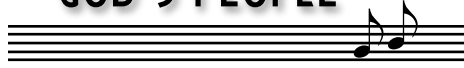


MUSICAL
MANIFESTATION
AMONG
GOD'S PEOPLE





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AMONG
GOD'S PEOPLE**

J. Giner



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Contents

Introduction 7

It is of divine origin 9

Its benefits 23

1. It is an educational means23
2. It helps us to overcome discouragement, depression, sadness and temptation.....25
3. It is a way of reaching souls29

4.	It is a means to have communion with God	33
	A powerful weapon against evil	34
	What kind of music should be used?	41
	Singing for the glory of God	43
a)	Cheerful and appropriate for the occasion	44
b)	Musical instruments may be used	45
b)	No shouting or jangling.....	49
c)	Clear and soft tones.....	49
d)	Correct pronunciation.....	50
e)	No theatrical acts	50



Introduction

If we made a worldwide inquiry to find out what is the pastime or hobby that people like the most, without a doubt, the result would be music, both instrumental and vocal. Music was and is to be found in all cultures; it is something inherent to man. It is heard everywhere, at all times of the day; in hospitals, in public transportation, in prisons, during political meetings and sports events, in the big department stores, in the

doctor's waiting-room, in small workshops and in the big enterprises, in restaurants, colleges, popular celebrations, funerals, homes and even in church.

Music is part of our life, we could say it is an innate need in man; many aspects of man's existence could not be conceived without music. Have we ever thought what would our services be like if music were not played in them, or how would a wedding ceremony be like without music? What about a social gathering without joyful songs? It would not be the same! As the well-known Spanish writer Concepción Arenal says, "*Music is a voice that finds an echo in every soul and it seems to be an echo of all voices.*"

1

*It is of
divine origin*

Music is a gift from heaven. The Spirit of Prophecy says it is of “heavenly origin”. *“Music is of heavenly origin. There is great power in music. It was music from the angelic throng that thrilled the hearts of the shepherds on Bethlehem’s plains and swept round the world. It is in music that our praises rise to Him who is the embodiment of purity and harmony. It is with music*

and songs of victory that the redeemed shall finally enter upon the immortal reward.

“There is something peculiarly sacred in the human voice. Its harmony and its subdued and heaven-inspired pathos exceeds every musical instrument. Vocal music is one of God’s gifts to men, an instrument that cannot be surpassed or equaled when God’s love abounds in the soul. Singing with the spirit and the understanding also is a great addition to devotional services in the house of God.” (3SM 335).

It is obvious that since the origin of music is found in God, He also rejoices over His people with singing of such a beauty that humans will not be able to perceive until they are in heaven (Zeph. 3:17). *“We learn from the Word that there is joy among the angels of heaven over one repentant sinner and that the Lord rejoices over His church with singing.” (ML 238).*

The angels also praise the Lord with singing and instrumental music

and sometimes their voice has been heard upon the earth (Luke 2:8-15): *“Music forms a part of God’s worship in the courts above.”* (Ev, 507). *“Cherubim and seraphim, and the unnumbered hosts of all the unfallen worlds, sang anthems of praise to God and the Lamb when this triumph was assured. They rejoiced that the way of salvation had been opened to the fallen race and that the earth would be redeemed from the curse of sin. How much more should those rejoice who are the objects of such amazing love!”* (MB, 104). There will be special music and singing when the redeemed of all times will return to the heavenly home, *“In that day the redeemed will shine forth in the glory of the Father and the Son. The angels, touching their golden harps, will welcome the King and His trophies of victory--those who have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. A song of triumph shall peal forth, filling all heaven. Christ has conquered. He enters the heavenly courts, accompanied by*

His redeemed ones, the witnesses that His mission of suffering and sacrifice has not been in vain.” (AH, 550). And the 144,000 will sing their experiences on the sea of glass. (Rev. 14:1-3).

Music, in all its forms, vocal, instrumental, religious, profane, beneficial, harmful is present in the Bible from the beginning to the end. We can also find a precedent that proves that music existed before God created the world, even before the existence of sin. In Ezekiel 28:12,13, we read the following, *“Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone [was] thy covering,... the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.”*

This is the story of the creation of Lucifer, the angel that later on rebelled against God. Before evil was introduced in the universe, wonderful harmonious and extremely attractive notes that proceeded from the instru-

ments played by the holy angels filled the heavenly court. At the foundation of this world, *“when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy”* (Job 38:7) Adam and Eve had also the privilege to receive the sacred gift of music.

The Israelites sang and played musical instruments during their long pilgrimage in the wilderness. On the one hand, when singing accompanied by music was repeated, it imprinted in their minds precious spiritual lessons and motivated them, sweetened their journey and strengthened their faith. Music was also present in their many ritual or ceremonial performances, as we shall see further on.

“Moses directed the Israelites to set the words of the law to music. While the older children played on instruments, the younger ones marched, singing in concert the song of God’s commandments. In later years they retained in their minds the words of the law which they learned during childhood.”

“If it was essential for Moses to embody the commandments in sacred song, so that as they marched in the wilderness, the children could learn to sing the law verse by verse, how essential it is at this time to teach our children God’s Word! Let us come up to the help of the Lord, instructing our children to keep the commandments to the letter. Let us do everything in our power to make music in our homes, that God may come in.” (Ev, 500).

“As the people journeyed through the wilderness, many precious lessons were fixed in their minds by means of song. At their deliverance from Pharaoh’s army the whole host of Israel had joined in the song of triumph. Far over desert and sea rang the joyous refrain, and the mountains re-echoed the accents of praise, ‘Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously.’ Exodus 15:21. Often on the journey was this song repeated, cheering the hearts and kindling the faith of the pilgrim travelers. The commandments as given from Sinai, with prom-

ises of God's favor and records of His wonderful works for their deliverance, were by divine direction expressed in song, and were chanted to the sound of instrumental music, the people keeping step as their voices united in praise."

"Thus their thoughts were uplifted from the trials and difficulties of the way, the restless, turbulent spirit was soothed and calmed, the principles of truth were implanted in the memory, and faith was strengthened. Concert of action taught order and unity, and the people were brought into closer touch with God and with one another" (Ed, 39).

"As a means of education an important place was filled by the feasts of Israel... But three times a year seasons were appointed for social intercourse and worship.... The songs that had cheered the wilderness wandering were sung. God's commandments were chanted, and, bound up with the blessed influences of nature and of

kindly human association, they were forever fixed in the memory of many a child and youth.” (Ed, 41).

The first hymn registered in the Bible is found in Exodus chapter 15. When the Israelites were delivered from the Egyptians who were persecuting them, Moses and the children of Israel sang a song of thanksgiving and praise to God who had worked such a great miracle for them. The mothers of Israel taught their children, in songs, the precepts of the Law as well as prayer and the lessons from the Scriptures.

David, the psalmist, also knew this gift of heavenly origin and he used it to glorify God and for the benefit of souls. Who does not know psalms 23 and 1? What about psalm 51, that is a composition after David’s experience when he fell in sin, his repentance and his trust in God’s forgiveness? *“The fifty-first psalm is an expression of David’s repentance, when the message of reproof came to him from God:... Thus in*

a sacred song to be sung in the public assemblies of his people, in the presence of the court--priests and judges, princes and men of war--and which would preserve to the latest generation the knowledge of his fall, the king of Israel recounted his sin, his repentance, and his hope of pardon through the mercy of God.” (PP, 725).

“In the hour of his darkest trial David’s heart was stayed upon God, and he sang.” (PP, 742).

David calmed king Saul in his moments of rage, by skillfully playing his harp, *“Those who witnessed these strange exhibitions in Saul recommended to him music, as calculated to have a soothing influence upon his mind when thus distracted. In the providence of God, David was brought to his notice as a skillful musician.... David’s skillful playing upon the harp soothed the troubled spirit of Saul. As he listened to the enchanting strains of music, it had an influence to dispel*

the gloom which had settled upon him, and to bring his excited mind into a more rational, happy.” (1Sp 368).

We can surely state that the music that accompanied those inspired texts was wonderful. Many of the Hebrew religious services and festivities were seasoned with the sound of instrumental music and the songs of the Levites.

“The service of song was made a regular part of religious worship, and David composed psalms, not only for the use of the priests in the sanctuary service, but also to be sung by the people in their journeys to the national altar at the annual feasts. The influence thus exerted was far-reaching, and it resulted in freeing the nation from idolatry. Many of the surrounding peoples, beholding the prosperity of Israel, were led to think favorably of Israel’s God, who had done such great things for His people.” (PP, 711).

The birth of our Lord Jesus Christ was announced with the songs of an-

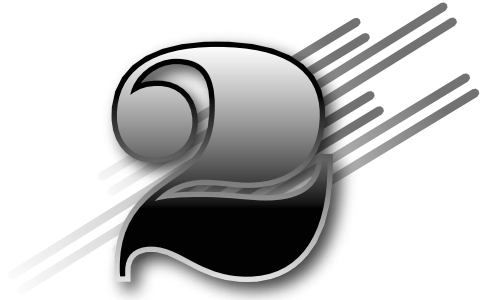
gels (Luke 2:13,14), and our Saviour also sang all along His life and ministry, “[Christ] *With the voice of singing He welcomed the morning light. With songs of thanksgiving He cheered His hours of labor and brought heaven’s gladness to the toilworn and disheartened.*” (MH, 52).

Jesus knew the powerful effect of spiritual music since childhood and in many occasions He was heard singing to His Father, specially when He was tempted by the enemy or He sang in order to help people, “*When Christ was a child like these children here, He was tempted to sin, but He did not yield to temptation. As He grew older He was tempted, but the songs His mother had taught Him to sing came into His mind, and He would lift His voice in praise. And before His companions were aware of it, they would be singing with Him. God wants us to use every facility which Heaven has provided for resisting the enemy.*” (Ev, 498).

“Often He expressed the gladness of His heart by singing psalms and heavenly songs. Often the dwellers in Nazareth heard His voice raised in praise and thanksgiving to God. He held communion with heaven in song; and as His companions complained of weariness from labor, they were cheered by the sweet melody from His lips. His praise seemed to banish the evil angels, and, like incense, fill the place with fragrance. The minds of His hearers were carried away from their earthly exile, to the heavenly home.” (DA, 73).

In the evening, at the paschal meal, short before He was betrayed and delivered to death, He sang psalms 113 and 116, according to the information in the Spirit of Prophecy. The apostles often sang with their Master. (Matth. 26:30). After His death, when He came out of the grave victoriously *“the angel host bow low in adoration before the Redeemer, and welcome Him with songs of praise.”* (DA, 779).

Christian songs have their origin in Hebrew music and they were brought to Europe for the proclamation of the gospel. At least the main part of Gregorian hymns had their origin in the ancient music of Israel. Later on, music sung in many voices was propagated in the old world and thereof come many of the hymns we sing in our churches today. This style of hymns is found practically in all Christian denominations.



Its benefits

If used properly, music produces positive effect upon our body and spirit. Sister White says, “*There is great power in music.*” (3SM, 334). Let’s us see some of these benefits:

1. It is an educational means

Surely the reader has had the experience of learning some psalms, or any other part of the Bible by heart putting music to it and singing it or

singing it with the music someone else has composed. Many schoolteachers use this method to teach their students to memorize the most important lessons quicker and more efficiently. But this is not something new; the Lord already used this method in the old times in order to teach Israel the special lessons related to His divine intervention and the truths He wanted to reveal to them. As we have seen before, Israel used to sing on their journey across the desert. By repeating the songs over and over again, they remained engraved in their mind.

The words of the songs usually express the Christian experience of their composers, while others are psalms, stories from the Bible, relevant Bible passages, etc. When sung many times, they remain stored in our memory. Many people learn much better when they sing passages from the Bible than when they read them. Some children learn very long psalms to which music is put. By no means do I want to say with this that the mes-

sage has to be learnt in songs; this is just another very pleasant and beautiful way of learning. In the same way, the Lord invites us to sing so that the message of salvation may remain engraved in our hearts after repeating it so much. This method *“is one of the most effective means of impressing the heart with spiritual truth. How often to the soul hard-pressed and ready to despair, memory recalls some word of God’s--the long-forgotten burden of a childhood song, --and temptations lose their power, life takes on new meaning and new purpose, and courage and gladness are imparted to other souls!”* (Ed, 168).

2. It helps us to overcome discouragement, depression, sadness and temptation

In order to illustrate what we have just said, let us go back to the time of king Saul, which we mentioned before. (Read 1 Samuel chapter 16, verses

14 to 23). The king of Israel suffered from attacks of rage and depression but when David played the harp “*aul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.*” (Verse 23). Nowadays, some physicians heal certain diseases making use of music. But we should not forget that before medicine ever discovered the beneficial influence of music upon the mind, Solomon wrote, “*but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.*” (Prov. 29:6).

Educators know that music attracts children and calms them down when they are excited (we refer to the right kind of music). In Spanish there is a proverb “*music tames the beasts*”. Which mother or father has not once put his/her baby to sleep by singing it a lullaby? Children, who have had the privilege of growing up in a Christian family, have the wonderful potential of the songs they heard and sang during years in morning and evening worship. They will never forget this.

“How often to the soul hard-pressed and ready to despair, memory recalls some word of God’s,—the long-forgotten burden of a childhood song,—and temptations lose their power, life takes on new meaning and new purpose, and courage and gladness are imparted to other souls!” (MYP, 292).

“Song is a weapon that we can always use against discouragement. As we thus open the heart to the sunlight of the Saviour’s presence, we shall have health and His blessing.” (Ev, 499).

“It has power to subdue rude and uncultivated natures; power to quicken thought and to awaken sympathy, to promote harmony of action, and to banish the gloom and foreboding that destroy courage and weaken effort.” (Ed, 167).

“With a song, Jesus in His earthly life met temptation. Often when sharp, stinging words were spoken, often when the atmosphere about Him was heavy with gloom, with dissatisfaction,

distrust, or oppressive fear, was heard His song of faith and holy cheer.” (Ed, 166).

“If there was much more praising the Lord, and far less doleful recitation of discouragements, many more victories would be achieved.... Let praise and thanksgiving be expressed in song. When tempted, instead of giving utterance to our feelings, let us by faith lift up a song of thanksgiving to God.” (Ev, 499).

I recall, when I used to do canvassing work and the day was not being very successful, I felt discouraged and aware that I was running the risk of giving up my duty, I would sing a hymn on the way and as I concentrated in the words, the Lord gave me power to go forward. Hymns such as *“Take Thou My Hand, O Father”* and others gave me much hope and inspired me and they still do it today.

3. It is a way of reaching souls

Sometimes, what cannot be done with a sermon, it is done with a song. I recall the experience I had some years ago, when I visited a prison in the city where I live in order to preach the gospel. The staff of the prison gathered more than a hundred inmates, who were considered very dangerous, in a big hall. Before I started, one of the officers approached me and told me that I should not waste my time with them because they would pay no attention.

I looked at those men in the eye and I could perceive they had led a very depraved life. In that place, one could only hear strident voices, vulgar expressions, loud laughter and see ironic looks. Therefore, before preaching, I took my guitar and told them I would sing a song. As I was singing, the noise was dying out, and some of the inmates rebuked their companions who had not yet kept silent. “Shut

up!”“We want to listen!”There was absolute silence and I could sing that hymn for the glory of God. When I finished, those young men had calmed down and they very respectfully listened to the things I told them about health and our message. When I finished speaking, they asked me to sing another hymn and then many of them came to speak to me, told me why they were there and some registered for a correspondence Bible course. They did not reach the point to be baptized in the church, but we still hope the work was not done in vain.

The experience does not finish there. I do not know how much time had gone by after that visit, maybe some weeks or months, when one day I was going around getting the installations from my customers from some books I had sold them, and I was carrying some money with me. Suddenly, I saw a young man on the road, who asked me to give him a lift. At first, I thought I would stop, but then I remembered the money I had with me,

and the many things that happen on the highway, and I gave up the idea and decided to go on. That very moment my car stopped. The young man ran toward me and putting his head through the window asked me if I could give him a lift to the city where I was going. I felt rather confused but the young man spoke and acted so fast that I had no time to react. In a few seconds, he was already in my car. He looked around nervously, as if he were looking for something. I feared the worst... our eyes met and the young man told me, "I know you." I Unpremeditatedly, I answered: "Maybe from the jail". The young man smiled and said, "Surely, now I remember! A short time ago you sung for us in the prison, and we liked it very much. I was there, but now I am on probation.

We spoke about the message and when we arrived in the city I stopped the car and the young man got off and greeted me very politely. Was it a coincidence? I don't think so. I thanked the Lord for this experience. "*Song is*

one of the most effective means of impressing spiritual truth upon the heart.” (Ev, 500). “There is great pathos and music in the human voice, and if the learner will make determined efforts, he will acquire habits of talking and singing that will be to him a power to win souls to Christ.” (Ev, 504).

Canvassers and students, in a special way, should cultivate this gift. They will find many opportunities in their work to use this talent. Singing they may bring hope and joy to people who are discouraged and afflicted and who have maybe never entered a church: *“Students, go out into the highways and hedges. Endeavor to reach the higher as well as the lower classes. Enter the homes of the rich as well as the poor, and as you have opportunity, ask, “Would you be pleased to have us sing some gospel hymns?” Then as hearts are softened, the way may open for you to offer a few words of prayer for the blessing of God. Not many will refuse to listen. Such ministry is genuine missionary work.” (ChS, 66).*

4. It is a means to have communion with God

Hymns are like prayers; when we sing them from the heart we are communicating with God Father, *“As a part of religious service singing is as much an act of worship as is prayer. Indeed, many a song is prayer. If the child is taught to realize this, he will think more of the meaning of the words he sings and will be more susceptible to their power.”* (Ed, 168).

Music and singing must occupy a notable place in church. The songs sung by the whole congregation, or the special participation of a soloist or a choir, are greatly inspiring, give peace to the soul and turn our service into a lovely praise of the Lord. When we sing properly in church, the angels of heaven join their voices to ours.

Apostle Paul urges us to praise God with singing, *“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual*

songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:19).

A powerful weapon against evil

Like all good things that God has created for the benefit of man, music has also been perverted by Satan. Beholding the evil things in this world, Christ said, “*An enemy hath done this*”.

“*Music... when put to a wrong use, it is **a terrible curse**.*” (AH 408). “*Music is often perverted to serve purposes of evil, and it thus becomes one of the most alluring agencies of temptation.*” (Ed, 167).

The holy worship God commanded Adam and his descendents was terribly perverted and from sacrificing animals people turned to the sacrifice of children and adults that were offered in holocaust to pagan deities.

What was even worse was the fact that those perverse rituals were also practiced by the people of God.

Degradation affected also music. Due to the decrease in a Christian spirit in our countries since the beginning of the present century, harmonic music has been rejected and atonal, strident music with words that are an offence to moral principles and in some cases a real worship to the devil has taken its place. Jazz, an African rhythm mixed with European melodies, was introduced in America and in the forties rock and pop music derived from it. Rock music is characterized by a monotonous rhythm and loud sound; it leads the audience to a trance and makes people prone to demoniac influence. Therefore, it is compared to the idolatrous cults in Africa. When a person has been listening to that music for a long time, he tends to become depressed, aggressive and rebellious. There are cases in which the rhythm leads to a hysterical state that acts upon the libido. We do not say this

because we are old-fashioned Christians, but a recent issue of a Spanish magazine published a long article in which the author warns the readers about the great danger in much of our modern music.

We quote some paragraphs which we consider interesting, *“About two decades ago, a Californian protestant minister, Gary Greenwald, planned and carried out an interesting research. He followed the steps of some of the most famous rock and heavy metal groups at the time, because he was convinced that in the words of their musical compositions, was hidden the clue that related this groups with the figure of the Wicked one. After a certain time, he found what he wanted by making the famous records, like the Electric Light Orchestra (ELO), The Beatles or Pink Floyd, run backwards. He found aberrant prayers addressed to the devil invoking dark and terrible blasphemies... After him, other researchers made a deeper research and found*

relevant evidences about the subliminal satanic messages in contemporary rock music.”

These songs usually deal with the same subjects: Rebellion against parents, society, teachers, and against everything... encourage licentiousness, violence and even suicide. Statistics have shown that 18% of the suicides committed by the youth are guided by rock music and ,many men become violent under such influence. We continue quoting from the article mentioned above:

“At the end of 1992, in Argentina, Cynthia Telarico committed suicide after her father did not allow her to attend a concert by the Guns N’Roses; this same band caused turmoil during the group’s performances in Santiago de Chile, where dozens of drug-addicts and drunkards jumped onto the stage.”

There is a closer relationship between rock and drugs. As a rule, the composer of this kind of music is an

atheist or an enemy of Christianity. In 1966, John Lennon said: *“Christianity will pass away; we are today more popular than Jesus.”*

We continue quoting: *“The youth in particular are in danger because, among other things, they attend the discos where deafening rhythms are heard and thus they absorb the so-called satanic rock that transmits subliminal messages that cause a kind of demoniacal possession. Cardinal John J. O’Connor, on 4 March 1990, from the pulpit of Saint Patrick Cathedral in New York, declared: “The devil has the best of his prophets in rock and heavy metal music These songs are a snare for the youth, a sonorous pornography, and an instigation to suicide.”*

I cannot publish in this article the words in some of these songs because they are subliminal messages, either in a direct or indirect form. Besides, they are so offensive to Christian morality, that just reading them has an effect upon people and I do not want

to make propoganda for the devil. The reporter finishes writing, *“Are these words only childish games or part of a devastating plan to implant in the youth a certain pattern of thinking that we could call ‘esoteric black rock?’”*

Whoever listens to this music places himself on the enemy’s territory and runs the risk to rebel against God and to forget Him.- But the most amazing thing from what we are saying, is that this kind of music is infiltrating Christianity. On a visit I made to Costa Rica, I was amazed to see that rock music, mambo, salsa, bolero and even rap, are sung in protestant and catholic congregations together with Christian words; and Christian radio programs are constantly broadcasting this kind of music. Once, from a car, I could see people gathered in a worshipping place moving frenetically to the rhythm of an extremely rhythmical music. The people were twisting and moving in all directions. It looked more like a disc than a church. Incredible! People who propitiate and

tolerate this kind of worshiping, claim That this kind of music is part of the people's cultural background and that by no means it can be separated from their religious experience. Other people say that they would rather see the youth praising Christ in church even with rock music than to see them in the world completely separated from God. Others support the thesis that the youth have to be attracted with their own weapons. But, let us think over... Is popular culture to be used as a guideline for how to conduct worshiping in our churches? One can legitimately make use of the culture and tradition of the world as long as they are in harmony with a "*Thus saith the Lord*", otherwise, "*what communion hath light with darkness?*" (2 Cor. 6:14).

To attract a young person to the church or to keep him in it, allowing him to play all sorts of diabolic rhythms is not good for the church or

for the young person himself, since one is allowing a spurious Christianity that will give bitter fruits.

What kind of music should be used?

God does not want this kind of music to be ever introduced in our churches; with this I do not mean to say that we only have to sing hymns from the XVI century. We can sing hymns that have been composed in our times, if they inspire reverence and their tunes do not follow worldly rhythms used to praise the devil, awake the lowest passions or awake a sickly sentimentalism. Obviously, when we sing hymns with music that has been used to dishonor the name of God, the mind makes associations and even though the words are different, one is reminded of scenes lived when one was disobedient to the Lord or of the words and teachings that their authors, enemies of faith, composed.

Certainly, if the hymns that were composed to praise God are respectful, reverent, and their text is in harmony with our message, even if they come from the Baptist or the Methodist Church, or from other sources, they can be sung. We should remember that most of the hymns of our Adventist hymn book are from the Evangelic Church. Modern hymns are objectionable and some of them should be rejected because they faithfully imitate worldly music to attract the youth. Church leaders should be very careful in this aspect, but not just sanction all music because it is cheerful. One has to be very balanced and careful in this matter.

One also has to consider the origin of a certain musical piece. Where does it come from? With what purpose was it written? The tango is an example of this kind of music. It is of common knowledge that its words and rhythm are contrary to a Christian spirit. Therefore, there is no need to present an argument regarding its

use as Christian music, because it is obvious we should not even consider using it. This same rule should be applied to all sorts of music, including Afro-American music whose origin, to a great extent, has to do with spiritual ceremonies and rites of the animist tribes.

Singing for the glory of God

I want to share with you some useful advices from the Spirit of prophecy regarding how the songs and music in our churches should be:

a) *Cheerful and appropriate for the occasion*

The term “cheerful” does not mean that we have to be jumping around in the church. There is a great difference between singing with a heart full of gratitude to the Lord and the joy for salvation that was granted us, and moving our body excitedly to the

rhythm of a music that leads to dancing. Some people use as an argument that David also danced, but he danced for God, in full reverence. The object of such dancing was to worship God. In those times men and women did not dance together and when they danced at all it was, as already said, to honor and praise the holy name of God. *“The music and dancing in joyful praise to God at the removal of the ark had not the faintest resemblance to the dissipation of modern dancing. The one tended to the remembrance of God and exalted His holy name. The other is a device of Satan to cause men to forget God and to dishonor Him.”* (PP, 707). *“Those who make singing a part of divine worship should select hymns with music appropriate to the occasion, not funeral notes, but cheerful, yet solemn melodies. The voice can and should be modulated, softened, and subdued.”* (Ev, 508).

If today we would accept that kind of manifestations in our assemblies, there would be great confusion and

irreverence that would be contrary to the teachings in God's word that urges us to do everything decently, orderly and for God's glory.

b) *Musical instruments may be used*

On many occasions this matter has caused polemics that have not helped the church to grow spiritually. The clash of opinions has taken place mainly between the youth and adults. Our youth are "bombarded" with modern music and it is impossible to escape to a place where its magnetizing tunes are not heard.

Today's synthetic music, with its monotonous tunes, rhythms, jangling, dissonance, and the thousands of obscene texts it entails, it is chained and maybe it is better to say "saturated" of percussion. There is no music in which the battery, with its captivating and provoking rhythm inviting to move is not heard; rhythm, rhythm, movement, dancing, to lead the youth

to move, to dance, to ecstasy and frenzy. It is the same style of music, in modern version, used by ancestral tribes in order to reach the ecstasy that leads them to communicate with the spirits or with their god. Therefore, to introduce batteries, drums or other percussion instruments in our churches would be to open the door to the influence of the devil, to prepare the way to the satanic majesty to work “from within” in the work of captivating and destroying the hearts of Christians.

There is a text in the prophecies that calls my attention, since it has a certain prophecy regarding drums, shouting and dancing, *“The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation. Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And*

this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit. "The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time. Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to use musical instruments to do the work which last January was represented to me would be brought into our camp meetings. The truth for this time needs nothing of this kind in its work of converting souls. A bedlam of noise shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing. The powers of satanic agencies blend with the din and noise, to have a carnival, and this is termed the Holy Spirit's working." (2MS, 36).

On the other hand, it is not good or advisable to prohibit the use of all musical instruments in our churches, except for the organ, because they are considered profane. Let us remember that the Bible speaks about the

zither, the harp, the flute, the trumpet, etc. and the Spirit of prophecy urges us that whenever possible musical instruments should be used to accompany singing: *“Let the talent of singing be brought into the work. The use of musical instruments is not at all objectionable. These were used in religious services in ancient times. The worshipers praised God upon the harp and cymbal, and music should have its place in our services. It will add to the interest.”* (Ev, 150).

b) No shouting or jangling

“I have often been pained to hear untrained voices, pitched to the highest key, literally shrieking the sacred words of some hymn of praise. How inappropriate those sharp, rasping voices for the solemn, joyous worship of God. I long to stop my ears, or flee from the place, and I rejoice when the painful exercise is ended...” (Ev, 507).

“I saw that all should sing with the spirit and with the understanding also. God is not pleased with jargon and discord. Right is always more pleasing to Him than wrong. And the nearer the people of God can approach to correct, harmonious singing, the more is He glorified, the church benefited, and unbelievers favorably affected.” (Ev, 508).

c) Clear and soft tones

“Let all take time to cultivate the voice, so that God’s praise can be sung in clear, soft tones.” (Ev, 504).

d) Correct pronunciation

“It is not loud singing that is needed, but clear intonation, correct pronunciation, and distinct utterance.” (Ev, 504).

e) No theatrical acts

“His singing does not have an influence to subdue the heart and touch the feelings.... The demonstrations and bodily contortions, the unpleasant appearance of the strained, forced effort has appeared so out of place for the house of God, so comical, that the serious impressions made (by the sermon) upon the minds have been removed...”
(3SM 333).

This is applied to forms, but there is something that should not be forgotten, and it is what motivates us to use this talent.

Why do I sing? Is it for God’s glory or for mine? At the General Conference in 1997, we spoke about music and the conclusion was reached that each country has a peculiar way of playing and that a stereotyped way of singing and playing an instrument cannot be imposed for the whole world, but what counts it to respect the previous guidelines.

Let us take more time to sing in our churches since thanks God we have brothers and sisters who know music, some who compose songs, others who can skillfully play a musical instrument.

The most joyful moments I remember in a church are related to music. Through music one can make friends, souls are joined together and the heart is lifted up to God.

What a wonderful gift God has given us! Shall we use it for His honour and glory? When we sing upon this earth we are preparing to sing in the heavenly courts. In heaven, the redeemed will sing songs whose music is impossible to know while we are here (1 Cor. 2:9), but we surely know that through endless centuries, music will continue to be a way of edifying and praising our God, and the Lamb.

John the Revelator, takes us to that glorious time in the future, where there will be indescribable joy and love, and shows the redeemed ones singing

a new song. (Rev. 14:2-3). Do we want to sing that song? Let us consecrate ourselves to God with all our heart upon this earth and sing, let us sing the wonders of Him who took us out of darkness to his wonderful light.