



Preacher's Pen by Gene McCoy

* "Dissed" is a contemporary expression that is an abbreviation for "disrespected."

The music war that has been waged in churches has played right into the hands of Satan. In a strangely similar way that men were scattered when God confused the languages at Babel, we have seen a great dispersion as a result of the divergent tastes among people with little tolerance for cultural and generational evolution.

Churches have contributed to and facilitated the division and factions by playing the role of an enabler. Despite their attempts to remedy the problem, churches have actually accentuated and perpetuated the underlying disease of selfish pride, among others. Instead of dealing with the illness, they have addressed only the symptoms.

The trend has been the deliberate fracturing of the body along lines of musical preference. Churches offer two distinct formats, one that is customarily identified as "contemporary" and the other identified as "traditional." While it may not be a significant observation, this seems to be something that occurs only in the United States and maybe Canada.

Whatever became of the attitude Paul expressed that he was willing to forfeit his liberties so as to promote unity and remove obstacles to the salvation

of those who were not like him (1 Cor. 9:22)? Can we say that we prefer and bear with one another in love (Rom. 12:10; Eph. 4:2)? And where is the attitude of Christ displayed in such squabbles (Phil. 2:1-10)?

"DISSSED"*
by babel sounds



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DISsonance
DISharmony
DISfellowship

The application of these Scriptures cuts both ways. To the ear of many older Christians, the chord progressions and accompaniment by percussion and electronic instruments sounds like confusion. At the other end of the age spectrum, however, are ears that are not attuned to the hymns accompanied by an organ. But the fact is that neither is dissonant, either musically or in the ear of God. Both, when done well, are equal in terms of music theory, artistic beauty, biblical accuracy, and spiritual integrity. The impasse is completely cultural. And unnecessary. Even inexcusable!

The remedy resides in the heart of each

Christian. We must first reconcile ourselves to the fact that worship is not about us. Ben Merold tells the account of a woman who stomped out of the CA church where he preached because she didn't like the music being performed by visiting musicians. Minutes later she returned to her front row seat, explaining to Ben on her way that she realized it didn't really matter whether she liked it or not.

This relates not only to our personal preferences, but also to the mistaken notion that the assembly of the church is to somehow appeal to and entertain non-Christians; that we must tailor the music to the tastes of the worldly people who visit.

Rather than allowing Satan to succeed in his persistent plotting to create dissonance and disharmony, resulting in disfellowship, we should celebrate the unity of cultures and classes that results when we put Christ first. The same gospel that broke down the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile is no less powerful to remove the barriers created by our selfish obstinacy over such petty concerns as musical style.

Don't allow the sly ol' Devil to co-opt our praise to accomplish his evil ends. Cease and desist all dissing and being dissed.