

PROFANE FIRE ON THE ALTAR

1. Introduction

Since several years now, many churches, around the world, including the French-speaking world, have been adopting a “very spiritual trend”, called “**praise and worship time**”.

These “praises” generally consist of a piling up of performances of music and songs, provided by selected specialised bands, and are lasting at least thirty minutes per meeting. Depending on the dynamic of the “worship leader”, these sessions may be interspersed with comments and other spiritual thoughts. The musical style and the rhythmic



emphasis is almost unilaterally of the “Praise Made US” type, with some variations at different times and some regional inflections, based on style trends that are currently fashionable in different youth cultures.

The models for the use of the instruments, the sound and special effect systems and equipments, are drawn from the present day showbiz world. Similarly, the sound level encountered in many church meetings, can easily rival that of contemporary secular youth concerts.

2. A steam roller

The present situation is the outcome of a “religious revolution” which has swept through the churches like a steam roller, crushing any regional, even national affinities and sensitivities in its path, **imposing** new “standards”.



Few are the courageous opponents who do not fear being discredited by the “new worshippers” for lacking deep spirituality.



Even rarer are the pastors who have dared to stand up against the “dictate” of young people in search of sensations and enjoyment, for fear of losing their crew to other groups who will be all too happy to pick up the pieces.

A cast of “praisers” now lay down the law in most evangelical, pentecostal and charismatic churches, and even in a good number of more traditional institutions, may be at “homeopathic doses”.

3. **Undeniable realities**

Behind the façade of this so-called praise to God, we have to unfortunately note the following phenomena:

- ***The mediatised and commercial programming of the Christian youth is an undeniable reality and “its music” is indeed the music of the contemporary entertainment scene. What the “world” loves, is loved by a large number of children and young people coming from evangelical family contexts.***



- ***Considering the behavioural profile of this youth, tinged with rebellion and opposition to possible challenges and questioning, we must note that very few of them show any interest for the “tastes” of the one for whom the said praises are intended, that is to say God himself. In fact their musical consumption and production is almost totally dominated by their fixation on trendy preferences, leading to a kind of spiritual onanism.***

- ***The styles and types of music that are prevalent on the “media scene” have become the de facto standard for a majority of congregations, flouting the community realities to which the Church of Jesus Christ is supposed to submit itself -- “Young people and old will rejoice together” – Jér. 31. 13. What is one to think of the traumatic experiences of those who have lost part of their hearing during a “praise and worship service” or of those who have to absolutely protect themselves by wearing “protective ear plugs”?***



- ***In the last bastions of resistance to this “worldly avalanche”, a “Trojan horse” called “evangelism” has broken down the resistance of the last refractory ones, obliging them to accept what should often be termed “organised noise”. This is how many Christian kids have been able to circumvent the veto of the censors in their churches and their families and enjoy with impunity the latest musical frolics, under cover of the message to be brought to the world through the medium of modern music. If we consider the statistics from the USA, where 75% of young people raised in churches fall away, we can only regret this breach, all the more so as the Bible context at no time supports the use of music and singing as a vector for evangelism.***





- ***The European continent is awash with “stars” and super-qualified bands. Does our Lord really take pleasure in these parties that promote “top” individuals and bands who seek to be valued by their brothers and sisters?***

4. What does the Lord have to say?

Reading: *Leviticus 6:1-6 / 10:1-7*

A prophetic word:

A large number of churches with a genuine spiritual past are presently smitten by a interdict from God because of

“profane fire on the altar”

(other translations say unauthorised fire, while older ones speak of strange fire).



These churches are spiritually polluted by musicians and singers who strive to lead them into what they consider to be the presence of the Lord in order to bring down the anointing and fire of his Spirit, but without having been first to the altar of sacrifice. On the contrary, their inspiration and motivation are directly empowered and fired up by the musical productions of the entertainment business, “Christian” or not.



The Lord cannot be pleased with such offerings and to persist in bringing them can become dangerous because God is not mocked.

5. Genuine praise and worship

Question:

What are the praises and the worship that please our God?

Answers:

- a) Anyone who wishes to serve a local church with music and singing must receive a **clear call from God** for that function.



When that person appears before the people of God, they must have first been to the altar of sacrifice, that is to say, having had **contact with the Lord** in the intimacy of his holy place. Relations with their brothers and sisters must be pure and in order, without obstacles or dissensions. Those who are thus disposed have no problem in submitting themselves to those who God has established to lead the church and they will not seek to put pressure on them by contending with them.

→ *Lev. 6:1-6 / 1 Chr. 15:2, 12-22 / 2 Chr. 5:11-13 / Neh. 12:27-36 / Mat. 5:23*

- b) Genuine praise comes from people who are **united**. Good looks upon the heart and music that causes pain or irritates a part of the brothers and sisters present does not please him. The Church is a body and the bringing of the “praise and worship” offering is a **community activity** that transcends generations.

→ *Ps. 22:23 / 35:18 / 1 Cor. 12:7 / 1 Cor. 14:26 / Phil. 2:2-4 / 3:15*

- c) The “praises” that please our flesh because of their musical style are not necessarily a **sacrifice** that is pleasing to God. On the other hand, if the generations deploy mutual efforts to please each other, elders to young people and vice versa, this can become a significant **sacrificial contribution**.

→ *Hos. 14: 2 / Heb. 13: 15 / Mal. 4:5, 6*



- d) Our God wants to be **praised and thanked despite everything**, including during negative and painful events.
→ *Acts 16:24, 25 / 1 Thess. 5:18 / Eph. 5:20*
- e) Musical creations and new compositions, whether instrumental or voice, must absolutely **distance themselves from the contemporary world** and its modes and methods of expression. God finds no pleasure in what draws its inspiration from modern “hits”.
→ *Rom. 12:1, 2 / Eph. 4:21-24 /*
- f) God desires songs and praises that spring from **our heart**, which means from the depths of our inner being. Such expressions are necessarily diverse and depend on the surrounding culture, though they are and enriched by the Holy Spirit. This means being set free from a global North American music culture.
→ *Eph. 5:19 / Col. 3:16 / Jas. 5:13 / Rom. 15:9 /*
- g) Since the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost it is no longer necessary to call on him to “come down” on the united church. Thus a conditioning and “warming” the atmosphere for this purpose is not recommended. **The Spirit will not allow himself to be manipulated**, such manipulation being used by the occult world. In a genuine worship service, the sign of our dynamic acceptance **by faith** of God’s presence among his people will be our submission to the Word of God.
→ *Eph. 2:22 / 2 Co. 6:16 / 1 Co. 3:16*

6. A call to repentance

The curse which weighs on the evangelical world, because of the “**profane fire**” referred to above can only be lifted by the **repentance** of the persons and congregations concerned. The weakening of the intensity of the prayer life among God’s people, the relativising of the Holy Scriptures and the rarity of real miracles and healings may well be evidence in this area.



Return to me, declares the Lord of hosts, that I may return to you!

Zech. 1:3

Lussy, 21. 07. 2007 / jpt

Date of issue on www.apv.org : 21.08.07 / updated jpt-nn 11.06.19

Jean-Pierre Trachsel
Alliance Pierres Vivantes – Siviriez – Switzerland