

## ***Song Selection***

Song leaders face a difficult challenge in selecting songs for worship services. There are the 'old standards' that have been known and loved for many years and there are the newer songs preferred by many of our young people. What I favor is variety among scriptural songs.

When we sing only a few songs over and over again, they can become stale, and it is easy for us to simply mouth the words without thinking about them. So I try to make sure that the congregation where I am a member gets to use a variety of songs. Since several other song leaders are more comfortable with songs they have known for a long time, it's often my job to introduce some that are newer or less familiar. But one of my goals is enough variety that our minds remain occupied with the objective of worship, not overly confused by a wave of new & unknown things, and not lulled to sleep by endless repetition of a few familiar hymns.

Of the newer generation of songs, there are some that I will not lead because they seem to be written for their performance value rather than for edification. I am aware of a song in which the four vocal parts are singing four different sets of words at the same time, and it seems to me that this cannot lead to us edifying one another any more than (in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century) having four different prophets speaking at the same time rather than in turn (1 Cor. 14:29-30). I am aware of another song where the first verse is intended to be sung only by a few people, and those who sing soprano are invited to join only in the 4th verse, and I won't lead that one, either, because I don't think it's right for most of the audience to be sitting idle while 3 verses go by. I also think that the newer generation of songs tends to be more 'emotional'. What I mean is that they seem to be written to express more awe than praise - to emphasize our own reaction to God, and that tends to lead many of them to focus more on us than on God. That's not always a bad thing in small doses, but a couple of songs are written with so much 'mush' that I literally cannot understand what they are expressing. If I don't understand the message, I don't lead the song.

Our objective is to worship. Scriptural content is the first goal, and the second is an atmosphere where the focus is worship. Too little variety and too much novelty are both distracting, as I said above. Furthermore, a song should be within the vocal capabilities of the people in the audience, or it will fall flat and disrupt the mood.

***- by Erin Percell***

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## ***Too Little Too Late***

Why is it we get interested in the right things when it's just too late?

A young couple marries, but take one another for granted. He abuses his position as husband, and she resists everything he says or does. Years pass with such neglect, abuse, and mistreatment. They end up in a divorce court. In the process of working out a settlement, the husband decides he wishes to repent and reconcile with his wife. Why now? Where was this penitent disposition when it would have saved the marriage? She may resist his offer, deciding that it's no use trying anymore. For her, it's a case of "too little, too late."

A foolish and immature son becomes estranged from his parents. He never calls, never visits, never shares his life with them. The parents agonize, but there is little they can do to have a relationship with a child who wants nothing to do with them. Years pass. Age takes its toll on the parents. One day the son receives a call. His mother is dead. He attends the funeral, weeps loudly and uncontrollably — but for what? The opportunity to love his mother and develop a relationship with her is gone forever. He may now see his immaturity, his selfishness, his ungodly character. He may repent and do better in the future, even caring for his widowed and aged father. But as far as his mother is concerned, it's "too little, too late."

A man lives an immoral and profligate life. He has no time for spiritual things, and has never made preparation for eternity. God is in none of his thoughts. He disdains the "holy Joes" that do their best to serve God. The day of judgment comes, and he knows it is "too late." He never prepared himself to meet God. Now he confesses Christ (as all will do, Phil. 2:11) but it is too late. Why didn't he do it in life when he had time and opportunity? He now receives the consequences of choices he made, and his penitent spirit is just a little bit "too little, too late."

Perhaps some personal offense was never corrected and the person to whom you needed to apologize has since died. It is too late to right a past wrong under such circumstances. Does not have to be a "forever failure"? No! Pray to God for His forgiveness, and make whatever restitution you can for the wrong you committed. As long as the world stands and life is in your body, it is never too late to do the right thing, whether that is little or much.

As a youth, serious mistakes may have been made and sins committed which have followed you into adulthood. Don't let the past keep you from repentance immediately. God will accept you, even now.

"Today" is the day of salvation (Heb. 3:15). Let's use it before it is "too little, too late."

- by **Mark White**

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### ***What Denominational Leaders Don't Believe***

In a poll conducted by sociologist Jeffrey Hadden and reported in Pulpit Helps, 10,000 "clergymen" were asked about their belief in some fundamental Bible truths. Here are the AMAZING results:

% that do <b><u>NOT</u></b> believe:	Scriptures inspired & Inerrant	Virgin birth	Physical resurrection of Jesus
Methodists	87%	60%	51%
Presbyterians	82%	49%	35%
Episcopalians	95%	44%	30%
Lutherans	77%	19%	13%
Baptists	67%	34%	33%

Are you surprised that only 40% of Methodists believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ? Does it shock you that fully one third of Baptists deny the physical resurrection of our Savior? Actually these results are to be expected when you analyze the low percentage of religious leaders who respect the absolute authority of the inspired word of God. For instance, only 5% of Episcopalian leaders believe that the Bible is inspired and inerrant! Not too surprising then that they have trouble believing what the scriptures teach on any other subject. These same folks plead for unity in the religious world, yet they deny the only true basis for such unity. In fact, their own attitude toward the Bible is the taproot of all division and denominationalism. We must believe, as Jesus said, "Thy word is truth" (In 17:17).

- by **Greg Gwin**