



REPENT AUSTRALIA

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14

Brothers & Sisters

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BRING THE ORGAN BACK!

Throughout the 1990s many churches decided that the best way to attract people was to adopt a 'seeker friendly' philosophy type of marketing their product. One of the basic premises of this philosophy, if you wanted to attract non-church goers, was to make church as less likely to the traditional church as possible. Pulpits had to go, to be replaced by flimsy music stands that could be removed in a jiffy. Baptismal fonts and Communion tables were kept out of sight. Churches got rid of choirs and replaced them with show-biz type of praise or worship teams and used as background singers for the 'stars' on the worship team. And most notable of all was the axing of the traditional organ. Up till now the ordinary Pentecostal or evangelistic churches in Australia have been experimenting with mission philosophies. And this is encouraging aspects of worship that remind many worshippers of their long-lost connection with the traditional church of their youth. People want to know that they are part of a larger story, one that began long ago before we arrived on the scene and will continue long after we're gone. Seeker-friendly churches cannot accomplish this, being tied to their own temporal and geographic context. Nevertheless, there is still one important element largely missing from its worship: BRING THE ORGAN BACK! To most people a church should be a church. That is, it should contain pews, stained glass windows, altars etc---in fact all the elements the seeker-friendly churches have eliminated. Furthermore, most people associate church music with hymns, psalms, choirs and organs. In fact, in Western culture, the sound of organ music is the most 'churchy' sound to people. Yet, for some reason, church leaders believe that people don't want it. But they are wrong! A survey of teenagers in America reveals that they see music appropriate for worship is that associated with choirs, hymns, psalms and the organ. Although adults assume that teenagers consider rock and roll the most appropriate for worship, it is not so. By removing 'churchy' music and the organ in the name of 'what young people like' they actually find it fake. Young people don't want their worship dumbed-down as many churches are doing; they want it to 'feel like church'. And, surprisingly, churches can take one simple step that will go a long way in recapturing that feeling: With the organ!

Reasons for Restoring the Organ

Besides the fact that most people connect the sound of a pipe organ with church more than any other sound there are other reasons for restoring it as a primary source of worship. Firstly, it is the best man-made instrument for supporting congregational singing---after the human voice itself. People sing more freely and with the greatest confidence when surrounded by good singers. But if singing is to be accompanied by an instrument the organ most resembles the human voice. Guitar-led music which is much used today, is a percussion instrument that inevitably draws throaty singing because it is a percussion instrument. Forced, throaty singing does damage to the musical instrument God gave us (our voices) unlike an accompanying organ which is one of the best ways to encourage healthy singing.

A Powerful Instrument

Secondly, the organ is a powerful instrument. Such power is useful in painting a picture in worship of the majesty and grandeur of our God. Although many instruments can produce loud sounds, it is the organ itself, not the performer that is the source of this strength. Playing the organ does indeed require great skill, but the player himself is dwarfed by the sheer magnitude of the instrument, so the 'look at me' factor is much less in the case of the organist than with a pianist or guitarist. Thirdly, the organ is the ideal instrument to produce music in major keys. In the Dark Ages, Gregorian chants were in minor keys. However, when the Reformation came with Martin Luther, the music changed too. Great hymns of faith, such as "A Mighty Fortress Is our God", were composed in major keys. The church continued on with great music over the years with men like Ira Sankey leading the singing at the great D.L.Moody crusades and Cliff Barrows with the Billy Graham meetings in major keys.

A Church Culture

Fourthly, the organ can create a 'church culture'. The church should not follow the world; rather in all areas of worship the church should lead the way setting an example of excellence, and let the world follow suit. Evangelical Christians in particular have been taught to be of the world, but not in it. Instead of aping the culture around us, the church should be creating a church culture that is superior to anything in the world. In church music, the organ is the cornerstone of the church sound, and thus of a musical culture. Admittedly the organ is an expensive instrument. This can be a plus, not a minus. Too often churches assume that 'good stewardship' means being cheap, but some things are worth the money. Christ's honour is the price we should pay to offer God the very best. So many churches cannot be recognised as being places of worship, consisting of disposable metal buildings that have been 'got on the cheap'. Contrast this with the great Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals of Europe which took centuries to build. Today many evangelicals gather in their disposable buildings and play disposable music on disposable music. An organ installation, by contrast, is a permanent thing. In effect, it says, "We are committed to excellence in church music, and we want to encourage that excellence for many generations to come". Surely Christ's honour is worth that! Lastly, the organ is made up of choirs. If Christian worship is fundamentally choral worship, then it follows that instrumental choirs would accompany the singing of human choirs. Churches should assemble brass choirs, woodwind choirs, handbell choirs etc to use in worship though not on a weekly basis but that their contributions to worship every so often, so that their gifts are being employed but not overdone.

Three Elements

Music is made of three elements: Melody, harmony and beat---in that order. Melody in a minor key with no harmony leads to depression. Harmony with the melody distorted and the rhythm varied leads to rebellion. Beat overpowering melody and harmony leads to sensuality. Rock music, so popular today, has perverted the natural order so that the beat takes pre-eminence over melody and harmony. Major keys make for bright, happy, victorious music. Minor keys are sad, wistful and sometimes depressing---and over 80% of rock music is in a minor key.

A Blessing to the Soul

Music is so powerful! It can be a blessing and a delight to the soul or it can bring despair and ruin. We must recognise that we have failed our young people by despising our birthright as inheritors of the glorious Kingdom of God and like Esau of old have sold our heritage for a mess of godless pottage. Through our music we have failed to implant a solid faith and the joy of holy singing in their hearts. In fact, it would not be going too far to claim that the devil's master stroke has been the infiltration of the Church's music. He has succeeded in pervading the great singing of the church with minor key songs over-ridden by excessive bass and drums, though minor singing should be used sparingly; so should the pounding beat of drums. The honour and majesty of God are so profound that they demand melody and harmony as basic to the worship of His people who have been robbed by the music of the devil.

Wishing you and your family a blessed and glorious New Year 2013.

R.A: Led by our Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit to glorify the Fatherhood of God with the Brotherhood of Man; in love and in faithfulness to bring glory and honour to His holy name.

REJOICE IN COVENANT PRAYERS FULLY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT DAILY FOR AUSTRALIA'S REVIVAL.