

“WHOSE HEART MUSIC IS IN YOUR MISSION’S HYMNAL?” ETHNOMUSICOLOGY PRINCIPLES FOR CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY

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Introduction

Phil grew up not knowing Christ. His hometown in a remote part of Washington State was so small that the closest church was over a half-hour drive away. Phil’s parents, pleasant and caring though both rather work-obsessed and materialistic, simply had no interest in religion. Phil knew a few general things about Christianity during his childhood. But as a young adult living in Seattle, Phil did not possess saving faith. Then, one day several months ago, Phil was sitting on a park bench in the plaza on his office lunch break, eating a pork sandwich by himself, when two very pleasant missionaries—they were actually Chinese—came up and started talking to him about Jesus.

The two older men, Lin and Chou, had converted to Christianity in China when they were teenagers and had worshipped together in a house church. They had found their way to the US a couple of years ago with their families, and made Seattle their home. The two men’s excitement and intensity in presenting the story of the Savior immediately got Phil’s attention. Lin and Chou both spoke English, though it was far from perfect. They had with them a modern English translation of the Bible, which they repeatedly referred to in their first, simple discussion with Phil. Phil agreed to meet with the two missionaries again during his next lunch hour, and then again. A wonderful relationship between Phil and the two Chinese men developed. The Holy Spirit used the missionaries’ Bible-based presentations to work faith in Phil’s heart. By the grace and power of God, Phil became a Christian.

Lin and Chou invited Phil to join the congregation they had started. They held services in a small rented storefront space in a strip mall. Phil was more than eager to accept their offer. With Jesus

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in his heart, Phil wanted to learn more about the one true God. He wanted to join with others on Sunday mornings in thankfulness and praise to his Savior. After all, the teachings of the two Chinese missionaries were all based on the Bible. Phil was convinced that their church taught the truth. And so, one Sunday, Phil went off to find the church. A twenty-minute drive later, and Phil was at the modest storefront church. Inside, Phil found metal folding chairs for the worshippers and in front, a cloth-covered folding table for an altar with candles and a wooden cross. The room was about half full.

But the moment Phil set foot in the Chinese missionaries’ church, something seemed very odd to him. I’ll let Phil describe it from here:

So, I come into the church, and I hear this strange music—the music for the church service. I mean, it really sounded strange, like from some Asian country or something. Well, actually, it was from an Asian country—Lin and Chou are Chinese! I guess it’s what they use for church music in China, probably the only church music Lin and Chou really know. I looked around to see where the music was coming from. It was live, and I see it coming from this smiling, energetic Chinese lady, who’s playing some type of really odd, stringed instrument, I don’t know, kind of like an oriental banjo or something, except she’s holding it upright and resting it on her lap and using like a violin bow . . . It was obviously from China. And I think it must have been tuned really weird. I mean, the song she was playing was like nothing I have ever heard before. Maybe a little like the music in the background of a martial arts movie, I don’t know. It was certainly not like any music you would know how to sing to. So, it turns out the smiling lady playing the weird string instrument was Michele, Lin’s wife.

So, there are about thirty other people in the room, smiling, some looking a little nervous, some not, but everyone seems really glad to be there. So, I go and sit down. Then those two great guys, wonderful men, Lin and Chou, come out in front to begin the service. They were even in these pastor outfits, which I had never seen them in before. I was at the 10:00 English service. (They also do a 1:00 service in their Chinese language.) Lin and Chou see me and they each give me a huge smile. That made me feel great. They were excited to finally see me in their church. So Lin says, “Let’s open our songbooks to page 13,” and then, the strange music starts up all over again.

Now the words to the song are in English of course but the music was in Chinese! I looked around and saw other white people like me in the chairs. In fact, it was almost all white people this morning. No doubt most everyone in there was a personal friend of Lin and Chou. Everyone there had probably first heard the Gospel through them, and had great respect for them. But what was up with the strange, loud music? The songs were almost impossible to sing. I started to wonder again, is this the only worship music they

know? Is it the only kind of music they use? Maybe they think it's the best music or something, and we should all learn it. But, I thought, what about using a little American church music, like you see on TV, something that would be a whole lot easier to sing? I kept thinking, this is the one church I know that is teaching pure truth from the Bible, but this music is just not working. I guess I felt rather surprised that Lin and Chou, who are such wonderful, smart, godly men, somehow hadn't figured out that the music they used wasn't a good idea. In fact, it was really kind of a turn-off. It was draining the energy out of the room. No one seemed to be singing with any joy or energy. I sure wasn't. I couldn't!

So, that opening song kept going, verse after verse, with most of the people gamely trying to learn the song and get through it. A few people seemed to have the hang of it a little. But most sang with their mouths barely open. Only occasionally would you hear a syllable and a note come together the way I think they were supposed to. One couple looked like there were pretending to be singing. This one gal just gave a huge sigh and gave up completely. Everyone kept their songbook open out of respect. But it seemed like most people were just kind of faking it.

The song finally, mercifully, came to an end. Pastor Lin, smiled and cheerily said, "Thank you brothers and sisters! We will continue to work on these classic worship songs next week!" People just nodded and smiled but you knew what they were thinking. Some made secret glances at each other. One young man just shook his head to himself in resignation. One girl rolled her eyes at her friend.

We knew our singing was bad. I don't think anyone really wanted to sing songs in that music style again. Like I said, I've heard all kinds of church music on TV and the internet, in all kinds of different styles. And the people are singing with joy and energy, you know, really enjoying it. So one day, I very carefully and respectfully asked Chou about the possibility of using other kinds of music on Sunday. Chou said those other styles, like on the internet, weren't really appropriate for a serious Bible-based church like ours. I said, what if we had some music in other styles but with really good words, like with Bible verses in them? But Chou didn't really show any interest in that. "Once you practice our music a little more, I know you will like it," he said with that huge smile and a friendly pat on my arm. He is always so friendly. So, that was it about the music.

Week after week, everyone did work on those Chinese songs, but they never got a whole lot better. I guess you could say we kind of got used to them. "It's classic, beautiful church music that's been around for ages and ages, stood the test of time," Chou would remind us. "It is classic music appropriate for the house of God." The fact is, no one really wanted to challenge Lin and Chou on the

church music. We all just put up with it. After all Lin and Chou are such wonderful, good-hearted men. They work so hard and love everyone so much. They are our spiritual fathers! They are family to me! No one wanted to offend them or hurt their feelings.

So Mrs. Lin plays her strange stringed instrument every week for church. She even offered to give free lessons to anyone so they could also play in church. As for me? I open my songbook with the songs they brought from China, try to sing a little bit, but I'm glad when the songs are over, especially the long ones. It's a shame. You know, music is really important to my generation. I think everyone would really love to really sing out!

Don't get me wrong. The words to the songs are great, sometimes taken right out of the Bible, like verses from Psalms. The English words don't always fit the Chinese music real good, like sometimes you are trying to cram a lot of words into a few notes . . . The thing is, I really wanted to sing out in church, you know, with a lot of joy and energy, praising Jesus for saving me. I wanted to sing with my whole heart. But that doesn't really happen. That foreign sounding music always gets in the way.

Sound farfetched? In fact, the practice of missionaries bringing their own culture's worship music with them to a foreign country goes back centuries. In Africa, the practice goes as far back as the African explorations of Henry the Navigator, who brought the Roman Catholic Mass to Guinea and Ghana in 1482.² During the seventeenth century, the Spaniards were lugging huge pipe organs into the "New World" for their masses.³

However, the last few decades have seen a veritable explosion of interest among mission agencies in ethnomusicology: the study of music in culture. Understanding how to use music cross-culturally for evangelistic, pedagogical, and doxological purposes is no easy task. Simply translating existing hymns from the missionary's hymnbook is hardly the best way to create music for outreach. Certain fundamental truths regarding "man and music" need to be considered if the missionary is to have music that truly resonates with the people he or she serves. A basic knowledge of how music functions in an individual and in society—understanding "why people in a particular place and time make music in a particular way"⁴—is critical when preparing music for cross cultural missions. What is ethnomusicology? Why the term?

²James R. Krabill, "Encounters: What Happens to Music when People Meet," in *Music in the Life of the African Church*, with Roberta King (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 59.

³John Frederick Schwaller, *The History of the Catholic Church in Latin America* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 71.

⁴Timothy Rice, *Ethnomusicology: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 78.

Simply put, ethnomusicology is an expansion of musicology, the study of music. Because musicology has been devoted primarily to the study of music which is European in origin, a new term was needed to designate the study of music whose origin is not European, and in many cases, music that has never been written down . . . The variety [of music] is staggering, and while music types are not quite so diverse as languages, the comparison is parallel in many respects.⁵

While a wide variety of definitions for ethnomusicology exist,⁶ for our purposes, the following points made by Timothy Rice are useful:

Ethnomusicology is the study of why, and how, human beings are musical. This definition positions ethnomusicology among the social sciences, humanities, and biological sciences dedicated to understanding the nature of the human species in all its biological, social, cultural, and artistic diversity.

"Musical" in this definition does not refer to musical talent or ability; rather it refers to the capacity of humans to create, perform, organize cognitively, react physically and emotionally to, and interpret the meanings of humanly organized sounds. The definition assumes that all humans, not just those we call musicians, are musical to some degree and that musicality (the capacity to make and make sense of music) defines our humanity and provides one of the touchstones of human expression. . . . The principle method ethnomusicologists use to study why and how human beings are musical [is] the ethnographic, or fieldwork, method.⁷

Christian ethnomusicologists study the use of music in cultures and subcultures in foreign countries and in their home country. A strong foundation in the biblical theology of worship is assumed. Participation in Christian worship is of course the result of the Holy Spirit converting us and filling us. God's Word reveals the church throughout history using music for evangelistic, pedagogical, and doxological purposes. Receiving from God and responding to God take place during Christian worship. A concise definition of Bible-based Lutheran worship is found in Maschke's *Gathered Guests*. He writes:

The concept of worship has two clear directions and four distinct dimensions. Worship is God's service to us as His gathered guests and our faith-full response to Him in Christ. Worship is also an

⁵James R. Krabill, ed., *Worship and Mission for the Global Church* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2013), 119.

⁶"When attending meetings of the Society of Ethnomusicology, the largest organization of the field, I used to be struck by the number of specialized papers that began with statements giving the speakers' definition of and general orientation toward the field." Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 5.

⁷Rice, *Ethnomusicology*, 1, 3.

opportunity to grow and develop as a community and for the community to be empowered to go out into the world. Therefore, Lutheran worship can be described as being upward, downward, outward and inward—or to put it in the words of this chapter, Lutheran worship is encounter, expression, education, and evangelism.⁸

Christians gather to hear the word, administer the sacraments, confess their sins, and offer prayers and praise; they leave to search for the lost and be a blessing to their fellow man and woman. Paul's words in Colossians 3 describe our Creator God calling his gathered people to instruct one another and to give thanks: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom" (Col 3:16a).⁹ Music, as an emotionally powerful vehicle for transporting truth, may be prominently used in the church's human-divine and human-human dialogues, as Paul adds: ". . . as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God" (Col 3:16b). These words indicate that Paul assumed music was being used by the congregation as they dialogued with their Creator and with each other. We find Paul writing similar words to the Ephesians: ". . . speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph 5:19-20).

Commenting on the use of song in worship, Luther wrote:

That it is good and pleasing to God to spiritual songs is, I think, not hidden to any Christian. Everyone is acquainted not only with the example of the kings and prophets of the Old Testament (who praised God with singing and playing, with poetry and all kinds of string music) but also with the common use of music, especially the singing of psalms, in Christendom from the very beginning. St. Paul, too, instituted this in 1 Corinthians 14:15 and bids the Colossians (3:16) heartily to sing spiritual songs and psalms unto the Lord in order that thereby God's Word and Christian doctrine might be used and practiced in diverse ways.¹⁰

Luther's comments on the use of song in the service of "God's Word and Christian doctrine" accurately reflect Paul's writing in Col 3:16-17 and Eph 5:19-20. On the centrality of the proclamation of the Word of Christ in worship Deterding writes:

Col 3:16-17 and the parallel in Eph 5:19-20 present worship as consisting of two components: the sacramental (God bestows his

⁸Timothy H. Maschke, *Gathered Guests: A Guide to Worship in the Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Academic, 2003), 20.

⁹Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the NIV.

¹⁰Ewald M. Plass, *What Luther Says, vol. II* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), 980.

gifts upon his people) and the sacrificial (the people present their confession of faith, prayers, thanksgiving, and hymns of praise to God). Worship has its center and origin in the proclamation of the Word of Christ. This is done by the reading of the Scriptures, by proclamation (preaching and teaching) and by that music which involves the proclamation of the Word. That music is also a means for the proclamation of the Word is made clear in the Ephesians passage, which explicitly makes reference to speaking *to one another* with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs as well as singing *to the Lord* (emphasis original).¹¹

It is highly significant that in Paul's inspired instructions and encouragements for a strong, active worship life in the multi-cultural congregations of Ephesus and Colossi, he specifies the use of three categories of worship music: psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Commentators are essentially in agreement that the precise nature and boundaries of the three categories of music are difficult to establish. O'Brien writes, "It is not possible to distinguish sharply between each of the three terms 'psalms,' 'hymns,' and 'songs' (so most recent writers . . .)."¹² We of course have no idea what the music sounded like at the time of Paul's writing. Each of the three broad musical categories would probably consist of a variety of musical genres and styles within that category. And even though aural specifics may be unrecoverable, several observations can be made about each category. The three terms indeed signify three distinct categories, two of which are centered in different cultures. For a closer look at the three music categories, I rely primarily on the research of Arnold and O'Brien.

Psalms

Commenting on Eph 5:19 Arnold observes:

The term "psalm" was used primarily in the context of Judaism. The term serves as the title for the LXX version of the 150 songs of the Hebrew *Tehillim*, the book of "praises," and appears 72 times throughout the collection. One can find the term in a number of Second Temple Jewish texts, such as the first-century *Psalms of Solomon*. By contrast, "psalm" is far less frequent in Gentile texts of Graeco-Roman paganism. For instance, it never appears in the numerous inscriptions of Ephesus.¹³

¹¹Paul E. Deterding, *Concordia Commentary: Colossians* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003), 155.

¹²Peter T. O'Brien, *Word Biblical Commentary: Colossians and Philemon* (Dallas: Word Books, 1982), 209.

¹³Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 352.

O'Brien notes that "'psalm' is employed by Luke of the Old Testament psalms, (Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20; 13:33) though it came to be used more generally of a song of praise (1 Cor 14:26, Col 3:16) of which the Old Testament psalms were probably regarded as spiritual prototypes."¹⁴ On Paul's use of the word "psalms" in connection with the Corinthian congregation (1 Cor 14:26), O'Brien believes the term there refers to "a newly coined 'song of praise' prompted by the Spirit and sung with thankful rejoicing of the congregation."¹⁵ Bartels agrees that "psalms" may have included "new Christian songs (which may well have been modeled on the psalms of the OT and of later Judaism)."

As song models for the Christian church, the OT psalms covered an extraordinary range of subjects (messianic prophecy, praise, petition, individual and community lament, the cursing of God's enemies, etc.). A wide range of musical styles would have been necessary to convey such a wide range of emotional expression.¹⁶

Hymns

The term "hymn," according to O'Brien, refers to "any 'festive hymn of praise' (Isa 42:10; cf. Acts 16:25, Heb 2:12). In its two New Testament occurrences [Eph 5:19 and Col 3:16] it refers to an expression of praise to God or Christ."¹⁷ Arnold's research reveals the common use of the term "hymn" in New Testament times to denote a song of praise to a deity:

The term "hymn" (ψαλμοῖς) was commonly used of poetic ascriptions of praise to the various gods and goddesses through antiquity . . . During the NT era, there were guilds of hymn writers who employed their skills at crafting hymns. In fact, an inscription discovered at Ephesus refers to a guild of hymn writers (συνέδριον τῶν ὑμνοδῶν) who wrote their hymns in honor of "the most holy goddess Artemis." Another Ephesian inscription lists the members of a religious society and refers to one as a "hymn writer" (ὑμολόγος). Although the term "hymn" appears occasionally in Jewish texts (including thirteen times in the LXX), it is more common in Greek religious circles.¹⁸

Commenting on Eph 5:19, Thielman reminds us that Greek hymns of Paul's time could also be used for pedagogical purposes. Writing pedagogical songs would be made easier with the available option of writing in prose style. Thielman notes:

¹⁴Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 395.

¹⁵O'Brien, *Colossians and Philemon*, 209.

¹⁶Bartels, NIDNTT 3: 671, 572, quoted in O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 209.

¹⁷O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 395.

¹⁸Arnold, *Ephesians*, 353.

Hymns in antiquity were sometimes in prose rather than poetic form and involved instruction as well as praise (Gordley 2007: 30-39), so the term "speaking" covers more than the singing of poetic compositions or utterances of praise to God. It also includes the kind of instruction that Paul assumes his readers have received, according to 4:20-22 (cf. Col.3:16).¹⁹

With the music category of "psalms" rooted in the Jewish culture and the music category of "hymns" centered in the Greek culture, what can be said of the third category, "songs of the Spirit" or "spiritual songs"?

Spiritual Songs

The term "spiritual songs" appears to indicate a catchall category for other sacred song styles of Paul's day. One can assume that a term as general as "spiritual songs" included a wide variety of music styles, as newly composed songs were added to the church's collection. To which culture did the music styles of the "spiritual songs" category appeal? Arnold writes that the final expression Paul uses here, "songs,"

was a more general term and was equally at home in Jewish and Gentile circles. It appears numerous times in the LXX (although only seven times in the NT) and is frequent in Graeco-Roman literature . . . A funerary inscription found in Ephesus refers to a group of mourners who honored the deceased "with tears and songs (ψδαίς)". The book of Revelation, where the noun appears five times, refers to the twenty-four elders who "sang a new song" (ἀδουσιν ᾠδὴν καινὴν) before the Lamb (Rev 5:9).²⁰

Given the multi-cultural makeup of the Ephesian and Colossian congregations, Paul's urging the brothers and sisters to use "psalms" and "hymns" would guarantee that the sacred heart music of the Jews and the sacred heart music of the Greeks were available for worship. Using the term "spiritual songs" suggests that additional sacred music styles found throughout the multi-cultural mission fields of Paul were available for worship. Given the generalness and scope of the three song categories, it seems that numerous sacred music styles of Paul's day were at the disposal of Christian congregations. On Paul's use of the three terms, Arnold concludes, "The form of the music covers a wide range and represents significant diversity."²¹

For missionaries, the importance of Paul's words on utilizing music from a variety of cultures for worship in multi-cultural settings can hardly be overstated. The heart music of a culture one is working

¹⁹Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 361.

²⁰Arnold, *Ephesians*, 353.

²¹Arnold, *Ephesians*, 353.

with is not to be excluded. This needs to be a starting point for any missionary working to incorporate music into the biblically grounded worship practices of his field.

After urging the Ephesians to make use of a variety of music in worship, Paul significantly writes, "Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord" (5:19b). The heart Paul refers to is, of course, one in which Christ now dwells (Eph 3:17)—a heart that was once dead but is now resurrected to exuberant spiritual life through the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph 2:1). Commenting on verse 19, Arnold notes that "the heart is the center of the person, equivalent to the idea of the "inner self."²² "Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (19b-20). As in any service to the Lord, the believer will want to sing to the Lord "wholeheartedly" (6:7).

Following God's command, foreign missionaries, home missionaries, pastors, evangelists, and lay leaders working in multi-cultural settings organize, introduce, and encourage corporate worship. How is the church leader who is untrained in facilitating worship music cross-culturally to proceed? Christian musicologists have discovered several fundamental principles to consider. We will examine twelve of the most important principles or premises. These principles are of critical importance when utilizing music as a vehicle for sharing the gospel message in a cross-cultural setting.

And while some of these principles may appear obvious, we do well to keep them in mind. The principles are interconnected and synergistic; when applied as a whole they can lead to effective worship music. Conversely, a mistake in one area can lead to problems in other areas, as will be easily apparent. Let's review several of these underlying premises and principles made by ethnomusicologists working in cross-cultural worship settings.

Principle #1: Each of us has a heart music.

I call with all my heart (Ps 119:145).

Throughout the Old and New Testament, God's Word indicates that corporate worship includes the singing of songs. Every culture has its own preferred music styles. While missionaries are familiar with the concept of a heart language, many are not familiar with the concept of a heart music. Huyser-Honig writes:

We all have a heart language, the mother tongue in which we first learned to express love, joy, sorrow, and need. Heart lan-

²²Arnold, *Ephesians*, 354.

guage is rich in nuance, humor, gesture, and inflection. It's the words you naturally dream in, the genres and images you use to change minds.²³

What Huyser-Honig says of our heart language is equally applicable to our heart music. Harris writes: "Just like each person has at least one heart language, we all have our own heart music and arts; it's like a mother tongue for expressing your heart, and it effects how you worship."²⁴

That we each possess a heart music—musical styles we prefer for expressing our emotions—is no surprise. Our brain actually becomes neurologically programmed to respond to the music we grew up with. (Ever wonder why so many people think the music of their generation was the best music ever?) In the extraordinary book, *This Is Your Brain on Music*, Daniel J. Levitin explains the amazing impact the music one grows up with has on the brain:

Young children start to show a preference for the music of their culture by age two, around the same time they begin to develop specialized speech processing . . .

Researchers point to the teen years as the turning point for musical preferences. It is around the age of ten or eleven that most children take on music as a real interest, even those children who didn't express such an interest in music earlier. As adults, the music we tend to be nostalgic for, the music that feels like it is "our" music, corresponds to the music we heard during these years. One of the first signs of Alzheimer's disease (a disease characterized by changes in nerve cells and neurotransmitter levels, as well as destruction of synapses) in older adults is memory loss. As the disease progresses, memory loss becomes more profound. Yet many of these old-timers can still remember how to sing the songs they heard when they were fourteen. Why fourteen? Part of the reason we remember songs from our teenage years is because those years were times of self-discovery, and as a consequence, they were emotionally charged; in general, we tend to remember things that have an emotional component because our amygdala and neurotransmitters act in concert to "tag" the memories as something important. Part of the reason also has to do with neural maturation and pruning; it is around fourteen that the wiring of our musical brains is approaching adult like levels of completion.

²³Joan Huyser-Honig, "Ethnodoxology: Calling All Peoples to Worship in Their Heart Languages," Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. <http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/ethnodoxology-calling-all-peoples-to-worship-in-their-heart-language/>.

²⁴Robin Harris, "The Great Misconception: Why Music is Not a Universal Language," in *Worship and Mission for the Global Church*, ed. James Krabill (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2013), 82.

There doesn't seem to be a cutoff point for acquiring new tastes in music, but most people have formed their tastes by the age of eighteen or twenty.²⁵

The missiological implications of these scientific findings on the brain's programming of musical preferences are profound. Music styles introduced by a missionary that are foreign to the host culture will not naturally resonate at a deep level with that culture. The musical vocabulary utilized in the missionary's music to indicate specific emotions may be unknown (more on that in the following section.) Simply stated, there will not be the same attraction to foreign music as there is to the music with which the nationals grew up. According to research cited by Levitin, it is a simple, biological fact.

Given that a community's musical preferences are so strong, even neurologically wired, how likely is it that a congregation of the newly converted will be able to take up a foreign missionary's music and still be able to "pour out" their "hearts" to God (Ps 62:8), "praise" the Lord "with all my heart" (Ps 86:12), "sing and make music with all my soul" (Ps 108:1)?

It is important to point out that, over many generations, foreign missionaries have had virtually no training in ethnomusicology. Though they may have had the best of intentions, utilizing only their denomination's worship music rather than tapping into the indigenous heart music of the people they served produced profoundly adverse results. Speaking of Africa, Krabill writes:

It is indeed unfortunate that many Western missionaries, as Christianity's first messengers, failed to tap traditional African music sources and open the door "whereby at least some of this wealth might pass across into the worship of the young churches." This constitutes . . . one of the saddest chapters and most regrettable aspects of the entire story of Western missionary efforts. All too common have been experiences similar to the one reported of an elderly man in Chad who confessed with hesitation to the local American missionary, "I want to become a Christian, but . . . do I have to learn your music?"²⁶

It should be noted that Western worship music introduced by foreign missionaries did at times, over time, take root.²⁷ However, the situation is complex and calls for careful examination. In *Music in the*

²⁵Daniel J. Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music* (New York: Dutton, 2006), 224-226.

²⁶Roberta King with Jean Ngoya Kidula, James R. Krabill, and Thomas A. Odura, *Music in the Life of the African Church* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 58.

²⁷"Missionary hymns from both Europe and the United States are prolific in large portions of the church in Sub-Saharan Africa today. They form a foundational core of the church's worship heritage across the continent, especially with mission-founded churches." King, *Music in the Life*, 18.

Life of the African Church, Krabill comments on the historical "first stage" of the introduction of Western worship music in Africa, a stage which he labels "importation." Krabill writes:

For much of Africa's church history, the hymns of Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley, portions of the Latin mass, or "The Hymn of Joan of Arc" were simply taken over from the West and reproduced as accurately as possible by new believers in African worship contexts. Interestingly, over time, many African Christians came to genuinely cherish Euro-American music traditions and consider them as their own . . . Catherine Gray reports a (similar) situation among the Baganda in Uganda where Western Hymnody "is now so much a part of Christian worship and Baganda life that it could be called indigenous music" (cited in Morehouse 2006, 10).

Not all Africans, however, have felt as "at home" with Western traditions as this might suggest. There has persisted with many people a deep lingering and underlying sense of alienation, of "spiritual unsuitability" in the Western music legacy introduced by the missionaries. Nigerian E. Bolaji Idowu stated it most harshly when he wrote (1965, 30-31): "Again and again, as we have observed, choirs have been made to sing or screech out complicated anthems in English while they barely or do not at all appreciate what they are singing . . . We must not be deceived by the fact that people have borne their martyrdom to the infliction without complaint so far."²⁸

Thus in Africa today we find a wide variety of responses to the historically embedded, centuries-old Western hymns, from being joyfully embraced, to tolerated, to repudiated if given the chance. The words of King are sobering: "Though their (the African church's) heritage is the hymns, they love to be 'taken home' as they sing songs drawn from their cultural roots. Only then is their music in worship complete."²⁹

One can only wonder how different the response to earnest missionary efforts would have been had the concept of "heart music" been understood and implemented in early mission work. This leads us to our second ethnomusicology principle which needs to be understood once and for all:

Principle #2: Music is not the universal language.

There is no intrinsic relationship between ascending melodic contour and going to heaven, but if this is the way a group of people agree to represent the Ascension, then a symbol has been created.³⁰

²⁸James Krabill, "Encounters—What Happens to Music when People Meet," in Roberta King, *Music in the Life of the African Church* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 71-2.

²⁹King, *Music in the Life*, 3.

³⁰Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology*, 316.

I suspect there is little chance that the Indian classical raga *Deepak* will conjure up in my mind the intended image of "a youth wearing a red cloth . . . [riding] an elephant among the hills and valleys, at night, singing heavenly songs . . ." ³¹ However, for certain people, the music does conjure up that image, for their culture has taught them to assign that meaning to the music. Just as "the relationship between the structure and sound of a word and what it means is usually arbitrary," ³² so also humans arbitrarily assign a meaning to the sounds and structures in music. ³³ We find "human beings assigning meanings to musical features and performances just as they assign meaning to other cultural forms such as clothing, food, and physical gestures." ³⁴ Obvious examples of our culture assigning meaning to certain music would include the slow tempos and syrupy string arrangements of many love ballads, or the minor keys, stripped-down sound, and raw chunky beats found in a lot of traditional American blues. We have assigned certain meanings to these musical features. However, these musical meanings are not universal. And, as Rice reminds us, "The substance on which verdicts of beauty are made are culturally specific and not universal." ³⁵

The fact that one's response to music is culturally conditioned—that a culture assigns meaning to musical sounds and styles—has significant implications to cross-cultural mission work. In her article, "The Great Misconception: Why Music is Not a Universal Language," Robin Harris, quoting from renowned British ethnomusicologist John Blacking, explains:

One of the root causes of the so-called worship wars is that we fail to take into account some basic differences in "music languages." John Blacking, a well-known British ethnomusicologist, wrote, "The meaning of musical signs is ambiguous; culture bound, rather than objectively self-evident; people are inclined to perceive and interpret them with reference to their experiences of different cultural systems, as well as according to variations in individual personality." In other words, our ability to decode the sounds we hear is culturally conditioned. And it is quite possible for us to misinterpret musical and other signs because they have attached meanings we don't understand . . . Systems of music and arts are, according to Blacking, even more culture-specific than language, so true understanding requires a long process of learn-

³¹Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology*, 316.

³²Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology*, 306.

³³As Nettl notes, there are "scholars who believe that music, like other human works, can best be examined as a symbol and as a system of signs or symbols." Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology*, 302.

³⁴Rice, *Ethnomusicology*, 57.

³⁵Rice, *Ethnomusicology*, 63.

ing the language, rather than relying on assumptions that may or may not be correct.³⁶

Understandably, it is hard for many Westerners to come to terms with the fact that in many other cultures the great works of Western hymnody and sacred music are simply not heard the same way we hear them. This was demonstrated conclusively, however, in research conducted by a group of Christian ethnomusicologists, as reported by Huyser-Honig. She writes.

You may wipe away tears of worshipful awe while hearing a mass choir sing Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus." ICE members³⁷ who've shared the famous chorus in other countries find that it's not universally appreciated.

- Senuso people in Ivory Coast said it sounded "like crying music."
- It reminded Massai people in Kenya of noisy jet engines.
- Tibetans said it was "not steady." They wondered how a song with so many high and low pitches and loud and soft volumes could be considered fine art.³⁸

One is hard pressed to find examples of missionaries who have taken the trouble to analyze the indigenous music with members of the host culture first before introducing Christian worship in their mission field. Instead, missionaries have often arrived to their fields with preconceived musical opinions, as Kidula explains.

In the encounter with European Christianity, African music almost always began in a position of unsuitability for worship because of its involvement with the African ways of life, which were deemed both pagan and uncivilized.³⁹

As will be examined under subsequent ethnomusicology principles, questions of the suitability of indigenous music for worship require careful study by the missionary in partnership with the host country. Musical signs and meanings in the indigenous music have frequently been misunderstood by missionaries due to a lack of field study. We do well to heed Harris's summary words. Comparing the translating of the Bible into the indigenous language to translating music into indigenous heart music, Harris writes:

³⁶John Blacking, *Music, Culture, and Experience*, ed. Reginald Byron (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), 229, quoted in Robin Harris, "The Great Misconception: Why Music is Not a Universal Language," in *Worship and Mission for the Global Church*, ed. James Krabill (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2013), 83.

³⁷International Council of Ethnodoxologists.

³⁸Huyser-Honig, *Ethnodoxology*. <http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/ethnodoxology-calling-all-peoples-to-worship-in-their-heart-language/>.

³⁹Jean Kidula, "Music Culture—African Life," in *Music in the Life of the African Church*, Roberta King (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 48.

Because of the widely accepted view of music as a universal language; it never occurred to most early mission workers that, just as they needed to learn new, complex, and "strange sounding" languages in order to communicate with local people, so also did they need to study and understand local music and other artistic systems like dance and drama as well as visual and verbal arts like proverbs, poetry, and storytelling. Instead many workers simply brought their Bible in one hand and their hymnbook in the other. The Bible was generally translated into vernacular languages, as were many of the song texts from the hymnbooks. But the musical language of those hymns remained unchanged in their original, Western form.⁴⁰

The conclusion is obvious. While the Bible-based texts of many a Western hymn and liturgy may certainly be useful in a mission field, the musical accompaniment in Western hymnals should have been left at home.⁴¹

Principle #3: Different cultures emphasize different music elements in their music.

The problem of inserting foreign worship music into a mission field is compounded when the music elements⁴² prominent in the missionary's worship music are of lesser importance in the music of the host country, while the host culture's music emphasizes different elements altogether. An obvious example: since Reformation times, Lutheran worship music has emphasized the elements of melody and harmony. However, much of African music⁴³ places a high value on rhythmic complexity, a rare feature in Lutheran worship music.⁴⁴ Social anthropologist John Miller Chernoff writes of the musical sensibility of Africa that is "almost reversed" from the musical sensibilities of Western music. Chernoff writes:

⁴⁰Robin Harris, "The Great Misconception," 85.

⁴¹For further discussion on the missionary leaving his or her hymnal at home, see Vida Chenoweth, "Spare Them Western Music," in *Worship and Mission for the Global Church*, ed. James Krabill (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2013), 119-123.

⁴²While there are a variety of approaches to identifying and describing the elements of music, the most common system lists seven elements: rhythm, dynamics, melody, harmony, timbre, texture, and form. For a simple definition of each music element plus brief related information see: <http://www.slideshare.net/onesideup/elements-of-music-13265026>.

⁴³Africa cultures are not, of course, monolithic. However, as Chernoff's quotation indicates, one does find throughout the continent a preponderance of music that, compared to Western church music, is much more rhythmically complex.

⁴⁴Luther's original "Our God He Is a Castle Strong" (A Mighty Fortress Is Our God) was more syncopated than most of the versions found in today's hymnals and may suggest a level of rhythmic sophistication among the Reformation congregations beyond that of most Lutheran churches today. See LW 53:283-284.

In Western music, then, rhythm is most definitely secondary in emphasis and complexity to harmony and melody. It is the progression of sound through a series of chords or tones that we recognize as beautiful. In African music this sensibility is almost reversed. African melodies are clear enough, even if African conceptions of tonal relationships are sometimes strange to us, but more important is the fact that in African music there are always at least two rhythms going on.⁴⁵

The missionary's Western music may not be anywhere near as attractive, beautiful, or special to the host country as the missionary assumes. In fact, the well-intentioned missionary's worship music may be further from the heart music of the people than he or she would ever imagine. The missionary role is best served when the missionary teaches a biblical theology of worship followed by facilitating a process whereby the nationals choose music styles that both honor God and resonate in the hearts of the people.

Principle #4: Within a biblical framework, the host country will choose the music styles appropriate to worship.

The meaning of music resides in people, not in sounds.⁴⁶

Tango, Calypso, Reggae, Salsa, Merengue, Bachata, Cumbia, Rumba—what do all of these music styles have in common? Every one of them is a secular dance style with a distinct rhythm. Today, every one of these music styles is used in Christian worship, whether in the Caribbean, Central America, or South America. How did these secular styles find their way into the church? When did a "rhythm of the street" become (to steal a line from Paul Simon) a "rhythm of the saints?" As Corbitt writes, "Since the early church of the first century, Christians have struggled with the associational baggage of music from ungodly or worldly contexts."⁴⁷

To understand when a secular style of music is acceptable for use in the church requires guidance from members of the culture the missionary serves—the cultural insiders. Consider the example of our own Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod in the United States. Before the 1960s one would have invariably found an organ (or a piano, among groups with limited resources) providing the accompaniment for worship music originally written primarily for keyboards. Today, one may also find in some WELS churches such instruments

⁴⁵John Miller Chernof, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 42.

⁴⁶J. Nathan Corbitt, *The Sound of the Harvest* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 33.

⁴⁷Corbitt, *Harvest*, 34.

as acoustic and electric guitars, electric bass, electric keyboards, and acoustic or electronic drum sets playing guitar-based songs in music styles once predominantly identified as secular.

When and how did certain secular music styles become acceptable in certain congregations? It would take an exceedingly complex study to attempt to answer these questions. But one thing is certain: cultures are not static, including the music culture of populations attending local churches. A cross-cultural missionary (like our fictional Chinese missionaries in the opening story) would be unable to judge what type of American music would be most effective in a local congregation without a careful study.

In facilitating the use of music in a cross cultural mission field, ethnomusicologist Brian Schrag has developed a "Heart Arts Questionnaire" for a Christian community. Schrag explains:

In this activity, the aim is to find out the artistic genres that most touch people's hearts in wider society and in any existing Christian congregations. The response will provide strong indicators of artistic genres that could be used for kingdom purposes (1 Sam 16:23; 2 Kgs 3:15, Ps 81:1-3) and help you answer questions like these:

- What forms of expression in the surrounding community could be most appropriate to express joy and reverence in corporate worship? What would be the reaction of believers and nonbelievers to those? What artistic genres could you choose? How can you draw on the characteristics of this genre—the people involved, where it happens, the form of the event, the objects involved, the language used—to deepen worship in the community?
- How could church planters and congregations evaluate the forms and symbolic meanings of the artistic genres that could be used in worship times?
- In what ways do people communicate truth with each other in your society? How could these methods be used in penetrating ways (e.g., for preaching, evangelizing, liturgy, teaching)?⁴⁸

This is but a portion of Schrag's questionnaire, but the thrust is clear: rather than a missionary arriving and implementing his or her pre-chosen worship music, the society is brought into partnership in evaluating which music styles will be appropriate and effective for that society's worship.

The potential complexity of the music culture in a foreign country, with its multitude of subcultures, can hardly be overstated. Consider an example from current mission work in Haiti.

⁴⁸Brian Schrag, *Creating Local Arts Together: A Manual to Help Communities Reach their Kingdom Goals* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2013), 176-177.

There is a saying in Haiti: the country is 70% Catholic, 30% Evangelical, and 100% Vodou. Aspects of the Vodou religion permeate Haitian culture. At one orphanage we worked with, children pass six Vodou temples on their two kilometer walk to school. During all-night Vodou ceremonies one hears a thunderous wall of polyrhythmic drum sounds played by half a dozen highly skilled drummers, along with occasional blasts from a conch shell, while a hypnotic, other-worldly female voice wails over the top of it all.

To distance themselves from Vodou, the Pentecostal churches in Haiti prohibit the use of Vodou drums—not just the Vodou rhythms, but the unique handmade conga-like drums with their distinct wood stake tension pegs. Most Pentecostal churches only permit the use of a metal-shell drum in the shape of a bass drum, played with a beater, plus the use of small hand drums. A simple, distinct, upbeat rhythm is known as the rhythm of the Pentecostal churches. In contrast to the *Vodousants* and the Pentecostals, the village Catholic church may use a simple conga drum and employ folkloric rhythms. Meanwhile, large Baptist churches in urban areas may utilize Western-style drum sets.

As for our Lutheran churches, the region of Haiti where one works makes a difference. In northern Haiti, where the French influence is strong, our congregation began with Western hymns. Aside from a small handful of favorite hymns, there is little robust singing by the congregation. (Then again, according to the pastor, it is also considered a serious lack of decorum for the pastor to sweat during the service.) However, in our Lutheran congregations in central Haiti, where people grew up hearing Vodou music, no one has a problem using Vodou rhythms (such as a polyrhythmic accompaniment involving four different rhythms played on four hand drums) during Sunday worship. In a context like this, where even a national church would have difficulty making decisions about what is “appropriate,” missionaries simply cannot make these decisions unilaterally. They need to partner with cultural insiders from the local area to understand what types of music and musical instruments are appropriate for worship.

Finally, as noted earlier, societies are not static, but constantly in flux. Christian ethnomusicology literature is replete with accounts of congregations struggling with issues of appropriateness in styles of music, dance, and drama for worship. Sometimes, the adaptation of a secular style to use in the church is a gradual process over years and years. At other times, the acceptability of a secular performing arts style for worship has occurred through a single incident. Consider the following true story from Western mission work in Thailand.

A voice called out, “Grandma, *sit down!* What do you think you’re doing?”

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Without a break in her motions, she simply stated, “You don’t tell your old grandma to sit down. I’m ninety years old, and I’m just thanking the Lord that you’re here.”

During an Isaan language Bible discussion in Thailand, as people sat on straw mats in the home of a believer, one elderly woman stood up from her squatting position, stepped into the middle of the circle and suddenly began to dance traditional Isaan steps. Her thin arms and fingers waved gracefully back and forth in rhythm to her small, delicate steps. It was a familiar sight at drunken parties—but this was *Christian worship!* There was no music, only stunned silence . . .

After Grandma danced, however, everything changed. Traditional dance became a part of worship. And music soon followed.⁴⁹

God has commanded that we use music as a vehicle for conveying the saving gospel message. The stakes could not be higher when making choices in style. The challenge will always be to find music styles that are appropriate, attractive, and effective. Corbitt provides a concise summary:

There are two dangers. On the one hand, congregations that protect their music boundaries run the risk of raising walls against the very people they seek to reach. On the other hand, some Christians appear to identify with the culture of the street rather than offering a faith for the street.⁵⁰

By working closely with the nationals, may we find music styles whereby, through the power of the Holy Spirit we might, as Luther says, “be bettered and strengthened in the faith through his holy Word, driven into the heart with sweet song.”⁵¹

Principle #5: Worship music needs to be playable by local musicians on locally-available instruments.

Our drums, cymbals and other traditional instruments had to give way to keyboards and other pianos.⁵²

A few years ago I was in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for a songwriting workshop . . . At the end of the workshop we had a closing celebration. Among the guests was a third-generation

⁴⁹Frank Fortunato, Paul Neely, and Carol Brinneman, *All the World Is Singing: Glorifying God through the Worship Music of the Nations* (Tyrone, GA: Authentic Publishing, 2006), 16-17.

⁵⁰Corbitt, *Harvest*, 26.

⁵¹Plass, *What Luther Says*, 2:981.

⁵²Paul Hiebert, *Mission et Culture* (St-Legier: Editions Enmaus, 2002), 206, quoted in Roch Ntankeh, “Culturally Appropriate Worship; My Story as a Cameroonian Pastor,” in *Worship and Mission for the Global Church: An Ethnodoxology Handbook*, ed. James R. Krabill (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2013), 94.

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pastor. . . . Several guests had been invited to speak, but the pastor was not on the program. Toward the end of the celebration, however, he insisted on taking the floor. He was amazed, he said, that he had an opportunity there to hear the Lord being praised, not only in his mother tongue, but also with rhythms and instruments from his village. He was so overwhelmed to have this wonderful experience during his lifetime that he burst into tears, unable to control his emotions.

The pastor's reaction was a great shock to me because, according to my African education and training, a man, especially an elderly man, must not show his tears. The fact that this man was so overwhelmed by culturally appropriate worship that he could not control himself showed that the need for such worship in our society was critical.⁵³

Throughout foreign mission history, the stereotypical image of a missionary's wife playing an organ or piano while the nationals gamely attempt to sing a hymn was an all-too-frequent reality.⁵⁴ National musicians found themselves not only unfamiliar with the style of music, but also unfamiliar with the imported instruments and how to play them. Meanwhile, the host country's heart music was often categorically dismissed, or even prohibited (along with the indigenous instruments), due to its non-Christian connections. The problem grew as the number of locations in the mission field offering Sunday services increased.

As most Western worship music was originally written for keyboards, adapting hymns to indigenous instruments can prove extremely difficult. I recall Peruvian guitarists in remote Andean villages earnestly trying to accompany Lutheran hymns. However, the need to change chords so often (at times every beat or two) makes it nearly impossible to play the hymns well. The alternative strategy of having missionary wives and missionaries teach nationals to play keyboards proved to be a long and arduous task with decidedly disappointing results.

Heart music by definition is played on the instruments available to a culture. Attempts to replicate the music on instruments other than those the music was originally composed for can be problematic as best or simply impossible.⁵⁵ Consider the Indian *sitar*. Notes are

⁵³ Krabill, *Global*, 9.

⁵⁴ Christian ethnomusicologists remind people of the parody of this phenomenon found in an early scene in the movie, *The African Queen*, where Katherine Hepburn is playing an organ and, along with the pastor, singing before bewildered Africans. See Krabill, *Global*, 145.

⁵⁵ In my opinion, attempts to replicate the sound of indigenous instruments with electronic instruments invariably produces disappointing results. While the quality of

utilized that fall between the half-step intervals found on a keyboard. A pair of *tablas* (Indian drums) produce sounds that no other drum can produce.

Moreover, by using Western music and Western instruments, the missionary may send an underlying message to the nationals that only Western music is appropriate for worship. Nationals may conclude that their indigenous instruments are inappropriate for God's house or, at the least, are lower-status.

The question of the appropriateness of certain instruments to Christian worship is a question that has vexed both foreign missionaries and new Christians of the host country for centuries. The concern can be found as far back as the New Testament era.

Since the early church of the first century, Christians have struggled with the associational baggage of music from ungodly or worldly contexts. Instruments were not allowed as part of Christian worship because they were often associated with the pagan rituals of temple prostitutes and Greek dramas. It was nearly eight centuries before the first instruments were reintroduced into the worship of the Catholic tradition despite a strong Old Testament tradition of temple worship (Hustad, 1993, p. 179). However, when we view the attitudes of early missionaries toward traditional music of other cultures, they struggled with the same evaluation of music outside the sanctuary of Christian worship as we do today.⁵⁶

Similar to analyzing music styles for appropriateness in worship, analyzing instruments for appropriateness in worship needs to be done in discussion with cultural insiders. The situation may well be fluid, as, again, music cultures are not static. A study of the cultural connotations of musical instruments found in the host community requires input from numerous insider sources, including Christians and non-Christians from several generations, recently added church members and older church members, plus Christians not only from the Lutheran churches but from other area churches.

One may encounter much difference of opinion within the Christian community regarding the appropriateness of certain indigenous instruments. Consider the following example from the Isaan culture in Thailand:

Isaan culture has a variety of beautiful, melodious indigenous musical instruments. None, though, expresses the peoples' heart more than their bamboo mouth organ, known locally as the *kaen*.

the electronic versions continues to increase, such programs cannot, of course, produce the countless technical nuances available to a player of the original instrument.

⁵⁶ Corbitt, *Harvest*, 34.

Incorporating the *kaen* into worship, however, did not come without questions. In animistic practices, the *kaen* is used to call upon the spirits. Was it appropriate to use *kaen* to worship the Lord Jesus Christ?

Thai Christians still debate its use. Some cannot separate the idolatrous practice from the instruments, and therefore condemn the *kaen* as "satanic." However, for Isaan people untouched by Western religious influences the *kaen* remains the sound of "our people." It speaks deeply to the heart of Isaan who are now in a new family as God's children.

As one follower says, "Why can't we use the *kaen* to praise God? Before we became Christians, we used our mouths to follow spirits. Does this mean we now need to get a new mouth to praise God? Isn't a new heart enough?"⁵⁷

Some cultures have come up with creative solutions to separate music styles or music instruments from their original non-Christian connections. For example, in Africa, "sticks may be used in playing church drums and the same rhythms played with bare hands in entertainment venues."⁵⁸ The difference in the drum sound would be significant. Recall our example in Haiti, where it is considered inappropriate to bring the distinct, wood-peg Vodou drums (even brand new ones never used in a Vodou ceremony) into the house of the Lord. Yet, in certain regions of Haiti the distinct polyrhythms played during Vodou ceremonies may be appropriated and played on hand drums for Christian worship.

For Latin America worship, where the indigenous instrument of worship is the guitar, we are currently involved in producing a guitar-based (rather than keyboard-based) Spanish hymnal. A variety of Latin rhythms are used in the liturgy and the hymns. Many of the songs in the hymnal include both a page of the guitar-chord arrangement plus a page of the Latin percussion arrangement (maracas, claves, guiro, bongo, conga, etc.). A 2016 lyric writing workshop in Lima, Peru, brought together three Lutheran brothers in the faith from Bolivia, Chile, and Mexico. The team, guided by a Bolivian pastor, wrote lyrics to rhythmic folksongs from Bolivia, Peru, Mexico, and Jamaica. Since the hymnal is available as an online resource to be downloaded and printed, we can easily add songs and liturgies to the collection. Composers and lyricists from any of the Spanish-speaking countries (which often contain extremely diverse cultures within them) may easily contribute works for consideration for the Spanish hymnal.

⁵⁷ Fortunato, *Singing*, 17-18.

⁵⁸ King, *Music in the Life*, 47.

Kidula reminds us that "many African melody instruments still take a back seat to European and contemporary instruments in worship."⁵⁹ It is truly regrettable if missionary practices have led nationals to make inappropriate comparisons between their indigenous instruments and Western instruments, and conclude that their instruments are inferior.

However, another type of paternalism may occur when missionaries attempt to limit or exclude the use of modern instruments. Understanding the significance of modern Western instruments to a non-Western mission field requires study. Krabill writes that in Africa beginning after 1982 he witnessed

the increased use in many churches of "praise choruses," English and French-language song texts, American-inspired worship resources, and the almost universal adoption, from youthful, urban congregations to faith communities in outlying rural areas, of the drum kit and electronic equipment (i.e., sound systems, keyboards, and guitars).⁶⁰

Jean Ngoya Kibula's findings are similar. Writing on his attempts to teach music in African Bible schools in the 1980s and 1990s (the countries are not specified), Kidula reports that the students "held an ambivalent attitude toward African instruments. Youth were interested in participating in the global culture and preferred to learn keyboard or guitar to African instruments except for special choral numbers."⁶¹ (We will have more on this topic in a subsequent ethnomusicology principle.)

One also finds attempts to combine indigenous instruments and modern instruments in foreign mission fields.⁶² Based on ethnomusicological research in Bulgaria, Rice makes the following fascinating observations on the motives underlying attempts by Bulgarians to combine modern Western instruments with indigenous instruments. Although Rice's research is based on secular music and groups, his observations help explain why some worship communities wish to combine the use of modern and indigenous instruments.

Synthesizers, drum sets, and electric guitars produce an underlying bed of amplified sound that is an icon of modern forms of global popular music. This element in the musical sign allows Bulgarian fans of this music to imagine themselves as modern and connected to a cosmopolitan culture in which this kind of music is ubiquitous. The lyrics are in Bulgarian, and sometimes a Bulgar-

⁵⁹ King, *Music in the Life*, 49.

⁶⁰ King, *Music in the Life*, 63.

⁶¹ King, *Music in the Life*, 113.

⁶² See Krabill, *Global*, 148-150.

ian traditional instrument like the bagpipe is added to the mix, underscoring the Bulgarianness of this genre and its link to Bulgarian national identity.⁶³

In congregations with no instrumentalists, the use of professionally recorded accompaniment tracks is a growing option. A university campus church group in Venezuela simply sings along to YouTube videos during Sunday services. However, congregations in Majority World settings are often at the mercy of energy availability and the power and quality of their sound system. Even where the technology presents no problems the potential for YouTube videos to turn worship into entertainment rather than participation must be considered carefully.

As in all discussions on appropriateness of music practices for the national church, nationals need to take the lead in discussions on music instruments. The missionary, knowing his or her limitations as a cultural outsider, will encourage the input of a wide variety of cultural insiders in Bible-based discussion on instrument use. Musical instruments that are easily available, easy to maintain, can be taught and learned within the culture, and most importantly can play the heart music of the people, need to be utilized for worship.

In Psalm 150, every category of instrument is called upon for use in praising God in corporate worship. God willing, any "disqualified" indigenous instruments will one day find their way into the service of the Creator of all instruments, our wonderful Savior God.

Principle #6: The creation of music resources by the national church is part of the overall missional goal of planting indigenous confessional churches having their own identity.

Wherever the board conducts mission work it will seek to plant national churches that will grow up into their own identity and stand with us doctrinally and confessionally.⁶⁴

Not everyone composes songs. It is not like speech in that everyone talks. Let us be patient.⁶⁵

The following statements are found in chapter four of the *WELS Board for World Mission Handbook*, under the heading, "to plant indigenous churches rather than long-dependent missions."

Our aim is to awaken and foster in newly converted children of God the awareness, willingness, and joy of using the gifts that are given by the Holy Spirit as fruits of faith for the administration,

⁶³Rice, *Ethnomusicology*, 59-60.

⁶⁴*WELS Board for World Missions Handbook*, 4.2.

⁶⁵Vida Chenoweth, "Spare Them Western Music," in ed. Krabill, *Global*, 121.

the practice, and the support of sound evangelical church work in their midst and the propagation of the gospel in the world.⁶⁶

In order to "awaken and foster in newly converted children of God the awareness, willingness, and joy" of using Spirit-given musical gifts for kingdom work, the missionary will need to encourage and facilitate the use of the culture's appropriate heart music for worship.

Regarding the self-administration of the national church in matters of worship forms the handbook states:

WELS worship forms are evaluated with the national church in order to adapt understandable patterns for the culture in which it takes place. The missionary trains and mentors spiritual leaders for the national church. He has a phased plan of transferring responsibilities to national leaders and eventually to a fully trained national pastor . . .⁶⁷

"Evaluating worship forms with national leaders in order to adapt understandable patterns for the culture" should lead to biblically sound worship practices and music resources which are culturally appropriate, attractive, and effective. As the missionary "trains and mentors spiritual leaders for the national church," and "phases in a transfer of responsibilities to national leaders," it is crucial that any musical preferences of the missionary that are not appropriate to the host culture are not passed on, particularly to the first group of trained and mentored pastors and lay leaders.⁶⁸ As noted earlier, modern foreign mission history is replete with examples of missionaries failing in this regard, as the first generation of national pastors insist on inserting culturally inappropriate music into the national church. Undoing the damage caused by well-meaning but misguided first-generation pastors becomes a significant challenge. One need keep in mind the following handbook guideline: "Cultural adaptations of traditional church customs and forms will be carefully tested and evaluated by expatriate and national workers *together* during the partnership stage of development (emphasis mine)."⁶⁹

When an open and equal partnership between missionaries and national leaders exists, indigenous music styles and forms can be tested and evaluated fairly for appropriateness in worship. Nationals must not be afraid to champion appropriate indigenous music styles for worship that may run counter to the personal preferences of the missionary.

In the handbook section entitled "self-propagation" we read:

⁶⁶*WELS Board for World Missions Handbook*, 4.2.

⁶⁷*WELS Board for World Missions Handbook*, 4.2.3a.

⁶⁸*WELS Board for World Missions Handbook*, 4.2.3a.

⁶⁹*WELS Board for World Missions Handbook*, 4.2.3b.

The planting of an indigenous church helps ensure growth that is *natural and culturally appropriate* . . . The forward-thinking missionary also will realize that soul-winning ministry is enhanced by "preparing God's people for works of service" (Eph 4:12). As believers are trained to propagate the faith, they spread the saving message to a greater number of people in *clearer language* and in a larger area than the missionaries could ever hope to reach (2 Kings 5:2-3; Lk 2:17; Jn 4:28-29; Acts 8:4; Acts 18:24-26; 2 Cor. 3:2-3; 1 Peter 2:9).

Believers witnessing among those of their own culture attract the ears of their fellow citizens in a way that is unique . . . The church-planting missionary makes way for a properly motivated and trained laity who help "grow" a national church with the power and according to the timetable of the Holy Spirit (emphasis mine).⁷⁰

What is said above regarding spoken language is equally applicable to the musical language of a people. Just as nationals spread the life-saving message in clearer language than the missionary, culturally appropriate music will communicate more clearly to the people than a foreign musical language. Believers who are witnessing among those of their own culture attract the "musical ears" of their fellow citizens in a way that is unique. The goal is that the "church-planting missionary make way for a properly motivated and trained laity" also in music matters, to help "grow" a national church with the power of the Holy Spirit.

As the handbook importantly states in the final sentence of this section: "Their community [the larger community in which the believing nationals live] will never be allowed to forget that an active and energetic group of Christians is in its midst." Those Christians will no doubt be even more energized as they utilize their heart music in reaching out to others.

Principle #7: Within a biblical framework, outward emotional expression in worship needs to be informed by the local culture.

So David went to bring up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. When those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets.

As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King

David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart . . .

When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, going around half-naked in full view of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!" (2 Sam 6:12b-16,20).

Michal strongly disapproved of David's exuberant dance to the Lord (including his improvised dance outfit!). She felt David's unbridled emotional expression highly inappropriate for Israelite royalty. As we will later see in David's response to Michal, the king makes it clear that what is important is the attitude toward God in one's heart, an attitude which may produce an extremely emotional and dramatic expression of praise.

Societies vary widely in the type and degree of emotional expression that is considered culturally appropriate. Obvious examples include the wide variety of ways that grief is expressed during funeral activities, from loud wailing to quiet weeping, from throwing oneself on the casket to standing rigid at attention, from a silent exit from the cemetery to the sound of a brass band that becomes more exuberant by the minute. (In practice, one often finds much variety within a given culture and also individuals who may act beyond the normal cultural guidelines.) Consider the wide spectrum of ways in which people greet each other upon arrival to a place of Christian worship, from loud welcoming words, bear hugs and kisses, to a simple, respectful nod and a firm, fraternal handshake. Cultures teach what kinds of emotional expression are "normal," and how departures from the norm will be interpreted.

Emotional expression in church music is culturally informed. Consider the striking differences in emotional expression that may be found in Christian church choirs in the United States, e.g., the difference between the church choir of an inner city African-American congregation and the choir of a rural, Midwestern congregation. Such musical and performance elements as the musical arrangements, instrumentation, physical movement/choreography, interplay with the congregation, and the use of improvisation will both influence and demonstrate the emotions that are finding expression, and these may differ significantly.

The cross-cultural missionary may be coming from a vocal aesthetic that contrasts widely with that of the people he or she serves. For example, King writes, "Stylistic studies that compared types of African production against Asian or European vocalizations described the use of groans, moans, guttural sounds in emoting and as a pre-

⁷⁰WELS Board for World Missions Handbook, 4.2.3c.

ferred aesthetic."⁷¹ Such vocal aesthetics of the heart music of the nationals may be foreign to the worship music and music sensibilities of the missionary. Changing or discarding indigenous musical practices or techniques that enhance emotional expression in favor of Western worship aesthetics will certainly not endear the missionary's worship program to the nationals.

Outward display of emotional expression in worship music performance is not of course to be used as a measuring stick to determine the intensity of feelings within the heart. Such a correlation is patently false. For example, consider the stoic, ramrod-straight war veteran in the midst of a wildly-cheering parade crowd as the flag goes by on Independence Day. The veteran's pride and commitment to country may be far beyond that of the more demonstrative parade goers around him. Sinful judgmentalism is at work when one church member questions the faith of another member due to the lack of an emotionally intense demonstration of "gifts of the Spirit."

Nonetheless, an extraordinary array of emotional responses are involved in a Sunday liturgical service: praise and prayer to Creator God, confession of guilt, repentance, relief from guilt, assurance of forgiveness and an eternity in Paradise, a recounting of God's mighty deeds, sobering instruction on how to live one's life, answers to life's most vital questions. All of these are included in every Sunday Service, and all our emotional responses to these vital themes takes place within the very presence of our almighty God.

Missionaries need to analyze carefully the cultural norms of emotional expression of the people they serve. One needs to diligently guard against considering one's home culture's standards for emotional expression in worship to be universally applicable. As always, God's word will be the guiding light as the missionary works with the nationals on the topic of emotional expression in worship. What one will find in the word is, of course, variety in emotional expression in biblical worship among diverse cultures. For Christians of all ages, worship emanates from the humble heart of a penitent sinner who, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus, may approach Almighty God as his very own child.

David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD's people Israel—I will celebrate before the LORD. I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor."

And Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death (2 Sam 6:21-23).

Principle #8: Other arts, such as dance and drama, may be linked to music and utilized in worship.

When Pharaoh's horses, chariots and horsemen went into the sea, the LORD brought the waters of the sea back over them, but the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground. Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing. Miriam sang to them:

"Sing to the LORD,
for he is highly exalted.
Both horse and driver
he has hurled into the sea" (Exod 15:19-21).

While hastily preparing to leave Egypt and slavery forever, Miriam apparently packed in a way that gave her easy access to her hand drum. So did all the women of Israel. When Pharaoh's army drowned in the Red Sea, all the women immediately grabbed their hand drums and broke into exhilarating dance and song. Many years later, the command to praise God with dance was written into Israel's inspired songbook: "Let them praise his name with dancing, and make music to him with timbrel and harp" (Ps 149:3); "Praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe" (Ps 150:4).

Commenting on music and dance in Africa, Wemen wrote, "Africa's music is a mirror of the soul, an essential part of [the African's] inmost being . . . it is in the music and dance that the African can best be himself."⁷² It is highly unlikely that a Westerner would find himself or herself saying, "It is in the music and dance that I can best be myself." Let's face it. The cross-cultural missionary's exposure to and participation in dance may be limited, especially as it pertains to the use of dance in praise and worship. Chernoff describes the situation.

Thompson has described African religions as "danced faiths" . . . the dance gives visible form to the music . . . The "visible faith" of our saints [Westerners] has traditionally taken a different form, and the notion that one can dance one's faith would tend to lead us in one of two directions, toward an ecstatic freedom of movement that breaks the limitations and boundaries of self and body, or toward a quiet and solemn uniformity of movement that gains power as a community unites to testify a covenant of duty and love. A brief survey of the music which Westerners consider to be religious would make evident why Westerners have had difficulty perceiving the religious and philosophical sentiments in African

⁷¹King, *Music in the Life*, 43-44.

⁷²Henry Weman, "African Music and the Church in Africa," *Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia*, 3(1960):20, quoted in Krabill, *Global*, 144-145.

dance: if you tried to dance to Handel's "Messiah" you would end up marching.⁷³

Chernoff's point regarding the connection between music and dance is critical. If the sacred music introduced by the missionary is foreign and "undanceable," the use of indigenous dance by the "new man" the Holy Spirit has created will be unnecessarily, even tragically, limited. The use of dance for praise, sanctioned by God himself, will diminish, perhaps even be entirely lost, rather than encouraged and expanded. A critical missionary mistake in one area of indigenous artistic expression has led to another: The loss of culturally appropriate music for worship leads to the loss or severe limitation of God's gift of dance to the national church.

As with music, dance may be used for theological, doxological, and pedagogical purposes. The guidelines presented in this paper regarding the nationals taking the lead in creating culturally appropriate music for the church are equally applicable to dance.⁷⁴ The missionary offers guidance and encouragement through teaching a biblical understanding of dance. God's word contains stories of dance, from the abhorrent use of dance by the children of Israel worshipping the golden calf and the dreadful use of dance by Salome, to examples of the appropriate use of dance by Miriam the prophetess; by David, Israel's mightiest king; and in the words of the prophet Jeremiah (31:4,13).⁷⁵ The psalmist's inspired words that we use dance in praise of the Lord motivate us to find a way. This is especially true in cultures that make such prominent use of dance.

Missiological literature is replete with examples of the use of dance for pedagogical purposes. Ethnodramatologist Julisa Rowe writes of a Catholic arts training institute in Andhra Pradesh, India which "has done folk and classic [dance] pieces depicting the life and works of Christ, such as shepherds dancing for joy at the birth of Jesus, and a *bharata natyam* on the miracles of Jesus."⁷⁶ I recall witnessing a Christmas program at a Lutheran orphanage in India in which an 8-year old orphan danced the story of Jesus healing a lame man. Throwing his cane into the air, the lame man, who had never even stood before, burst into the most exuberant

and exhilarated dance I have ever seen—the dance of one who had waited his whole life to dance. The audience responded to the child's extraordinary depiction of Jesus' mighty deed with thunderous applause.

It is not only God's gift of dance that needs to be employed in service of the kingdom. Rowe goes on to demonstrate how "indigenous drama forms are being used to communicate Christ with great effect around the world."⁷⁷ On the use of drama in Africa, King writes:

Enacting ritual drama reinforced ideas and teaching from kinetic, visual, and physical senses. This layering of knowledge was such that it was not only heard, but also felt, seen, experienced, and expressed. Such an approach to knowledge acquisition enhanced the oral presentation and reinforcement of both individual and collective memory.⁷⁸

As Chernoff reports, "J.H. Kwabena Nketia, perhaps the foremost African musicologist, has written; 'A village that has no organized music or neglects community singing, drumming, or dancing is said to be dead.'⁷⁹ These are indeed sobering words for the missionary entering a culture whose arts he or she has not studied and does not understand. Song, dance, and drama form a "multiplex of inextricably linked artistic forms"⁸⁰ that, in many cultures, play a critical role in the formation of community and in communicating values.⁸¹ God has gifted mankind with a variety of art forms, none of which are to be left outside of the faith community. Rather, the church needs to find its rightful place of influence and participation in the culture's arts. Where the Spirit has converted men and women we find the church "recreating and reconfiguring the musical culture for the purposes of the kingdom of God."⁸² May our Lord guide our cross-cultural workers to find ways of working with the host country that encourage the use of music, dance, and drama. All of the arts need to be employed in the unrelenting war with the devil and the demons for eternal souls.

Then young women will dance and be glad, young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow (Jer 31:13).

⁷³ Chernoff, *African Rhythm*, 144.

⁷⁴ Rice reminds us that "a tremendous amount of the world's music accompanies dance . . . ethnomusicological publications and conferences have always welcomed reports on dance research, and it deserves a place among the important themes of the field." Rice, *Ethnomusicology*, 66.

⁷⁵ Recall the reference to dance made by Jesus, recorded in Matthew 11:17 and Luke 7:32.

⁷⁶ Julisa Rowe, "Ethnodramatology for Community Engagement," in ed. Krabill, *Global*, 61.

⁷⁷ Julisa Rowe, "Ethnodramatology," in ed. Krabill, *Global*, 62.

⁷⁸ King, *Music in the Life*, 45.

⁷⁹ J. H. Kwabena Nketia, "Sources of Historical Data on the Musical Cultures of Africa," *Institute of African Studies*, University of Ghana (1972): 3, quoted in Chernoff, *African Rhythm*, 36.

⁸⁰ King, *Music in the Life*, 7.

⁸¹ King, *Music in the Life*, 137.

⁸² King, *Music in the Life*, 137.

Principle #9: In addition to fundamental biblical doctrines, cultures may emphasize different spiritual topics in their songs.

There are many different metaphors of the atonement . . . justification in Christ within a legal setting . . . atonement as sacrificial expiation . . . The metaphor that does stir the heart of the animist is that of Christ, the triumphant one, who defeats the principalities and powers.⁸³

As a missionary to Peru, for years I had wanted to work with a group within reach of one of our preaching stations, the indigenous Shawi tribe of the Amazon jungle. One cannot, of course, simply walk into an Amazon tribal village without permission. National Pastor Jaime and I had met a hunter, Emilio, a non-native, who knew of our desire to work with the tribals. Emilio had permission to enter the Shawi village of Nueva Barranquita where he had an agreement with the village chief. Emilio would give half of all the animals he shot to the village and keep the other half to sell at a local river town market. Emilio said he would introduce Jaime and me to the Nueva Barranquita chief and elders. (It wasn't until much later that we discovered that Emilio was also a shaman. Having heard that Jaime and I were "spiritual men," Emilio thought that if he hung around with us he might pick up a few new spells and incantations.)

One long day, after hours on an Amazon River tributary and another hour of walking down a jungle path, we finally stood at the edge of Nueva Barranquita. Emilio went in to ask permission for us to enter the village. Several women, seeing a white person for the first time in their lives, let out a scream, grabbed a child under each arm, and fled inside the nearest thatch-roof hut. They were afraid I was there to steal their children for reasons too ghastly to describe here.

After a forty-five-minute wait, we were allowed to enter the village to talk to the elders. We stepped into the communal house where the elders formed a circle around us, machetes at their sides. I offered a very brief, simple, law and gospel message. A Shawi who spoke very basic Spanish (most of the men do for trading purposes) translated into their heart language. My presentation took less than half an hour. I asked if there were any questions. "Yes," replied the chief. "What do you think about evil spirits?"

I immediately replied that we knew that they existed but that it is possible to live one's life without fear of evil spirits. Everyone in the room was visibly startled at the statement. I asked if we could come

⁸³Gailyn Van Rheenen, *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1991), 141.

back and tell them more about the one true God, who had already defeated the evil spirits and the chief of the evil spirits. After a brief consultation with the elders, the village chief invited us back.

In our Lutheran hymnals, other than an occasional reference to Satan, we do not have much material on the topic of evil spirits. As this is the spiritual topic of paramount importance to the Shawi tribe, as well as other tribal groups living throughout the Peruvian Amazon, I wrote a song about evil spirits, based on a simple three-chord American folk song melody. It was very well received:

No tengas miedo en la oscuridad

1. *No tengas miedo en la oscuridad
Cuando hay ruidos extraños en la comunidad
Nunca estas solo, tienes la promesa de Dios.
"Estoy contigo siempre hijo", dijo Cristo:*
2. *El diablo y los demonios fueron echados de los cielos
Ellos han perdido el paraíso, por su rebelión contra Dios
Ahora en la tierra a veces ellos quieren molestarte
Pero tengo su palabra, ¡Que consuelo! que dice así:*
3. *"El Señor es mi pastor, nada me faltará"
En lugares de delicados pastos me hará descansar
En valle de sombra de muerte a veces yo necesito pasar
Pero Tú Señor estás conmigo, no temeré.
"Siempre contigo" Cristo dijo: no temeré.
"Hasta el fin del mundo" Cristo dijo: no temeré.*

Translation:

1. Do not be afraid in the dark
When there are strange noises in the community.
You are never alone, you have the promise of God.
"I am with you always, son," Christ said.
2. The devil and the demons were cast out of heaven.
They have lost paradise, for their rebellion against God.
Now on earth they want to trouble me sometimes.
But I have your word—what comfort!—which says:
3. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."
In green pastures He makes me rest.
In the valley of the shadow of death sometimes I need to pass.
But you, Lord, are with me, I will not fear.
"Always with you," Christ said; I will not fear.
"Until the end of the world," Christ said. I will not fear.

Fundamental biblical doctrines can be presented in songs in ways that take into account the spiritual worldview of the host culture. As noted in the opening quotation, the redemption language that resonates most with cultures coming out of an animist religion (arguably

the largest non-Christian religion in the world) speaks about Jesus defeating the devil and the evil spirits.

But not only do we need to present the fundamental doctrines in song. We need to encourage and facilitate the production of songs that provide a biblical response to any spiritual issues the host culture particularly struggles with. These concerns will, of course, always be connected to fundamental doctrines. But being able to respond to a group's specific daily spiritual concerns (such as fear of evil spirits) demonstrates the relevancy of the Christian faith not only in making it to the blessed hereafter, but also in facing the intense struggles in the here and now.

Certain spiritual misconceptions within a culture's worldview may have been handed down for countless generations. Bible-based songs that are easily memorized may greatly aid in a group's battle to throw off centuries-old spiritual confusion and darkness.

Principle #10. Cultures are not monolithic.

Monocultural societies exist in fewer and fewer numbers—if, in fact, they ever really did.⁸⁴

Compounding the evangelist's challenge in finding effective music for outreach is the fact that cultures are not monolithic. In today's modern world, new societies are being created at an accelerating rate. Rice writes:

modern life is causing many societies and cultures to fragment and recombine. Individuals find it advantageous, and in some cases necessary, to escape their social and cultural roots, move to new places, and connect with, or even create, new social groups.⁸⁵

The movement of people of all age groups from rural to urban areas creates new subcultures and even subcultures within them or *micro-cultures*. Certain modern cultures appear more stratified along generational lines than ever before. Newly forming cultures today include diaspora communities in large cities, recently arriving refugees in rural areas, migrant youths, long-term refugee camp dwellers, etc. The missionary's target group needs to be carefully surveyed and studied, reliable inside informants need to be cultivated, and trusting relationships need to be established if music that communicates effectively is to be discovered and developed.

Consider another example from my missionary work in Peru. Several members of our Lima churches had emerged from a drug-

⁸⁴Brian Schrag, "Ethnoartistic Cocreation in the Kingdom of God," in Krabill, *Global*, 52.

⁸⁵Rice, *Ethnomusicology*, 4.

addiction past (illegal drugs in Peru are incredibly cheap) and demonstrated a heart for working with recovering addicts in a residential treatment center. As "cultural insiders," our members were familiar with the subculture of an urban Peruvian drug addict. We were invited by a privately-owned residential treatment center to present Bible classes, Sunday services, and individual and group counselling.

It immediately became obvious that the musical settings of our Spanish translation of *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941) held no interest for the treatment-center culture. Meanwhile, there were certain spiritual topics of great concern to the clients. Beyond the need to understand the basics of sin and grace, critical spiritual issues for the clients included the assurance of Christ's unconditional love, the availability of spiritual strength to overcome addiction, and the issue of leaving behind the tremendous guilt from the consequences of their addictions (broken marriages, estranged children, lost careers, lost homes, etc.). For those clients who did not know Jesus, the urgency of their immediate spiritual situation was obvious. More than a few residents had nearly died from overdose and were constantly in danger of relapse. Eternal souls were at stake!

The residents often possessed a huge amount of nervous energy. Worship songs that were high energy, up-tempo, and based on modern music with Latin rhythms and Western pop sensibilities became tremendously popular. Each song included law and gospel teachings. With a stack of tambourines waiting for them at the end of every bench in the chapel, residents loved singing and shouting the precious Bible-based truths found in the following samples from various songs.

Como un ladrón en la noche

Como un ladrón en la noche

La muerte viene por mí.

Como un ladrón en la noche

La muerte viene por mí.

Nunca es invitada

Debe estar preparado.

Yo sé que Cristo me ama

Está escrito en la Escritura.

Yo sé que Cristo me ama

Está escrito en la Escritura.

En la cruz Cristo murió

Después tres días, Él resucitó.

Literal translation:

Like a Thief in the Night

Like a thief in the night,
death comes for me.

Like a thief in the night,
death comes for me.
Never is it invited,
you better be prepared.

I know that Christ loves me;
it's written in the Scriptures.
I know that Christ loves me;
it's written in the Scriptures.
On the cross Christ died;
after three days he rose.

No quiero vivir en su sombra

*No quiero vivir en su sombra no más, Satanás.
No quiero vivir en su sombra no más, Satanás.
Con fe en Cristo somos hijos de Dios.
Con Él yo puedo derrotar a los demonios.
Que milagro ahora estoy aquí, ¡Cristo me salvó!
No quiero caminar contigo no más, Satanás.
No quiero caminar contigo no más, Satanás.
No soy un esclavo de ningún hábito.
De todo mi pasado Cristo me libró.
¡Que milagro ahora estoy aquí, un hijo de Dios!*

Literal translation:

I Don't Want to Live in Your Shadow

I don't want to live in your shadow no more, Satan.
I don't want to live in your shadow no more, Satan.
With faith in Christ we are sons of God.
With him I can defeat the demons.
What a miracle now I am here, Christ saved me!
I don't want to walk with you, no more, Satan.
I don't want to walk with you, no more, Satan.
I am not a slave to any habit.
From all of my past Christ freed me
What a miracle now I am here, a son of God!

Dejalo tu pasado

*"Déjalo, tu pasado en el pasado.
"Déjalo, tu pasado en el pasado.
"Deja tu culpa en la cruz,
"Dame tu carga," dice Jesús.
"Borrado, tu pasado está borrado.
"Borrado, tu pasado está borrado.
"¿Son tus pecados como escarlata?
"Quedarán blancos como la nieve.
"¿Son rojos como la púrpura?
"Quedarán como la lana" (Isaías 1:18)*

Literal translation:

Leave Your Past

"Leave it, your past in the past.
"Leave it, your past in the past.
"Leave your guilt at the cross,
"Give me your burden," says Jesus.
"Erased, your past is erased.
"Erased, your past is erased
"Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow,
"Though they are as red as crimson,
they shall be like wool." (Isa 1:18)

Addressing a subculture's specific spiritual issues in new songs requires a significant investment of time and effort. Such hard work will not be lost on the people one serves. God willing, and through the Spirit's power, the addition of such worship resources will have spiritually thirsting individuals returning for more of the water of life.

Principle #11: Technology is altering many of the rules.

Ethnomusicologists today have largely abandoned their construction of the world in two spheres—the traditional and the modern. They have, instead, become completely engaged with the mixing, hybridization, and syncretism of musical forms that arguably began along the ancient silk road.⁸⁶

Technology has made virtually any style of music from anywhere in the world available to those with access to the Internet. Think of it. People can hear anything, anywhere, anytime—and usually for free. One could be sipping tea in Marrakesh while listening to Mississippi prison songs from the 1930s, or Moldavian jazz music, Moroccan caravan music, Mongolian warrior songs, Martinique zouk, Memphis blues—you get the idea. The so-called "globalization" of music has significant implications for those involved in cross cultural outreach and worship. As Rice observes:

The recognition of the importance of media and technology, not simply as a means of recording live music but as a fundamental fact of modern musical life, has led to the study of what Rene Lysloff terms music and "technoculture." Arguing that "the ethnographic Other is now fully plugged in," he suggests that ethnomusicologists examine the cultural use of musical technology as seriously as they study unmediated performance.⁸⁷

⁸⁶Rice, *Ethnomusicology*, 98.

⁸⁷Rene T. A. Lysloff, "Mozart in Mirrorshades: Ethnomusicology, Technology, and the Politics of Representation," *Ethnomusicology*, 41.2 (1997): 215, quoted in Rice, *Ethnomusicology*, 104.

Just as individuals and groups within a culture may be bilingual or multilingual, people today may become "bi-musical" or "poly-musical" through technology and access to the Internet. Individuals may become comfortable not only with their indigenous music but with entirely different music systems or styles. And while, as we have seen, "People tend to absorb the fundamental grammars of the own language and their own music very early,"⁸⁸ exposure at an early age to music systems from foreign cultures through individual listening devices makes bi-musicality increasingly common.

Poly-musical individuals are found in increasing numbers in Christian churches throughout the world, as people grow up not only with their indigenous secular and sacred music but also with easily available Euro-American popular music and contemporary Christian music (CCM). Church musicians virtually anywhere on the planet learn the same Western style CCM songs by ear through internet videos. Musical arrangements are available either in songbooks or downloaded for free from the Internet. As noted earlier, at an ever-increasing rate, congregations are utilizing professional accompaniment tracks or internet music videos rather than live musicians, resulting in a nearly endless number of available songs.⁸⁹

And while the most influential popular music in the world today continues to be Euro-American pop music, it may be mixed with local, regional, and national music styles⁹⁰ to produce new music hybrids that are particularly popular with young people. Citing secular examples, Rice notes that one can now find an "extreme metal scene in Brazil, hip-hop in Istanbul, Burmese rap, punk in China, and rock music among Tibetans exiled in Dharamsala, India."⁹¹ In the church, new music hybrids are also appearing through the mixing of the local music with international worship music styles.

There are, of course, serious concerns regarding the escalating "encroachment" of Western praise music on the world. It is often the style of choice for the "modern" churches in many developing countries, both in urban areas and increasingly in rural areas as internet

⁸⁸Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology*, 56.

⁸⁹During 2016, in Kenya I witnessed a middle-school age girl walk to the front of a congregation of about one hundred people on a Sunday morning and hold up her cell phone. The church became completely quiet. The girl hit "play" and proceeded to sing a song to the accompaniment on her cell. After she ended her song and the applause died down, she pointed to her handbag and announced that she would be selling CDs of her songs after the service.

⁹⁰Schrag reminds us that "Most societies comprise melanges of people with artists who practice local, regional, national, and international art forms. Brian Schrag, "Ethnoartistic Cocreation in the Kingdom of God," in Krabill, *Global*, 52.

⁹¹Rice, *Ethnomusicology*, 103.

access increases. Indigenous music styles, and the ability to play them, is decreasing in many parts of the world. Schrag writes:

During a songwriting workshop I led in Cameroon in 2005, I asked the six city-raised participants how many knew one of their traditional music styles well enough to compose in it. The number: zero . . . My experiences with composers like those above and many other stories I hear show that spoken and performed forms of communication are affected by many of the same social trends. The picture is grim: young people in ethnolinguistic communities are often not learning to sing their parents' songs, and the unique God-marked systems that produce them are fading at a precipitous rate.

Forces arrayed against local art forms are formidable: urbanization . . . globalized communication media . . . media industries that relentlessly press their favored art forms . . . and short- and long-term Christian missionaries that promote the Euro-American "praise and worship" church music tradition all over the world.⁹²

One would be hard pressed to find a mission field in the world today that does not exhibit accelerating cultural changes due to technology. As Rice observes, "Today, the ease of travel, the migration of people from villages to cities, the emigration of people from troubled lands, and the readily available technology to share ideas and cultural artifacts across vast spaces help configure musical processes in nearly every part of the globe."⁹³ Again, the missionary needs to ask himself or herself the fundamental question: "Does the worship music of my cultural background have a place in this mission field?" (If the mission's music has already been on the field for some time, another set of issues is obviously raised.) In today's world of poly-musical people, multiple styles of music for worship may be called for. New hybrid styles for worship music may result when church musicians with diverse or poly-musical backgrounds interact.

Music in culture is never static. Given the extraordinary power and reach of technology today, the rate of change is indeed accelerating.

The Amazing Attraction of African-American Spirituals

The 1992 release of *Sister Act*, the hit movie starring Whoopi Goldberg, spawned the black gospel choir movement in Japan. The vitality of black gospel singing portrayed in the film, with energetic choruses of "church music" somehow wonderfully and mysteriously appealed to Japanese sensibilities—in a country where less than 1 percent of the population are professing Christians. Within

⁹²Brian Schrag, "Ethnoartistic Cocreations in the Kingdom of God," in Krabill, *Global*, 53.

⁹³Rice, *Ethnomusicology*, 99-100.

months of the film's release in Japan, black gospel choirs began to spring up by the hundreds, and then by the thousands.⁹⁴

When I began serving as a missionary in Peru back in the 1990s, I was surprised and dismayed at the use of illegally copied worship music by several of our congregations. Many Christian book stores in Lima sold illegal, affordable songbooks of Spanish Contemporary Christian songs, complete with lyrics and guitar chords. As I discussed the ethics of these practices with pastors and members many replied, "What else can we do? Give us another option!" Again, the only other music resource most of the congregations had was a Spanish translation of *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941).

I didn't know back then what I know now about facilitating a church's development of their indigenous music. Rather, in an effort to find simple melodies for the church that were in the public domain and license-free, I turned to traditional North American folk songs, blues songs, and especially African-American spirituals.

I wrote lyrics on Bible stories and biblical doctrines for the folk songs and blues songs, and often added several verses to the spirituals. I adapted the songs to Latin rhythms that are found in Latin American Christian worship. The response by the Peruvians to the new worship songs was overwhelmingly positive. For some of our members, these songs became their favorite church music. Since then, I have found an attraction to African-American spirituals among Christians in other Latin America countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela), and also among Haitians, Pakistanis, and Kenyans that I have worked with.

What makes African-American spirituals attractive to so many cultures? The simple melodies and song structures, flexible rhythms, and especially the chord progressions of the spirituals⁹⁵ are at the root of American popular music. Indeed, the roots of much of twentieth-century American popular music may easily be traced through traditional American blues. Piazza writes:

In fact it may be helpful to see the blues as a huge river through the middle of our culture. Almost every notable form of American music in the twentieth century is a city, or a village, along that river. Jazz, rock and roll, rhythm and blues, bluegrass, and even so-called serious or classical music have all drawn strength,

⁹⁴Gary Fujino, "Japanese Black Gospel Choirs: A Counterintuitive Approach to Contextualization," in Krabill, *Global*, 274.

⁹⁵For a discussion of how the "original African-American way of handling harmony," i.e., the spontaneous, "fabulous head arrangements" of the singers which gave way to the more widely known gospel harmonies of today, see Alan Lomax, *The Land Where the Blues Began* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1993), 43-48.

power, and refreshment from, and owe much of their character to, the blues.⁹⁶

And where do traditional American blues come from? As music historian LeRoi Jones writes, "Blues issued directly out of the shout and, of course, the spiritual."⁹⁷ Cone, in fact, has labeled the blues "secular spirituals."⁹⁸ Melodies and chord progressions from the two genres, blues and spirituals, are literally interchangeable. Sounding amazingly similar to the Reformation-era practice of utilizing well-known folksongs for church songs, Jones writes:

It would be quite simple for an African melody that was known traditionally to most of the slaves to be used as a Christian song. All that would have to be done was change the words (which is also the only basic difference between a great many of the "devil music" songs [the blues] and the most devout of the Christian religious songs . . .). The Negro's religious music contained . . . "rags," "blue notes" and "stop times". . . . Blues issued directly out of the shout and, of course, the spiritual. . . . The end of the almost exclusive hold of the Christian Church on the black man's leisure [after the Emancipation] also resulted in a great many changes of emphasis in his music. The blues is formed out of the same social and musical fabric that the spiritual issues from.⁹⁹

Simply stated, the powerful melodies and gospel music chord progressions of spirituals can sound as modern as today's popular American music. I have adapted African-American spiritual melodies to such rhythms as mambo, rumba, calypso, and reggae for Latin American and Afro-Caribbean worship songs. My Pakistani friends have adapted African-American spiritual melodies and lyrics to their modern Pakistani rhythms and Bollywood rhythms. The original African-based rhythms of the spirituals are used in Haiti where they resonate deeply with our Lutheran brothers and sisters. Melodies from the spirituals are used for liturgy pieces in a Spanish-language Lutheran common service and communion service. Some of these liturgy pieces are being used in churches in Peru, Colombia, Mexico, and

⁹⁶Tom Piazza, *Devil Sent the Rain: Music and Writing in Desperate America* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2011), 26.

⁹⁷LeRoi Jones, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2002), 62. Jones notes that "the immediate predecessors of blues were the Afro-American/American Negro work songs, which had their musical origins in West Africa" (Jones, *Blues*, 18). He refers to what may be called proto-work songs: "the shouts, chants, hollers which later took more lasting form as blues" (Jones, *Blues*, 59). Even "centuries-old Anglo-Saxon ballads" helped shape the blues (Jones, *Blues*, 59).

⁹⁸James H. Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues: An Interpretation* (New York: Maryknoll, 2008), 100.

⁹⁹Jones, *Blues People*, 45,47,62,63.

Haiti, as well as Chicago, Houston, New Orleans, and New York City. I have sung translated versions of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" at the funeral of a Peruvian pastor in Lima and the funeral of an evangelist's mother in Jacmel, Haiti.

While I have taken liberties with some of the lyrics of the spirituals when creating Spanish language hymns, many verses remain in their original form. What lyrics could possibly compare to those found in "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child," or "Soon I Will Be Done with the Troubles of the World"?

The spirituals rose out of the context of slavery in the Americas. Lyrics often contain a double meaning, referring to both earthly freedom and spiritual freedom. The life-long struggles to overcome an unimaginably oppressive world, the devil, and one's own flesh through Jesus—to cross over Jordan and into the Promised Land—resonates with sinners across time and across continents. For some cultures the original lyrics of the spirituals can, of course, be a bit obscure. In my Spanish work, "O, Dem Golden Slippers" became *Bailando en los Cielos* ("Dancing in the Heavens"). For poetic reasons, "Rock-a My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham" turned into *Calma mi Alma in los Brazos de Abraham*: "Calm My Soul in the Arms of Abraham."

Eminent Smithsonian Institute music folklorist Alan Lomax wrote, "Perhaps human song reached its peak in the performances of Gospel quartets like the Soul Stirrers and the Blind Boys of Atlanta . . . [The black spiritual is] the finest genre of this and perhaps any continent."¹⁰⁰ Over one hundred fifty years later, the music genre born out of the bondage of slavery still resonates in a variety of musical settings among Christians around the world.

Principle #12: Within a biblical framework, every society has the right to choose its own worship music.

As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets" (Mark 12:38-39).

Have we, in pride, given Western music the place of honor at the musical banquet table?

One glance at a live symphony orchestra on stage about to perform can bring a chill down one's spine. The level of musicianship in a major city orchestra is simply astounding. The musicians' years of private lessons, starting in early childhood and on through the most prestigious

music conservatories in the world, have brought them to this moment. Meanwhile, a look at the large pages of the conductor's score reveals notation for over thirty synchronized lines of instrumental music. Then there is the extraordinary craftsmanship of the musical instruments, from modern brass instruments that costs thousands of dollars to string instruments over a hundred years old that are priceless and irreplaceable. Finally, there is the symphony hall itself, a multimillion dollar building designed according to the latest scientific research on acoustics for the optimum presentation of organized sound. Do we really believe anyone in the world has music comparable to Western music?

Therein lies the problem. Deep in many a Westerner's heart remains the unmovable conviction that Western music is simply the most advanced, beautiful, powerful, creative, artistic, expressive, sublime music ever created by man. That belief extends of course to church music. Think robed mass choirs of conservatory-trained vocalists, monstrous-sized, stained glass-shaking pipe organs, magnificent cathedrals, classical masterpieces by Handel and by Bach (a Lutheran no less!). We can't seem to shake the feeling that we have the best music for appropriate, God-pleasing worship.

Even the most cursory look at music from other continents can help to expose that feeling for the ethnocentric prejudice it is. We have mentioned Indian music that uses more notes between a half-step than we are trained to discern, accompanied on *tablas* in which the musician gets about sixteen tones out of two small drums, playing a rhythm in a different meter (say, seven beats against five) in each hand—music that practically defies notation. Music education beginning in early childhood, lessons with master musicians, extraordinary craftsmanship in the making of instruments, serene music venues: all of it is there.

The word "paternalism" encapsulates a fundamental concern of missionaries. In the area of worship music, it is often a simple, all-too-natural step to go from thinking one's church music is the best to attempting to guide others to "see the light" and make use of the same, unsurpassable music resources for their church. However, for the majority of places in the world, Western classical church music will not be the healthy, effective choice for worship music.

"Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:3).

Recall our opening story of the Chinese missionaries in Washington State. What if you had come to faith through the Spirit-empowered message of foreign missionaries, who then expected you to worship in the music of their foreign culture? If it is hard to imagine ourselves being content to sing, week after week, music that we find it impossible to think of as our own, we should think twice before inflicting this experience on others. Historically, the Lutheran church has upheld the

¹⁰⁰ Lomax, *Land*, 47-48.

right of the congregation to choose its own worship music. For now, it will suffice to recall that every Lutheran pastor of our synod and of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) subscribes to the Augsburg Confession, which includes these words:

For this is enough for the true unity of the Christian church that there the gospel is preached harmoniously according to a pure understanding and the sacraments are administered in conformity with the divine Word. It is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that uniform ceremonies, instituted by human beings, be observed everywhere (AC VII).

What steps can be taken to assure that our confessional position on human traditions, rites, and ceremonies is practiced in our mission fields regarding worship music? Again, the stakes could hardly be higher. In oral cultures, spiritual truths are learned and passed on not only in stories but also in song and other performing arts. What impression is given, what messages are conveyed, when the missionary arrives on the field with Western musical settings for liturgy and songs, and no strategy to involve the nationals in producing worship materials in their heart music?

Clearly, missionaries need a proactive strategy to encourage and facilitate the use of a culture's heart music. The host culture needs to be an equal partner at the worship-committee table as the missionary guides the national church to a solid understanding of the biblical theology of worship. As the *supra*-culture of Christianity reshapes individuals through the power of the Holy Spirit, joyful hearts want to sing out in total exuberance to the Savior who sets us free. "I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever" (Ps 86:12).

Where Do We Go from Here?

On the stage at the front of a college lecture hall, I was sitting at a table with three others in front of a packed audience. It was a session of an international conference on evangelism, and we were there for a panel discussion. During the question-and-answer period, I was asked about culturally-appropriate music.

"You can sing a song like this," I explained, and sang *a capella* the first few lines of "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name," using a stately, robust singing voice. "It sounds very nice, meaningful, appropriate to our ears," I commented. "Or, you can sing the song like this . . ."

I placed both of my hands on the wooden table. In the same tempo as the first version, I began to beat out an energetic Calypso rhythm as if playing a pair of bongos. I sang the song again which now had a very different energy, a unique exuberance. The moment I finished the song and before the audience began to applaud, a foreign man sit-

ting near the front pointed his finger at me and declared, "That's the music we need for Pakistan!"

At dinner that night with the Pakistani man (I'll call him Paul) and his wife (I'll call her Ann) along with the director of WELS Multi-Language Publications, we had such an intense, animated discussion on worship music that I barely ate. I asked Paul which rhythms are appropriate for Christian worship in Pakistan. He replied that any rhythm could be used for worship, from British marches to Bollywood songs. "But be aware my friend," Paul added with a twinkle in his eye, "people in church may start to dance!" Over and over Paul declared, "There must be music with rhythm for the church." In words I will never forget he said to me, "Remember, Terry, no rhythm, no good!"

Less than a year later, the four of us gathered in Dubai for a one-week music workshop to create Pakistani worship songs. Besides Paul, Ann (who is an expert translator), and the director of MLP were present. Paul also brought along three professional Pakistani musicians and his daughter Rene (name changed), a highly-trained vocalist, all of whom spoke English.

The idea was to try to write and record worship songs using the recording equipment brought by the three Pakistani men, which consisted of an electric keyboard, microphone and stand, and a laptop. The recorded worship songs would be used as accompaniment tracks for Pakistani house churches. I was disappointed that the musicians did not bring any indigenous instruments. However, working off of the keyboard run through the laptop, tracks containing the synthesized sounds of sitar, strings, and guitar were created. Folkloric *tabla* rhythms and Bollywood drum-set rhythms from downloaded rhythm loops were used for the percussion accompaniment.

The three Pakistani musicians were eager to work in a variety of music styles, including Western pop, global pop, folkloric and modern Pakistani styles, and Bollywood styles. The three musicians were very excited when I demonstrated a few African-American spirituals to them. I had already used the tunes with much success in several mission fields, often adding numerous verses to increase the doctrinal content. The three men immediately had Ann begin making Urdu translations of the lyrics. They began experimenting with various Pakistani rhythms for the spirituals. I will never forget playing on the keyboard over and over the opening phrase from the haunting "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child," for Matt (name changed) the Pakistani keyboard player. After intently watching my right hand play the four-measure phrase over a dozen times, he then reached over my shoulder and played it. Matt does not read music. That is how he learned it.

Within a couple of days, our group fell into a routine. During the day, I demonstrated numerous public-domain American folk songs,

traditional American blues songs, and spirituals. The group loved them and essentially wanted to use every single one of them. The simple chord progressions sound like contemporary Euro-American music, the melodies are very malleable, and the songs easily lend themselves to a variety of Pakistani rhythms. Biblical topics for the songs were discussed and decided upon by the group. One day when I demonstrated recordings of the new, highly rhythmic Latin worship songs we were using in Latin America missions, Paul eagerly requested that we create Urdu translations of several of the "songs with Spanish rhythms," as he called them. He wanted to use the songs with their Latin rhythms for Pakistani worship. On another day the hotel room furniture was moved aside as Paul taught the entire group Bollywood-style choreography for one of our recorded songs. Not surprisingly, he is hoping to eventually make a music video.

Meanwhile, late into the night every evening, the three Pakistani musicians worked alone to compose worship songs in traditional Pakistani styles. By the end of the week they had written music and lyrics for over a dozen songs. Ann wanted at least one Lutheran hymn translated, arranged, and recorded. A modern version of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" was recorded in Middle Eastern vocal style, featuring the stunning, lilting voice of Rene. By the end of the week-long workshop, Bible-based worship songs in a variety of global and Pakistani music styles had been produced for the house churches of Pakistan.

Our Dubai workshops demonstrate numerous ethnomusicological principles in action. A partnership was formed between missionary and nationals, but with the nationals taking the lead in choosing the musical styles they wanted for Pakistani worship, and directing the music composing, lyric writing, arranging, and recording technique.

Significantly, the Pakistanis created worship music from a wide variety of music styles. As noted, traditional Pakistani styles, modern Pakistani styles, global worship styles, even Bollywood styles were utilized, along with western contemporary styles and even a Latin style. The Pakistanis chose the instrumental sounds they wanted, going with both modern and (synthesized) traditional instrumental sounds.

Not every worship music workshop will be blessed with exceptional composers. One of the main cautions in hosting such workshops concerns expecting superb compositions and lyrics to emerge within a week or two. Sometimes that happens, sometimes it doesn't. It may take time, even years, before such local talent emerges in a mission field and produces quality materials. The option of using local, talented composers and musicians who are not Christian but nonetheless can produce heart music worship songs needs to be carefully weighed by the local Christian community. (The theological content of the lyrics is always solely the domain of the church.)

The process of creating heart music worship resources in a cross-cultural mission setting begins, of course, with the word. A series of classes on what constitutes God-pleasing worship is vital. Bible stories involving music may be presented. (In the never-ending battle between Jesus and the devil for eternal souls, what has happened to God's gift of music? How is music used for the kingdom and against the kingdom—in other words, for good and for evil?) A discussion and understanding of the varied roles that music plays in the host culture is critical. The extraordinary physiological impact of the music one grows up with may be discussed. Lectures on Luther's biblical understanding of God's gift of music, his impact on church music history, and his personal practices in creating heart music for the church may be especially enlightening. Stories of the music workshops of confessional Lutheran church bodies in other countries, which include the challenges they wrestled with and the solutions they have found, will be helpful. Again, an independent national church that takes responsibility for its own worship music is the objective.

An ethnomusicological field study will produce critical information. As already noted, not only Christian churchgoers but those of other religions and the unchurched need to be surveyed and the results carefully analyzed. Information needs to be obtained from as large a variety of cultural insiders as possible in analyzing which music styles are appropriate, attractive, and effective for use in Christian worship.

More of our Lutheran missionaries are taking ethnomusicological principles to heart. Backed by the amazingly clear example of Luther himself, missionaries are facilitating the use of culturally appropriate worship music among the people we are humbled and honored to serve. In the end, God's gift of music is really only about two things: using music to glorify God and using music in a way that blesses our fellow man (Ps 86:12, Col 3:16). Music is used for guarding the sheep and for reaching out to the lost sheep. We need appropriate music that resonates deeply in people's hearts as a vehicle for the saving message the Spirit uses to work faith. Music brings messages to people who cannot read. Music makes the memorization of God's saving word easier, to help withstand the attacks of the "old evil foe." No wonder Luther wrote, "I place music next to theology and give it the highest praise."¹⁰¹ May God continue to bless our music efforts for the kingdom!

¹⁰¹ Plass, *What Luther Says*, 2:980.

APPENDIX 1

Examples of Music Styles and Song Sources
Used for Hymns by Luther

The following are examples in which Luther either wrote the lyrics, the musical accompaniment, or both, or gave his approval for the song to be included in a Reformation hymnal. In a few, Luther's contribution to the song cannot be established with certainty.

1. 1523 "A New Song Here Shall Be Begun"
"He [Luther] availed himself of the mass media most commonly used in his day for broadcasting important news . . . folk songs . . . Folk ballads told the stories . . . [Luther] wrote the ballad of the two Brussels martyrs . . ." (LW 53:212).
2. 1523 "Ah God, from Heaven Look Down"
". . . the first half has a close affinity to the fifteenth-century folk song *Begierlich in dem Herzen mein* . . ." (LW 53:225).
3. 1523 "Would That the Lord Would Grant Us Grace"
"This Phrygian tune is an adaptation from an older German hymn to the virgin, *Maria du bist Gnaden voll*" (LW 53:233).
4. 1523 "Come, the Heathen's Healing Light"
Based on *Veni Redemptor Gentium* by Ambrose. "Luther substituted a doxology for the original words. . . There is also a metrical change. Instead of the original Long Meter Luther introduced a stanza of 7.7.7.7. He also made skillful changes in the melodic line. These changes, small as they seem, change the character of the melody completely and make a Lutheran chorale of a medieval hymn" (LW 53:235).
5. 1523? "Jesus We Now Must Laud and Sing"
A Gregorian melody originally, "the majority of later hymnals offer a radically simplified, syllabic version more suitable to congregational singing. Quite likely Luther took a hand in editing it according to his own concept of German plain song" (LW 53:237).
6. 1524 "In Peace and Joy I Now Depart"
"It has the syncopation typical of sixteenth-century polyphonic *cantus firmi*, and with its bold broad steps, it may well be by Luther" (LW 53:247).
7. 1524 "Let God Be Blest"
"It is not unlikely that he [Luther] transformed the medieval *Corpus Christi* hymn into a Lutheran post-communion chorale to save a liturgical song that was popular with the people and that he himself treasured" (LW 53:252).
8. 1524 "Now Let Us Pray to the Holy Ghost"
"The first stanza of this hymn is not by Luther. It is a German *Leise* (i.e., a sacred folk song in the vernacular . . . [Luther] decided

to add three stanzas to it and so converted the medieval *Leise* into a Lutheran chorale . . . The melody too is of pre-Reformation origin. Its strongly pentatonic character . . . suggests that it is a very old folk melody" (LW 53: 263).

9. 1524 "Come, Holy Spirit Lord and God"
"[This hymn] incorporates an older German antiphon . . . Luther was extremely fond of it and remarked in his table talks, 'The hymn "Come, Holy Spirit Lord and God" was composed by the Holy Ghost himself, both words and music'" (LW 53:265).
10. 1524 "God the Father with Us Be"
"This hymn of invocation of the Holy Trinity seems to be patterned after medieval pilgrim songs invoking the aid of the saint . . . The melody was evidently well known, for the enchiridia of 1525 did not even bother to print the notes . . . A comparison of Kleber's tablature and Walter's version suggests that Luther adopted the melody without change. He retained the first five lines of the text with minor changes, replacing the appeal to the saints with an invocation of the three Persons of the Trinity" (LW 53:268).
11. 1524 "In the Midst of Life We Are"
Luther's hymn is based on "the hymn *Media vita in morte sumus* ("In the Midst of Life We Are in Death") found in English manuscripts of the eleventh century . . . The second part of the hymn has ancient Greek beginnings. *Media vita* enjoyed enormous popularity during the Middle Ages. It was used not only in memory of the departed, but also as a prayer hymn, a battle song, and even as a charm . . . [Luther] decisively altered the character of the hymn as a whole . . . Here as elsewhere, Luther altered the music in the direction of the folk song. At least the first two lines are reminiscent of the folk ballad *Tannhauser*" (p. 274-5).
12. 1534/35 "From Heaven on High I Come to You"
"No other hymn of his [Luther's] is as simple and intimate in content and as folk-like in structure. The first stanza is actually patterned after a pre-Reformation secular folk song, a singing game popular with the young people of Luther's time. . . Originally Luther used the lilting melody of this folk song for his Christmas carol" (LW 53:289).
13. 1535/45 "To Me She's Dear, the Worthy Maid"
"The first stanza sounds like a secular love song . . . Since here as elsewhere he [Luther] preserved the imagery of Scripture and addressed the church as the "elect lady," it can hardly be termed surprising that he employed that poetico-musical form which in his time was used to 'praise one's lady,' namely, the *Hofweise*. . . He [Luther] utilized the style of sixteenth-century love lyrics" (LW 53:292).