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Reformation
& Revival



A Quarterly Journal for Church Leadership

Volume 4, Number 4 • Fall 1995

Book Reviews

Jubilate II: Church Music in Worship and Renewal

Donald P. Hustad

Carol Stream, Illinois: Hope Publishing Company (1993).

595 pages, cloth, \$29.95.

This book is the second edition of *Jubilate! Church Music in the Evangelical Tradition* (Hope, 1981). The title change is significant. In this second edition, Hustad explores patterns of worship and renewal in a much wider range of Christian traditions than in the first edition, thereby making the book useful to a much broader audience. Readers from many denominations (or even nondenominational fellowships) may find much of interest here. Hustad's fine scholarship is combined with a writing style which, though by no means condescending or simplistic, is accessible to readers from many backgrounds: nonspecialist readers with an interest in church history and music, scholars, and church leaders who need to make day-to-day decisions about music (pastors, musicians, educators, worship committee members, and so on.)

Even readers who are familiar with the earlier edition will find *Jubilate II* well worth reading, as the improvements are substantial. Besides the wider-ranging treatment mentioned above, many sections are revised to include findings of recent research; some errors have been corrected; reordering of material and inclusion of more subheadings have increased the ease of use; large sections have been added to bring the historical and practical sections up to the present day, and the music lists and excellent bibliography have been thoroughly updated.

Though Hustad has a wide acquaintance with church music, he writes specifically from an evangelical perspective. Much of his lengthy professional experience reflects this. For example, he has taught at Moody Bible Institute (Chicago) and

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville, Kentucky), and has played organ for Billy Graham crusades. He is familiar with the needs of churches and with the uses (and abuses) of music, both in discipling the faithful and in reaching the seeker, and he has a firm grasp of the musical dilemmas that have seized many churches in recent years.

The book is organized in three large sections. In the first part of the book, the author lays the foundation for understanding music's role in the church and gives many practical suggestions for planning worship. In the second part of the book, he traces a "history of music in Christian worship and renewal" from Bible times to the twentieth century, with special emphasis on Reformed traditions and American practice. In the third part of the book, he deals with present conditions in worship. Once again, he offers many practical suggestions, even in matters as specific as, for example, music education for children and adults, the selection of instruments, teaching of new hymns, and the use of music in foreign missions. This is a small selection of topics covered. (It is tempting to "dip into" the topics, but the book is clearly intended as a whole, so the reader would gain greatest benefit from reading the first two parts of the book first in order to understand the philosophical and historical background which underlies the author's suggestions.) Sometimes he even provides lists of music or patterns for special services. It would be helpful to have even more of such guidance, but this would probably make the book too unwieldy.

Hustad has great respect and appreciation for music of many styles and cultures, but he is not afraid to give stern yet gracious criticism when he deems it necessary. Perhaps the book's greatest virtue is its balance, its sensibleness. It manages to combine much that is philosophical or idealistic with genuine understanding of real conditions and necessities, and provides timely suggestions for improvement.

Wendy J. Payton
Iowa City, Iowa

Public Praise

Graham Kendrick

Altamonte Springs, Florida: Creation House (1992).

194 pages, paper, \$8.99.

When hundreds of thousands of people organize in the streets to publicly proclaim the lordship of Jesus Christ they get a reaction. Add a transcontinental dimension demanding sophisticated timing, transportation, and communication, and Christian praise marches become a time-zone-stretching technological enterprise on a par with a day at the Olympics.

This is the ambitious mission of March for Jesus, International, whose humble beginnings in Soho and meteoric rise to international proportions are documented in *Public Praise*. Graham Kendrick, popular Christian musician and one of the original March for Jesus entrepreneurs, leads the reader on a breathtaking journey from a 1985 march confronting spiritual powers of darkness in London's inner city to a view of modern Christian triumphalism rarely imagined in many of today's decidedly sober churches.

Kendrick has intertwined narrative, theology, and applications of lessons learned which race along together at a reckless pace. The book brims with optimistic commitment to Christ's last spoken orders to reach the world with His good news. Despite its exuberant tone, however, *Public Praise* leaves one wondering whether Kendrick and company might be frenetically spending energy on ventures only peripheral to the Great Commission and the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

One of the more confusing aspects of *Public Praise* is the ever-expanding explanation of the purpose for the March for Jesus. Kendrick cites the media impact of the 1988 March for Jesus to the Heart of the Nation through the business and government districts of London as evidence that the church

needs to become visible again.

The church has been apologetic about its presence for far too long.... For too long we have abdicated the responsibility for the public, visible declaration of our faith. We have effectively abandoned the streets to political marches, activists, cults, charity collectors, carnivals, and, in many cases, to seedy street life and an atmosphere of violence. . . .What right do we Christians have to complain about the state of our streets if we are never there? (pp.14-15).

If the state of our streets is not a compelling reason to march in a procession of praise, Kendrick provides others. Building on the illustration of Christ's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, Kendrick introduces a more confusing three-tiered objective for marching. He says, "The singular intent of March for Jesus is to exalt Jesus and to see His kingdom come and His will be done on earth" (p. 16).

Early on one realizes Kendrick might be setting himself up with expectations never to be realized by any annual ritual, no matter how globally inclusive. The components of this tripartite purpose statement have always been best pursued within the disciplined community of the visible church, because the church thrives under the authority of God's Word and the ministry of the sacraments, not in public, ecumenical demonstrations.

Kendrick's applications of marching continue to escalate dramatically in scope. From the simple assertion that "the Lord receives glory," Kendrick's vision grows until churches unwall themselves, Revelation 13's Beast is defeated in an all-out worshipathon, the global church homogenizes itself, Great Commission harvests are combined and stored, all believers increase in faith by dumping their inhibitions and boldly transforming the world, Psalm 24 is fulfilled, and ... bump, bum, bum, baaah! ... all the earth shall worship!

Apart from Kendrick's expectations for the marching move-

ment, there are other problems which arise as one follows the course of the March's growth.

First is the complicated and awkward issue of associations. The first march in Soho was driven by the "confrontation" spiritual warfare model espoused by many charismatically oriented mission groups, and the movement continues to be predominately Pentecostal and charismatic at the grass roots level.

To criticize the intentions of those¹ who are trying to spread God's kingdom through Peretti-esque heavenly combat would be unbrotherly.² Their ultimate concerns are generally the ultimate concerns of God: to accomplish His purposes and establish His kingdom through the ministry of His people in the world. Their methods, however, often lack strong biblical warrant and are based on a convoluted view of the kingdom of God and its present manner.³

Second is Kendrick's explanation of the original motivations for the marches. Comparing his activity to Christ's disciples' ignorant but willing preparations for His Triumphal Entry, Kendrick says:

In the same way, we have moved ahead in the unfolding of the March for Jesus with a simple certainty of obedience. To the logical thinker this might seem a strange way to go about something on such a scale; yet, if we are honest, most of us go about our daily lives in more intuitive ways than we care to admit (p. 17).

Indeed, the last statement might be true, but human intuition, uninformed by the clear, *logical* truth of Scripture, seldom leads one toward godly obedience. What one intuits about God's will for one's life usually is a matter of wise choices based on preferences and circumstances. Certainly, anything for which one is morally responsible to God must be discernible in His word.

Nevertheless, Kendrick tramps on, saying that “the starting point for March for Jesus was not understanding but obedience.... I knew God was requiring me to write praise march songs, but the call only made sense to me after I began to do it” (p. 18).

The most unresolvable problems a scripturally informed reader might have with *Public Praise* have to do with Kendrick’s simplistic, undisciplined use of Scripture. One glaring example: In Kendrick’s enthusiasm to promote this perceived movement of God’s Spirit, he stumbles, unfortunately misplacing the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem as the centerpoint of Jesus’ ministry, instead of the Cross.

... this climactic act [of Jesus’ ministry] seems to have become eclipsed by our focus on the more somber dramas of betrayal, arrest and crucifixion and the glorious triumph of resurrection and ascension which follows. Of course, preachers exaggerate the problem by suggesting that the people in the exuberant crowd became the mob who condemned Christ before Pilate a few days later (pp. 68-69).

Apparently not only we but the apostles mistakenly eclipsed the Triumphal Entry with the Cross! The New Testament never mentions this preliminary to Passion Week as anything to be imitated or honored, but the Cross ... well, the Cross and the Resurrection are all our hope and glory, as they are the glory of Christ himself! What glory is there in processions that the majesty of a suffering Savior rescuing sinners from their infinite, willful wickedness should not eclipse?

So what value is March for Jesus? I don’t know. Perhaps it is a kind of high-tech social event for professing Christians who ordinarily would not gather together to celebrate their common life in Christ out of doors. There are places in the world, and even on our own continent, where believers are such a minority that an event like March for Jesus could be an opportunity to meet others and to find ways to deepen

fellowship.

If Kendrick could rein in his obsession with finding scriptural mandates to march, *Public Praise* might motivate us all to gather for the simple faithful pleasure of praising God together. And if that were the case, we could march, swim, jog or sit and still let God arise, let His enemies be scattered, and let the faithful bow humbly beneath the Cross of Christ.

End Notes

1 In the 1995 March for Jesus “Local Church Guide” endorsements are included from Jack Hayford, John Wimber (Vineyard International), Loren Cunningham (YWAM), and C. Peter Wagner (A. D. 2000). Says Wagner, “It is time that massive numbers of Christians banded together to declare the Lordship of Jesus over our cities and nations! God has raised up the March for Jesus as His principal catalytic instrument for bringing this into reality in our times.” Not to impugn Wagner’s motives, but all this talk about marching for the lordship of Jesus leaves one wondering what catalytic value is left to the simple preaching of the Gospel and the testimony of godly men and women quietly doing good deeds.

2 For a balanced treatment of current ideas on spiritual warfare see Wayne Detzler’s article “Myths About Spiritual Warfare” in *Reformation & Revival Journal*, Volume 4, Number 1, 1995.

3 For a helpful discussion of the manner of the kingdom of God see Herman Ridderbos’ *The Coming of the Kingdom* (Presbyterian & Reformed, 1962), especially chapter VII, “The Coming of the Kingdom and the Church.”

Charles T. Evans
Roanoke, Virginia

Music Through the Eyes of Faith

Harold M. Best

San Francisco: Harper (1993).

225 pages, paper, \$10.00.

There is only a handful of primordial musical forms. The most common Western form takes us on a journey to a distant place and then brings us home. Another proposes a theme and then looks at that idea again and again but from many different angles. One further form takes us on a journey from one place to another, this time, however, viewing the distant arrival point as "home." We could speak of this latter form as a "ramp" form. Agatha Christie mysteries are ramp forms. The biographies found in the Hebrews chapter eleven hall-of-fame would fit this form. The history of the cosmos—from garden to city—would also fit this form. Harold Best's book is a ramp form, and a good one too.

Best describes music as it now is (our starting point in the ramp form). He observes a state of pluralism and even embraces it as good, based on the diversity seen in the created order. This is not a bullet-proof proposition for the reason that Best also compares diversity of musical style with the diversity of human language, a condition which must honestly be credited to fall-out from the Babel debacle. I am not sure we could unequivocally call our plethora of human languages as "good." Still, the existence of that plethora is undeniable, and so is the potpourri of available musical styles.

Despite a debatable start, Best is not a relativist. He writes: "Regarding the creation, the Scriptures make simultaneous provision for the intrinsic goodness of all things and one thing being better than another" (p. 104).

At this point, we are halfway up the ramp form.

Best bends over backwards to be as winsome as possible,

speaking charitably of music which readers of almost any musical persuasion at one time or another would disdain. What is remarkable about this is that he is able to accomplish this without caving in and embracing relativism. I suppose this comes with the wisdom of years. There are very few highly competent biblical musicians like Best who have thought deeply about aesthetics.

Well into the book, there does come the time that pluralistic musical practices must be scrutinized with a microscope. Most journeys involve some pain and adversity. This one is not exempt. The chapters on musical quality, worship, contemporary Christian music, church music, and evangelism, are full of disturbing insights. Nevertheless, Best doesn't diagnose a problem without also suggesting a reasonable remedy. And, in his conciliatory manner, he finds health in even the blackest of pictures. To his credit, his cure is never "Amputate at the neck!"

The end of the ramp form truly comes at the penultimate page. I will let the text speak for itself.

All along we have been arguing that music has no intrinsically sacred meaning or secular meaning. We have argued instead that its meaning is brought about by repeated use in a given context, which then "imputes" meaning that music does not intrinsically possess.

Because it is true that music quickly absorbs meaning from its immediate surroundings, this principle should work just as effectively when music, born first in the church, develops its primary associations there. Then if any perceptual dissonance takes place, it will take place in culture as a result of what the church does, not the reverse.... Why not assume that the church is capable of getting the associative jump on culture? (p. 215).

In short, the church needs a new musical aesthetic (or aesthetics). This will not come to pass as long as we continue

to slobber after the latest trend in the music of the world.

Of special interest is Best's chapter on Christian contemporary music (CCM). His insights will edify both those who are enthusiastic adherents of CCM as well as those who loathe it. There is no denying that CCM presents some serious problems for the church. There is also no denying that CCM is here to stay (at least for the immediate future).

One word of caution: This book truly is the dark sayings of the wise. I fear that a casual reading will yield results completely out of phase with Best's intentions. Because he is so conciliatory, the casual reader could easily take his book as a pat on the back, an encouragement to continue doing music exactly how we have been doing it. This would indeed be an unfortunate misreading.

For the careful reader, there is unique understanding to be found in this book which I have not seen elsewhere. And for that reason, I cannot recommend Harold Best's book highly enough.

Leonard R. Payton
Paradise, California

Music and Ministry: A Biblical Counterpoint

Calvin Johansson

Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers (1988).

138 pages, cloth, \$9.95.

If ever there was a time we need to reflect on the function of music in the church it is now. Music has gone through dramatic changes in our time. The access to dissemination of music has forever changed the way we perceive it. What music is selected for church use—and why—requires great discernment of the music minister in the light of these changes. Johansson's book is an excellent foundation for music minis-

ters and pastors who are developing that discernment and their philosophy of music ministry.

Music and Ministry: A Biblical Counterpoint begins with an exposition of aestheticism and pragmatism—basing a music philosophy purely on artistic considerations or purely on practical considerations. Johansson rejects both of these in favor of a truly biblical philosophy. Seven chapters develop what constitutes that philosophy.

He begins this biblical philosophy of music with theology. The doctrines of creation, the *imago Dei* and the Incarnation are discussed for their use to us as individual creative beings as well as a foundation for what should constitute the right use of music in the church. Theological insight on the part of the music minister will direct him away from the prevailing aesthetic or pragmatic philosophies. While these chapters may seem tedious to some their theological content is desperately needed in light of our—and sometimes our churches'—current cultural preoccupation with the self. These three doctrines give us a much needed biblical basis of understanding the self and how that affects the music minister as a creative redeemed servant.

Having established a theological foundation, chapter five discusses the complexities of the gospel in contemporary culture. Johansson touches on many of the current debates such as music as witness, the church and mass culture, the church and pop, and folk music and jazz. Johansson makes a clear distinction between pop music and folk music, and sides with the argument that pop music and its inherent characteristics have no place in the church. This will no doubt be a debatable point for many considering the current church growth movement and the concept of relevancy.

In chapters six and seven Johansson turns to the underlying motivation and desires of the music minister and the congregation by discussing faith and stewardship. Here we begin to see how a right philosophy of music can combine with

a right heart in the music minister to produce a mature musical position. Johansson states:

The church music program ought to reflect the mature walk in Christ and provide sustenance, inspiration, and encouragement to its constituents. Such a program improves worship music, first of all, by doing away with the sacred secular dichotomy and by balancing emotion and reason (p.75).

The last discussion is centered around the "Mystery and Awe" that music can provide. By its very nature some music has the propensity to incite things that are unknown and transcendent. Mystery and awe have become a rarity in some churches, and this chapter can awaken and remind many tired music ministers that music can and does have that ability to transcend words and reach people in mysterious ways.

In his concluding chapter Johansson brings together what this "working counterpoint" of a music ministry will look like. He makes the point that a mature philosophy of music ministry is not a list of do's and don'ts but rather a biblically founded flexible living approach to music. "Ministry should be characterized by both of these distinctions—an uncommon acceptance of our people as they are and a passionate desire to teach them God's full intention for the redeemed" (p.121). Music ministers are not just musicians; they are ministers—servants of God through the art of music.

Music and Ministry: A Biblical Counterpoint provides the reader with a thoughtful, theologically grounded approach to the job of providing music in the church. It provides an excellent starting point for the young minister of music as well as a reawakening call to the veteran church musician. Undoubtedly there will be debate as to how to judge some styles of music, particularly in the pop realm. That's another book. The point is not to seek a simple yes/no solution, but to

consider all the elements of the music minister's philosophy in relation to theology, culture, congregation and servanthood.

The most difficult task may simply be finding the time for music ministers to thoroughly digest this book. Pastors would be wise to give serious thought to their philosophy of music ministry. How easy it is to just do our church music the same old way: Trying out the latest fad without critical debate. Have we twisted our thinking to allow some musical practices to remain simply out of tradition, or to bring in new ideas out of a simple desire to be contemporary? May our music ministers have the courage to make changes when and where they're needed, and may the congregations have the maturity to realize and welcome those changes.

James Syler

St. Augustine, Florida

A Panorama of Christian Hymnody

Erik Routley

Chicago, Illinois: G.I.A. Publications, Inc. (1979).

259 pages, cloth, price unavailable.

As more pastors are expressing concern over their congregations' lack of understanding regarding congregational singing, it is unfortunate that evangelical seminaries do not include hymnological studies as a part of the standard curriculum for pastors, especially considering that the minister will most likely be solely responsible for the education of his congregation regarding worship. Teaching, whether good or bad, *will* be communicated to his people through the singing of hymns. What is he to do?

The average pastor is dropped off in the middle of a growing jungle of material without the necessary training to make

informed choices. Many simply plunge ahead without much reflection, relying on past preferences or employing the “democratic” principle of singing what everyone already knows and likes. But others may be asking, “Where can I find reliable information on hymns?” There are the numerous books of “beloved hymn stories” which are readily available in any Christian book store, but these are merely filled with entertaining (although often apocryphal) stories of how a hymn came to be written: they offer no serious analysis of the texts themselves or begin to ask the most important question, “What makes a hymn a good one?” Furthermore, a text which is no more than empty doggerel may be elevated to the level of a “classic” because of a sentimental account of the life of its author.

Erik Routley was not an author of “beloved hymn stories.” Rather, he was a scholar whose works reflect a desire to identify the best hymns in Christendom. *A Panorama of Christian Hymnody* is his most comprehensive work on this subject, covering everything from early Greek and Latin texts to the twentieth century. The reader must bear in mind that, strictly speaking, the term “hymn” refers to a type of poem, not a piece of music, and this volume approaches hymns as a literature textbook would the works of Milton, Donne, or Shakespeare. At the same time, Routley confesses that “a hymn without its tune is incomplete,” but he reserves an examination of hymn *tunes* for the companion volume, *The Music of Christian Hymns*. The text is always the proper starting point, as one must first judge whether or not the poem in question is rubbish to be discarded or a glorious crown to lay at Christ’s feet.

Routley begins his survey not with the ancient Greek hymns but with the Reformers. He does so for two reasons: First, the Reformation saw a rebirth of congregational singing and, second, the Greek and Latin hymns were not known by English-speaking Christians until the nineteenth century. His

examination of Luther includes several complete texts as well as an extremely helpful look at the influence of Medieval poetry and art music on Luther’s works (forever laying to rest the tired old myth, so oft repeated by the proponents of the popular-music idiom, that Luther used “barroom tunes” for his hymns). More space is devoted, however, to the Reformed tradition of psalmody than to Lutheran chorales, as Routley points out that it was the influence of Calvin, not that of Luther, that definitively shaped the future of the English and Scottish churches. Beginning at Geneva, the author illustrates the development of psalmody as it was carried back to England and Scotland by the Protestant exiles and how the poetic idiom which evolved formed the basis of English hymn writing for centuries to come.

In each article, anecdotal information never replaces serious examination of the full texts of hymns, and this alone makes the book worth owning. All are presented in their original versions, and most readers will be amazed at the wealth of texts which are routinely excised by hymnal editing committees. For example, Isaac Watts’ great hymn, “Crucifixion to the World by the Cross of Christ” (or “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”) is a poetic reflection on Galatians 6:14. This theme is completely lost in hymnals which omit the pivotal stanza:

His dying crimson, like a robe
Spreads o’er his body on the Tree;
Then am I dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.

Equally mangled by hymnal editors, but fortunately included here, is Matthew Bridges’ panoramic text, “Crown Him with Many Crowns,” whose stanzas are often conflated with those of an inferior hymn by Godfrey Thring. The inclusion of Charles Wesley’s eighteen-stanza “For the Anniversary of One’s Conversion” (of which “O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing” is an excerpt) is important for theological and historical

reasons, if a bit unmanageable for congregational singing.

The author is careful not to fall into some of the more prominent hymnological pitfalls, such as “Nineteenth-Century bashing”; rather, he gives examples both of excellent hymnody of the Victorian and Edwardian eras and of the more familiar, excessively sentimental ones. With regard to the American gospel songs of this period (such as those by Fanny Crosby, P.P. Bliss, *et al.*), Routley asserts that there are a few gems among them, but that on the whole they are “nursery rhymes” which have overshadowed the more important American contributions of the Black spiritual and the Appalachian folk hymn.

On the whole, the author’s analyses are insightful and engaging, although at times his somewhat liberal theological bent and anti-Puritan bias show through. However, Routley’s incomparable scholarship more than makes up for these nuisances.

Above all, *A Panorama of Christian Hymnody* allows the concerned churchman to examine the texts of hymns from every age and tradition without being distracted by the pull of a familiar tune or the austerity of an unfamiliar one, allowing him to weigh a text on its own merits and to decide whether it is a fit vehicle for the praise of the living God. Settling this question first will help to clear the confusing “jungle” considerably.

John Allen T. Bankson
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Today’s Music: A Window to Your Child’s Soul

Al Menconi

Elgin, Illinois: David C. Cook (1990).

176 pages, paper, \$12.99.

Menconi asserts that music is the key to understanding a child’s thought process. While this is a towering assumption, it concurs with Alan Bloom’s observations about college students since the 1960s. Menconi claims that the average child listens to between two and six hours of music a day. This, too, is an awe-inspiring claim, which, nevertheless, is well supported by Menconi, a diligent student of popular culture.

Today’s Music divides into two parts (1) an understanding of secular popular music, and (2) a Christian response to that understanding.

Menconi’s analysis of secular popular music is the reason to read this book. First, the field is so wicked and/or vacuous that who would want to waste his time researching it? Menconi has spared us this burden. He debunks the typical yellow journalism stuff about backwards masking and Satanic rituals. Rather, he attacks the philosophies contained in the lyrics, and they do provide unlimited cannon fodder to that end. Music which promotes hedonism and nihilism is sufficiently wicked for Satan’s purposes. There really is no need for ritualistic feasts of raw rat gizzards.

The book contains a brief history of rock and roll. One point worth mentioning is that a record studio owner by the name of Sam Phillips “realized that he could reach a large white audience if he could just find a white man who could sing with the energy and passion of a black singer. And he found one—Elvis Presley” (p. 53). Menconi later points out that Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis came out of Pentecostal backgrounds. (This is a noteworthy historical factum, because contemporary pop music, like the charismatic movement

whose spiritual forebear is Pentecostalism, makes feelings the primary arbiter of the true, the good, and the beautiful. Virtually no one speaks of the architectural forms of pop music; they are of no interest. No, what is important about rock and roll is how it makes you feel. It is no small wonder that the charismatic movement dominates the sensibilities of contemporary Christian music, which is, truth be told, rock and roll for Christians.)

The book moves on from a history to an analysis of the present state of secular popular music. Of course, this portion of the book is being antiquated by the minute. Still, it is insightful.

The second portion of the book describes what the Christian should do in response to the state of secular pop music. He challenges the misguided assumption that music is only entertainment, and, therefore, harmless. (By the way, Kenneth A. Myers' *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes* does this very well.) He notes a doubling of sales of one brand of hard liquor merely because it is mentioned in a popular song. The target age group of that rock band is twelve-to-sixteen-year olds.

This book is more about parenting than about music. For this reason, Menconi's most valuable advice is that parents soberly evaluate their own entertainment consumption. Here, to his credit, he takes off the kid gloves. The present abominable nature of secular pop music has its roots in the bad habits of previous generations. Menconi has no mercy on parents who complain about their child's vile taste in heavy metal or thrasher music while the parents continue to imbibe in "God's music" (country and western—p.91) or in "mellow lust" (e.g., Neil Diamond, Barry Manilow, Whitney Houston—p.93). This "repent, the kingdom of God is at hand" has always been a good message. God's mercy is often attached to repentance, as the people of Nineveh could tell us.

From this point, Menconi turns to the chapter of the book

which he considers the most important, namely, an examination of the individual child's musical diet. He recommends that we pay close attention to the messages in order to discover the child's worldview or his specific anxieties because, in the music the child has found something which expresses his distress with a high degree of accuracy. This is a powerful argument since it is a frightening time to be a child. Reformed people should see Menconi's observation as a golden opportunity maintaining, at least creedally, a high view of God's sovereignty. The knowledge that God is in control is the ultimate answer to all anxieties.

As strong as the book has been to this point, the rest of it is regrettable. It all stems from an incomplete understanding of music, theologically and aesthetically. (I hasten to reiterate, as long as Menconi is speaking of music from the perspective of parenting, he is outstanding.)

The theological weakness stems from an unquestioning trust in modernity, that inexorable force which isolates mankind from community. Thus, Menconi recommends that we buy a Walkman for our child so that he can listen to Christian music, thereby sending him even further into his own private world. When we are crucified with Christ, however, we are grafted into an olive tree, we become organs in a larger body, we are mysteriously combined with a numberless host to become the bride of Christ, we are adopted into the family of God. Usually, when the Bible treats the subject of music, it is with the idea that it is done in community. Indeed, even all those first-person-singular Psalms became song texts for the Israelites (notice the plural form). In the light of this, Paul writes in Colossians 3:16 that the way the word of Christ dwells in us richly with all wisdom is that we teach and admonish one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, and that we sing with gratitude in our hearts to the Lord. It is difficult to admonish one another when our means of contact is through the Walkman or a hi-fi set because we can

tune out anything (both literally and figuratively) we do not like. This is a technique well suited to hearts which are desperately wicked and deceitful. It eliminates the very beginning when God said that it was not good for the man to be alone. The atomizing forces of modernity play right into the hands of our adversary, the Devil, who lurks like a roaring lion waiting to devour us one by one. It is the age-old strategy of divide and conquer.

The Septuagint used several different headings within the book of Psalms. Some were merely "Psalms," others were "hymns," and still others were "spiritual songs." The hundred and fifty Psalms present the most natural reading of Paul's epistles when he mentions psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. While it does not conclusively support a position of strict psalmody (there are other scriptural facets which come to bear on this matter), it certainly points to a high priority on the Psalms within corporate worship, and, therefore, within the believer's musical diet. With this in mind, it is no accident that the first Psalm describes the man whose delight is in the Law of the Lord. I cannot lay claim to an exhaustive knowledge of contemporary Christian lyrics. Nevertheless, I have read a lot, and I can say with some confidence that contemporary Christian lyrics are conspicuously devoid of the Law of the Lord. This may be because the Law doesn't feel good, and yet, the blessed man delights in the Law of the Lord. He likes it! I bring this up to illustrate how much the world has infiltrated us and how incapable the means of contemporary Christian music are to counteract that trend for the simple reason that they are the world's means supplanted by Christian words, and the world doesn't like the Law of the Lord.

Menconi's solution to the secular pop music addiction is to replace it with a Christian pop music addiction. He might be quick to assert that he merely recommends "Christian" music, but that is tantamount to pop music. You are just not going to walk into Tongues of Fire Christian Music and Video Store and

find Tennessee Ernie Ford's greatest hits, the best of Ira Sankey, Martin Luther's top ten, or Gregorian chants. These do not serve the commercial interests, which determine what power Christian music has—a power that popes could only dream of. I suppose, from a perspective of sanctification, that we should rejoice if someone moves from a diet of Madonna to Amy Grant, although even that is questionable considering that widespread lurid poster of Amy Grant showing lots of bare shoulder.

As for aesthetics, Menconi asserts that the difference between musical styles is like the difference between seasoning of steaks. This is the philosophy of the "seeker sensitive" movement in which beauty is determined by the results the music brings. From this we can see that what may be considered beautiful today may be perceived as ugly in five years. The problem with this sort of relativism is that beauty is an attribute of God, and God does not change. Therefore, there is something in beauty's essence which is transcendent. Just what that is may be difficult to ascertain and may demand disciplined humility and study on our part in its quest. Still, all styles are not equal any more than all pots are created for glory or for destruction.

There is not a single mention of high art music in this book. This is unfortunate because children are able to develop a taste for good music more easily than adults. Think of all the children who are riveted to those ludicrous operas on Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. This isn't even good high art, but it certainly promotes sensibilities in that direction, and children receive it well. Unlike their parents, they don't find Beethoven boring until they have had their musical arteries hardened by the equivalent of McDonald's food, namely, popular music (be it Christian or secular). High art music is efficacious because in it, unlike commercial popular music, we can see God bestowing lavish amounts of common grace. It gives us a unique window on the earth which is the Lord's. Isn't this the

world we want our children to see?

The idea that all styles are equal is even more problematic from the perspective of ethics. Plato inveighed heavily against this thought. Interestingly, the fourth-century church fathers embraced Plato's teaching on style almost exclusively as the church was being overrun by the Arian heresy with the means of simple, appealing music (contemporary Christian "praise songs" of the fourth century). Plato codified a system of associations which are probably simplistic. Nevertheless, associations are an inescapable feature of being human, and I wonder if we can wholeheartedly embrace Christian music which is in the style of "mellow lust" simply because the offending words have been replaced with words about how beautiful and sweet Jesus is.

There is only one perfect book, and *Today's Music* is not it. In spite of my severe criticism, the good features of this book are very good, and for this reason, there are two audiences that would benefit by reading it. The first is that group of Christians who are just beginning to give thought to their media consumption. As for the parenting issues, if you have a teenager who is drinking deeply at the trough of secular pop music, the problems are larger than the diet itself. In this case, along with Menconi, I encourage the parent to look for as much to repent of as possible. Menconi has good suggestions on this.

The second group which would benefit from this book consists of those of us who live in Reformed Fortress, who typically home school our children, do not own a television, and sing Isaac Watts' "Divine and Moral Songs" after a healthful meal which even Seventh-day Adventists would admire. We are placed in the perplexing tension of making disciples at the uttermost part of the earth (in our case, our neighborhoods) and nurturing our kids in the faith. I suggest that the kid next door who listens to Megadeth for hours on end is like a foreigner to us, a person we do not understand, nor does he

understand us. Menconi's book is a little like a Michelin guide to a foreign country which will not prepare you to become a naturalized citizen of that country but will, nonetheless, allow you to have meaningful contact. The example of Paul as a missionary shows us that becoming all things to all men first of all means trying to understand them so that they are then able to respond to the Gospel as we present it and not to an unfortunate miscommunication on our part.

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Campus Aflame

J. Edwin Orr

Wheaton, Illinois: International Awakening Ministries (1995).

P.O. Box 232, Wheaton, Illinois 60189.

286 pages, paper, \$14.95.

In this masterpiece, subtitled "Dynamic of Student Religious Revolution," J. Edwin Orr ably takes the reader through over a century and a half of spiritual revivals among the young people of North America. All of the great evangelical awakenings from the 1800s up until 1970 are documented in great detail. Beyond this, *Campus Aflame* confirms that the college campus was often the place where the Holy Spirit began the stirrings of revival that affected the church and then society.

Orr begins his book with a chapter focusing upon the evangelical heritage that he defines as: "that way of life or mode of thinking which considers the New Testament as its source of authority, superior to tradition or rationalism—though not at all disregarding tradition or reason." Out of this focus upon the Scripture as the basis for faith and practice came the Christian college movement. As Christianity spread with the migration of many groups seeking religious freedom

in the new world, so also came the desire to found Christian colleges that would train the future leaders of the church.

According to Orr, the enduring elements of each evangelical awakening, the elements that lasted beyond the initial enthusiasm were those which were founded in the Scriptures. In one of his final chapters, titled "Pattern of College Revival," he said,

It may be safely said that college revivals do not occur in academic communities where there is little or no knowledge of the Scriptures as the Word of God. This also is true in evangelical awakenings among the masses. Either there is a familiar knowledge of the Word, or the Word is preached in great power. Where there is little knowledge or none, a turning to God may occur, but it is more likely to be in the form of a folk movement, without conviction of sin.

Orr points out that a profound sense of need preceded every great work of God as the college community became aware of great apostasy. For months and usually years, deeply concerned individuals prayed that God would bring deep conviction of sin. Men and women prayed according to the promise of God as recorded in 2 Chronicles 7:14, If "My people who are called by My Name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

In his final chapter titled "Theology of College Revivals," Orr records a pattern that is experienced by those who truly are revived:

- 1) **Repentance**—Through the Holy Spirit's leading, an individual's thinking is changed. He now sees his sin as that which is abhorrent to God.
- 2) **Conviction**—The sin he had embraced brings genuine guilt that drives him to seek God's forgiveness and cleansing.
- 3) **Confession**—Sin that is private between God and the individual is confessed privately, and that which has affected

others and is known publicly is confessed publicly. (Note: On campus after campus, the faculty and leadership were careful to instruct the students from the Scriptures about that which would be appropriate and would bring glory to God and edification to the assembly.) Quoting Orr:

Without a doubt, in the course of many college revivals there have been unwise confessions made in public. The Scriptures discourage the discussion openly of sins of the flesh. Open confession of pride, or hypocrisy, or unbelief, presents no temptation to the hearer. But human beings have glands as well as minds, and the confession of carnal appetites or practices may indeed present temptation.

4) **Conversion**—Many who believed they were regenerate found out that they knew about God but did not have saving faith in Him.

5) **Restitution**—It is clear that confession without restitution is a sham. When true confession was made there was always the need for reconciliation, and those truly revived did all that was in their power to make things right.

6) **Witness**—God always gave those revived a deep desire to reach the lost with the good news that had been given to them. After each great awakening (1800, 1859, 1905, 1949, 1970) there was always a new outbreak of mission zeal.

God's glorious work of awakening and reviving His people continues to our day. May we seek His face in our individual lives and churches so that we might see the glory of our God shed abroad in our great land and the world. Amen!

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The Fabric of Theology

Richard Lints

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans (1993).

359 pages, paperback \$19.99.

The Evangelical Mind and Heart

Millard J. Erickson

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House (1993).

219 pages, paperback \$14.99.

Throughout the history of the Christian Church, theologians of every generation have had the responsibility of interpreting and applying God's Word to their world. Each generation is faced with a multitude of issues that require a biblical response. Sustained study and reflection on the Scriptures in combination with systematic organization of different doctrinal loci, have provided the framework for the church's witness in apologetics, ethics, and systematic theology. In this respect, the task of organizing and formulating a confessional framework that is biblically and theologically orthodox is something that must be faced afresh each generation. While biblical truth remains constant, cultures and the questions they ask do change.

It is in response to the issues that we face in "Our Time" (to quote a phrase used by David Wells in recent publications) that these two volumes have been written. Each author is by training a professional theologian working at an evangelical seminary. While the focus of each book is different, they overlap in that they are both attempts to formulate a scripturally-based method for the construction of an evangelical hermeneutic and theological method.

Lints' volume is a thorough and thoughtful examination of the ingredients that go into the making of a Bible-based

theology. He evidences himself a careful observer of our culture and the postmodern era in which we live. Interfacing classic Protestant orthodoxy with postmodern theology, he demonstrates the bankruptcy of the latter to produce either true knowledge of God or experience of the life eternal Jesus promised to all those who receive Him in His Word.

Tracking down the ancestral pedigree of postmodern theology, he shows its origin in Enlightenment-thinking with its rejection of external authority of a transcendent nature. Lacking a transcendent source, theology is now constructed from human experience, theology having become anthropology. Noting the pragmatic temper of the modern age with its redefining of theology in anthropological or psychological categories, Lints provides an interesting sociological analysis of the ways in which postmodernism pluralizes institutions and plausibility structures with the resulting relativism that ensues. Rooted in subjectivism, postmodernism is shown to be inadequate in providing a unified field of knowledge necessary for developing a scripturally-based source for theology proper much less theological prolegomena.

As a biblical alternative, Lints argues that the true nature of the theological task should be focused upon the history of redemption as it centers on Jesus who is the Christ. Theology, as human reflection, begins as we first listen to what God has said and done as recorded in Scripture. All theological formulation finds its point of origin in divine initiative wherein there is self-disclosure of the triune God in His words and acts in history and in the Incarnation of His Son. As a basis for theological formulation, Lints argues that biblical history is both factual and purposeful. Theological prolegomena, Lints urges, should be constructed along redemptive-historical contours, taking into account textual, epochal, and canonical horizons. Arguably, Lints is at this point building upon the work of the magisterial Reformers, Luther and Calvin, as well as Jonathan Edwards, and in particular, Gerhardus Vos. In

contrast to the more logical way of ordering a systematic theology common to most classic systematics, Lints believes our theological framework should be linked to the structure of the biblical text, not merely to its content. Scripture as a whole provides the matrix and canonical context for interpreting itself. As such, the entire canon in its historical unfolding is foundational in providing the matrix in which a biblical-theological perspective is disclosed. This in turn provides the parameters and content for theological prolegomena and the formation of a systematic theology sensitive to the methodological constraints imposed upon it by the self-disclosure of God in human history over the centuries.

By way of comparison with Lints' focus on theological prolegomena, Erickson's book is a collection of articles and lectures covering a variety of topics addressed in recent years. Divided into five sections, the book deals with evangelicalism and its influence on society, the environment, its understanding of the person of Christ, the nature of salvation and the Christian life, and the future of evangelicalism as a movement.

Because of the chapters prehistory as articles and lectures, the book lacks the depth and thoroughness of Lints' work. What it suffers from in cohesiveness, is more than made up for in its eminent readability. Erickson is a gifted and fair-minded author who patiently and methodically unfolds his subject. Offering a similar diagnosis as Lints' on secularism, Erickson analyzes the breakdown of evangelical orthodoxy through its own educational institutions, desire for academic "respectability" among its secular peers, and uncritical embracing of the social sciences as an interpretive grid for its self-understanding of the Christian identity and message.

Erickson warns us of the dangers of cultural adaptation and the rush for relevance at the expense of assimilating our message to the culture's mores. He calls for a return to a true theocentrism in which doctrine and life, belief and profession,

go together hand in hand. At issue is the importance of reemphasizing the antithesis between Christianity and secularism.

The book includes helpful chapters on a Christian theology of ecology, picking up on points made by Francis Schaeffer in the 1970s. Useful material is included on the lordship debate, the signs and wonders movement, and the trend among some evangelicals to embrace annihilationism. Throughout his presentation, Erickson maintains a thorough-going biblicism in his scholarly critique of detractors of the evangelical position. His explanations are often suffused with the burdens of a pastor's heart for the consequences in human lives of any position that deviates from classic Reformation orthodoxy.

Both these volumes are worthy contributions in helping to formulate an evangelical theological methodology for "Our Time." Each is committed to sustained intellectual inquiry in seeking to establish a theological identity for the church and its ministry. Moreover, each author recognizes the importance of doing theology from within the church for the sake of the church. Interestingly, both volumes would benefit from discussion of the need for the Spirit's witness and presence in formulating theological perspective. Lints' discussion seems overly freighted with the sociological analysis of the biblical data and while good emphasis is placed on the need for a biblical-theological hermeneutic, the absence of any sustained discussion of the role and presence of Satan, or the need for spiritual illumination in theological prolegomena was sorely missed. Perhaps it's time to reopen volume four of Owen's works or dip into sections of the recently republished *Biblical Theology*. Owen's work still merits careful study for the role the Spirit plays in providing the spiritual illumination necessary for our theological endeavors as we today seek to go about preserving the treasure in earthen vessels for our generation.

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