

**ENDTIME ISSUES NEWSLETTER No. 205**  
**“THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC IN THE BIBLE”**  
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***POPULAR BELIEFS: ARE THEY BIBLICAL?***  
**INTRODUCTORY PRICE EXTENDED UNTIL JULY 4!**

The demand for *Popular Beliefs: Are They Biblical?* has surpassed our fondest expectations. The first printing of 10,000 copies came out on April 25 and was sold out in one month. We expect to sell the second printing within the next few weeks. Yesterday we shipped over 1000 copies, 500 of them were sent to Singapore.

**Some churches and institutions have just learned about this timely book and are asking for a few days to collect the orders. To make it possible for them also to order the book at the special introductory offer, I decided to extend the offer until July 4, 2008.**

**Why is the Demand for *Popular Beliefs* so Great?**

Two major factors are contributing to such an overwhelming demand for *Popular Beliefs*. First, is the urgent need felt by many Adventists for a compelling witnessing book they can give with confidence to people inquiring about our faith. Many Adventists have emailed me messages saying that they have waited for years for a book like *Popular Beliefs* that shows

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why the most popular Catholic and Protestant popular beliefs are unbiblical, while the less-popular Adventist beliefs are biblically correct.

The second factor that explains the overwhelming demand for *Popular Beliefs*, is the subsidized price of \$5.00 per copy for a case of 30 copies and \$4.00 per copy for an order of 100 copies. Keep in mind that the regular price for *Popular Beliefs* is \$30.00 per copy, because it is a big book of 384 pages with an attractive laminated four colors cover.

### **The Subsidized Price has Been Made Possible by a Few Donors**

The subsidized price we have extended until now, has been made it possible by the generosity of a few donors who offered to defray part of the cost of the book. However, the funds received have been depleted. **This means that beginning from July 6, 2008, the price goes up to \$7.00 for an order of 30 copies and \$5.00 for an order of 100 copies or more.**

If you or your church have not yet ordered a case of 30 copies *Popular Beliefs: Are They Biblical?* at the special price of \$150.00, be sure to place your order before July 4 to take advantage of the introductory offer. See details at the end.

### ***Popular Beliefs* is an Ideal Witnessing Book**

*Popular Beliefs: Are They Biblical?* appeals especially to professional Adventists, who are eager to witness in the work place to colleagues inquiring about our Adventist faith. An attorney called me to order 240 copies of *Popular Beliefs* to give to clients with whom he has discussed his Adventist beliefs.

During the past few weeks I have received numerous email messages from Adventists who have already passed out copies of *Popular Beliefs* to non-SDA family members, office workers, and friends. All of them take time to share with me the positive impact of the book. In a few instances, those who received a gift copy of the book, are asking for additional copies to give to Christian friends.

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*Popular Beliefs* is a much needed witnessing book that you can give with confidence to friends who want to know why their popular beliefs are unbiblical and the Adventist beliefs are biblically correct. Each of the 10 popular beliefs is traced historically and examined biblically. The ultimate goal is to lead people to appreciate the validity and value of our Adventist beliefs.

### **Special Offer Extended Until July 4, 2008**

Several churches have asked me to extend the special introductory offer until July 4, 2008, because they are still in the process of collecting orders. Thus, I have decided to extend the special introductory offer until July 4, 2008. After that date the price goes up to \$7.00 per copy for a case of 30 copies. This means that if you order a case now, you pay only \$150.00 for case of 30 copies, but from July 6, the cost for a case of 30 copies goes up to \$210.00. The regular price of the book is \$30.00.

### **My Legacy to our Adventist Church**

In many ways *Popular Beliefs: Are they Biblical?* represents for me my legacy to our Seventh-day Adventist Church. This may be my last and hopefully my most important contribution to the mission of our Adventist church. All my previous 17 books are making a contribution by helping truth-seekers to understand and accept fundamental Bible teachings held by our church. But the impact of *Popular Beliefs* most likely will be greater than any of my previous books, because it examines, not one, but 10 popular beliefs, which are biblically wrong.

### ***Popular Beliefs* Expresses my Gratitude to God for His Healing**

When I was diagnosed with terminal liver cancer on February 2007, one of my deep regrets was the inability to complete *Popular Beliefs* during the remaining few months I was expected to live. I promised to the Lord that if He would extend my life, I would put forth my best efforts to complete *Popular Beliefs*, to express my gratitude for His providential healing.

The Lord has answered my prayer in an unexpected way. He led me to Cancer Research Center in Goshen, Indiana, which is only one hour away from Andrews University where we live. The Center is a pioneer in the

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field of nuclear oncology and treated my liver cancer with a combined strategy of chemotherapy and microsphere embolization — a treatment available only in few cancer centers. Within two months my cancer was reduced by 95%. Grateful to God for a new lease on life, I fulfilled my promise by devoting every spare moment of this past year to complete *Popular Beliefs*.

When *Popular Beliefs* came off the press on April 25, I was overwhelmed by a deep sense of gratitude to God for restoring my health and for enabling me to complete this important research project. I felt that an appropriate way to express my gratitude to God, was to plan for a dedication service for the book. In a special way the service was a re-dedication of my life to His service. About 30 fellow believers, including three medical doctors and a few teachers, attended the dedication service at our home.

### **A Most Effective Witnessing Publication**

Fellow-believers often ask me this question: What book would you recommend for a neighbor or office worker who ask me questions about our Adventist beliefs? Until now my answer has been: “Unfortunately we do not have a single book that answers questions about our fundamental beliefs in the context of what other Christians believe.”

The Good News is that finally this much needed book is available. *Popular Beliefs: Are They Biblical?* is designed to meet this specific need. Adventists who have been looking for a book to witness to their friends, will be glad to give this book, because it exposes false teachings and affirms biblical truths in a calm, dispassionate, and objective way.

### **My Sincere Hope**

I have written this book with the earnest desire to help Christians of all persuasions to re-examine their popular beliefs in the light of the normative authority of the Bible. At a time when most Christians still hold to popular beliefs that derive from human traditions rather than from biblical revelation, it is imperative to recover those biblical truths that God has revealed for our eternal salvation.

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It is my fervent hope that this book, fruit of many months of dedicated research, will help Christians of all persuasions to “come out” of the Babylonian confusion of popular but unbiblical beliefs, and accept God’s glorious plan for our present life and our future destiny.

**SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER UNTIL JULY 4 ON  
*POPULAR BELIEFS: ARE THEY BIBLICAL?***

**For few more days, until July 4, 2008, we offer *Popular Beliefs: Are they Biblical?* at the following introductory prices:**

**1 copy of *Popular Beliefs: Are they Biblical?* at \$30.00 per copy.** Mailing expenses are included for the USA. Add \$10.00 for AIRMAIL postage to any overseas destination.

**10 copies of *Popular Beliefs: Are they Biblical?* at \$10.00 per copy,** postage paid, instead of the regular price of \$30.00 (\$100.00 for 10 copies). Mailing expenses are included for the USA. Add \$50.00 for AIRMAIL postage to any overseas destination.

**30 copies (one case) of *Popular Beliefs: Are they Biblical?* at \$5.00 per copy** (\$150.00 for 30 copies). Mailing expenses are included for the USA. Add \$100.00 for AIRMAIL postage to any overseas destination. Beginning from July 6, 2008, the price will go up to \$7.00 per copy, that is, \$210.00 for case of 30 copies. The airmailing cost remains the same.

**100 copies of *Popular Beliefs: Are they Biblical?* at \$4.00 per copy,** postage paid. (\$400.00 for 100 copies). Mailing expenses are included for the USA. Add \$300.00 for AIRMAIL postage to any overseas destination. Beginning from July 1, 2008, the price will go up to \$5.00 per copy, that is, \$500.00 for 100 copies. The airmailing expenses remain the same.

**HOW TO ORDER *POPULAR BELIEFS: ARE THEY BIBLICAL?***

You can order *Popular Beliefs: Are they Biblical?* at the introductory prices given above, in four different ways:

**(1) ONLINE:** By clicking here: [http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/cart/catalog/index.php?cPath=26\\_35](http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/cart/catalog/index.php?cPath=26_35)

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**(2) PHONE:** By calling us at (269) 471-2915 to give us your credit card number and postal address.

**(3) EMAIL:** By emailing your order to <sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com>. Be sure to provide your postal address, credit card number, and expiration date.

**(4) REGULAR MAIL:** By mailing a check to BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103, USA. We guarantee to process your order as soon as we receive it.

### **WOULD YOU LIKE US TO PRESENT AT YOUR CHURCH OUR POPULAR SEMINARS WITH WORDS AND SONGS ?**

Would you like us to present at your church one of our popular seminars on the **SABBATH or SECOND ADVENT or CHRISTIAN LIFE with Words and Songs?** These seminars have been greatly enhanced by the participation of Cristina Piccardi, an outstanding soprano from Brazil who joined my ministry eight months ago. She sings several times before and after each of my lectures. She also gives a sacred concert on Sabbath afternoon. Her powerful and passionate singing touches the hearts of people everywhere. Her singing has almost double the attendance at the seminars.

Our 2008 calendar is already filled for the next few months, but we still have a few openings in the latter part of the year. We will be glad to email you the list of the open weekends so that you can choose the weekend that best suits your church.

To make it possible for many churches to benefit from our seminars, we keep the cost of the seminar down by asking only for the refund of two airline tickets and two nights for two rooms in a reasonable hotel. We do not ask for any honorarium. Instead, we trust in the Lord to meet our financial obligations through the sale of our publications and recordings on Saturday night.

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If your church board wishes to preview one of our seminars, we will gladly mail you free of charge the DVD album with our SABBATH SEMINARS with Words and Songs, that was recorded in Loma Linda. The album contains 3 DVDs with 6 hours of live recording of my lectures and Cristina's singing.

Feel free to contact us by email <sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com> or by phone (269) 471-2915. We will gladly supply you with any additional information and reserve a weekend for your church.

### **“THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC IN THE BIBLE”**

**Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D.,**

**Retired Professor of Theology and Church History,  
Andrews University**

The inspiration to write this newsletter came from two different sources. The first source is the powerful and passionate singing of Cristina Piccardi, who joined my ministry eight months ago. She is an outstanding soprano who came to Andrews University to accompany her husband who is a seminary student. In my view, she is by far the best soprano I have heard in the Adventist church. In fact, three years ago she won the first prize at an international opera singers' competition. Through the influence of an Adventist voice professor, she decided to devote her gift of singing to God, by singing sacred music.

Eight months ago, Cristina joined my itinerant ministry. She sings several times before and after each of my powerpoint lectures. The response has surpassed my fondest expectations. Her powerful and passionate singing touches the hearts of people wherever I present my seminars. This experience has made me forcefully aware of the marvellous way singing can help people conceptualize and internalize the beauty of our Adventist message.

The powerful singing of sacred songs warms up the hearts of people and makes them receptive to the message. After presenting my seminars for the past 30 years, relying solely on my broken accent and gestures, now I feel like a blessed man to be able to present the beauty of our message with the help of Cristina's powerful and passionate singing. Every where

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we go our believers never stop thanking me for bringing along Cristina to sing at the seminars.

### Questions I have been Asked to Address

The second source of inspiration for writing this newsletter, is the many questions people have been asking me about the music used for church worship. It is a known fact that some of the contemporary music used today in the worship service, is causing painful discussions and divisions in our Adventist church.

Promoters of “Christian” rock appeals to certain Bible texts to defend the use of such music for church worship and to reach the rock and roll generation. Over the years they have specifically asked me to address the following major questions:

(1) How do you deal with those Bible texts which call us to “make a joyful noise” or “a loud noise” unto the Lord”? Doesn’t “Christian” rock music fulfill this biblical injunction since it is loud and joyful?

(2) How do you explain Psalms 149 and 150 which specifically enjoin us to “Praise him with timbrel and dance” (Ps 150:4; cf. 149:3)? If David himself “danced before the Lord with all his might” (2 Sam 6:14), what is wrong with dancing in the church today?

(3) Does the Bible really make a distinction between sacred music for divine worship and secular music for entertainment? Isn’t the style of church music simply question of culture and personal taste?

(4) Why women were not allowed to sing or play instruments in the music ministry of the Temple, synagogue, and early church? Was it because of cultural or theological reasons?

(5) Why a number of musical instruments, such as drums, tambourines, were not allowed in the worship service of the Temple, synagogue, and early church? Does this mean that we must use in the church today only string instruments to accompany the singing, like in Bible times?



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***The Christian and Rock Music:  
A Study on Biblical Principles of Music***

To find answers to these questions, I devoted one year of my life researching what the Bible has teaches about music. The findings of my research have been published in the first half of the book *The Christian and Rock Music: A Study on Biblical Principles of Music*. The second half of the book is written by six contributors are from five different countries, namely, South Africa, Australia, USA, Norway, and Germany. Each of them is eminently qualified in the field of music, in terms of academic training and/or professional experience. More important still, all of them are passionately involved in enriching the worship experience of their congregations.

***The Christian and Rock Music*** is a most timely book, because contemporary Christian Music is fast replacing traditional music and instruments across denominational churches, including an increasing number of Seventh-day Adventist churches. In many churches today “praise bands” have replaced the choir, powerpoint slides have replaced the hymn books, synthesizers have replaced organs, and drums and guitars have taken their place in the repertoire of church music instrumentation.

These changes in church music are causing controversies and divisions in many congregations. Some see the new “pop music” as the music of Babylon, while others as the prophetic “New Song” to reach and satisfy the baby-boomers’ taste for rock music. Often the arguments generate more heat than light, reflecting personal taste or culture rather than a grasp of the biblical principles of music.

I am thinking of a lovely couple with whom I have stayed countless times in London, England. The husband felt compelled to resign as a local Elder, because he could not support some of the beat music used for worship. A good number of Adventists have shared with me the pain of having to leave the church they helped to build, because they could no longer tolerate the “Christian rock” played during the worship service.

***The Christian and Rock Music: A Study of Biblical Principles of Music*** offers a balanced and biblical analysis of the use of Contemporary Christian Music for worship and evangelism. The book has two major objectives.

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The first is to help people understand the true nature of the various styles of rock music popular today. Special consideration is given to the problems arising from transforming rock music into a medium for Christian worship and evangelism. The second objective is to define those biblical principles that should guide Christians in making good musical choices.

The aim of this symposium is not to dismiss all contemporary music as “rock,” because there are contemporary songs with music and words which are suitable for divine worship. Rather, the aim is to clarify how the music, words, and the manner of singing should conform to the Biblical principle of worship music.

*The Christian and Rock Music* shows how clearly the Bible differentiates between the secular music used for social entertainment and the sacred music worthy of the worship of God. There are ample biblical and historical evidences indicating that music and instruments associated with social entertainment, were not allowed in worship service the Temple, synagogue, or early church. The reason is that such music would have tempted believers to turn their place of worship into a place of entertainment, as it happens in some churches today. To prevent this thing from happening, God’s people in Bible times were taught to use only the sacred music suitable for divine worship. The authors of this book believe that the same principle applies to the church today.

If you do not have yet a copy of *The Christian and Rock Music*, you can order the book by phone or online. To order by phone call us at (269) 471-2915 to give us your credit card number and postal address. To order online, just clicking at this link -----

### **Objectives of This Newsletter**

For the sake of brevity and clarity, I am dividing the findings of my research published in *The Christian and Rock Music* into three parts. Each of them is posted in a separate newsletter. This means that the next three newsletters will deal with three important biblical teachings on worship music.

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The first part, posted in this newsletter, examines the importance of music in the Bible, especially singing. The three major questions addressed are: (1) When, where, how, and why should we sing? (2) What does it mean to “make a joyful noise unto the Lord”? (3) What is the “New Song” that believers are to sing?

The second part of our study to be posted in the next newsletter number 206, focuses on the ministry of music in the Bible. The investigation begins with the music ministry in the Temple, and then continues with that of the synagogue and finally of the New Testament church. The results of this investigation are significant because they show that, contrary to prevailing assumptions, the Bible makes a clear distinction between sacred and secular music. Percussion instruments, rhythmic music, and dancing were never part of the music ministry of the Temple, or the synagogue, or the early church.

The third part of our study to be posted in the newsletter number 207, examines what the Bible teaches about dance and dancing. The question we address is whether or not the Bible sanctions dance and dancing as a positive component of church worship. This is an important question because supporters of pop music appeal to some Biblical references to dance to justify their use of rhythmic dance music in the church. By way of conclusion, a brief summary will be given of the Biblical principles that have emerged in the course of this study.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF SINGING IN THE BIBLE**

The importance of music in the Bible is indicated by the fact that God’s creative and redemptive activities are accompanied and celebrated by music. At creation we are told that “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7). At the incarnation, the heavenly choir sang: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!” (Luke 2:14). At the final consummation of redemption, the great multitude of the redeemed will sing: “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exalt and give him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to be clothed with the fine linen, bright and pure” (Rev 19:6-8).

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## The Singing of Creation

The response of the natural world to the majestic glory of God's created works, is often expressed in terms of singing. This clearly shows that singing is something which God welcomes and in which He delights. There are numerous examples in the Bible of all of God's creation invited to sing praises to God.

“Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; they will sing before the Lord” (Ps 96:11-12; NIV). “Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; let them sing before the Lord” (Ps 98:8; NIV). “Praise the Lord, all his works, everywhere in his dominion” (Ps 103:22; NIV).

We read about the birds singing because God provides them with water (Ps 104:12). The heavens, the lower parts of the earth, the mountains, the forest, and every tree breaking forth in singing unto the Lord (Is 44:23). The wilderness, the cities, and the inhabitants of the rock, sing and give glory to God (Is 42:1-12). Even the desert shall blossom and “rejoice with joy and singing” (Is 35:2).

All these metaphorical allusions to the animated and inanimate creation singing and shouting praises to God, tell us that music is something that God ordains and desires. If these were the only references to music in the Bible, they would be sufficient for us to know that music, especially singing, has a special place and purpose in God's universe.

## The Human Singing

More wonderful than all of nature singing is the invitation extended to human beings to sing. “O Come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!” (Ps 95:1). “Sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name” (Ps 30:4). “Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men” (Ps 107:8; KJV). Jesus said that if people would not praise Him “the very stones would cry out (Luke 19:40).

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The Bible specifically mentions that singing should be directed to God. Its purpose is not personal gratification, but God’s glorification. Moses said to the people: “I will sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously” (Ex 15:1). David declared: “I will extol thee, O Lord, among the nations, and sing praises to thy name” (2 Sam 22:50). Similarly Paul exhorts the believers to sing and make melody “unto the Lord with all your heart” (Eph 5:19). God and the praising of His people are so wrapped up together, that God Himself is identified as “my song.” “The Lord is my strength and my song” (Ex 15:2).

Music in the Bible is not only for God, it is also from God. It is God’s gift to the human family. In praising God for His deliverance, David says: “He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God” (Ps 40:3). This text tells us that music can be inspired by God, just as His Holy Word. A telling proof is the fact that the longest book of the Bible is Psalms—the hymn book of God’s people in Bible times. This means that sacred music, is not only a human artistic expression, but also a gift from God, sometimes inspired by the Lord Himself. We may differ on the style or types of music, but no Christian can legitimately be opposed to music per se, because music is part of God’s gracious provision for the human family.

### **Music Essential to the Total Human Well-being**

The first statement that we find in the Bible on any given subject, usually it has a foundational value. This seems to be true also in the case of music. Few generations from Adam and Eve, the Bible tells us that three sons were born to Lamech and his two wives, Adah and Zillah. Each son is introduced as “the founding father” of a basic professions. “Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have cattle. His brother’s name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. Zilla bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron” (Gen 4:21-22).

It is evident that these three brothers were the founding fathers of three different professions. The first was a farmer and the third a toolmaker. Both agriculture and industry are essential to human existence. Sandwiched between the two is the musical profession of the middle brother.

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The implication seems to be that human beings are called, not only to produce and consume food and goods, but also to enjoy aesthetic beauty, such as music.

The American classical pianist Sam Totman sees in this verse an indication of God's provision for aesthetic human needs, besides the physical and material ones. He writes: "Here, within the compass of but a few verses, God reveals that the provision of man's material needs is not enough; in addition, man must have an outlet for his aesthetic sensitivities. Even from the beginning music was more than a mere pastime which could be viewed as something pleasant but essentially unnecessary. Simply stated, God has created in man a certain aesthetic need which can be best satisfied in music, and in his love and wisdom he has provided for this need."

From a biblical perspective, music is not merely something potentially enjoyable. It is a gift provided by God to meet the total human needs. The very existence of music should give us reason to praise God for lovingly providing us with a gift through which we can express our gratitude to Him, while experiencing delight within ourselves.

### **The Reason For Singing**

Religious music in the Bible is God-centered, not self-centered. The notion of praising the Lord for entertainment or amusement, is foreign to the Bible. There were no "Jewish" or "Christian" music concerts in Bible times, which were performed by bands or singing artists in the Temple, or synagogue, or Christian churches. Religious music was not conceived as an end to itself, but a means to praise God by chanting His Word. An amazing recent discovery that will be mentioned later, is that the entire Old Testament was originally intended to be chanted (sung).

Singing in the Bible is not for personal pleasure or to reach out to the Gentiles with tunes familiar to them, but to praise God by chanting His Word—a method known as "cantillation." Pleasure in singing comes not from a rhythmic beat that stimulates people physically, but from the very experience of praising the Lord. "Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praise to his name, for that is pleasant" (Ps 135:3; NIV). "How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him" (Ps 147:1).

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Singing unto the Lord is “good” and “pleasant,” because it enables believers to express to Him their joy and gratitude for the blessings of creation, deliverance, protections, and salvation. Singing is seen in the Bible as an offering of thanksgiving to the Lord for His goodness and blessings. This concept is expressed especially in Psalm 69:30-31: “I will praise God’s name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving. This will please the Lord more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hoofs.”

The notion that singing praises to the God is better than sacrifice, reminds us of a similar concept that obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Sam 15:22). Singing praises to God by chanting His Word, is not only a pleasant experience, but also a means of grace to the believer. Through the singing believers offer to God a worship of praise, which enables them receive from His enabling grace.

### **The Manner of Singing**

To fulfill its intended function, singing must express joy, gladness, and thanksgiving. “Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving” (Ps 147:7). “I will praise thee with the harp for thy faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praises to thee with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel. My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to thee” (Ps 71:22-23). Note that singing is accompanied by the harp and lyre (often called psaltery—Ps 144:9; 33:2; 33:3), and not with percussion instruments. The reasons, as noted in the previous chapter, is that string instruments blend with the human voice, without supplanting it.

In numerous places the Bible indicate that our singing should be emotional with joy and gladness. We are told that the Levites “sang praises with gladness, and they bowed down and worshipped” (2 Chron 29:30). Singing should be done not only with gladness, but also with the whole heart. “I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart” (Ps 9:1). If we follow this biblical principle, then our singing of hymns or praise songs in church, should be joyful and enthusiastic.

To sing enthusiastically, it is necessary for the grace of God to be applied to the believer’s heart (Col 3:16). Without divine love and grace in the heart, singing becomes as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal (1 Cor 13:1).

The person who has experienced the transforming power of God's grace (Eph 4:24), can testify that the Lord has "put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God" (Ps 40:3). The music of an unconverted, rebellious heart is to God an irritating noise. Because of their disobedience, God says to the children of Israel, "Take away from me the noise of your song" (Am 5:23). This statement is relevant in a day of loud amplification of pop music. What pleases God is not the volume of the music, but the condition of the heart.

### **"Make a Joyful Noise unto the Lord"**

The reference to the volume of the music, reminds us of the admonition to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord," – a phrase that occurs seven times in the KJV version of the Old Testament (Ps 66:1; 81:1; 95:1-2; 98:4, 6; 100:1). These verses are often used to defend the use of loud rock music in the church. I have preached in churches where the music of the band was amplified at such level that my eardrums were in pain for several days afterwards. This is the price sometimes I have to pay for preaching the Word of God in those churches that have introduced music bands with high power amplification system. Sometimes their huge speakers are placed right on the platform close to the ears of the preacher.

The defence for the use of deafening sound in the church service is that God does not really care about how we sound, as long as we make a joyful noise unto Him. Since rock bands with their electronic equipment are able to produce a powerful, thundering loud noise, it is alleged that God is very happy by such "joyful noise."

Before examining those Bible texts where the phrases "joyful noise" or "loud noise" appear in some mistaken translations, it is important to remember that in Bible times there was no electronic amplification. This means that what was loud in Bible times, would be very normal today. The volume of the music produced by the human voice or musical instruments without amplification, does not increase in proportion of the number of participants.

Ten trumpets do not make ten times the noise or volume of one trumpet. In his book on the *Psychology of Music*, Carl Seashore devotes an entire



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chapter to the subject of volume. He writes: “The addition of one or more tones of the same intensity tends to increase the total intensity in the volume, but only to a slight degree. For example, if we have a piano tone of 50 decibels and we add to that another tone of the same intensity, the combined effect will be about 53 decibels. If we add a third tone, the total intensity is likely to be 55 decibels. Thus the addition to the total intensity decreases with the number of units combined; and in every case the increase is small in comparison with the original intensity of one element.”

What all of this means is that the singers that David appointed “to offer praises to the Lord with the instruments” (1 Chron 23:5), could produce at most a sound volume of about 70 or 80 decibels, because they had no amplification possibilities. After all the usual choir was rather small, consisting of a minimum of 12 adult male singers, accompanied by few string instruments. The level of volume depended from the distance between the singers and the congregation. By contrast, today a four-man rock group with the right amplification system can output a sound power in the 130-140 decibel level, which can upstage a jumbo set at takeoff.

The “loud noise” in Bible time was never loud enough to harm people physically. Today the possibility of being hurt by excessive volume, is a constant possibility. “Most ear doctors say that we should not listen to anything above the 90 decibels on the sound scale. Many rock music groups, both secular and Christian, play at 120-125 decibel level! (Keep in mind that the SST Concord Supersonic jet hits just over the 130 decibels when leaving Washington’s Dulles Airport.) ‘Your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit’ (1 Cor 6:19). Certainly that text is applicable to this point. We are to be good stewards of our eardrums, too!”

### **Does Loud Noise Praise God?**

Do those Bible texts that speak about making “a joyful noise” or “a loud noise” unto the Lord, teach us that God is pleased with the excessive amplification of the human voice or musical instruments during the worship service? Hardly so. This conclusion is largely drawn from a mistranslation of the original Hebrew terms commonly translated as “noise.” In his book, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World*, Curt Sachs answers this

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question: “How did ancient Jews sing? Did they actually cry at the top of their voices? Some students have tried to make us believe that such was the case, and they particularly refer to several Psalms that allegedly bear witness of singing in fortissimo. But I suspect them of drawing from translations rather than from the original.”

The phrase “make a joyful noise” is a mistranslation of the Hebrew *ruwa*. The term does not mean to make an indiscriminate loud noise, but to shout for joy. The God of biblical revelation does not delight in loud noise per se, but in joyful melodies. A good example is found in Job 38:7 where the same word *ruwa* is used to describe the sons of God who “shouted for joy” at creation. The singing of the heavenly beings at creation, can hardly be characterized as “loud noise,” because “noise” presupposes unintelligible sound.

The mistranslation of *ruwa* as “noise” has been caught by the translators of the New International Version (NIV), where the term is consistently translated as “shout for joy,” rather than “make a joyful noise.” For example, in the KJV Psalm 98:4 reads: “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.” Note the more rational translation found in the NIV: “Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music” (Ps 98:4). There is a world of difference between “making a loud noise unto the Lord,” and “shouting for joy” or “bursting into jubilant song.” Singing jubilantly with the full volume of the human voice, is not noise making, but an enthusiastic expression of praise.

Another self-evident example of mistranslation, is found in Psalm 33:3 which in the KJV reads: “Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.” The latter phrase is contradictory, because music skilfully played can hardly be described as “loud noise.” One wonders why the translators of the KJV did not use some common sense. The NIV correctly renders the verse: “Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy” (Ps 33:3).

There are two Old Testament references which indicate that sometimes music can degenerate into noise making. The first reference is found in Amos 5:23 where God rebukes the unfaithful Israelites saying: “Take

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away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen.” A similar warning is found in Ezekiel’s prophecy against Tyre: “And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall no more be heard” (Ezek 26:13).

In both texts the word “noise” correctly translates the Hebrew *hamown*, which occurs eighty times in the Old Testament, and is commonly translated as “noise” or “tumult.” The NIV correctly uses the word “noisy”: “I will put an end to your noisy songs, and the music of your harps will be heard no more.” The reason God views such music as “noise” is because it is produced by a rebellious people.

There is one instance in the New Testament where the word “noise” is used in conjunction with music produced by professional mourners. We read in Matthew 9:23-24: “And when Jesus came into the ruler’s house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, He said to them, Give place; for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.” In this case the music and the wailing are correctly characterized as “noise,” because they consisted of incoherent sounds.

On this occasion the Greek verb *thorubeo* refers to the musical wailing and noise making by minstrels and the crowd. The fact that Christ characterizes such music as “noise,” suggests that the Lord does not approve loud musical noise in a worship service. “It was a Semitic custom to hire professional mourners to wail, and sing and beat percussion instruments and play mournfully over the dead. . . . Although this verse definitively connects noise making with music in the New Testament, it does not implicate that in the New Testament dispensation we should make noise unto God with our religious music.”

The review of relevant texts indicates that the Bible does not sanction making a joyful noise unto the Lord, or any kind of noise making for that matter. God’s people are invited to break forth in singing with power and joy. God does care about how we sing and play during the worship service. God has always demanded our best, when making an offering to Him. As He required the burnt offerings to be “without blemish” (Lev 1:3), so it is reasonable to assume that He expects us to present Him the very best musical offering. There is no biblical basis for believing that the loud noisemaking music or questionable lyrics are acceptable to God.

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**The Place and Time of Singing**

The Bible instructs us to sing, not only in God's House, but also among unbelievers, in foreign countries, in time of persecution, and among the saints. The writer of Hebrews says: "In the midst of the congregation I will praise thee" (Heb 2:12). The Psalmist admonishes to "Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the faithful" (Ps 149:1). Paul affirms "I will praise thee among the Gentiles, and sing to thy name" (Rom 15:9). Isaiah exhorts to praise God in the islands (Is 42:11-12). While in jail, Paul and Silas were "praying and singing hymns to God" (Acts 16:25).

The frequent references to praising God among the heathens or Gentiles (2 Sam 22:50; Rom 15:9; Ps 108:3), suggest that singing was seen as an effective way to witness for the Lord to unbelievers. However, there are no indications in the Bible that the Jews or the early Christians borrowed secular tunes and songs to evangelize the Gentiles. On the contrary, we shall see below that the entertainment music and percussion instruments common in the pagan temples and society, were conspicuous for their absence in the worship music of the Temple, the synagogue, and early Christian gatherings. Both Jews and early Christians believed that secular music had no place in the house of worship. This point will become clearer as we proceed with this study.

Singing in the Bible is not limited to the worship experience, but extends to the totality of one's existence. Believers who live in peace with God, have a constant song in their hearts, though the singing may not always be vocalized. This is why the Psalmist says: "I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live" (Ps 146:2; 104:33). In Revelation those who come out of the great tribulation are seen standing before God's throne, singing with a loud voice a new song which says: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb" (Rev 7:10). Singing praises to God is an experience that begins in this life and continues in the world to come.

**The "New Song" of the Bible**

Nine times the Bible speaks of singing "a new song." Seven times the phrase occurs in the Old Testament (Ps 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9;

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149:1; Is 42:10) and twice in the New Testament (Rev 5:9; 14:2). During the preparation of this manuscript, several subscribers to my ENDTIME ISSUES newsletter have emailed messages, arguing that for them the contemporary pop religious music is the prophetic fulfillment of the biblical “new song.” Other believe that Christians are required to sing new songs and consequently musicians constantly must compose new hymns for the church.

There is certainly a continuing need for new hymns to enrich the worship experience of the church today. However, a study of the “new song” in the Bible, reveals that the phrase “new song” refers not to a new composition, but to a new experience that makes it possible to praise God with new meaning. Let us look first at a couple of passages from the Old Testament which help us define the meaning of the “new song.”

The Psalmist says: “He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God” (Ps 40:2-3; NIV). In this text the “new song” is defined by the appositional phrase as “a hymn of praise to our God.” What makes the song new, is not the new lyrics or tune, but the new experience. It is the experience of deliverance from the slimy pit and of restoration upon solid ground, that gives reason to David to sing old hymns of praise to God with new meaning.

The “new song” in the Bible is associated, not with simpler lyrics or more rhythmic music, but with a unique experience of divine deliverance. For example, David says: “I will sing a new song to you, O God; on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music to you, to the One who gives victory to kings, who delivers his servant David from the deadly sword” (Ps 144:9-10). It is the experience of deliverance and victory that inspires David to sing with a new sense of gratitude the hymns of praises.

The same concept is expressed in the two references to the “new song” found in the New Testament (Rev 5:9; 14:2). The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures sing a “new song” before the Throne of God. The song praises the Lamb “for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God” (Rev 5:9).

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On a similar note in Revelation 14 the redeemed join the elders and the living creatures in singing “a new song before the throne” (Rev 14:3). We are told that “no one could learn that song” except those “who had been redeemed from the earth” (Rev 14:3). What makes this song new, is not the new words or melody, but the unique experience of the redeemed. We are told that they are the only ones who can sing it, not because the words or melody is difficult to learn, but because of their unique experience. They came out of the great tribulation; thus they can express their praise and gratitude to God in a way no one else can do.

The Greek word translated “new” is *kainos*, which means new in quality and not in time. The latter is expressed by the Greek word *neos*. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament clearly explains the difference between the two Greek words *neos* and *kainos*. “*Neos* is what is new in time or origin, . . . *kainos* is what is new in nature, different from the usual, impressive, better than the old.”

The “new song” presupposes not a new tune or lyrics, but a new experience. It is only the person who has experienced the transforming power of God’s grace, who can sing the new song. It is noteworthy that Paul’s famous exhortation in Colossians 3:16 to “sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” is preceded by his appeal to “put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (Col 3:9-10). The “new song” celebrates the victory over the old life and old songs, while at the same time it expresses gratitude for the new life in Christ experienced by believers.

## **THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC IN THE BIBLE**

In discussing the importance of music in the Bible, we have focused so far on the role of singing in the personal spiritual experience. Very little has been said of the ministry of music conducted first in the Temple, and then in the synagogue, and finally in the early church. A brief examination of the public ministry of music during Bible times, offers significant lessons for church music today. This topic will be examined in the next newsletter Number 206.

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**CRISTINA PICCARDI'S NEW DVD RECORDINGS**

A brand new recording of Cristina Piccardi's sacred concert and of our **SABBATH SEMINAR with WORDS AND SONGS** was made in Loma Linda few weeks ago. The recording was done with four state-of-the-art high definition cameras that provide an exceptional clear and crispy video images.

We felt the need to make a high quality recording to share our new ministry with fellow believers in different parts of the world. We are happy that at this time we can offer a professional recording both of Cristina's Sacred Concert and of our **SABBATH SEMINAR with WORDS AND SONGS**.

The **SACRED CONCERT** consists of **16 sacred familiar songs that cover the major themes of God's creative and redemptive love**. Her marvellous singing will touch your heart and inspire you to devote your life more fully to the Savior. You can see the picture of this new album by clicking at this link: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/pic.htm>

The **SABBATH SEMINAR** consists of **3 DVD disks** containing a total of 6 hours of recording, that is, the Cristina singing and my preaching done on Friday evening, Sabbath morning, and Sabbath afternoon. Cristina sings a few songs before and after each of my lectures. You can enjoy this informative and inspiring 6 hours seminar in the privacy of your home or church, without having to travel long distances or investing money to fly us in. You can see the picture of this new album by clicking at this link: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/sabbathandsong/index.htm>

### **Who is Cristina Piccardi?**

In my view Cristina is by far the best Adventist soprano I have heard in my life. Surprisingly she is a slim, only 118 pounds, 5.6 feet high – not the typical heavy-set soprano. When my wife asked her: “How can you project such a powerful voice when you are so slim?” She replied: “It is God's gift.”

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Cristina was born in Brazil 26 years ago and came to Andrews University two years ago to accompany her husband who is studying at the seminary. She has earned degrees in voice performance both in Brazil and at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA, where she received full scholarship during the two years of her studies, graduating in December of 2005.

She has performed in a leading role with symphonic orchestras in the USA and overseas. In the year 2005 she won the first price at an International Competition for Opera Singers.

I officially met Cristina on October 6, 2007 at Andrews University Pioneer Memorial Church. I was spellbound by the three sacred songs she sung during the communion service led by Pastor Dwight Nelson. When we met after the communion service, we both immediately felt that the Lord was bringing us together in a providential way to proclaim with words and songs our timely Adventist Message. She told me that after singing for five years in a leading role with various symphonic orchestras, she felt the call of God to leave glitzy opera stage, in order to dedicate the gift of her voice to sing sacred music. This means that now we are presenting together with words and songs my powerpoint seminars on the **SABBATH, SECOND ADVENT, and CHRISTIAN LIFE STYLE**.

You can enjoy a preview of Cristina's outstanding singing by clicking at this link: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/cristina/> She sings the first stanza of THE HOLY CITY.

### **Special Package Offer of Cristina's Recordings.**

At this time we wish to offer the complete package of Cristina's three albums, together with the newly recorded SABBATH SEMINAR with WORDS AND SONGS for only \$50.00, instead of the regular price of \$230.00. The package included the following four albums:

**(1) THE CD ALBUM REJOICE IN THE LORD** which consists of 11 sacred songs recorded with Marcelo Caceres, Professor of piano at Andrews University. The regular price of the album is \$30.00.



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**(2) THE DVD ALBUM SING UNTO THE LORD** which consists of 10 sacred songs recorded at the Andrews University Pioneer Memorial SDA Church. The regular price of the DVD album is \$50.00.

**(3) THE DVD ALBUM BY HIS GRACE** which consists of 16 sacred songs recorded in Loma Linda with four high-definition cameras. The regular price of the DVD is \$50.00.

**(4) THE DVD ALBUM OF THE SABBATH WITH WORDS AND SONGS** which consists of three DVD disks with 6 hours of recordings of Cristina singing and my preaching done on Friday evening, Sabbath morning, and Sabbath afternoon. The regular price is \$100.00.

The special offer on the above package of 4 albums is only \$70.00, mailing expenses included even overseas, instead of the regular price of \$350.00.

### **How to Order Cristina's Package of Four Albums**

**You can order the package of the four albums containing Cristina's Sacred Concerts and the SABBATH SEMINAR in WORDS AND SONGS in four different ways:**

**(1) ONLINE:** By clicking here: [http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/cart/catalog/product\\_info.php?cPath=26&products\\_id=122](http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/cart/catalog/product_info.php?cPath=26&products_id=122)

**(2) PHONE:** By calling us at (269) 471-2915 to give us your credit card number and postal address.

**(3) EMAIL:** By emailing your order to <[sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com](mailto:sbacchiocchi@biblicalperspectives.com)>. Be sure to provide your postal address, credit card number, and expiration date.

**(4) REGULAR MAIL:** By mailing a check to BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES, 4990 Appian Way, Berrien Springs, Michigan 49103, USA. We guarantee to process your order immediately.