

FBFI BREAKOUT SESSION

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Promoting Scripturally Separated Church Music: Teaching Discernment, Not Merely Drawing Lines

1st Chronicles 12:32 speaks of men who “understood the times, and knew what the people of God ought to do.”

There are 4 implications in this verse:

1. In different generations there are different needs.
2. There are people who understand the times, and some who don't.
3. God wants those who understand to give leadership.
4. We must go forward on our knees.

The Pre-requisites to Promoting Scripturally Separated Church Music

1. I must search the scriptures concerning music and worship.
 - A. I must search exhaustively.
 - B. I must search with a teachable spirit.
 - C. I must search with intellectual honesty.
2. I must examine my own heart and example.
3. I must listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

4. I must deal with the issue the way the Holy Spirit deals with the issue.

The Goal of Separation

1. Separation is bilateral—from uncleanness unto God (Ezra 6:21)
2. Separation is motivated by desire for full communion with God (2 Cor. 6:14–7:1)
3. The end result of separation is complete holiness of flesh and spirit (2 Cor. 7:1)

The Applications of Separation

1. Separation applies to respectable sins also.
2. Separation is based on the character of God.

What is scripturally separated church music?

“Discerning music issues through scripture to approve musical worship that is excellent in doctrine, holiness, beauty, and influence; and promoting that discernment among the saints through Spirit-filled instruction.”

Discerning music issues through Scripture

Philippians 1:9–11; 1 Corinthians 6:12, 10:23, 14:15, 15:33;
1 Corinthians 8–10; Psalm 101; 2 Timothy 4:1–4; 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1;
Philippians 4:8–9; 1 Kings 13; 2 Chron. 20:35–37; Hebrews 12:28–29;
Psalm 96:6–9; 1 Thessalonians 5:21–22; Ephesians 5:10.

To approve musical worship

Approve means “to approve by testing.” We need a systematic grid of questions for approval.

That is excellent in doctrine, holiness, beauty, and influence;

Excellence is not mediocrity. The question is not, “Is this okay?”
The burden of proof is on the excellence side.

Excellence in doctrine—example of the Psalms (Content-rich,
content-centered)

Excellence in beauty—Exodus 28:2, Psalm 81:1–3;

Excellence in holiness—a forgotten doctrine, a multi-faceted issue

Excellence in influence—of the music, the musicians, the
associations, the worldview

Being separate is managing influence, not exercising judgment.

^{NASB} **1 Corinthians 15:33** *Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."*

God sometimes uses people of mixed influence. (Jehoshaphat, 2
Chronicles 20:35–37)

“Will the use of this music negatively influence my people?”

“Is the music expedient and edifying for the flock of God?”

(1 Corinthians 6:12, 10:23).

Be balanced in assessment.

We are more susceptible to negative influence from a believer than an unbeliever.

“Is this the most excellent music available?”

Drawing a line is functionally necessary; but teaching and explaining is more important.

Discernment is necessary because the music issue is multi-factoral. It's not a single continuum.

Where is a given piece of music on **the spectrum of rhythm?**

Where is a song on **the spectrum of doctrine in the lyrics?**

Where is a song on the **spectrum of associations?**

Where is a song or musician on **the spectrum of worldliness in presentation?**

Keith Getty has said that much of Christian music today is “dangerous” and is contributing to the “de-Christianization” of people.

We are influence managers.

Can a person benefit from the good lyrics and good melody of those songs without being negatively influenced by the associational baggage?

We are responsible for our flock. But the key is not merely drawing a line. The key is teaching about the whole problem with the overall melting pot of ecumenism and worldly Christianity.

We do not have a Bible verse that tells us what musical styles to use.

We do have descriptions of the flesh and characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit.

Can you imagine sounds that express these descriptions of the flesh or the fruit of the Spirit?

^{NASB} **Galatians 5:19–21** Descriptions of the works of the flesh

immorality

impurity

sensuality

strife

outbursts of anger

rivalries

drunkenness

revelries . . .

and things like these . . .

Titus 1:6

dissipation (loosing of inhibitions)

rebellion.

^{NASB} **Galatians 5:22–23** Descriptions of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23).

Can you imagine music that expresses this?

love,

joy

peace

gentleness

self-control

From Philippians 4:8–9 we also get these moods, emotions or atmospheres commended:

Honorable (also translated “dignified”)

just

pure

lovely,
of good repute
excellent
praiseworthy

^{ESV} **Psalm 96:9** Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!

Is there music most excellent to express the splendor of holiness?

^{NASB} **John 4:23** "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers."

Is there a kind of music most excellent to help people connect with truth in their spirits?

What kind of music would keep the focus on the spirit, not the physical?

What kind of music would enable me to grasp the truth?

What kind of singing style would enable me to focus on the words without distraction?

What are the major problems with mainstream Christian music today?

1. Lyrics. Weak lyrics, often light in God-focus and heavy in man-focus or self-focus.
2. Commercialism. The Christian music industry is heavily monetized. The fact that these concerts are ticketed and the tickets are expensive shows that it's more concert than ministry. Would you charge

admission for a preaching ministry? Or for a truly “sacred” concert of music?

3. A musical style that is fashioned (to various degrees) after the music of this world.
4. Celebrityism. The Christians who consume this music are often spoken of as fans. The magazines uphold these musicians as celebrities. The musicians are called “artists,” which implies it’s about an artistic career rather than a ministry.
5. Competition and Favoritism. This goes hand in hand with the celebrity-ism. Why should there be “Dove Awards” given each year, and top-40 charts, and a “song of the year”? Why should there be a GMA red carpet for these celebrities if it’s all about a holy ministry? Why should Christians be “fans” of their “favorite artist”?
6. Worldliness. The images of these “artists” appear to be imitating their secular rock counterparts in worldly attire, sullen demeanor, outlandish styles, and often immodesty.

Problems with discussing CCM—

We talk past each other, not being careful about terms “Sensual singing style,” “carnality.”

We paint issues with a broad brush.

Blacklisting without explanation

Speaking of CCM in monolithic terms when there is range and degree to objectionable elements.

Not acknowledging the good in what people are doing

Underestimating the power culture has to create different view and blindspots.

Being unaware of our own blindspots
Being quick to speak and slow to hear
Believing that the effects of music are always automatic
Not being intellectually honest about scriptural material
Thinking that every micro-trend is a mega-direction
Not knowing the scriptures, or knowing the scriptures and not being
intellectually honest
Ignoring disconfirming information
Thinking I must become like the world in order to reach the world
Being stricter than the Holy Spirit
Not helping people be comfortable to ask questions
Entering a discussion loaded for bear
Handling an issue with a sledgehammer when a fly-swatter would do
Not understanding why the issue is difficult
Not understanding the chemistry of compromise (2 Chron. 18:1–3)
Seeing the issue as monolithic instead of multi-dimensional