

Music and Devotion

Building on the first hour, this session will explore the use of great sacred music in public worship and personal devotion. We will contextualize some of the great masterworks of the sacred repertoire and learn to prayerfully give our attention to what the Lord is saying through this medium.

Delta David Gier has been called a dynamic voice on the music scene, recognized widely for his penetrating interpretations of the standard symphonic repertoire, passionate commitment to new music, and significant community engagement. Orchestras Mr. Gier has conducted include the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the St. Louis Symphony, and the Minnesota Orchestra. In Europe, his engagements include the Bergen Philharmonic, the Polish National Radio Symphony, and the Bucharest Philharmonic, along with many other orchestras in Italy, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Turkey. He studied at the University of Michigan under the renowned conducting teacher Gustav Meier, along with studies at the Tanglewood Music Center and Aspen Music Festival. He was a Fulbright scholar in eastern Europe from 1988-90. He has chaired the music jury of the Pulitzer Prize and is a frequent panelist for the League of American orchestras. The Lakota Music Project was developed under Gier's direction to address racial tensions between Native Americans and whites in the region the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra serves. Other engagement projects with the SDSO have included Arab, Chinese and Sudanese/Somali refugees.

J. Mark Bertrand is a bibliophile, a novelist, and a pastor. He is the author of the non-fiction book *Rethinking Worldview*, and of three crime novels: *Back on Murder*, *Pattern of Wounds*, and *Nothing to Hide*. He is also the writer behind Bible Design Blog, a site which has led to a resurgence of interest in the design and production of quality editions of the Bibles. Mark is a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church in America.

I. How the Spirit works (not really an answer...)

A. Jesus, "God who told stories"

B. The Imagination

II. The challenges of sacred music in public worship

A. The function of music in worship

As a foundation, it helps for everyone to be on the same page about what music is supposed to be doing in the liturgy. Common answers: "being beautiful," "inspiring awe," "warming up the crowd," etc. The right answer? Continuing with the metaphor from earlier: Music = Prayer. Whether the congregation sings or not, the music of the liturgy is the sung prayer of the worshipper first and foremost. Understand that, and the complexion of the 'worship war' questions changes.

B. The cultural trajectory of worship music

Thanks to the pop influence, we approach music in church through the portal of "taste" which has a lot to do with cultural identity—are you highbrow? are you

Nashville? Do you have a bit of an edge? Ultimately, what radio station do you sound like? The CHALLENGE is to make the culture of reference an internal one—i.e. to develop a musical language within the specific congregation that lets us say, “This is our music.”

C. The problem of resources

Pop is not only in demand, but it is far easier to get right (i.e., less demanding). An affluent church with its heart in the right place can sustain a sacred music program...but what can the have-nots hope to achieve? Arguably the rich church is just channeling a different taste (the elitism argument). But is there a way to bring richness into the liturgy of a modest church?

III. Sacred Music

A. Bach – St. John Passion

B. Sanctus x 3: Bach, Mozart, Berlioz

C. Plainchant

Suggested Readings: