

# MUSIC

## A RED MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY CHURCH POSITION PAPER

A church's Music and Worship Program can either be one of the biggest blessings and God-honoring programs or one of the most contentious. People have very strong feelings about the type and style of music that they personally like. Factors that influence opinion regarding music preference include age, family upbringing, past worship styles, generational differences, personality, and whether a person is introverted or extroverted.

From a church leadership standpoint, answering the question, "Which type of music style best reflects our congregational worship experience?" is difficult and fraught with potential danger. From a Biblical standpoint, the Elders of the church have only a few guidelines and principles to base their decision on. The Bible tells us to:

- praise the Lord with our whole heart (Psalm 138:1)
- bless the Lord (Psalm 144:1)
- extol our God and King (Psalm 145:1)
- give thanks (Psalm 136:1)
- remember all of His benefits and acts of kindness (Psalm 103)
- remember His attributes (Psalm 101:1)
- confess our sins (Psalm 32, 51)
- sing to the Lord (Psalm 95)
- make a joyful shout to the Lord (Psalm 100:1)

The Bible gives us freedom to worship in stillness (Psalm 4:4), with quiet instruments (Psalm 150:3b, 4b), or with loud instruments (Psalm 150:3a, 4a, 5). It seems as the whole of Scripture is interpreted that the Lord is not as concerned with the type of worship music as He is the heart attitude of obedience (1 Samuel 15:22).

Different churches are led to handle the congregational music style selection in different ways. Some larger churches that have multiple worship services arrange their services according to worship style. They might have one traditional, one current, and one that would be cutting-edge. The advantage to this format is that it makes the people happy that prefer only one music style and that can make it to whatever time slot that this style is offered. The disadvantage to this format is that it tends to "lock" people into their preferences and also minimizes the amount of time slots that will be used to reach and minister to the most amount of people.

Other churches are led to specialize in one music style. Usually congregations that are an established denomination or sometimes have an older aged congregation go with a traditional approach to their music selection. Other churches that are led to reach primarily the youngest age groups go with a cutting-edge approach.

The approach which the leadership at Red Mountain Community Church has been led to take is primarily a current approach. We arrived at this approach through prayer and believe it to be the best way to build up and equip the church for its ministry to future generations. Through this approach, we will be able to remain relevant to the culture that will next replenish our local body and Christ's kingdom.

Therefore, we believe that our worship services should have biblically based songs set to modern and culturally up-to-date music. The Bible tells us in Psalm 149:1 to "Praise the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song, His praise in the assembly of the saints." The Lord desires for His saints to always be coming up with new ways to sing about His wonderful works and character.

Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart (Ephesians 5:19)

Ephesians 5:19 gives us the picture of the early church living their lives out in joyful praise. They were exhorted to speak among themselves in three almost synonymous ways: psalms (composed sacred songs), hymns (sacred poetical compositions), and spiritual songs (new songs guided in their composition by the Holy Spirit). These were then designed to be sung with music in the hearts of the congregation.

The dynamic of worship in the redeemed church is to be full of biblical praise, full of the Holy Spirit, and designed in such a way that magnifies the Lord's work and ways in the cultural context of the day. Under the current music approach, the church should strive for songs that are rich in scriptural truth and yet set to modern music.

What this means from a congregational perspective is that Red Mountain's Music and Worship Program will be constantly changing and in a state of flux. In order to stay current, the music will always need to be updated. Traditional songs will be inserted into the Music and Worship Program but will be primarily changed into a current style of music (one that fits the modern and culturally up-to-date definition). Also cutting-edge music will be inserted and sometimes added to the Music and Worship Program in order to keep it current with the times.

What fits into the current definition requires wisdom and discernment from the Holy Spirit? The responsibility for monitoring this will be with our Spirit-led Worship Pastor and our Spirit-led Elders. The leadership at Red Mountain hopes and prays that those that would like something other than current music would find their worship needs met in either their adult community, youth group, or that the current worship style might become a joyful expression of their love of Christ.

It is our desire to truly see Jesus Christ our Lord honored and adored. Praise the Lord!