



FRANKLIN ROAD

baptist church

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NEWSLETTER

MAY 1, 2017

I NEED TO CONFESS SOMETHING TO YOU: I DON'T PREFER EVERYTHING WE SING ON SUNDAY MORNINGS. IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T WORSHIP. QUITE THE OPPOSITE. I HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY AWARE OF THE STATE OF MY HEART DURING WORSHIP OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. IT'S JUST THAT SOME OF THE SONGS WE SING WOULD NOT BE PLAYED IN MY CAR ON A REGULAR BASIS, I WOULDN'T LISTEN TO THEM AS I CUT THE GRASS, NOR WOULD I LISTEN TO THEM AS I SIT AT MY DESK AT WORK. THERE ARE JUST SOME SONGS THAT DON'T FIT MY PERSONAL PREFERENCE. THAT'S NOT A BAD THING.

IN FACT, THERE ARE ALSO MANY SONGS THAT I DO LISTEN TO THAT I WOULD NOT SEE FIT TO PLAY FOR CHURCH. NONE OF THEM WOULD I CONSIDER INAPPROPRIATE FOR WORSHIP, BUT I WOULD CONSIDER THEM INAPPROPRIATE FOR OUR CONGREGATION.

I ONCE HEARD A PROMINENT CHRISTIAN MUSIC WRITER SPEAK ABOUT HER EXPERIENCES WITH WORSHIP AS A WRITER, AS A SINGER, AND AS A WORSHIPPER. IT WAS FASCINATING TO UNDERSTAND HER PERSPECTIVE OF WORSHIP. HER MUSIC HAS INFLUENCED DECADES OF CHRISTIANS AND, IN MY OPINION, HAS SHAPED THE CULTURE SURROUNDING CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC. SHE SPOKE TO US, A CROWD OF MAINLY COLLEGE-AGE STUDENTS, ABOUT HER DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE "WORSHIP WARS." IT WAS CLEAR THAT HER HEART WAS BURDENED BY THE FIGHTING THAT WAS TAKING PLACE IN CHURCHES ACROSS AMERICA OVER THE SELECTION OF MUSIC STYLES, INSTRUMENTS, AND SONGS IN THE WORSHIP SERVICE. SHE DISCUSSED THE CLEAR GENERATIONAL DIVIDE THAT WAS PERVERSIVE IN CHURCHES AND A GREAT DEAL OF THE DIVIDE WAS CREATED AS A RESULT OF PERSONAL STYLISTIC PREFERENCE.

FROM THAT MOMENT ON AFTER HEARING HER SPEAK, MY PERSPECTIVE ON WORSHIP CHANGED. I WAS SUDDENLY MORE INTERESTED IN THE WORDS THAT THE MUSIC ENHANCED. MUSIC IS INTENDED TO ENHANCE OUR WORSHIP. IT IS INTENDED TO ENHANCE THE WORDS. IT IS NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND. GIVEN THIS PERSPECTIVE, WE MUST BE AWARE OF TWO THINGS: THE WORDS ARE OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE, MUST BE TRUE AND MUST DECLARE THE SUPREMACY OF GOD; AND THAT THE STYLE OF MUSIC IS BUT A CULTURAL STATEMENT AND CANNOT BE DICTATED BY ANYTHING BUT OUR OWN PERSONAL PREFERENCE.

MY HEART LONGS FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO HEAR MEMBERS OF OUR CONGREGATION LIFT THEIR VOICES IN A JOYFUL OUT-POURING OF PRAISE TO OUR KING. BUT THAT WILL REQUIRE YOU TO ENTER THE WORSHIP SERVICE EVERY SUNDAY WITH AN EXPECTATION THAT THE STYLE OF MUSIC YOU HEAR WON'T ALWAYS BE YOUR FAVORITE. GIVEN THE DELICATE NATURE OF MUSIC STYLE AND PREFERENCE, NO DECISION ABOUT THE MUSIC IS MADE LIGHTLY. WHEN I STARTED IN THIS POSITION IT WAS MY HOPE THAT THE MUSIC COULD "GROW ORGANICALLY" FROM THE CONGREGATION. THE PURPOSE OF THIS STATEMENT WAS TO ENCOURAGE AN ATTITUDE OF INVESTMENT WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION. I ENJOY HEARING ABOUT WHAT YOU LISTEN TO WHEN YOU'RE LISTENING FOR PLEASURE.

THERE ARE TWO THINGS I THINK ABOUT WHEN SELECTING MUSIC: DO THE WORDS OF THIS SONG DECLARE THE SUPREMACY OF GOD? WILL THE MUSIC ENHANCE THE WORDS APPROPRIATELY FOR OUR CONGREGATION?

I DON'T PICK SONGS BECAUSE "I LIKE THEM". I PICK SONGS OUT OF LOVE FOR THE BODY.

IF YOU EVER FIND YOURSELF DISTRACTED BY A STYLE OF MUSIC REMEMBER THAT THERE ARE PROBABLY MULTIPLE PEOPLE WHO ARE BEING MINISTERED TO BY IT AND THAT WE ARE CALLED TO LOVE EACH OTHER MORE THAN WE LOVE OUR MUSIC PREFERENCES. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO PRAY FOR A HEART OF WORSHIP THAT TRANSCENDS THE BARRIERS OF PERSONAL PREFERENCE AND HONES IN ON THE HEART OF GOD AND HIS GLORY. HE IS WORTHY TO BE PRAISED!

GRACE AND PEACE,
ADAM