

JOHN CALVIN'S PERSPECTIVE ON MUSIC AND WORSHIP, AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

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Abstract

Different views on worship and music have been expressed by different Reformers. The Reformers rejected some aspects of medieval worship such as the Gregorian chant, the use of elaborate vocal and instrumental music, overly theatrical performances at worship, the unwarranted expense of elaborate ceremonies, enormous pipe organs and the uselessness of text unintelligible to the common man. The Reformers aimed at introducing simple forms of worship and music in the Church, and to restore the true worship of God and therefore introduce congregational singing and participation in worship. This paper surveys John Calvin's views on worship and Music. Calvin held that the Word of God should be central to worship and that prominence should be given to the Bible over any other obsessions. He therefore prohibited many things in worship because he wanted God to be the focus of worship and devotion. The study concludes that although the Church today cannot limit itself to singing of the Psalms alone, nonetheless, music sung in the Church should be Bible-based to draw the attention of worshippers to God.

Introduction

Worship is a principal act in the life of the Christian church, and it is the church's response to God's gift of Christ. Therefore, the kind of music used in worship is very important. Worship and music play important roles in Christian worship especially in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.¹ The same can be said of worship during the reformation. The reformation of the sixteenth century was linked with the recognition of a need for drastic overhaul of the institutions, practices and ideas of the Medieval Catholic Church.² The reformation, therefore, called for some changes in the way the Church was run and administered by the Medieval Church. The Reformers were concerned with "discovering the *essentia ecclesiae*: what

makes the church the church?"³ The Reformers were concerned with the proper administration and leadership in the church and its worship.

One aspect of reformation theology that needs to be reconsidered is the Reformers understanding of worship and church music. The Reformers rejected some aspects of medieval worship, such as the Gregorian chant, the use of elaborate vocal and instrumental music, "the dangers of overly theatrical performances, the unwarranted expense of elaborate ceremonies and enormous pipe organs and the uselessness of text unintelligible to the common man."⁴ Their aim was to elevate and make the word of God the center of worship and to introduce simple forms of worship and music in the Church. The aspiration of the Reformers was to restore the true worship of God. This was accomplished through the introduction of congregational singing and lay participation in worship which prior to this time was the lot of only the clergy.⁵

Different views on worship and music have been expressed by the Reformers. Martin Luther, a singer and a composer, continued much of the Catholic Church's liturgy, and retained Latin as the language of worship. He was interested in strophic congregational style of singing (German choral or English chorale), which was monophonic with two elements, text and a tune.⁶ Luther considered music as an exceptional gift of God second to theology. He indicated, "I would not give up my slight knowledge of music for a great consideration. And youth should be taught this art; for it makes fine skillful people."⁷ This alludes to the importance Luther attached to music. The power and influence of music in the life of Luther often moved him to preach the Word. He also employed his skills in music in the service of his Creator. Luther favoured the use of icons in the church and would not overthrow them because of the Gospel. He held that "music must be simple, direct, accessible, and an aid to piety."⁸ Contrary to the Catholic elaborate forms of worship, Luther and other Reformers emphasized simple form of church music.

The Swiss priest and theologian Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) on the other hand strongly opposed Catholic teaching because he considered it as infringement on individual freedom. He rejected music in worship, and removed all art works from the church. He destroyed organs and other musical instruments in the church because according to him, they promoted self-indulgence.⁹

John Calvin on the other hand, encouraged congregational singing and held that cheerfulness should characterize singing. He held that the Psalms should be used as the lyrics of congregational singing because it is

God's own words which should be employed in praising Him. He states further that "the result of singing is like a spur to incite us to pray to and to praise God, to meditate on his works, that we may love, fear, honour, and glorify him."¹⁰ Church music accordingly, should be characterized by devotion, praise, meditation and worship. This study surveys and reflects on John Calvin's views on worship and music. It also explores what the Seventh-day Adventist Church can learn from his experience and teachings on worship and church music?

Background of John Calvin

John Calvin (1509-1564), a Frenchman, was born on July 10, 1509 in Noyon, Picardy and baptized as Jean Cauvin.¹¹ In 1523 at the age of fourteen, John Calvin entered the *College de la Marche* in Paris, where he came under the tutelage of Maturin Cordier, a Latin scholar considered as one of the founders of modern pedagogy, where he was introduced to the scholarly world of humanism.¹² John Calvin continued his education in Paris in the College Montagu, an institution renowned for its strict discipline and Catholic orthodoxy. In 1528, he received his master's degree. After this degree, he left Paris to study Law in Orleans (1529-1531). In 1531, in his early twenties, John Calvin received his doctoral degree in Civil Law. In April 1531, John Calvin published his first scholarly work, a commentary on Seneca's *De Clementia*. The book shows his command of Latin, his belief in moral education, and his devotion to antiquity.¹³

John Calvin's rise to stardom came as a result of the influence of Lutheranism in Paris. John Calvin's role in the inaugural speech delivered by the Rector of the University of Paris in favour of reform, led to his running away from his post.¹⁴ Between the summer of 1532 and the spring of 1534, John Calvin's life changed as a result of his conversion to Protestantism which he described as a "sudden conversion."¹⁵ In July 1536, John Calvin decided to go to the Protestant city of Strasbourg to pursue a scholarly career. It is said that a "war in the region forced him to make a detour to the south, so as to approach Strasbourg from Geneva. He had no intention of settling there."¹⁶ On arriving in Geneva in the summer of 1536, John Calvin came in contact with a fellow Frenchman by the name of William Farel (1459-1565), the leader of the Protestant movement in Geneva. After considerable argument, John Calvin decided to stay in Geneva to join Farel and his co-workers to champion the cause of the Reformation there. Within a short time, he assumed the leadership of the

Genevan Reformation.¹⁷

In the context of the European Reformation, when John Calvin appeared on the scene in 1536, “Luther had another ten years to live; Philip Melancthon and Bucer were at the height of their influence; Zwingli had been dead for five years and Bullinger had taken his place in Zürich.”¹⁸ There was animosity between the followers of Luther and Bullinger. It was in this environment that John Calvin, a second generation reformer, launched his reformation work in Geneva.

To recount some of his achievements, John Calvin at the age of twenty-six, published in Basel, Switzerland the first edition of his book, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* which is considered as the single most influential book of the Protestant Reformation.¹⁹ John Calvin wrote commentaries on twenty-three of the OT books and all the NT books, with the exception of Revelation. He also wrote many pamphlets, letters, devotionals, doctrinal and polemical materials. John Calvin had the reputation of being a biblical scholar, theologian, and ecclesiastical statesman. He is regarded as the father of all the Reformed churches which have the Presbyterian form of church government.²⁰

John Calvin's Views on Worship

John Calvin expressed divergent views on worship and music. In relation to worship, he rejected the use of images and icons in the Church. He pointed out:

We believe it wrong that God should be represented by a visible appearance, because he himself has forbidden it (Ex. 20:40) and it cannot be done without some defacing of his glory... If it is not right to represent God by a physical likeness, much less will we be allowed to worship it as God, or God in it... Let not God's majesty, which is far above the perception of the eyes, be debased through unseemly representations.²¹

Unlike Luther, John Calvin spoke against the use of icons in worship. He was of the view that worship should be devoid of icons, which are used as a way of attracting human attention to God through meditation on them.

In response to Cardinal Sadoletto's letter calling for reconciliation with the Catholic Church, John Calvin wrote: “There is nothing more

perilous to our salvation than a preposterous and perverse worship of God.”²² He took a serious view of worship and gave no room for any absurdity. For John Calvin, the aim of worship should be the glorification of God, and salvation is connected to worship. The importance and seriousness John Calvin attached to worship comes clear in this statement: “Let us know and be fully persuaded, that wherever the faithful, who worship him purely and in due form, according to the appointment of his word, are assembled together to engage in the solemn acts of religious worship, he is graciously present, and presides in the midst of them.”²³ Worship is about meeting with God and the church needs to rekindle the sense of reverent anticipation in worship among worshippers.

John Calvin gave no room for human exaltation in worship. He indicated, “Nor can it be doubted but that, under the pretence of holy zeal, superstitious men give way to the indulgences of the flesh; and Satan baits his fictitious modes of worship with such attractions, that they are willingly and eagerly caught hold of and obstinately retained.”²⁴ There should not be any room for human exaltation, gratification or indulgence during worship; instead, all the attention should be focused on the glorification and honour of God.

John Calvin’s abhorrence of icons or liturgical art in worship notwithstanding, he made use of them. He stated, “And yet I am not gripped by the superstition of thinking absolutely no images permissible. But because sculpture and painting are gifts of God, I seek a pure and legitimate use of each, lest those things, which the Lord has conferred upon us for his glory and our good, be not only polluted by perverse misuse but also turned to our destruction.”²⁵ He stated further, “it is true that God ought to be heartily praised, both by musical instruments and by mouth. But it is another matter when we conduct the worship of God in the church.”²⁶ He was advocating a careful and skillful use of instruments during worship.

John Calvin introduced a new liturgy in all the churches in Geneva which included the singing of a Psalm or the Decalogue immediately after the confession of sins, the Long prayer, the Apostles’ Creed, a Psalm during the distribution of the emblem of the Lord’s Supper, and a Psalm or the Song of Simeon before the Aaronic Benediction.²⁷ He further intimated the use of vernacular in worship to make the worship meaningful to parishioners.²⁸ It can be said that there was a standardized liturgy that was recommended and followed by the churches in Geneva.

John Calvin held that for worship to be scriptural it should include the preaching of the Word, public and solemn prayers and the administration of the sacraments. Prominence was given to the word of God during the reformation. One of the hallmarks of the reformation was the preaching of the word which prior to this time was relegated to the background and prominence instead was given to the sacraments. The Reformers made the Word the center of worship.²⁹ For him, public and solemn prayer included singing. Furthermore, he held that public prayer was of two kinds: those offered by means of words only and those offered through music. Prayer could also be said through music. For John Calvin, pure worship embraces the liturgy of the Word and the upper room.³⁰ There could be no worship of God without the proper preaching of the Word and intensive prayer of the saints as the Apostles engaged in prior to the day of Pentecost (Acts 1, 2).

John Calvin taught that church worship service should end with the Lord's Supper. He encouraged weekly participation in the Lord's Supper because he considered the service as a summary of the whole Gospel. While humanity is saved by hearing the Word preached, the Gospel is confirmed by partaking in the Sacraments. The Word and sacraments, "confirm our faith when they set before our eyes the good will of our heavenly Father toward us, by the knowledge of whom the whole firmness of our faith stands fast and increases in strength." Faith begins to grow, increase and become perfected in the individual through the Word.³¹ The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was given prominence in John Calvin's worship.

To sum up, John Calvin held that the Word of God should be central to worship. "When the Bible informs our worship, it does inform our minds, but it calls upon our hearts to be engaged as well."³² To emphasise simplicity in worship, John Calvin called for the removal of icons and elaborate decorations and use of musical instruments. Christ should be the centre of our affection and devotion at worship, and worship should be devoid of any distractions. Also, John Calvin did not give place to sensuality or self-gratification in worship, for the sole purpose of worship to him was to glorify God.

John Calvin believed that reverence on the part of worshippers should be encouraged. He penned, "Here indeed is pure and real religion: faith so joined with an earnest fear of God that this fear also embraces willing reverence, and carries with it such legitimate worship as is prescribed in the law," and "we ought to note this fact even more

diligently: all men have a vague veneration for God, but very few really reverence him; and wherever there is great ostentation in ceremonies, sincerity of heart is rare indeed.”³³ We need to be careful that the grandiose nature of our temples does not distract worshippers. We should approach the throne of God with awe, and also not give room to ostentatious ceremonies while neglecting the Word.

John Calvin’s Concept of Church Music

Worship and music are so intertwined; therefore, John Calvin advocated the proper use of music in worship. He expressed a cautious and fearful view about music. He warned against the “voluptuous, effeminate, or disorderly music and insisted upon the supremacy of the text.”³⁴ Careful and skillful use of music in worship should be given prominence in worship because disorderly music may lead to sensuality and self-gratification. Therefore, the text of the music should be carefully selected to meet this objective. It was not only images in worship that John Calvin spoke against; he also disapproved the use of musical instruments in worship. In his commentary on the Psalms, he penned that the use of harp and psaltery “formed a part of the training of the law and of the service of God under that dispensation of *shadows and figures*, but they are not now to be used in public thanksgiving.”³⁵ The use of these instruments was part of the ceremonies that pointed to the first advent of Christ which to him were no longer necessary, they were nailed to the cross; and are unnecessary for worship today. The Levites were permitted to use *tabret, harp, and psaltery*, under the law and they were justified in “their use of instrumental music in the worship of God; it having been his will to train his people, while they were yet tender and like children, by such rudiments until the coming of Christ. But now, when the clear light of the gospel has dissipated the shadows of the law and taught us that God is to be served in a simpler form.” Therefore, imitating such mode of worship would be foolishness on our part.³⁶

According to Calvin, the use of musical instruments in worship smelled of popery, and was an unnecessary aid, a form of distraction from worship which is contrary to Paul’s principles that the tongue be employed in the praise of God (I Cor 14:16).³⁷ Furthermore, it was similar to practicing Old Testament religion of shadow and figures which have been fulfilled in Christ according to John Calvin.

John Calvin demonstrated his abhorrence of musical instruments in worship on different occasions. He stated that worship was never

understood to mean “such outward services, which were only necessary to help forward a people as yet weak and rude in knowledge in the spiritual worship of God.”³⁸ The focus of worship should not be the outward forms but the transformation it brings in the life of the believers. He therefore called for dichotomy between the people of God under the Old and New Testaments. He believed that now that Christ has come all aspects of worship which were figurative and pointing to better things to come in Christ should be done away with.

In place of the elaborate music of the medieval church, John Calvin called for and insisted on the use of only words from Scriptures for church music. Unlike Luther who encouraged the use of hymns which reflected scripture, John Calvin insisted that church music should come from the Psalms. The use of the Psalms in congregational singing “ensured that Divine revelation was being put to music.”³⁹ Church music can glorify God only if the Lord has given such songs. Because David received the Psalms through the Holy Spirit, when it is sang in worship, it is like God has put His own words in our mouths to praise Him. Charles Garside confirmed this assertion stating that “When John Calvin proposed to re-order the whole vocal-music life of the Christian community around the singing of Psalms; it was because the words of the Psalms were God’s words, put by God in the mouths of the singers, just as He had put them first in the mouth of David.”⁴⁰ While Luther advocated the use of ideas from scripture in church music, John Calvin called for using the exact words of scripture especially those contained in the psalms and the decalogue.

John Calvin promoted the use of the Psalms in worship and music because he knew the power of music and its ability to lead people to lasciviousness. In his 1537 Articles he advocated the singing of the Psalms in the Church for three various reasons. First, it was exemplified in the ancient church and Paul “says it is good to sing in the congregation with mouth and heart.” Second, because of the cold nature of the prayers of the faithful, “the psalms can incite us to lift up our hearts to God and move us to an ardour in invoking and exalting with praises the glory of his Name.” Third, God should be praised in His own words and the Psalms are the most suitable.⁴¹ Church music should draw the attention and focus of worshippers to God. Church music should be holy and honest to elicit a sense of prayer and praise among worshippers.

John Calvin’s advocacy of the use of only the Psalms in church worship notwithstanding, he included the musical versions of the Song of

Simeon, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostles Creed in the first songbook he prepared. Furthermore, he interpreted some Bible passages such as Eph 5:19; Col 3:16 as referring to all kinds of songs.⁴² John Calvin held that the elements of the music should be a means of "proclaiming the gospel, admonishing one another, prayer, confessing our faith and making vows, and prophesying, seeming to call for more than the Psalms alone. John Calvin was not an exclusive psalmist."⁴³ It can therefore, be said that John Calvin did not only use the Psalms but also advocated the use of other religious oriented materials in the composition of music.

In relation to style, John Calvin insisted that the music should be suitable and complimentary to the text; furthermore, the music should not detract the singer or listener from the text of the song. "We must, however, carefully beware, lest our ears be more intent on the music than our minds on the spiritual meaning of the words."⁴⁴

Another important aspect of John Calvin's church music was his use of children. He held that children be trained to lead Church music. "It will be good to introduce ecclesiastical songs, the better to incite the people to pray and praise God. For a beginning, the little children are to be taught; then with time all the church will be able to follow."⁴⁵ The children should sing monophony which must be simple so that the congregation can learn to sing it easily. John Calvin's use of children in church music aimed at emphasizing humility at worship and wanted the children "to teach adults simplicity, childlike devotion, and a sincere heart when singing, even though there might be problems with intonation and the like."⁴⁶ The use of Children in church music was to help instill humility and childlike simplicity in adults as they worshipped.

Nelson minced no words in his submission that "Calvin spared no words in his critique of the abuses of the Catholic Church, including the polyphony in worship, the unintelligibility, the lack of congregational singing, the use of instruments, and the secular nature of many songs used."⁴⁷ He goes further to state that "Calvin's Psalters (1539-1562) is in unison, using simple rhythm based on the natural accents of the text, sung syllabically (one note per syllable), and the melodies are mostly stepwise motion (although leaps ranging from thirds to octaves are not unusual). The distinctiveness of each melody, as well as their dignity, beauty, and portability, all contributed to their popularity even outside of the church."⁴⁸ Unlike the Medieval Catholic Church, congregational singing characterized reformation congregations.

John Calvin's philosophy of worship and music emanated from his understanding of the battle cry of the Reformers, *sola scriptura*. He held that "if the Word of God is the sole basis for faith and practice, then congregational singing should not merely be 'based' on the words of scripture, but should incorporate the very words of scripture as God gave them to holy men of old. What better example do we have than the psalms of David?"⁴⁹ There were three performance requirements that John Calvin imposed on his parishioners: "a total commitment of the heart; the text be sung in the vernacular, and the tune and text be memorized. It must be memorized, so that it would be imprinted on their minds, whereas the written out tune or text could distract the worshipper."⁵⁰ John Calvin made use of the vernacular in worship instead of the Latin of the medieval Catholic Church.

It can be summed up that with regards to church music; John Calvin promoted the use of the very word of God in His praise, hence his advocacy of the use of the Psalms in church music. He promoted the view that music be rendered without instruments and be sung in monophony to draw the attention of the worshippers to the text rather than the melody of the song. He was of the view that God be the center and focus of worship and human exaltation should not be given any place in worship. John Calvin also called on worshippers to worship in humility, hence his use of children to teach church music. From the study so far, it can be said that John Calvin prohibited many things in worship because he wanted God to be the focus of worship and devotion.

The Implication of John Calvin's Concept of Worship and Music for the Seventh-day Adventist's Worship and Music

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is "a conservative Christian body, worldwide in extent, evangelical in doctrine, and professing no creed but the Bible," stresses the atoning death of Christ on the cross and His intercessory ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Adventist stresses the soon return of Christ, "and observes the Sabbath of the Bible, the Seventh day of the week,"⁵¹ consider healthful living as a religious duty and are mission oriented. The SDA Church owns its beginning to the nineteenth century Advent movement, especially the Millerite movement of the 1840s. The Church regards itself as "heirs also of an earlier widespread awakening, in many countries, of interest in the Second Advent, of which the Millerite movement was a part."⁵² The Millerite Movement has root in the Second Awakening of the eighteenth century which can be linked to

the Wesleyan revival in England.⁵³ The name “Seventh-day Adventist,” was adopted in 1860 at Battle Creek, Michigan at one of their constituent meetings. Prominent founders of the Church were James and Ellen White, Joseph Bates, J. N. Andrews, Stephen Haskell, Uriah Smith and John Loughborough.

According to the statistics, as of the year 2010, the SDA church has established itself in 213 out of the 236 countries recognized by the United Nation. The Church has 70,188 organized churches and 65,157 companies, with a membership of 16, 923,239 as of December 2010.⁵⁴ Right from its inception, the mode of worship and music have played important roles in the *Seventh-day Adventist Church as indicated in the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*. Interestingly, from the Church Manual, there are so many similarities between the worship and music forms advocated by John Calvin and the Adventist Church.⁵⁵

From the chapter so far, it is clear that John Calvin was a man of his time. Having come from the dark ages and the reformation still at its infancy, there were many decisions that some of the Reformers took which may not be relevant for our day and time. That notwithstanding, there are many lessons that can be drawn from his views on worship and music for the church today. In partial agreement with Barber, “Calvin’s disapproval of the use of images, musical instruments, and support for psalms-singing on the Lord’s Day was nurtured within a highly charged historical setting: the theological and ecclesiastical battles of the late Middle Ages.”⁵⁶ It can therefore be said that not all what John Calvin advocated maybe relevant to our time.

While John Calvin deserves our praise for trying to reform the Church to suit the NT principles of worship, we also need to bear in mind that he was influenced by his aversion toward the Medieval Catholic Church. The first lesson that can be learnt from John Calvin’s mode of worship and music has to do with simplicity of worship. Worship should be simplified as much as possible.

Nonetheless, John Calvin’s view that musical instrument were permitted in the old dispensation but abolished in the NT due to the fact that they were “shadow of things to come” which was fulfilled in Christ may seem incongruous with the Bible. Furthermore, he does not have strong Biblical backing for most of his views. For instance, there is no strong biblical support in favour of the view that musical instruments were part of the ceremonial law that Christ fulfilled. However, the Adventist *Church Manual* advocates that “music should have beauty, pathos, and

power. Let the voices be lifted in songs of praise and devotion. Call to your aid, if practicable, instrumental music, and let the glorious harmony ascend to God, an acceptable offering.”⁵⁷ There is no need of the ostentatious use of musical instruments that characterized medieval Catholic worship. The use of the human vocals and biblical text were enough to make church music lovely. However, there is no correlation between the command not to use images (Ex 20:3-5) and John Calvin's ban on the use of musical instruments in the Church; these may all be related to his disgust for the Medieval Catholic Church. That notwithstanding, icons should be avoided in worship as indicated by John Calvin.

Nonetheless, John Calvin needs to be praised for his advocacy of the use of the Psalms for worship lyrics. The Psalms are full of praises for the Almighty God and its proper use can lift the soul heavenward. In agreement with Barber, Ephesians 5:19 calls for the use of “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your hearts to the Lord” (cf. Col 3:16). This test broadens the scope of the type of music that can be used in the Church and does not limit us to the use of only the Psalms. Church music cannot be limited only to the Psalms; it may include other hymns and songs whose words are taken from the scripture. The Seventh-day Adventist church music should always be characterized by the use of scriptural passages.

Another legacy of the Reformation that is worthy of emulation by the Seventh-day Adventist church is the use of congregational singing and the use of choirs in worship. The choir used to tackle complex and difficult music while the congregation sung in unison; this view was also promoted by Luther. This view is complimented by the Adventist *Church Manual* which states that “sacred music is an important part of public worship. The church needs to exercise care in the selecting of choir members and other musicians who will rightly represent the principles of the church.”⁵⁸ Skillful use of musical instruments should be advocated by all Adventist worship leaders.

As indicated by John Calvin, worship should be devoid of sensualism and emotionalism. While the importance of music in the life of the individual worshipper is indispensable, the sensual aspects of music should be avoided at all cost. Seventh-day Adventist Church worship should be devoid of sensualism and emotionalism since the focus of worship is God and not humans. This view is buttressed by the *Church Manual's* view that “great care should be exercised in the choice of music.

Any melody partaking in the nature of jazz, rock, or related hybrid forms, or any language expressing foolish or trivial sentiments, will be shunned. Let us use only good music in the home, in the social gathering, in the school, and the church.”⁵⁹ That was why John Calvin advocated the use of children to sing in the church in depict humility among worshippers.

John Calvin also promoted singing in the vernacular in the church. The use of the vernacular as advocated by John Calvin and other Reformers should be commended. It should not be limited to language, but also proper use of local and traditional folk songs. Unfortunately, many churches today use complex musical instruments contrary to what John Calvin taught. There is the need for the church to regulate the use of complex musical instruments in the worship. Some of the instruments used in worship are so cacophonous that the congregation focuses on the melody instead of the text of the music.

Another aspect of John Calvin’s worship that needs to be considered by the Seventh-day Adventist church today is the practice of humility and decorum in worship. The bible requires all worshippers to be humble before the Almighty God. When we talk about decorum in worship it also has to do with the ostentatious dressing of many worshippers which draw attention to themselves instead of God who should be the center of our worship and devotion.

Adventist as much as possible should encourage orderliness in worship. There should be no room for disorderly attitude in worship. Adventist worship should be carefully planned with properly designed liturgy that creates awe before God. We should always remember that the focus of worship is the creator and therefore, there should be no room for self-exaltation by worshippers.

Another important aspect of John Calvin’s worship is the proper place of the Word of God. The word should be the center of our worship. Worshippers should be admonished and encouraged from the word of God. Prominent place should be accorded the preaching of the word.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that John Calvin appreciated the beauty and import of music both in worship and for domestic use. While music can be used for recreational purposes, its main objective should be the glorification of God. There are different things that we can learn from the Reformers in terms of worship and church music. We need to sing more chorales and tunes from the Biblical text in our worship. We should

promote the singing of hymns in monophony (unison) as John Calvin advocated and it should be an integral part of our worship to encourage parishioners to concentrate more on the text instead of the melody. Those who can sing harmony should be encouraged to join the choir. We need to emphasise the underlying principle for John Calvin's use of children to lead congregational singing; it was to teach worshippers childlike humility. Music that is performed in the church should be devoid of theatrical display that characterized some worship today. We should always encourage child-like humility and attitude in our worship. While it is good to enjoy good melody in the church, elaborate vocal and instrumental music that attract attention to singers should be shunned in our worship. The church should not give room for overly theatrical performance that is characterizing different worship today. Also the text used in our music should be intelligible instead of the useless unintelligible text that has become common in today's music. We need not give room for any absurdity in worship. Our attitude at worship should be characterized by reverent anticipation because God is present.

Like John Calvin, the aim and purpose of Church music should be the glorification and praise of God (Psa 33:3, 4; 47:7, 8). If we are going to use instruments in the Church, those who play it should be skillful and respected (I Chron 9:33; 15:16; 23:5). Today, the Church cannot limit itself to singing of the Psalms alone but music sang in the Church should be Bible based to draw the attention of worshippers to things above.

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