

Principles for Selecting Christian Music - Part 2

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Host: David Wheaton

Principles for selecting Christian music. Today is part two of that topic right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host.

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Now if you missed last week, we discussed how Christian music in general and church music in particular has undergone a huge change over the past 50 or 60 years. Whereas for centuries, Christians sang psalms and hymns as a congregation, with or without instrumentation, by the way. Now the overwhelming majority of evangelical church music is like a rock concert that has taken a form of music, which intentionally incited listeners to immoral sex, drug use and rebelling against authority. The rock musicians say so themselves. This week on the program, we're going to discuss why this has taken place, and how it has significantly altered the church's worship service. Then, Chris Anderson, our guest from last week, who is a hymn writer and author of *Theology That Sticks The Life Changing Power of Exceptional Hymns* will join us again to explain how churches and individuals need to be carefully selecting music that is sound in doctrine and directs our minds and hearts to worship God.

Now, there are a lot of significant events taking place right now in the news, and we could discuss those today. But I would assert that what is taking place in the church with music is an even bigger issue. The church is the only institution on earth that God has promised to build and not abandon, because the church is the body of believers, the body of His Son, Jesus Christ. And when there is compromise in the church, it affects everything, not only the church itself, and those who are members of the church, but their families, and even in society more broadly. Because the church is so important therefore, Satan works tirelessly to attack the church. Even in the first century, shortly after sound churches were established by let's say, the

apostle Paul, or the apostle Peter, they would soon fall away or go off into false doctrine. And then Paul would be writing letters to them to correct where they've gone astray.

So the church is under constant assault. And we see in the beginning of Acts in verse 42 of chapter 2, it says this, that the early church, were continually devoting themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Those four things. Notice what they are. The preaching of the Word, fellowship with other believers, breaking of bread, that's communion, and prayer. Those were the four pillars of worship services in the early church.

Now, you'll notice there that music wasn't a significant factor in the church. At least it wasn't mentioned there. They didn't say praise and worship in that list of four things. But today, music has become either the most significant element of a church service or at least tied with the preaching aspect of the service. Each are given about equal time. Prayer and Bible reading and communion are given far less time in today's church service.

As I think back over the years of churches that I went to, say earlier in my life, remembering what the service was like then, and then thinking to what the service has become like now, even in the same church, it's such a huge difference. It's just hard to even process. But the present makes such a strong influence on us that we tend to forget about what it was like in the past. In the past, it was much more of a traditional hymn based music in the church, too as a mentioned more of a rock concert style of music today.

This week, I came across three articles that explain more of the history of what music has become in the evangelical church, what is taking place in these worship services, and the three articles are titled, Strange Lyre and lyre spelled L Y R E, that was a musical instrument and to play off the strange fire that Nadab and Abihu, who were the sons of Aaron, the high priest, sinfully offered at the altar in the Old Testament. The subtitles of the articles are, The Pentecostalization of Christian Music. That's the first one. The second one is, Early Beginnings of Pentecostal Worship. And the third one is, A Radical Departure From Historic Worship.

I cannot recommend highly enough that you read these three columns that are linked at our website. Just go to TheChristianWorldview.org and read through these three. And this will give you an explanation for how music in the evangelical church, how it got to where it is today and what is behind it. And the author of these three columns is named David de Bruyn I'm not sure how to pronounce it yet. He was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, and he now pastors a church there called New Covenant Baptist Church. And he's going to be coming on the program in a future week. But I'm just going to read a few excerpts of what he says in his columns.

Here's how it starts out. It's hardly disputable that global Christianity has been overwhelmed and colonized by the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. After Roman Catholicism, the Christianity identified variously as charismatic, Pentecostal, prosperity gospel, or Latter Rain with all its permutations and differences, and listen to this, makes up by far the largest percentage of what is classified as Christian. In just over 100 years since its beginnings in Azusa Street, California, it has come to dominate Christianity, and particularly the Christianity spreading in the global south and southeast. The growing and newborn Christianity in South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia is overwhelmingly of the Pentecostal kind.

Very few voices have been raised to counter the theological distinctives of Pentecostalism, which are an emphasis on the supernatural sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, a belief in the baptism of the Holy Spirit after or subsequent to salvation, and assorted novel views on healing, prosperity, prosperity gospel, and spiritual warfare. And I'm going to add one more that's a distinctive of charismatic or Pentecostal theology as you often hear them talk about getting extra biblical direct revelation, God told me this, He spoke to me, maybe it was a dream, maybe it was a vision or I heard a voice.

But perhaps far more insidious, has been the quiet takeover of Christian worship by Pentecostalism. Even in those churches that reject the theology of continuationism. Continuationism is the belief that the miraculous sign gifts that men had, were gifted with in the first century, the apostles were, speaking in foreign languages or tongues, doing healings of people, doing miracles, and prophecy, foretelling the future, that men and women continue, and that's where you get the word continuationism, that they still have these same miraculous gifts today. Now, just to be clear, we at The Christian Worldview are cessationists, which means that we believe that these miraculous sign gifts that were given to the first century apostles as a sign they were from God, before the record of the New Testament was put together, are not given to men and women today.

But we absolutely believe that God still does miracles and healings today. And these miraculous sign gifts will be given again to men in the future. Think about the two witnesses in Revelation who do signs and wonders. So back to the article, he goes on to say, as cessationist churches, those who don't believe in the miraculous sign gifts, post vigilant patrols at the doctrinal boundaries, but offer open borders to charismatic songs and music, forms of prayer and overall sentiment, a quiet transformation takes place. The result is a church that is cessationist on paper, but increasingly charismatic in sentiment and outlook. And here's an important sentence. *It is not long before this begins quietly reordering the discipline and ultimately the doctrine of the Church from within.* That's a big statement.

Okay, just two more paragraphs, and then I'm going to give a musical example of what Pastor David DeBruin is talking about. He says praise and worship theology, this is a peculiarly charismatic approach to worship that believes in an almost sacramental view of music and a tangible experience of the Holy Spirit's presence by means of successive phases of music and songs, often repetitive, and unbroken in sequence, worshipers can be led deeper and deeper into the presence of God until worshipers experience the presence of God in felt experiential ways. Certain kinds of music or prayer will bring about God's presence, the way the mass, the Roman Catholic mass, brought the body and blood of Christ to the table.

I'm going to play an example of this by Hillsong, which is a charismatic based church out of Australia but has a global influence, makes millions of dollars through sales of their albums and royalties, rights to have their song sung in churches. This is the engine that keeps this ministry going. They have a very well known song, you've probably heard it, it is called, Wonderful Name. And here are the lyrics. The heavens are roaring, the praise of your glory. For you are raised to life again. You have no rival, you have no equal. Now and forever, God, You reign. Yours is the kingdom, Yours is the glory. Yours is the name above all names. And then it goes into this extremely powerful chorus. What a powerful Name it is, what a powerful Name it is. The name of Jesus Christ my King. And keeps on repeating this over and over again. This is how this charismatic worship transports the listener into this deep sensory, highly stimulating experience, both with the repetitive lyrics and the overwhelming rhythm and form of the music.

That was Hillsong with their song, Beautiful Name. And there's nothing untrue about that. There is power in the name of Jesus, but the way that is communicated and presented and repeated, and the musical accompaniment that goes with it, that is almost like a drug that will just take you over. And that is the point of it. To get you deeper into this sensory experience, as if you can enter into the very presence of God.

I'm going to read a couple more excerpts from Pastor David de Bruyn's columns on music here. He goes on to say, Christian worship has often had a remarkably similar shape across traditions. Brian Chapelle showed in his work, Christ centered worship, that corporate worship except for communion in Roman Lutheran reformed and evangelical traditions had a very similar form. A call to worship, a confession, followed by thanksgiving, an Old Testament reading, a New Testament reading, a prayer for illumination, a sermon, followed by a benediction or dismissal with hymns or Psalms interspersed. Friends and proponents of Pentecostal worship, as you just heard, often do not realize how radically different charismatic worship is from this historic pattern.

Pentecostal authors have written that praise as a kind of, "Path into the presence of God." That is, worship is not a series of gracious revelations from God's Word with faith responses

from his people. Worship becomes a series of steps or stages growing in intimacy and intensity. Charismatic worship writers speak of the importance of, "flow," a technique of uninterrupted continual music designed to emotionally transport the worshipers into the climactic experience of, "worship," which they deem to be more intense and focused than, "praise." Just for the sake of time he goes on to say, the Pentecostal approach has parallels to the sensual and ecstatic worship of paganism. Steadily stimulate the body into a heightened state through sensual music, dancer movement, while steadily sedating the mind through chant like repetition, narrowed focus, or hallucinogenic drugs until the goal is reached, climactic encounter or possession with the spirit or God, the whole ritual, consciously or unconsciously, mimicking sexual stimulation, and climax.

One more example here of how this is done by another super popular group out of Bethel Church in Redding, California called Jesus Culture. The song is, He Loves Us, sung by Kim Walker Smith. And some of the lyrics are, If grace is an ocean, we're all sinking. So heaven meets earth like a sloppy wet kiss. And my heart turns violently inside of my chest. I don't have time to maintain these regrets when I think about the way that he loves us. Oh how He loves us. Oh How he loves us. And then that phrase is repeated over and over and over again. Listen to what it sounds like. (Song excerpt).

Again, that's Jesus Culture and, How He loves us. And as if that wasn't enough, where you stimulate the body into a heightened state quoting the article again, "through sensual music, dancer movement, steadily sedating the mind through chant like repetition, narrowed focus. Listen to how the song concludes with just more of this.

Audio Clip: Jesus Culture

And tonight, God wants to encounter you, and wants you to feel His love, His amazing love. Without it, these are just songs. These are just words. These are just instruments. Without the love of God it's just like we're just up here just making noise, but the love of God changes us. And we're never the same. We're never the same after we encounter the love of God. We're never the same after we encounter the love of God. And right now, if you haven't encountered the love of God, and you would know, because you wouldn't be the same, you would never be the same again. If you want to counter the love of God right now, you better just brace yourself, because he's about to just glow in this place and we're going to encounter the love of God right now. So God, I speak to all the hearts and I ask God that every heart be opened right now. Every heart be opened, every spirit be opened up to You, God. To you. And a love encounter, a love encounter from You tonight.

Host: David Wheaton

Did you hear what she was saying? A love encounter, a love encounter from you tonight. This kind of Pentecostal charismatic worship experience is what has taken over the evangelical

church. And this is one of the primary reasons why the church is the way it is today. Doctrinally shallow or compromised worshipers seeking an experience rather than being transformed by the renewing of our minds through congregational singing of reverent music, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and sound and strong preaching of the Word of God. And it's been exported all over the world.

What has been taught evangelicals is to seek a sensory experience, to feel a certain way at worship, rather than to actually mentally and volitionally worship God and yes, with our affections. I want to be clear that I do not think worship should be sedate or morose, or lack joy or enthusiasm. Shouting to the Lord, and even raising hands to worship Him or falling down before Him is a very biblical thing, if done with the right intentions, and the right kind of musical accompaniment and words to it. To direct our hearts to God is a beautiful and correct thing. Not this sensual overtaking of you by repetitive, throbbing music.

Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs can be done in ways that bring joy out of us and not just rote singing. And that leads us into our interview with Chris Anderson today. Chris is a former pastor of 25 years. He's a hymn writer. And he's also the author of the book we started discussing last week, *Theology That Sticks The Life Changing Power of Exceptional Hymns*. We're going to hear from him after this next short break as we discuss how to select the right kind of music. Because after all, what we listen to and sing is a choice. Just like what we choose to eat or watch, we develop an appetite for what we eat or watch, you are what you eat, it is said. So what we choose to sing and listen to should be what most honors God. And we choose in life by the way, we make decisions, we select, based on our worldview. That worldview is mainly driven by what we love the most. Do we choose based on a love for God? What honors him? Or do we choose based on a love for what makes us feel good? Stay tuned because we'll discuss all that with Chris Anderson right after this short break on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. I'm David Wheaton.

Featured Resource: The Pilgrims

The original stalwart souls who created a colony in the howling New England winter, just so they could worship according to the dictates of conscience, had far more influence on world history than they could have ever imagined. You see the seeds of liberty, both religious liberty and civil liberty, and the idea of self government and rule from within, all these are within that body of Pilgrims.

The preceding is from *The Pilgrims*, a 57 minute documentary of the inspiring story and faith of these Christians who greatly impacted our nation. You can order the DVD for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Go to TheChristianworldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. That's 1-888-646-2233 or TheChristianWorldview.org.

Featured Resource: My Boy Ben

For a limited time, we are offering *My Boy, Ben* for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. The book is the true story of a Yellow Lab that I had back when I was competing in the professional tennis tour. It's about relationships with Ben, my parents, with a childhood friend I would eventually marry, but ultimately with God who causes all things, even the hard things to work together for good.

You can order a signed and personalized copy for yourself or for your friend who enjoys a good story, loves dogs, sports, or the outdoors and most of all needs to hear about God's grace and the Gospel. *My Boy, Ben* is owned by The Christian Worldview. It's 264 pages, hardcover, and retails for \$24.95. To order go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Host: David Wheaton

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview, I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website [The ChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org) where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry.

Chris Anderson is our guest today. He is a hymn writer and author of the book, *Theology That Sticks*. We are now going to discuss how to select psalms and hymns and spiritual songs that bring honor to God and edification to the saints. Chris, you write, Christians must select worship songs intentionally using a biblical grid. And you have about eight or nine chapters in the book, sing songs that are biblical, doctrinal, Christian, Trinitarian, congregational, unifying, inspired, diverse, emotive, beautiful, experiential and doxological, a chapter on each of those categories. I guess there's about 10 or more there.

But let's go to the category of congregational. And you've already alluded to this that so much of the church today has gotten away from congregational to more of a performance a performative type situation. You go to an evangelical church today, it's like walking into a Christian rock concert and that's not meant to exaggerate but that's what it is. Multiple people on stage, colored lights, fog coming off the stage, highly emotional, experiential performance and people are typically standing and they're being performed at. If you look at people, yes, some will have their hands up, some will be singing a little bit. But most people are just sitting there watching. They're not necessarily participating in this. Talk about the importance of congregational participation in churches, how to foster that, as opposed to what we see so often today in this performance methodology.

Guest: Chris Anderson

The Bible commands us to sing together. Often we'll say, Well, we're not singing for people, we're singing for God. We're singing for an audience of one. That sounds very sanctified and

holy, but we are singing for God and we're singing to one another. There is an edification that happens in our music, not only an exultation. Healthy sounds, church music sounds like the congregation. Regardless of the instrumentation your church uses, you can do this poorly or you can do this well. But by conviction, you need to say the singing of the congregation is crucially important.

You know, how do you foster that? You choose better songs. I tell people, in an average church service, you probably sing five songs. There are 100s of 1000s of songs available, you get to sync five. So don't waste your choices. Don't sing a song just because it sounds good on the radio. In fact, if a song sounds good on the radio, it's probably not going to sing well congregationally. Most of your church can't sing like Josh Grobin.

Hymns are traditionally written to be very accessible. They're easy to follow the syncopation. It's easy to follow the rhythm, you don't have big jumps. If you're introducing a new song to your church, introduce one carefully chosen new song, and then reward the church with four other songs that they can just belt. Part of that is just a conviction that this really matters to God. And it's a big part of the health of the church. So let's choose songs that foster congregational singing. And let's teach them well and maybe turn down the volume of our accompaniment. Having four or five vocalists on the platform sing is fine. As long as they're supporting the congregation not drowning out the congregation. You want your church music to sound like the church, voices of the gathered people of God.

Host: David Wheaton

As you were saying that it brought memories of when I've been out to the Shepherd's Conference where you have 4,000 to 5,000 men from all over the world congregationally singing. It is truly something to behold, where we are not being overpowered from the stage. Stage, there's a performance illusion right there, from the platform, or whatever you want to call it, but there's such a power in that, where the message of the music is not being lost in the loudness of it or even the performance of it. So good words there.

Chris Anderson is our guest today here on The Christian Worldview. We are carrying his book *Theology That Sticks the Life Changing Power of Exceptional Hymns*. We highly encourage you to get a copy for yourself. And also give one to you're minister of music at your church or the pastor who selects the music each weekend. You can go to our website to order it, TheChristianWorldview.org or just give us a call toll free at 1-888-646-2233 or write to us at Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. Chris, what are some of the most important principles a pastor or music pastor should be using to evaluate songs that are worthy to be sung in the church?

Guest: Chris Anderson

You know, you think about parents. So parents, your kids are going to sing maybe five songs in church, maybe a couple songs in Sunday school or children's church. And then they're with you all week. And in your minivan, or in your house, you're teaching them music just all the time. I would say I probably learned more music in my home growing up than I did at the church. As you drive in the car, you're teaching your kids songs that they will literally remember on their deathbed. So you want to be teaching your kids songs that matter, not only you know, choosing well for your church.

I would say now when it comes to choosing well as a church, you should have as little tolerance for poor hymns as you do for poor sermons. Most of our churches wouldn't tolerate somebody getting up and preaching Error. Error isn't less threatening because it's sung. So we need to be even more careful. You know the first part of the grid says they need to be biblical. And that sounds like a no brainer, but there are a lot of songs that don't really have obvious biblical content.

I tell people when I sing, and even when I write lyrics, I basically am plagiarizing scripture. Take a biblical idea and then try to craft it into a beautiful song. I want to sing songs that when I sing the line, I'm actually singing the Word of God. For example, if we sing, And Can it Be, by Charles Wesley, we're gonna come to the verse that says, no condemnation now I dread, Jesus and all in Him is mine. Okay, as soon as you sing no condemnation now I dread, the entire congregation should be thinking of Romans 8:1. There is therefore now no condemnation of those who are in Christ Jesus. Or John 3:17. God didn't send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. So we sing a line and if we're intentional in our singing, if the leadership is intentional in how they set the song up and kind of give a preparatory word, we should be rehearsing Bible truth as we're singing. So that's why I would say biblical, doctrinal, Christian, I don't want to sing just general theology.

I want to sing a song that is so overtly Christian, that an unbeliever in their conscience, they couldn't sing, it would be offensive to them. Because we sing that, on the cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied. There are people that couldn't sing that. They don't believe that God is a God of wrath. They don't believe that the crucifixion was a satisfaction of propitiation of that wrath. I want to sing songs that are not just decent, not just passable, I want to sing songs that are exceptional. And again, if you only get to choose five or six for service, choose them really well.

The rest of the book gets into songs, some of them should be Trinitarian. Not all of them. But we have a shocking lack of hymns on the Holy Spirit, we should see more of those, and we should write more of those. We should sing songs from a variety of eras. I love to sing a song by Isaac Watts, followed up by a song written by Bob Coughlin. They're both teaching the

same doctrine, but they were written a few 100 years apart. I think there's something beautiful about that. Not only singing old songs, because God continues to teach us through His Word today, so we have new songs, but not only singing new songs, as though Christianity were copyrighted in the 80s or 90s. So there should be a definite breadth to our singing as well.

Host: David Wheaton

You're listening to Chris Anderson on The Christian Worldview. Today, you can order his book, Theology That Sticks this would be very helpful for you in selecting music, or for the pastor at your church who does so just go to our website, the Christian worldview.org or call us one 888-646- 2233 Or write to us at Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

What is The Christian Worldview Radio Program really about? Fundamentally, it's about impacting people, families, churches, with the life and eternity changing truth of God's Word. We know the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only message that saves us from God's wrath by God's grace for God's glory. And we know the Bible is the inspired Word of God, providing the only way to think and live to the glory of God. We are a nonprofit listener supported ministry. If you'd like to help us impact listeners with the biblical worldview and the Gospel, consider becoming a Christian Worldview Partner who regularly give a specified amount to the ministry. As a thank you, Christian Worldview Partners automatically receive many of the resources featured on the program throughout the year. To become a Christian Worldview Partner, call us toll free at 1-888-646-2233 or visit TheChristianWorldview.org.

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Host: David Wheaton

Thanks for joining us today on The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton, the host. Just a reminder that today's program and past programs are archived at our website, TheChristian Worldview.org. Transcripts and Short Takes are also available.

We're talking about music in the church today. And Chris Anderson, hymn writer and the author of the book Theology That Sticks is joining us. Chris, you've written some well known hymns. I

took one of them, *His Robes for Mine*, and I think many of our listeners will have heard this hymn or sung it in their church. And I'd like you to walk us through what went into your thoughts in writing this particular hymn. It goes like this.

His Robes For Mine :

His robes for mine,
O wonderful exchange!
Clothed in my sin Christ suffered 'neath God's rage.
Draped in his righteousness, I'm justified.
In Christ I live, for in my place he died.

His robes for mine
what cause have I for dread?
God's daunting law Christ mastered in my stead.
Faultless I stand with righteous works not mine,
saved by my Lord's vicarious death and life.

His robes for mine
God's justice is appeased.
Jesus is crushed, and thus the Father's pleased.
Christ drank God's wrath on sin, then cried, "Tis done!"
Sin's, wages paid; propitiation won.

Now let's do one more verse, the fourth verse.

His robes for a mine:
such anguish none can know;
Christ, God's beloved, condemned as though His foe.
He, as though I, accursed and left alone;
I, as though He, embraced and welcomed home!

Then the chorus is:
I cling to Christ, and marvel at the cost:
Jesus forsaken, God estranged from God.
Bought by such love, my life is not my own.
My praise, my all shall be for Christ alone.

And Chris, this is a beautifully written hymn. And it's really about the imputation of Christ's righteousness, the swap that takes place. II Corinthians 5:21, "God made Christ who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him". So walk us through what went into writing that particular hymn.

That's a strong word, but he suffered underneath God's wrath. Really the heart of the song is that God punished his own son for the sins committed by everyone else, by others. And now he has credited Jesus' obedience, Jesus' righteousness to us. Christians often talk about Jesus' substitutionary death, his vicarious death, so he died as a substitute in my place. We don't often enough talk about Jesus' substitutionary life, his vicarious life. There's a line in stanza two, that I'm saved by Christ's vicarious death and life, that he obeyed every command that God has given. The commands that I break, Jesus obeyed. He fulfilled all righteousness. He always did that which pleased the father. So when I am clothed in the righteousness of Christ, it's not the righteousness which is His inherently as the second person in the Trinity, it's the righteousness that He earned as the perfect man by fulfilling every command of God without a flaw. So God's daunting law has been mastered, has been kept. We say that we're saved by grace, not by works. Well, that's true when it comes to our works. Our works can only condemn us.

But there's a sense in which we are saved by Jesus' works. You know, Jesus obeyed on our behalf. The commands we couldn't obey, he did. And then his perfect record and our terrible sinful record were swapped. Probably the encapsulation of the song is that last verse, it says, He, as though I, condemned and left alone; forsaken of the Father, I, as though He, embraced and welcome home! That's the marvel of what God has done through justification. You mentioned II Corinthians 5:21 is a key part of that. I Peter 2:24, I Peter 3:18, Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring us to God. Isaiah 61:10 talks about how we've been clothed in the righteousness of God in order to be saved.

Host: David Wheaton

Chris, just so listeners can get a taste of what you're talking about, here's a short portion of your beautiful hymn, *His Robes for Mine*.

Sound bite: Hymn: His Robes for Mine

His robes for mine: O wonderful exchange! Clothed in my sin, Christ suffered 'neath God's rage. Draped in His righteousness, I'm justified. In Christ I live, for in my place He died. His robes for mine: what cause have I for dread? God's daunting law Christ mastered in my stead. Faultless I stand with righteous works not mine, saved by my Lord's vicarious death and life. I cling to Christ and marvel at the cost: Jesus forsaken, God estranged from God. Bought by such love, my life is not my own. My praise, my all shall be for Christ alone.

Host: David Wheaton

What a beautiful hymn with sound lyrics about what God has done for us in salvation through Christ. So Chris, you've explained the doctrinal basis for this song. What do you hope listeners and singers of it take away from singing this hymn, *His Robes For Mine*?

Guest: Chris Anderson

My hope is that people who learn that song, they sing it and then it sticks and they memorize some of the words. I want them to understand the doctrine of justification better, because now they have a song that is teaching them and helping them remember. And that's a challenge of hymn writing. You're kind of stretching people so that they're learning more, but you're not stretching them so far that it's nonsensical the first time they sing it. It needs to be quickly understood, but also kind of causing them to marvel. I think that's one of the lost things in our worship today is a sense of wonder, a sense of awe that I think of what Christ has done. And there's times I can't even sing it because I'm just moved. And something that has become maybe too familiar to us becomes precious again.

But even through a word like estranged, I've gotten some pushback. Jesus says, My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? And I used for forsaken, I used a synonym estranged, that there was some breach. Isaiah 59:2 says that my sin separates me from God. And when my sin was credited to Christ, there's some sense in which their fellowship their eternal fellowship was broken. It's a mystery. I don't pretend that I've understood it. But when Christ utters that cry of dereliction, you know, he's alone. And he's feeling the full weight of our sin. And part of the punishment isn't just his physical death, but his separation from the Father. The wages of sin is death.

And the song says, Sins wage has been paid, the separation, the death. And it's just something that I think as Christians, we look at that, and hopefully, through a song like this, press into an idea, they cause you to pause and think. Hopefully, we understand doctrine better. But even more than that, hopefully we're more deeply grateful. You know, these are just words. Now you actually further the message, because you have just the right tune with just the right path is the right emotion. And it becomes a really powerful tool for the Christian to use for his own growth, the growth of others and the glory of God.

Host: David Wheaton

Chris Anderson with us today here on The Christian Worldview. So you talked about that particular hymn, His Robes for Mine, and you explained it there. But you talk about in your book, Theology That Sticks, that the music pastor, music leader, should really spend a brief time enhancing the songs and hymns being sung in a church service. In other words, not just saying turn to page 322 and let's sing or going into like a sermon trying to explain the song, but there's kind of a right length or right thing to say. What should music leaders be doing in advance of having a congregation sing?

Guest: Chris Anderson

Yeah, that's a great question. I think part of it is pastors, it might be the only pastor might be the senior pastor. But pastors need to lean into this. It's one of the major teaching ministries of the church, you can't just hand it somebody else. If there's somebody else, choosing the songs of pastors, at least giving some input, I recommend to people that they they kind of set a menu, set it early, don't do it on Sunday morning, you know, in the car, don't do it, just you know, hey, we need one lively song. And then we need the song for the choir to move. And then we need the song for children to be dismissed to children's church.

You need to be more intentional than that. And I like to have four or five songs that follow the same theme. And obvious when you might do the theme of redemption. You don't only have to use the word redeemed. But you could do Jesus paid it all. You could do you know songs that talk about the price that was paid with the blood of Christ, that kind of thing? And integrate that with the scripture reading, just don't do random. Do it on purpose, do it intentionally. You know, not just based on this as popular on the radio. But what is it teaching people? And have I used songs from a few different centuries? And are they all pursuing the same theme? If we're talking about confessing sin, I could do a psalm 51 metrical song I could do before the throne of God above, which is an old text with a beautiful new tune that perfectly captures the feeling the pathos of the song, I could do a rise, my soul rise, we would align our choir song are any special music, the pastoral prayer, the Scripture, and we do that all with the hands on a theme. And then without preaching a sermon, you can in a line or to say, hey, we just sang about, our father is a creator, *This Is My Father's World*. But he's not only a father who creates, he's a father who forgives, we're going to sing how deep the Father's love for us. And you can quote, maybe part of Romans five, eight, or something like that, but you're kind of walking people through the logical thinking, you know, once in a while, so he's talking for five minutes about a song, I'm like, just let us sing, you know, get out of the way.

But you can just point out a line from the hymn where you can quote a portion of Scripture that you've prepared ahead of time, and make a segue. And then let's get back to singing. And you kind of step out of the way. And I tell congregational leaders for the most part. You don't need to be doing karate chops with big gestures. Just getting started. We're following your face. Anyway, get us started and then just stand there and sing with us. And then if you'd like to come in and cut us off or slow us down at the end, that's fine. But musicians and the song leader just try to be as transparent as you can get out of the way. So we can just focus on on what we're singing.

Host: David Wheaton

Chris Anderson with us today on The Christian Worldview. Just one final question for you, Chris. And it's sort of unrelated to what you have in your book, but I think maybe related in some way. We're coming up upon Christmas this year. And of course, Christmas music is something that is I think a highlight for many Christians around this time

of Advent when God sent His Son into the world. Talk about Christmas music. What are your thoughts and encouragement for us? What music, maybe certain songs, I love Handel's Messiah, I think maybe it's the best piece of music ever written straight from Scripture, it's just so powerful. But do you have any thoughts about when you think of Christmas and singing? What do you think of?

Guest: Chris Anderson

I think my favorite Christmas song is *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*. It is shocking, the doctrinal depth of that song.

"Christ, by highest Heav'n adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
Late in time,
behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate Deity."

That's amazing doctrinal truth. Sing songs like that. *O Come, All Ye Faithful* is beautiful. You know, there are some that are going to be a little bit more nostalgic, like *Away in a Manger*. I'm not offended by it. You know, don't just choose songs because they're nostalgic. Try to choose some that have a little bit more doctrinal meaning.

I like the Getty's, Stuart Townend and Getty, *Joy Has Dawned* is a very new, very doctrinal Christmas song. Please get in the habit, if you're choosing songs for your church, don't do it the morning of the service. Please don't just say hey, we're going to sing verses one, two and four. Verse three might be the best of the song. And you know, hopefully the song builds and you need to sing all of them. But just be more intentional what you serve to us. We would not respect a pastor who got up to preach who hadn't studied. And we should expect that there's been some serious prayer and thought that's going into the selection of songs as well, because they teach us surely as the sermon does.

Host: David Wheaton

Chris, we're so thankful for this book, *Theology That Sticks* and the thought and time and prayer and study that you have put into thinking about how Christians should be selecting music that is both glorifying to God but also edifying for our spiritual growth. Thank you for coming on The Christian Worldview today. We just wish nothing but God's best and grace to you.

Guest: Chris Anderson

God bless you. Thank you again for the opportunity.

Host: David Wheaton

We are out of time, but thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview Radio Program and for supporting this nonprofit radio ministry. Again, you can order the book we were discussing today, *Theology That Sticks the Life Changing Power of Exceptional Hymns* by Chris Anderson, by contacting our ministry. All that information will be given immediately following today's program. It's an excellent resource to help you select the kind of music that's honoring to God and especially your church as well. Let's be encouraged, we may live in a challenging world in which many churches have capitulated on this issue of music, but our hope and trust is in this, Jesus Christ and His word are the same yesterday, and today and forever. So until next time, "Think biblically, live accordingly," and stand firm!

The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program, order a transcript or find out, "What must I do to be saved?" Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener supported nonprofit radio ministry furnished by the Overcomer Foundation.

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