship”

“Refiner’s Fire” (Brian Doerksen, Mercy/Vineyard, 1990); can be heard on WOW Worship Blue and Vineyard’s CD “Refiner’s Fire” (*According to Vineyard Website, “Refiner’s Fire” has appeared on more Vineyard CD’s than any other song they’ve produced.*)

“Step by Step” (Rich Mullins BMG Songs, Reunion Records, 1991); can be heard on WOW Worship Yellow

“Let the River Flow” (Darrell Evans, Integrity’s Hosanna! 1991; Vineyard 1995); can be heard on WOW Worship Blue, and Live at Brownsville

“Let Your Glory Fall / Father of Creation” (David Ruis, Mercy/Vineyard, 1991); can be heard on “Songs of Renewal” and on Vineyard’s “Change My Heart Oh God” Vol. 2

“Arms of Love” (Craig Musseau, Mercy/Vineyard Publishing, 1991); can be heard on Vineyard’s “Change My Heart Oh God” Vol. 2, and “25 Top Vineyard Worship Songs”

“We Will Dance” (David Ruis, Vineyard Publishing, 1992); can be heard on Vineyard’s “Change My Heart Oh God” Vol. 2; also heard on Vineyard’s Touching the Father’s Heart,” “Glory and Honor,” “More Love, More Power,” and on Vineyard’s “Songs of Renewal,” and on WOW Worship Orange

“Awesome in This Place” (Dave Billington, Integrity’s Hosanna, 1992); can be heard on Integrity’s “The Secret Place” with Kent Henry

“I Believe in Jesus” (Marc Nelson, Integrity, 1992); can be heard on Integrity’s “Take the City” with Rusty Nelson

“Power of Your Love” (Geoff Bullock, Word Music, 1992); can be heard on Hillsongs’ “Shout to the Lord”

“Be Magnified, O Lord” (Lynn DeShazo, Integrity/Hosanna, 1992); can be heard on Integrity’s “Be Magnified” with Randy Rothwell

“Shout to the Lord” (Darlene Zschech, Hillsongs, 1993); can be heard on WOW Worship Blue as well as Integrity’s “Shout to the Lord 2000” and London Christian Media Production’s “I Believe the Promise” and on Hillsongs’ “Simply Worship” and on Integrity’s “Shout to the Lord”

“At the Cross” (Randy and Terry Butler, Mercy/Vineyard Publishing, 1993)

“Draw Me Close to You” (Kelly Carpenter, Mercy/Vineyard, 1994); can be heard on Vineyard’s “Change My Heart Oh God” Vol. 2.

“The River Is Here” (Andy Park, Mercy/Vineyard, 1994); can be heard on Vineyard’s Songs of Renewal, WOW Worship Blue and Vineyard’s “The River is Here”

“Sweet Wind” (David Ruis, Vineyard Publishing, 1994); can be heard on “Songs of Renewal” and Vineyard’s “More Love, More Power”

“True Love” (David Ruis, 1994); can be heard on “Winds of Worship Volume 3, Live from Toronto, Canada,” as well as on “Live Worship” (David Ruis)

“Firm Foundation” (Jamie Harvill & Nancy Gordon, Integrity’s Hosanna, 1994); can be heard on “Firm Foundation” (Hosanna!) with John Chisum

“Take My Life/Holiness” (Scott Underwood, Mercy/Vineyard, 1995); can be heard on Vineyard’s “More Love, More Power”

“Shout to the North” (Martin Smith, Curious? Music UK, 1995); can be heard on Worship Together’s “25 Modern Worship Songs for a New Generation” and “The road to ONE day.”

“Breathe” (Marie Barnett, Vineyard, 1995); can be heard on Vineyard’s “Hungry, Falling on my Knees”

“I Will Never Be the Same Again” (Geoff Bullock, Word Music, 1995); can be heard on Hillsongs’ “Shout to the Lord”

“I Give You My Heart” (Reuben Morgan, Hillsongs, Integrity, 1995); can be heard on Hillsongs’ “Simply Worship” and “God is in the House”

3rd Generation Contemporary: Missional Worship Songs

The annual number of new praise and worship recordings released into the market had grown exponentially by the mid-1990s, as had the number of independent publishers, new publishing companies, and new labels from the existing publishers. With an almost limitless well from which to draw, churches became a little less monolithic in the songs they selected for worship services.

But the surge of new songs was not just a result of greater productivity by zealous songwriters and producers. The public’s appetite for worship recordings was expanding, not only in the United States, but also globally.

From the inception of *1st Generation Contemporary: Modern Praise Songs*, praise and worship music was viewed as a *separate* category from CCM (Contemporary Christian Music). CCM dominated most of the airplay on Christian radio and became much stronger in the general market.

As several of the highly successful CCM artists took note of contemporary worship music's growing popularity, they began releasing worship recordings of their own. Albums such as "Third Day: Offerings" and Michael W. Smith's "Worship" broadened the awareness and the overall acceptance of worship music.

As selections from worship albums began getting more radio airplay, mega-hits emerged. Songs like "Here I am to Worship" and "I Can Only Imagine" became more widely recognizable than any of the songs released in the *1st* or *2nd* *Generations*. In some cases, worship music gained popularity on secular radio as well. These mega-hits created new standards in the Christian community; and as the use of worship hymns became normalized, the often-voiced accusation that all of the new songs were theologically "charismatic" began to fade.

With the new praise and worship mega-hits, individual songwriters gained popularity. Many of them became associated with large-venue worship conferences and events. One of these worship events—Passion—eventually organized Woodstock-style worship gatherings designed to attract university students. At these events many young men and women who attend mainline churches found themselves worshipping alongside friends who had grown up in non-denominational, independent, and charismatic churches.

Music from a new arrival on the publishing scene, Hillsongs Music, began releasing songs written in their Australian-based churches. Hillsongs Music factors prominently in the rise of *3rd Generation Contemporary: Missional Worship Songs*. Although the Hillsong Churches are part of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God movement, the songs do NOT share the hallmarks of songs from *2nd Generation Contemporary: Restorational Praise & Worship Songs* (Charismatic)—which focused on the physical expressions of worship and confession of the promises of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts and manifestations.

By contrast, The *3rd Generation Contemporary: Missional Worship Songs* focus on life in Christ, his atoning sacrifice, and our call to bring the message of Christ to the world. This is the primary characteristic of *3rd Generation Contemporary: Missional Worship Songs*. The content of the lyrics is drawn from beliefs that Christians share across denominational and non-denominational lines.

While some elements of *3rd Generation Contemporary: Missional Worship Songs* tend to cross multiple, diverse segments within church culture, other elements of *3rd Generation Contemporary* blur traditional ethnic distinctions as well. During the first two decades of contemporary praise and worship songs, Gospel and R&B (a rarely, if ever, found its way into mainstream praise and worship recordings.

Today, almost all multi-cultural congregations embrace Gospel-influenced praise and worship songs, and many predominantly Caucasian ones are embracing it as well. Gospel artists, whose audiences were once predominantly African-American and Pentecostal, write praise and worship hymns that incorporate and honor the combined heritage of R&B and mainstream praise and worship music.

A few examples of 3rd Generation Contemporary: Missional Worship Songs.

“Did You Feel the Mountains Tremble” (Martin Smith, Curious? Music UK, 1994)

“Yahweh” (Andy Park, Mercy/Vineyard Publishing, 1994); can be heard on Vineyard’s “Change My Heart Oh God” Vol. 2

“I Could Sing of Your Love Forever” (Martin Smith, Curious? Music UK, 1994); can be heard on Worship Together’s “25 Modern Worship Songs for a New Generation”

“Better is One Day” (Matt Redman, Thankyou Music, 1995)

“The Heart of Worship” (Matt Redman, Kingsway Thankyou Music, 1997; Higher Praise says the song is Public Domain); can be heard on “The Heart of Worship” and on WOW Worship Blue, Matt Redman Worship Leader

“Open the Eyes of My Heart” (Paul Baloche, from the album “First Love,” Integrity’s Hosanna Music, 1997); can be heard on Maranatha’s “Praise Band 10”; can also be heard on WOW Worship Blue with worship leader Paul Baloche and on Worship Together’s “25 Modern Worship Songs for a New Generation”

“Come Now is the Time to Worship” (Brian Doerksen, Vineyard Songs, 1998)

“Breath of God” (Butler & Rethmeier, Vineyard Songs, 1998); can be heard on Vineyard’s “Change My Heart, Oh God,” Vol. 3 and on “Live from the Nashville Vineyard”

“Lord Reign in Me” (Brenton Brown, Mercy/Vineyard, 1998); can be heard on Worship Together’s “25 Modern Worship Songs for a New Generation”

“Great in Power” (Russell Fragar, from “By Your Side,” Hillsongs, 1998)

“Hear Our Praises” (Reuben Morgan, Hillsongs, 1998); can be heard on Integrity’s “Shout to the Lord 2000”

“Trading My Sorrows” (Darrell Evans, Integrity’s Hosanna! Music, 1998); can be heard on Worship Together’s “25 Modern Worship Songs for a New Generation”

“We Fall Down” (Chris Tomlin, Meadowgreen Music, 1998); can be heard on Worship Together’s “25 Modern Worship Songs for a New Generation”

“My Redeemer Lives” (Reuben Morgen, Hillsongs Publishing, 1998)

“You Are My All in All” (Nichole Nordeman, from the Album “Girls of Grace,” Shepherd’s Heart Music, 1999); can be heard on WOW Worship Yellow

“You Are My King; Amazing Love” (Billy James Foote, New Song, 1999); can be heard on WOW Worship Yellow

“Freedom” (Mike Larson, Flood Songs, 1999); can be heard on the CD “Everything”

“Above All” (Lenny LeBlanc and Paul Baloche, Integrity’s Hosanna, 1999); can be heard on WOW Worship Cyan featuring Lenny Leblanc

“Be the Centre” (Michael Frye from “Hungry,” Vineyard, UK/Erie, 1999)

“Here I Am to Worship” (Tim Hughes, Kingsway’s Thankyou Music, 2000)

“God of Wonders” (Marc Byrd and Steve Hindalong, Storm Boy Music, 2000)

“Give Us Clean Hands” (Charlie Hall, Worshiptogether.com Songs, 2000); can be heard on WOW Red featuring Mark Schultz

“Hallelujah; Your Love Is Amazing” (Benton Brown and Brian Doerksen, Vineyard Songs, 2000); can be heard on WOW Red.

“I Can Only Imagine” (Bart Millard, Simpleville Music, 2001)

“You Are Good” (Israel Houghton, Integrity’s Praise! Music, 2001)

“Forever” (Chris Tomlin, Worshiptogether.com Songs, 2001); can be heard on WOW’s Yellow and the album “The Noise We Make”

“Famous One” (Chris Tomlin and Jesse Reeves, Worshiptogether.com Songs, 2002); can be heard on WOW Red and the album “Not To Us”

“Let My Words Be Few” (Matt Redman and Beth Redman, Thankyou Music, 2000); can be heard on WOW’s Red and the album “Let My Words be Few”

“The Wonderful Cross” (Isaac Watts, Nathan Nockels, Chris Tomlin, J.D. Walt and Jesse Reeves, Worshiptogether.com Songs, 2000); can be heard on WOW’s Yellow featuring both Chris Tomlin and Matt Redman and the album “The Wonderful Cross”

“Blessed Be Your Name” (Beth Redman and Matt Redman, Thankyou Music, 2002)

“Glory” (Reuben Morgan, Hillsongs, 2002); can be heard on Hillsongs “Hope”

“O Praise Him” (David Crowder, Worshiptogether.com Songs, 2003)

“Friend of God” (Israel Houghton, Vertical Worship Songs, 2003)

“How Great Is Our God” (Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, and Jesse Reeves, Worshiptogether.com Songs, 2004)

Should Mainline Churches Sing All Three Types of Praise Songs?

To avoid gradually shrinking in membership over the next decade—as young adults murmur, “that’s not my kind of music”—the congregation’s worship and music leaders must consciously decide to connect with the spiritual preferences of the young-adult age groups.

Music may not determine the people a church effectively reaches, but music choices will determine the people a church cannot reach. A church that sings *3rd Generation Contemporary: Missional Worship Songs* may still fail to reach age-14 to age-40 young adults. But a church that refuses to include the music that most effectively connects with people in that age group guarantees that it will see few of them in worship each week.

So, how is it possible to include both hymn types and all three generations of contemporary songs? **Consultants who visit numerous mainline Protestant congregations of various denominations across the country note the following patterns:**

- **Option #1:** About 50 percent of healthy, effective, mainline churches across the United States offer two kinds of worship services on Sunday morning. Often, this pattern involves a traditional service at 8:00 a.m. or 8:30 a.m. in which worshippers sing the *great classic hymns* and a few of the *old gospel hymns*, PLUS a 10:30 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. service in which worshippers sing from *at least two* of the three generations of contemporary praise songs noted above: *Modern, Restorational, and Missional*.
- **Option #2:** The other 50 percent of healthy, effective, mainline churches across the United States offer one type of Sunday morning service—repeated once, twice, or three times—that “blends” the *great classic hymns* and *at least two* of the three generations of *contemporary praise songs* noted above: *Modern, Restorational, and Missional*—so as to connect with all of the age-14 to age-40 young adults.

How do the Option #1 churches noted above blend the *great classic hymns* and *at least two of the three generations of contemporary praise songs* every weekend? Accomplishing this goal is built on the principle of showing *equal* respect for the spiritual needs of all age groups in the congregation. All of the age-14 to age-95 worshippers must (a) recognize this need to help people from every age group connect with God in worship and (b) stretch beyond their personal preferences in order to build a strong church for future generations. Three kinds of effective, mainline congregations show respect for the preferences of all age groups in three different ways:

- **Congregations with fewer than 150-200 people in average worship attendance** increase the likelihood of experiencing a positive future by providing one “blended” worship service—using Option #2 above.
- **About 50 percent of larger (200-1,000 or more average worship attendance) mainline congregations** offer two kinds of worship services on Sunday morning and sometimes a Saturday evening worship at 5:30 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. Often, this pattern involves a traditional service at 8:00 a.m. or 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, in which worshippers sing the *great classic hymns* and a few of the *old gospel hymns* and a 10:30 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. service in which worshippers sing songs from *at least two* of the three generations of *contemporary praise songs* noted above: *Modern, Restorational, and Missional*—using Option #1 above—and perhaps a Saturday evening worship at 5:30 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. that uses songs from *at least two* of the three generations of contemporary praise songs noted above.

- **The other 50 percent of larger (200-1,000 or more average attendance) mainline congregations** use a blended style in two, three, and sometimes four Sunday morning services—using Option #2 above—and perhaps a Saturday evening worship at 5:30 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. that uses songs from *at least two* of the three generations of contemporary praise songs noted above.

Many congregations that use a blended-service format unfold it in the following way every Sunday morning:

- To begin the service, sing eight-to-ten-minutes of three or four praise songs. Select these from *at least two* of the three generations of praise and worship songs *every week* and equally recognize *all three generations* in the course of a month. These songs meet the spiritual needs of young adults in the same way that the *old gospel hymns* met the spiritual needs of young adults between 1870 and 1935. In many congregations, a worship team of four-to-six youth or adults, in some instances using musical instruments, leads this opening section of worship.
- Follow those *contemporary praise songs* with informal announcements and include a brief time in which worshipers greet one another (more than 85 percent of United States congregations now incorporate this friendliness ritual in their worship services).
- The remaining forty-five minutes of the worship service use the two historic hymn preferences: one *old gospel hymn* (composed 1870 to 1935) and one *great classic hymn* (composed 1517 to 1870), such as “The Church’s One Foundation.”

To summarize this “blended” format, the service flows from (a) eight-to-ten minutes of *celebration* using *at least two* of the three generations of contemporary praise songs written since the mid-1900s, to (b) three-to-five *informal* minutes that include announcements, to (c) the more formal *meditative* time that includes *the old gospel hymns* and *the great classic hymns* during the remainder of the service, with hymns led by the chancel choir and music director. In other words, the overall “flow” of the service is from *contemporary* to *informal* to *traditional*. The parts of the service should unfold in the same progressive order each week, but the manner in which each part of the service is accomplished can differ. That variety increases inspiration and maintains attention-focus while reducing the possibility of boredom.

As you shift to a systematic, balance of multiple hymn types, print the following in the morning worship bulletin *every Sunday for at least six months*:

Our congregation strives to show *equal* respect for all five preferences in worship hymns and songs. Therefore, we select songs and hymns that are meaningful to every age group via a balanced music selection that consists of (a) the *great classic hymns* written 1520-1870, (b) *the old gospel hymns* written 1871-1935, and (c) the three generations of *contemporary praise songs* written in the 1960-1978 era, the 1978-1995 era, and the 1995 to today era.

Bottom line results of showing equal respect for all five hymn-type preferences: A larger percentage of church attendees experience a sense of coming into the presence of God in worship each week. At least 70 percent of church members with birth dates after 1945 (and many older adult members) find this style of worship more spiritually meaningful. Total worship attendance increases, the number of Christian conversions increase, and offerings increase. By focusing on transmitting the Christian faith to the next generation of adults (rather than clinging solely to historic worship hymns that meet the spiritual needs of fewer than 25 percent of worshipers), a congregation is far more likely to be healthy and strong over the next twenty-five years.

Internet Web Site Resources for Hymn and Song Selection

The following Internet sources are valuable to musicians, choir directors, and worship leaders in a variety of ways:

Christian Copyright Licensing Inc. (CCLI), Portland, Oregon, (www.ccli.com or 800/234-2446) has negotiated contracts with most of the music publishers. Churches can pay one yearly fee through CCLI and be free to use music from those publishers legally. CCLI has a massive legit (legal) database called Song Select. Its subscription service has various levels. *A basic subscription allows access to words and sample clips from the song (usually 30 sec. in length).*

The CCLI Web site has a searchable database that contains copyright information for specific songs. The charts page also has the most used songs from Hosanna and Vineyard; probably not as useful, but finding it all in one place is nice.

As part of its contract with user congregations, CCLI does quarterly sampling and, as a result, knows what songs are used during that time period. CCLI is so widely used by congregations that its count is probably an accurate representation of what songs people are actually singing. To obtain CCLI's current list of the top twenty-five most popular contemporary songs used in churches across the United States—updated every six months—go to the www.ccli.com/WorshipResources/Top25.cfm Web site.

Praise and Worship Archive (www.pwarchive.com) has a fairly comprehensive catalog of songs and chords. It is user driven, and people upload songs with the chord charts they use. Under the “Resources” section, www.pwarchive.com shows links to various other online resources, but the site does not provide sample sound files.

Many of the publishers (including Hosanna) have exercised their legal rights and asked www.pwarchive.com to remove the song words from all the songs drawn from their catalogs. In these cases, only the title, author, copyright information, and chord sequence for the song are included. Other publishers have allowed the words to be included.

The Web site www.worshipmusic.com is an online store that sells CDs, printed music, and other resources related to praise and worship. They have the most comprehensive collection of legal sound clips (but no lyrics).

The Web site www.angelfire.com/nj4/charts/ lists (a) 1950-1999 songs in rough chronological order and (b) samples of the different music categories, along with general information about individual writers and publishers. Note: The Web site is a bit awkward to navigate, and some of the copyright dates are off by a year or two.