

Reformation and Music

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Abstract

This article explores the impact of the Reformation and the post-Reformation era on the Christian understanding of music, as well as the historical development of music. The article begins with Martin Luther's unique contribution to the theology of music. The second section deals with John Calvin's complementary theology of music. The third section shows that some Lutheran post-Reformation theologians have developed their thoughts not only from the central tenets of Luther's theology of music but also from those of Calvin. The final section shows the relevance of reformational and post-reformational theologies of music to contemporary issues in worship. In conclusion, an eclectic and principled ecumenical understanding of those various theologies of music can help to challenge in a sensitive way the current shortage of high-quality music our contemporary context.

The sixteenth-century Reformation was a reformation not only of the church but also of music and the arts. Both Martin Luther and John Calvin knew the special power of music. Even Ulrich Zwingli, who banned music from the church, based his decision on his knowledge on the power of music (which he believed could distract worshipers from the Word of God). The Reformers agreed on the issue of justification but disagreed on music. Paul Westermeyer titles a chapter of his book *Te Deum* "Sound, Silence, and Strictures" to summarize the different views of music held by Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, ascribing

the influence on some later Lutheran Pietist communities to Zwingli.¹ The post-Reformation internal debates within Lutheran communities concerning church music were due to the increasing polemical confessionalization in both Lutheranism and Reformed communions. The unintended effect of this confessionalization was Zwingli's and Calvin's influence on some post-Reformation Pietists.

The Reformers' views of music were characterized by a break away from the medieval theology of music based on the Pythagorean theory of music to a modern humanistic ontology that interprets music as a means of rhetoric.² Music, which had belonged previously to the Quadrivium (along with geometry, arithmetic, and astronomy), thus slipped into the Trivium (rhetoric, grammar, and dialectic) in the Renaissance. This shift had implications for the Reformers' theology of music. The Reformers had to make a theological evaluation of music in relation to the Word of God. Both Luther and Calvin explain the relationship between music and the Word. The Reformers' theology of music can also be examined from the aesthetic perspective. Miikka Anttila freshly examines Luther's theology of music from the viewpoint of pleasure, showing simplicity, freedom, pleasantness, and joy as the aesthetic criteria in Luther's theology of music.³ He has shown that Luther not only develops a theology of music but also thinks musically and aesthetically in his theology.

I. Luther and Music

Luther's high esteem for music is attested in his famous claim that "next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise."⁴ In what sense does Luther place music next to God's Word? Anttila relates Luther's high praise of music as the greatest gift of God (*optimum Dei donum*) to his notion of *gift* as an essential concept in his theology: music is the greatest gift of God because, first, it is given to us by God, and secondly, with that gift we praise God in return.⁵

¹ Paul Westermeyer, *Tē Deum: The Church and Music* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 141–60.

² Cf. Oskar Söhnngen, "Die Musikanschauungen der Reformatoren und die Überwindung der mittelalterlichen Musiktheologie," in Musikwissenschaftliches Institut (Humboldt-Universität, Berlin), ed., *Musa, mens, musici: Im Gedanken an Wälther Vetter* (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1969), 52.

³ Cf. Miikka E. Anttila, *Luther's Theology of Music: Spiritual Beauty and Pleasure* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 173–94.

⁴ Martin Luther, "Liturgy and Hymns," in *Luther's Works* (Saint Louis: Concordia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958–1986 [henceforth *LW*]), 53:323.

⁵ Cf. Anttila, *Luther's Theology*, 76–81, 84. Anttila takes up the idea of reciprocity in Luther's notion of *gift*, such as discovered by Risto Saarinen, Wolfgang Simon, and Bo Kristian Holm.

In order to understand what Luther means, we need to read Luther's following description on music: "She is a mistress and governess of those human emotions," the most effective means that one can find "to comfort the sad, to terrify the happy, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate, or to appease those full of hate."⁶ Luther understands the emotions, inclinations, and affections as the masters of the human heart, for they drive human beings into either evil or good. Music is next to the Word of God because, like the Word of God, it can be used by the Holy Spirit as a means to govern human affections. In this context, Luther views human affections as something untamed and carnal that need to be controlled and moderated: the sad should be comforted; the happy should be terrified. Luther sees the danger of sinful human affections when they overwhelm and move the human heart in the wrong direction.

In his *Preface to the Psalter*, Luther compares the human heart to a ship driven by storms into various affections like fear, worry, grief, and sadness, but also hope, happiness, security, and joy. Different situations produce different affections:

He who is stuck in fear and need speaks of misfortune quite differently from him who floats on joy; and he who floats on joy speaks and sings of joy quite differently from him who is stuck in fear.⁷

Such earnest speaking is the greatest thing in the Psalter, for it contains different affections that are expressed in different songs. Congregants should adjust their affections in accord with the affection of the psalm. For Luther, the Psalter is "a kind of school and exercise for the disposition of the heart" (*Psalterium affectuum quaedam palaestra et exercitium*).⁸ In this context, Luther wants to emphasize the importance of singing with the spirit as taught by Paul (cf. 1 Cor 14:15) and so has introduced the "transition from the intellectual to the affective dealing with the Psalter."⁹

Music has a special function in the proclamation of the Word of God, for through music the Word of God is sounded. Luther is convinced that God's Word should not stay in its written form but instead be preached. He goes even so far as to give a theological justification, though rather unconvincingly, for his preference for the oral proclamation of the word.¹⁰ Luther includes

⁶ Luther, "Liturgy and Hymns," 323.

⁷ Martin Luther, "Word and Sacrament I," *LW* 35:255.

⁸ Martin Luther, "Selected Psalms III," *LW* 14:310.

⁹ Günter Bader, *Psalterium affectuum palaestra: Prolegomena zu einer Theologie des Psalters*, HUT 33 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 44.

¹⁰ "It does not suffice in the church that books are written and read, but it is necessary, that these are spoken and heard. Therefore, Christ has written nothing but spoken everything; the

the sonority (*Stimmlichkeit*) of any word in his understanding of the essential nature of that word.¹¹ As an implication of this concept, liturgical music is viewed as highly as the sermon, for both are proclamation of God's Word. Therefore, both preachers and teachers should be musically literate. Luther comments,

I have always loved music; whoso has skill in this art, is of a good temperament, fitted for all things. We must teach music in schools; a schoolmaster ought to have skill in music or I should reject him; neither should we ordain young men as preachers unless they have been well exercised in music.¹²

Music is an essential element in good education, for it can function as a prevention of many sinful activities. Along with gymnastics, music belongs to noble exercises that can help humans not to fall into debauchery, drunkenness, lust, and gambling.¹³ Good musical education will help to sanctify our aesthetic taste and appetite.

Not only does Luther comment on the importance of music, he himself was a composer. Judged by modern criteria, Luther cannot be regarded as a first-rate composer, for he reuses too many existing melodies by adapting them into his own compositions. However, as Robin Leaver has rightly pointed out, such an evaluation does not do justice to the concept of composition in Luther's age.¹⁴ Luther spreads the ideas of the Reformation not only through his sermons but also through his chorales, for through both the *viva vox evangelii* is heard.

apostles have written little but spoken very much. ... Because the office of the New Testament is not put into stone and dead panels but put for the sound of the lively voice. ... By the living word God completes and fulfills the Gospel. Therefore more speakers than good authors must be the aim of the church. In this sense Paul also writes to the Galatians: 'I wanted, that I could be present with you now and change my voice' [Gal 4:20], because much can be negotiated more effectively with the voice, which cannot succeed with writings" (*D. Martin Luthers Werke* [Weimar: Bohlaus, 1883–1993], 5:537, 10–25 [1519–21]). Michael Heymel points out that for Luther, the character of the proclamation of the gospel is heightened through the living and free human voice (cf. Michael Heymel, *In der Nacht ist sein Lied bei mir: Seelsorge und Musik* [Waltrop: Hartmut Spenner, 2004], 97–98).

¹¹ Cf. Billy Kristanto, "Musical Settings of Psalm 51 in Germany c. 1600–1750 in the Perspectives of Reformational Music Aesthetics" (PhD diss., Heidelberg University, 2009), 19–20.

¹² Martin Luther, *The Table-Talk of Martin Luther*, ed. William Hazlett (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publishing House, n.d.), 416, quoted in Robert E. Webber, *Music and the Arts in Christian Worship* (Nashville: Star Song Publishing Group, 1994), 258.

¹³ Cf. Martin Luther, "Table Talk," *LW* 54:206.

¹⁴ Cf. Robin Leaver, "Luther as Composer," *Lutheran Quarterly* 22 (2008): 394–95.

II. *Calvin and Music*

Compared to Luther, Calvin is frequently held responsible for a more skeptical view of music in the Reformed tradition. This is not entirely wrong, but the Genevan Reformer contributed some thoughts that in turn would enrich the theology of music in the post-Reformation era. In the last edition of his *Institutes*, Calvin discusses church singing in the context of common prayer in public worship. The first important principle is that voice and song must “spring from deep feeling of heart” if they are to have any value or benefit.¹⁵ Conversely, church singing “has the greatest value in kindling our hearts to a true zeal and eagerness to pray.”¹⁶ Thus, church singing must both come from the heart and kindle the heart. Only singing from the heart can kindle the hearts of our fellow human beings. While Luther sees the function of music as moderating (carnal) human affections, Calvin understands it as kindling (holy) human affections. For Calvin, church singing can serve as a remedy to cure lukewarmness in Christian life.

Following Augustine, Calvin reminds us of the danger of being more attentive to the melody than to the content of the words. Charles Garside rightly points out that “this moderation” spoken of by Calvin refers to Augustine’s preference to the words over the melody.¹⁷ Like Augustine, Calvin also condemns church music composed merely for sensory enjoyment. This is not to say that Calvin rejects enjoyment in itself. He clearly differentiates himself from Augustine when he writes that God’s gifts are meant “not only to provide for necessity but also for delight.”¹⁸ Calvin’s warning about sensory enjoyment should be understood within the context of his emphasis on the importance of understanding. Paul writes to the Corinthians, “I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also” (1 Cor 14:15). Faithful to Paul, Calvin believes that there will be no edification when there is no understanding. Mere enjoyment of music alone without the understanding of the words leaves the congregation unedified.

Unlike Luther, Calvin does not view music as having a special function in conveying the Word of God, and he does not develop the concept of the sonority of the word. Music is always the handmaiden of the word, never

¹⁵ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 3.20.31.

¹⁶ Calvin, *Institutes* 3.20.32.

¹⁷ Calvin, *Institutes* 3.20.32; cf. Charles Garside, *The Origins of Calvin’s Theology of Music*, 1536–1543, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 69.4 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1979), 21; cf. Augustine, *Confessions* 10.33.50 (PL 32:800; trans. LCC 7:230–31).

¹⁸ Calvin, *Institutes* 3.3.2.

vice versa. In this context, it is just one of many means that can be used by the Holy Spirit. This is clear from a comparison between Luther's interpretation of 1 Samuel 16:14–23 and Calvin's. Whereas for Luther, it is not a coincidence that God has used the power of music to heal Saul, for through music the Word of God becomes *verba vocalia*, sounding word, for Calvin, the most important agent in Saul's healing is the Holy Spirit: God could have used means other than music to heal Saul had he so desired. One should not ascribe the healing of Saul to the natural power of music, which can liberate Saul from his depression only "for a short time."¹⁹

With regard to undifferentiated accommodation of secular music in the church, Calvin warns,

There must always be concern that the song be neither light nor frivolous, but have gravity and majesty, as Saint Augustine says. And thus there is a great difference between the music which one makes to entertain people at table and in their homes, and the psalms which are sung in the church in the presence of God and his angels.²⁰

Though Calvin does not give formal criteria for "gravity and majesty," he at least affirms the old Augustinian emphasis on devotion to God. Music that merely entertains humans cannot be used in the church. Calvin's differentiation between church music and entertainment music is not unique to him. The Council of Trent also warns about secular actions that should be avoided during the Mass.²¹ Calvin certainly cannot be held responsible for the secularization of music in later centuries.²²

Regarding musical instruments, Calvin teaches that they belong to the old dispensation, to the ceremonial law terminated by the appearance of Christ in the New Testament.²³ In his later commentary on Daniel, Calvin acknowledges that the use of musical instruments is "customary in the Church even by God's command."²⁴ There is a difference, however, between the intention of the Jews and that of the Chaldeans. For the Jews, God uses musical instruments to arouse them from sluggishness to worship with

¹⁹ Söhngen, "Musikanschauungen," 56.

²⁰ John Calvin, "Foreword [or Preface] to the Psalter," trans. Charles Garside, in Elsie Anne McKee, ed., *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist, 2001), 94.

²¹ Cf. *The Council of Trent*, Session XXII, ix.

²² Cf. Jan Smelik, "Die Theologie der Musik bei Johannes Calvin," in E. Grunewald, H. P. Jürgens, and J. R. Luth, eds., *Der Genfer Psalter und seine Rezeption in Deutschland, der Schweiz und den Niederlanden* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2004), 76.

²³ Cf. John Calvin's *Commentary* on Psalm 92:3.

²⁴ John Calvin's *Commentary* on Daniel 3:6–7 (John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*, trans. Thomas Myers [Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1852], 1:212).

greater fervor. For the Chaldeans, musical instruments belong to their idol worship. Calvin views the use of musical instruments as divine accommodation to childish and weak people. The ideal worship of mature Christians needs no musical instruments.

One might well question whether Calvin's biblical exegesis that places music as belonging to the ceremonial laws of the old dispensation is sound. Sound or not, Calvin's view on musical instruments has highly influenced Reformed tradition in the worship practice handed down in the so-called regulative principle of worship.²⁵ Needless to say, Calvin's view on musical instruments is strongly marked by his reaction against the Roman Catholic worship of his age. One needs to complement such a contextual view with different questions and needs that arise in the later post-Reformation era.

III. *The Post-Reformation Era and Music*

The post-Reformation theology of music in Germany is characterized by diversity and polemics over the influence of contemporary music style on church music. Important voices such as those of Müller, Großgebauer, Mithobius, Gerber, and Spener have shaped the post-Reformation theology of music. Whereas Calvin struggled against Roman Catholicism, post-Reformation German theologians faced different problems.

Heinrich Müller (1631–1675), whose theological writings can be found in Johann Sebastian Bach's theological library, is one of the most important forerunners of German Pietism. Though Joyce Irwin has described his theology as "individualistic mysticism" that moves away from both Luther and Lutheran orthodoxy,²⁶ Müller has arguably integrated Luther's and Calvin's thought in his theology of music. Echoing Luther, Müller highlights the importance of being sensitive to the various affections of different songs. The mouth should follow the mind, which is moved by either joy or sadness. People sing foolishly when they sing joyful songs in sorrowful times or laments in joyful times.²⁷

²⁵ For discussions on the regulative principle, see John Frame, "Some Questions about the Regulative Principle," *Westminster Theological Journal* 54.2 (1992): 357–66; T. David Gordon, "Some Answers about the Regulative Principle," *Westminster Theological Journal* 55.2 (1993): 321–29.

²⁶ Joyce L. Irwin, *Neither Voice nor Heart Alone: German Lutheran Theology of Music in the Age of the Baroque* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993) 76–77.

²⁷ Cf. Heinrich Müller, *Geistliche Seelenmusik: Bestehend In zehen Betrachtungen und vier hundert auserlesenen Geist- und Krafft-reichen, so wol alten, als neuen Gesängen* (Rostock: Richel, 1659), 112.

The reason for this sensitivity to context is Müller's basic principle that singing must primarily proceed from the heart and not vice versa. This is not to say, however, that Müller rejects the value of public church singing, for a fellow worshiper can be aroused and edified by the words that are sung full of spirit by those who sing with understanding.²⁸ Here Müller's thought echoes Calvin's emphasis on the involvement of heart and mind in church singing. Still under the shadow of Calvin, Müller views music as one of many possible means to arouse the human heart. The real agent who moves the heart is the Holy Spirit, who can use other means besides music.²⁹ Music has no exceptional value in God's workings; it is not necessarily next to the Word of God.

Following his Rostock colleague Müller, Theophilus Großgebauer (1627–1661) sees himself as a watchman who sounds the alarm concerning the devastated state of the church. He reacts against the form of Sunday worship that focuses exclusively on the sermon and disregards the singing of hymns,³⁰ and he laments the condition of church music that has been influenced by the new Italian music style:

Oh, the miserable condition! What is happening? After the Reformation the community of Christ did indeed achieve her freedom from the Babylonian Captivity to the extent that she is allowed to sing some German psalms and to hear the prophecies and psalms in her mother tongue. ... And just as the world now is not serious but frivolous and has lost the old quiet devotion, so songs have been sent to us in Germany from Italy in which the biblical texts are torn apart and chopped up into little pieces through swift runs of the throat; those are the warblers (Amos 6:5) who can stretch and break the voice like singing birds. ... There the organist sits, plays, and shows his art; in order that the art of one person be shown, the whole congregation of Jesus Christ is supposed to sit and hear the sound of pipes. This makes the congregation drowsy and lazy: some sleep; some gossip; some look where it isn't fitting; some would like to read but can't because they haven't learned how. But they could be well instructed by the spiritual songs of the congregation, which Paul exhorts.³¹

The issue is not merely a conservative versus progressive stance towards the new style; rather, it is primarily about the insistence on the old principle of Reformation, namely the participation of the whole congregation in public worship, without which the church would return to the Babylonian Captivity. Like Müller, Großgebauer echoes Calvin's thought in his warning about frivolous music without devotion.

²⁸ Cf. Müller, *Geistliche Seelenmusik*, 113, 147.

²⁹ Cf. Irwin, *Neither Voice nor Heart*, 75–76.

³⁰ Cf. Theophilus Großgebauer, *Drey Geistreiche Schriften: 1. Wächterstimme. Aus dem verwüsteten Zion*. ... (Frankfurt and Leipzig: Wilde, 1710), 189.

³¹ Großgebauer, *Wächterstimme*, 208–9, quoted in Irwin, *Neither Voice nor Heart*, 84–85.

Großgebauer's *Wächterstimme* is countered by *Psalmodia Christiana*, published by Hector Mithobius (1621–1681), who represents the orthodox Lutheran theology of music. Mithobius shares Großgebauer's and Calvin's concerns when he laments on the condition of the majority of the congregation who sing without their hearts and without contemplating "what is being sung."³² Unlike Calvin, however, Mithobius advocates the continuity between the Jewish music of the old covenant (with many musical instruments) and the Christian music of the new covenant.³³ He is a passionate advocate of contemporary figural music. Yet this is not to say that he accommodates all kind of worldly styles of music. He rejects "the wanton, frivolous, confused and overly ornate manner of singing and playing ... as if one were in a pleasure house or worldly gambling house."³⁴ Again, one hears Calvin's distinction between religious and secular music here.

Later on, Christian Gerber (1660–1731) defends Großgebauer's voice in his book titled *The Unrecognized Sins of the World*. Echoing Großgebauer, Gerber attacks the contemporary Italian music style that only entertains the ear and whereby the text is chopped up "in pieces and mutilated."³⁵ Gerber also echoes Calvin when he warns, "God looks not at the external but at the internal; and where the internal is deficient the external is an abomination to him."³⁶

The issue of contemporary figural music is followed up by the father of Pietism, Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705). Spener reports the state of worship practice in his age, where the minds of the simple congregation is distracted by the complex figural music.³⁷ He, therefore, suggests fixed hours aside from Sunday worship for people who want to listen to that figural music. Pietism has contributed, perhaps unconsciously, to the liberation of

³² Hector Mithobius, *Psalmodia christiana ... Das ist, gründliche Gewissens-Belehrung, was von der Christen Musica, so wol Vocali als Instrumentali zu halten?* (Jena: Berger, 1665), 162.

³³ Konrad Ameln has pointed out the uniqueness of the copperplate of *Psalmodia Christiana* in his article "Himmlische und irdische Musik," *Neues musikwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch 2* (1993): 57–59.

³⁴ Mithobius, *Psalmodia Christiana*, 269–70, quoted in Irwin, *Neither Voice nor Heart*, 96.

³⁵ Christian Gerber, *Die unerkannten Sünden der Welt, aus Gottes Wort, zu Beförderung des wahren Christenthums, der Welt vor Augen gestellt, und in achtzehn Capitel deutlich abgefasst*, vol. 1, chapter 81, quoted in Joseph Herl, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism: Choir, Congregation, and Three Centuries of Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 203.

³⁶ Gerber, *Die unerkannten Sünden*, quoted in Herl, *Worship Wars*, 203.

³⁷ "Unkundig der Klänge und dessen, was bei ihrem Hören ein hierin erfahreneres Gemüt erfreut, hören sie [=die Mehrzahl der Einfältigeren] kaum zu, lassen vielmehr ihre Gedanken ziellos abschweifen, um sie hernach mit Mühe zur Ordnung zurückzurufen" (quoted in Karl Dienst, "Georg Philipp Telemann in Frankfurt am Main: Das gottesdienstlich-liturgische Umfeld," in Peter Cahn, ed., *Telemann in Frankfurt*, Beiträge zur mittelrheinischen Musikgeschichte 35 [Mainz: Schott, 2000], 36); see also Kristanto, *Musical Settings*, 45–46.

sacred music from use exclusively in the worship service. While Calvin has warned about the danger of bringing secular music into the church, Pietism has helped introduce religious music to the concert hall.

IV. Contemporary Relevance

Both Luther and Calvin knew how to treasure the unique relation between music and human affections. Of course, music is not the only thing related to affections. Ignoring the power of music in influencing human affections, however, is a disadvantage for the church. Contemporary churches suffer from both the idolatry of human emotions and from lukewarmness. Firstly, our contemporary society worships human emotions, and so Luther's understanding of music as a mistress and governess of human affections is still relevant. Compared to the more deeply seated affections, emotions are superficial. This is not to say that emotions cannot be good in themselves, but when one looks at the transformation of the human soul in the book of Psalms, one notices that it happens not on the emotional but on the affective level. Psalms were not exercises for the fine-tuning of human emotions but, as Luther says, a transformation from carnal to holy affections.

Secondly, on the other side, we have the leftovers of a defective modern orthodoxy, with its "sound" theological formulations, that fails to touch the emotions and thus to spark holy fire and zeal for the kingdom of God. Calvin appealed to music as a remedy for lukewarmness and dullness. Music can be used to arouse the human heart to praise God. He emphasized the importance not only of understanding but also of affections. Though the description of the Reformed tradition as being cold, one-sidedly rational, and suspicious of affections should be regarded as inauthentic if not caricatural, Calvin never overestimated the role of music in worship. Music is just one of many means that can be used by the Holy Spirit. Nowadays, some Christians depend too much on music to attract church attendants by introducing undifferentiated contemporary Christian music as if music were the most important factor in stimulating church growth. Calvin, to the contrary, would say that church growth is a product of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Calvin's distinction between entertainment music at the table and psalms in the church is still very relevant to our contemporary situation. At the end of his article on the distinction between religious and secular music, Frank Brown rightly states, "One cannot conclude ... that there is no difference between religious music and secular, or that the church should simply

embrace every kind of secular style of music in a welcoming spirit.”³⁸ Undifferentiated adoption of all kinds of contemporary style in the church is unacceptable. Of course, the variety of music styles in our times has become much more complex than in Calvin’s time. For that very reason, “the ability to distinguish between spirits” (1 Cor 12:10) is needed now more than ever. Along with Augustine, Calvin emphasized the importance of devotion in worship. Congregational songs should be sung *coram Deo*. Singing in the presence of God and his angels—that is, the mystical elevation of the believers into the heavenly communion of saints—is of much higher importance than insisting on an entertaining music style.

Another issue that can arise in our contemporary worship is the insensitive or one-sided choice of songs. The congregation comes with different moods and affections. It is always good to have different kinds of songs in public worship: joyful and mourning, celebrative and contemplative, complex and simple, and so on. Müller reminded us of foolish singing, that is, when a mournful person sings a joyful song or vice versa. Church services with one-sided affection create a one-sided congregation. Müller also emphasized the importance of singing with understanding and fullness of spirit so that those who hear can be aroused by the words that come out of the heart.³⁹

On the one side, we have the problem of overestimating music in worship; on the other, we have the problem of underestimating singing in worship by focusing exclusively on the sermon, as Großgebauer pointed out. It should be noted that the Reformers taught *sola Scriptura* instead of *sola sermone*s. From a Lutheran perspective, hymn singing too is a proclamation of the Word. From a Calvinist perspective, the *sola Scriptura* principle includes singing a hymn that has the Word of God as its content. Exclusive focus on the sermon was neither Luther’s nor Calvin’s original teaching. Großgebauer also reminds us of the danger of elitism, the use of music too complex for a simple-minded congregation. The result is the lack of participation in worship: the congregation comes to watch and becomes mere spectators. Unparticipative worship does not just happen because of complex music but can also be the result of entertaining music that leaves the congregation inactive. For Großgebauer, frivolous music leads to the loss of quiet devotion in worship.

Mithobius concurred with Großgebauer and Calvin when it comes to singing with the heart and with the contemplation of the words. Yet he

³⁸ Frank Burch Brown, “Religious Music and Secular Music: A Calvinist Perspective, Re-formed,” *Theology Today* 60 (2006): 21.

³⁹ Cf. note 28 above.

rightly corrected the Calvinist tradition with his idea of the continuity from the old to the new covenant, a thoroughly Calvinistic idea. Contrasting the old covenant (with its use of musical instruments) to the new covenant (with no musical instruments) ironically corresponds more with the Lutheran dialectic of law and gospel than with Reformed theology that generally insists on the continuity of the two covenants. Even Theodore Beza at the Mömpelgard Colloquium humbly acknowledged the use of musical instruments in worship as an *adiaphoron*.⁴⁰ Those who share the regulative principle should seriously consider Beza's authoritative voice. To oblige either the eschewal or the use of musical instruments in worship is unacceptable. Calvin has taught that the most important thing is to sing from the heart in the presence of God and his angels.

Finally, instead of absorbing every style of secular music into the church, Protestant Christianity should introduce sacred music to the public space, as Spener suggested.⁴¹ Spener's call to a moderate length of church singing is highly relevant for many contemporary Sunday services. The church is not a concert hall. Her main "calling" is not to promote good music, let alone to entertain people with music, but to be a house of worship and prayer. Liturgical music should not distract the congregation from worshipful devotion but rather advance it. Richness and diversity of beautiful music can be accommodated, developed, and taught beyond the church as a part of the cultural mandate.

Conclusion

Irwin concludes that the union of sacred and secular music in eighteenth-century Germany is not to be found in the Lutheran tradition before Bach, being a result "not of Luther's doctrine of vocation but of musicians' assertiveness over against the dominance of the clergy."⁴² Thus, the distinction between sacred and secular music was common not only in the Reformed but also in the Lutheran tradition, at least before the eighteenth century.

⁴⁰ Beza argues, against the Lutheran Jacob Andreae, that instrumental music does not move the hearts to God because it has no text that can be understood. Unlike the regulative principle, however, Beza clearly states that the use of musical instruments belongs to the *adiaphora*: "Therefore we also confess and do not deny that such instruments of music (*adiaphora*) are neither forbidden or commanded by God," quoted in Herl, *Worship Wars*, 197.

⁴¹ In the nineteenth century, Kuyper came to a similar conclusion, that arts should be liberated from "sacerdotal and political guardianship" in order to be able to maintain the sovereignty of their sphere (cf. Abraham Kuyper, *Calvinism: Six Lectures Delivered in the Theological Seminary at Princeton* [New York: Revell, 1899], 196).

⁴² Irwin, *Neither Voice nor Heart*, 151.

Even though since Bach, sacred and secular music seems to be the same, one should not forget that secular music at that time arose from Christian aesthetic principles. Pérotin, Machaut, Palestrina, Gabrieli, Schütz, Buxtehude, and Bach himself were church musicians. The secular music of our time originates from a totally different, nonbiblical worldview. Luther borrowed from secular tunes in his hymns, but it does not therefore necessarily follow that baptizing every kind of contemporary secular music style for use as worship music is justifiable.

Just as sound contemporary Christian theology should have its root in Christian theological tradition, so should contemporary Christian music be rooted in the tradition of Christian sacred music rather than in the secular style of its time with no reference to the tradition. By default, contemporary Christians are contemporary. There is no need to become contemporary, for we already are. Our calling is to cultivate every sphere, music included, based on a Christian worldview.

Reformational theologies of music have reminded us of the old Augustinian principle of the subservient role of music to the word. Good content needs a good container. Jesus said, “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins” (Mark 2:22). Undifferentiated embrace of all kinds of containers is not faithful to Jesus’s teaching.

Despite the polemics between Lutheran and Calvinist traditions concerning the role of instrumental music in worship, both agree on the particular function of music in worship. For Luther, church singing is proclaiming the Word of God. The Lutheran Praetorius writes on the indissoluble connection between speech or sermon (*concio*) and song (*cantio*). For him, both occupations are needed for the complete perfection of church liturgy.⁴³ Through *concio* comes the knowledge of God, through *cantio* the praise of God. Praetorius reminds us of the importance of the idea of reciprocity in the Lutheran understanding of God’s gift.

For Calvin, church singing must arise from the depth of the heart. He sharply distinguished true inward worship from outward hypocrisy. Perhaps he was too critical of Roman Catholic worship—his attitude certainly influenced his view of musical instruments—but his concern found favorable echoes in the writings of some Lutheran Pietists. An eclectic and sound ecumenical view of various reformational theologies of music proves to be a fruitful starting point for engaging in our contemporary situation.

⁴³ Michael David Fleming, “Michael Praetorius, Music Historian: An Annotated Translation of *Syntagma Musicum I*, Part I” (PhD diss., Washington University, 1979), 4.