

Worship Questions and Answers (Part 1)
Revelation 4
August 12, 2007

- I. **The Sabbath Day (see WCF 21.7-8) – Why an evening worship service?**
- A. **The OT Sabbath – a holy day**
 - B. **The NT – the Lord’s Day**
Revelation 1:10 ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet
 - 1. *I Cor. 11:20 When you come together, it is not the Lord’s supper that you eat.*
 - 2. **holy meal and holy day**
 - 3. **not ordinary or common**
 - C. **Separate and unique**
 - 1. **set apart day, set apart activities**
 - 2. *WLC 117 The Sabbath or Lord’s day is to be sanctified by an holy resting all the day, not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful; and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy) in the public and private exercises of God’s worship;*
 - 3. **not dualistic – holy and sinful**
 - 4. **but trichotomous – holy, sinful, and common/legal**
 - D. **The Sabbath → delight**
 - 1. **Isaiah 58:13-14**
 - 2. **notice the logic: you make it a delight → you shall take delight**
 - E. **Importance of the means of grace**
“Finally, adequate attention to the means of grace should produce greater reluctance to abandon the practice of evening worship.”¹
- II. **Music in worship**
- A. **What is the OPC philosophy regarding music?**
 - 1. *“But the acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in Scripture” (WCF 21.1)*
 - 2. **Elements – the what of worship – the fixed and unchanging parts of the worship service (see WCF 21.3-5)**
 - 3. **Circumstances – the how of worship – conditions that are most conducive to worship that is decent and orderly (I Cor. 14:40)**
 - 4. **Forms – the how of the preaching, praying, and singing in worship**

¹ D. G. Hart and John Muether, *With Reverence and Awe* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2002), 140. For more discussion regarding evening worship see http://www.refopc.org/why_evening_church.html.

B. What standard?

1. **what is orderly? (I Cor. 14:40)**
2. **reverence and awe, joy and praise**
3. **God-centered – objective basis for coming to worship**
“the biblical text never gives us the subjective (my experience or my offering of praise or obedience) apart from the objective (God’s saving work in Christ). . . . It never concentrates on what we are to do before establishing what God has already done.”²
4. **four tests**
 - a. Is it singable?
 - b. Is it biblically and theologically sound?
 - c. Is it biblically and theologically mature?
 - d. Is it emotionally balanced?³

C. What kind of songs may we sing?

1. **Psalms – “singing of psalms with grace in the heart” (WCF 21.5)**
“Reformed worship ought at least to embrace frequent or even preponderant use of the Psalter. . . . Psalms not only provide an emotional outlet for which Calvinists are not always well known, but also instill the hearts of saints with godly emotions.”⁴
2. **Sing a new song (33:3; 96:1; 98:1)**
 - a. To whom? Sing to the Lord a new song.
 - b. “These words are not proof texts for contemporary music, nor do they mean that the church must always be experimenting or innovating in its song. . . . Instead, to ‘sing a new song’ is to make sure that the hymnody of the church accurately reflects the fullness of God’s words and deeds in all stages of redemptive history. As the mighty acts of God unfold in the salvation of his people, the people of God respond with song.”⁵

D. What about special music?

1. **Dialogical principle**
Directory of Public Worship 3.1 “The parts of worship are of two kinds: those which are performed on behalf of God, and those which are performed by the congregation. In the former the worshipers are receptive, in the latter they are active. It is reasonable that these two elements be made to alternate as far as possible.”
2. **Because God is the audience, congregational singing the rule**
3. **What about choirs?**
4. **What about preludes and offertories?**
5. **What about solos?**

² Michael Horton, *In the Face of God* (Dallas: Word, 1996), 214.

³ Terry L. Johnson, “The Pastor’s Public Ministry: Part One,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 60 (Spring 1998): 148-51.

⁴ Hart and Muether, *With Reverence and Awe*, 162-3.

⁵ *Ibid*, 163.