

Pure Worship

after God's Own Heart **PART 2**

Continued from the previous issue of Joy! Magazine with testimonies of worship leaders from across the CTMI Network

In the old covenant, exceptional times of praise and worship were experienced when God brought deliverance and victories to His people, this being manifested by a joyful heart, songs and dances. Other manifestations of praise and worship occurred when they were brought to repentance; and also when they bowed down before Him whenever they were reminded of who He is... the Almighty God, the God of power and love! In the new covenant, praise and worship should be for the same reasons, following the same pattern, in addition to thanksgiving for the fact that Jesus, the Son of God came to bring salvation, deliverance, and victory to all those who believe in Him. But it is not just good enough to join in, praising and worshipping the Lord, unless our hearts are right towards Him and everyone else.

Let us not forget that nothing we do in our own strength and ability can ever find acceptance before God. We must

therefore question seriously why, in so many churches today, such a great emphasis is put on what man can do with his musical talent and how much of his abilities are directed to performance. 'Excellence of ministry' is also widespread, as though we can impress God with our costumed choirs, instruments, and so on...



Jocelyn Sery - Elder & Songwriter
St. Pierre, La Réunion

“ I spent many frustrating years going round in circles applying Biblical principles to worship, without identifying my life fully with the cross of Christ. Until that revelation came, and the cross started exposing exactly what I carried in my heart –how much my flesh had developed secret mechanisms to hide the falsehoods

that ruled my life – I had no clue what Jesus meant when He said we will worship Him in spirit and in truth. I saw how much law, or the hand of man, had trampled on the grace of God. I worshipped the Lord according to technical principles; yet, to God, how false my worship must have sounded! Amos 5:23-24 and 6:5 tells us just how little God is impressed with our talents as worshippers. That is because He hears the things that our voices do not express. He sees everything we try to hide... This is because God does not have fellowship with our flesh, but with our hearts!”

In so many churches and concerts, worship has become so tainted by the spirit of the world that it is impossible to separate the Godly from the secular. There is great compromise by the leadership of churches in order to 'keep the youth in church'. Even the dancing in so many churches is not the result or the fruit of a victory, like when David danced before the Lord when the ark of the covenant was brought back to the city of God. Today Christians don't need a victory or a reminder of what the Lord has done to behave as they would in night clubs... Dancing, jumping and moving their bodies to very worldly and emotional music. Lord help us! "They end up doing the same things in church that they would wish to be doing in the world!" says Miki Hardy.



Joëlle Atisse - Songwriter
Curepipe, Mauritius

“ I remember my schemes to perform well, knowing I would receive compliments about my singing... Deep within me, I was full of ambitions and plans to become someone who would be loved and pleasing in the eyes of everyone... But, increasingly as I heard the Gospel of the Cross, all these ambitions fell aside one by one; the Lord holds up a mirror revealing just how weak and useless I am when I am not taking my cross. I see clearly that the spirit of the world is captivating man's heart and leading him away with dark music that appeals only to his emotions. You can influence and transmit any good or bad message through words and melodies. When divinely

inspired, anointed songs are sung, God's spirit flows and touches, heals, melts, rebukes and comforts hearts. Worldly songs, on the contrary, give access to the devil which impacts people's lives negatively and eventually destroys them. For me, I desire more and more that the Spirit leads me. I've come to realise that in spite of my weaknesses and my short comings, the Lord is pleased with a simple heart that doesn't want to compromise but wants to surrender to Him wholly.”

What Jesus said in John 4 speaks of a genuine and sincere worship coming from the depths of our hearts and centred only on Christ. This reflects just how important it is that the heart of the worship leader himself is pure, because what he carries is what will be imparted to the Church.

“ For this reason, worship does not begin when we sing a song. Singing is just an expression of my heart to God. God looks at the state of my heart and life rather more than the words I sing. I know many men of God who have terrible voices. Imagine if worship was determined by the sound of a voice, if that were the case then many would never worship God... not in our eyes anyway! A bad singer can be quite off-putting, but that person could be before the very throne of God in their heart, face to face with God Himself. Yet, to you, what they are singing seems unacceptable because it does not sound 'nice'. But remember that God sees their heart. It's so much more than just about music, melodies, being in tune or singing in the right key... it's about your life!”



Eugene Nyathi - Elder & Songwriter
Zimbabwe

From all these testimonies, we can see that the right heart and understanding of the freedom that we have in Christ is at the base of everything we do relating to worship. As someone has stated: “Music is not worship, but worship can be music!”



Jean-Jacques Fabien
Worship Leader & Songwriter
Curepipe, Mauritius

“ There must also be a revelation of the grace of God in order to worship Him in freedom and not according to principles. This revelation can only be manifested and grow in our hearts when we are exposed to the gospel of the Cross of Jesus; the cross being the place and time where a radical change occurred in the way we would enjoy fellowship and live with him... no longer according to the spirit, rules, principles, or any kind of law, of the Old Testament, but according to His grace. I believe that we are called to be totally free to live out the revelation of the cross and of God's grace in order to step into a higher dimension of worship... true worship that pleases God. To me, worship is related to all my life and heart, and not to music!”



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