

"I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

What About "Christian" Music?

Victor got this note from Terri:

Hi Victor...

Just wanted to thank you for including me on your list. I truly enjoy receiving your e-mails!

Question: Is christian music okay to listen to?

I have....

Songs 4 Worship

Shout to the Lord (Hillsong featuring Darlene Zschech)

Ultimate Worship Collection

Chris Tomlin - "See the Morning"

The Worship Session

"Open the Eyes of my Heart" and "I Can Only Imagine" - Ultimate Worship Anthems of the Christian Faith

Mahalo, Terri

Victor's reply:

Hi Terri,

You ask, "[Is christian music okay to listen to?](#)"

I will try to lay down some guidelines for judging what is called Christian music and address music in general from my perspective.

One must pay attention to the lyrics of that which is called Christian music. Many songs contain religious notions and doctrines that are not at all Scriptural. They may sound good, they may be tearjerkers, and they may even seem to glorify the Lord, but they often tell "little white lies," if not express outright diabolical trash, doctrinally, emotionally, philosophically, and spiritually. Consider the words and ideas carefully.

Another factor to consider is the spirit of the music. A deceptive religious spirit pervades much of "sacred" music, coming from Mystery, Babylon the Great, a beautiful, seductive, apparently godly, spiritual corporate woman who has taken many wise and strong to their graves.

Many so-called Christian groups and soloists only glorify themselves, whether deliberately or because they think that, by their own presentation, beauty, talents, and skills, they are glorifying God. I choose not to support them. Whenever flesh receives glory, no matter how beautiful and moving, it is not good, and God isn't in it.

"And He said to them, You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows

your hearts. For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15 MKJV).

Those who listen to this music are drawn away in mind and spirit from God, wittingly or not. The particular problem with this music is that it deceives and lulls listeners into thinking it promotes true worship of God, but it is nothing more than the world's ungodly nature disguising itself by using Biblical and religious terminology. Better to listen to honest secular music anytime.

Those who produce, listen to, and defend worldly Christian music are only choosing to be, and are, in and of the world. They are not after edification of the spirit in Christ, but entertainment of the flesh. The Bible says the world is at enmity with God. Perhaps better to listen to heavy metal, punk rock, or screamo (not that I advise it):

"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I would that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth" (Revelation 3:15-16 MKJV).

I have found almost all so-called Christian music to be unacceptable for one reason or another. And almost all the artists are doing it for selfish gain; their inspiration is of the spirit of this world; their business is to entertain anyone and everyone - they entertain their own. And their spirit and motivation are evident in their music to the spiritually discerning.

Are Christians called to indulge in it? Is such music justified by claiming to be getting the Gospel out to the lost masses? Is that really what is happening? Does God reach out by pleasing the flesh? Is He pleased? We don't think so.

I heard music in Heaven once, Terri. Here is my record of it:

"Dream - MUSIC IN HEAVEN

I believe this dream was around 1982, in Saskatoon, at the Gordie Howe campground, about three years after Paul was called upon, in Israel, to leave Alison and follow the Lord. I was in Heaven in my dream, and I saw Paul and Alison. Alison did not belong there, not because we were better than she or because she was wicked, but because it was not her time or place. I needed to tell her so.

At some point, whether before seeing Paul and Alison or just after, I saw a well-dressed elderly man seated on a chair, bowed in prayer, saying, 'Lord, bless brother Vic.'

Then we heard music and a choir of many people, all men it seemed. How beautiful the music and the voices! Comparing music on earth to it would be like comparing a homely pebble to a glorious mountain. In the midst of the singing, suddenly a shout went out from all, in unison, a shout of joy and excitement! How wonderful!

I then saw a man (who looked like someone we knew) on stage, playing a base violin while all sang. He was plucking the strings with his right hand. On his neck, he wore a long hanging necklace of some sort. He began to pluck the necklace instead of the strings, and the base sound of the violin continued as though he was still plucking the strings. Everyone broke out in joyful laughter. It was the humor of God - clean, funny, life-giving, at nobody's

expense, miraculous, sharing his glory with another (not a god, but His sons). What a taste of Heaven!”

Admittedly, Terri, the music we have on our site is of low performance quality. One day, Lord willing, He will arrange for skilled, godly musicians who are genuinely interested in serving and glorifying Him - men, women, soloists, choirs, whomever - to do something with it.

Our music is not there for entertainment. The lyrics are primarily why those songs are posted, relating and growing out of past experiences in our spiritual journey, though the Lord also gave me the tunes. The doctrine is sound, and the truths make one free.

As I write, I am listening to Handel’s *Messiah*. What a beautiful, if only earthly, performance it is! And though we don’t celebrate Christmas, I love some Christmas carols; take, for example, “Joy to the World.” The things that man can do with music, as with so many other things, is simply marvelous to me. I spend little time listening to music. Why? I don’t know; I enjoy music, maybe not enough.

The Bible has much to say about music. There were choirs and orchestras to praise the Lord. David was a skilled harp player who composed music for many of the psalms we read (some day we may hear those!). As well, there have been some good Scripturally sound hymns composed over the past several centuries that have ministered to me spiritually.

But must it be Christian music that Christians listen to? I love much music by many composers and performers in the world. Pavarotti can bring tears to my eyes. He is likely the greatest tenor in modern history. I confess that I have enjoyed a lot of the Beatles’ music, especially when put to orchestral. I think those boys were very talented and creative.

Not that you are suggesting anything of the sort, but it might be good to mention that we should not write anything off just because it comes from nonChristians, including music. Having been set free by the Lord and brought to rest, I have been able to enjoy many things that, at one time, I could not enjoy in my self-righteous, legalistic, religious past.

We have people in the world who are clearly great at what they do, and they do many things very well. Music is one of them. Remember, God sends the sun and the rain on the just and the unjust; He gives gifts to all men. We are not to condemn, exclude, or ignore anybody per se, though as believers, we must judge the fruits and the spirit of things and govern ourselves accordingly.

The peculiar musical creativity and skills of Blacks sometimes astound me. Let’s face it - they have certain gifts and abilities, although carnal, that are exemplary and not found with Caucasians; we cannot ignore or minimize their quality. Of course, Caucasians have their gifts, too - I enjoy Spanish and Hawaiian music!

Though not Christian, many Jewish musicians and composers are extraordinary (not that others aren’t, but one finds a disproportionately high number of Jews excelling in music) - Vladimir Horowitz, Yehudi Menuhin, Isaac Stern, Jascha Heifetz, Itzhak Perlman...the list goes on and on.

What about Simon and Garfunkel? Aren't they great? Jewish or not, I have enjoyed Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, Smetana's *The Moldau* (from which came part of the Israeli national anthem, “HaTikvah” - “The Hope,” a stirring number to me). Perhaps my favorite piece of all is Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*. It fascinates me!

I have enjoyed several of the older classical composers - Strauss, Chopin, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Beethoven, and others. But each to his or her tastes.

My point: It doesn't have to be Christian music. My previous point: Much so-called Christian music is not so good (not saying that none of it is good). And above all, recognize that, as with food, drink, clothing, or anything else, we can get carried away and preoccupied or compromised in our spiritual health and relationship to God if we are not earnest with Him.

“Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31 MKJV).

There may be some good Christian songs; there may be instrumental and orchestral music available for godly spiritual edification; I haven't looked into it for years now, but even there, if there have been any lyrics associated with it, and they are not good, and one is familiar with them, then one must beware of their thought and influence.

As an aside, and in fairness, I recall years ago hearing Jimmy Swaggart singing and playing piano, years before he fell into disrepute. Regardless of what people think of him today, I honestly thought his music was inspirational in a good way; I appreciated it. But I might feel differently now, not having heard him for decades. I know I have changed.

I haven't listened to the music you mention, Terri. Perhaps if I have the opportunity to do so, I will. Do you have any you can send me on the net, or is any of it available to take a quick listen? Perhaps you will alert us to some edifying music we can share with all. Who knows? Maybe you are the one who will do something with our music!

Is it appropriate to say “Mahalo” to you, too?

Victor

Terri's reply:

Hi Victor...

Mahalo simply means thank you or goodbye.

Thank you for your insights on christian music. I wanted to know because I felt a little troubled about it.

I do also enjoy classical music as well as Pavarotti and Bocelli. I don't know if you've ever heard of Amici - The Opera Band.

I was never fond of the Beatles, and yes I do enjoy Hawaiian Music.

Have you heard Slack-key guitar (ki ho alu) music? In the 19th century, Mexican cowboys (Paniolo) were hired here on this island and brought with them their guitars and style of

playing. Hawaiians created their own style (slack-key) from the mexican's style.
I will be getting Handel's Messiah and listening to the music on your website.

Mahalo, Terri

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