



Congregational Singing

Presentation to the 1st UU Music Convention Delegates

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Key Texts

- Psalm 96: --3
- Psalms 100:1-5
- Ephesians 5: 18-19





Congregational Singing Defined

- the practice of the congregation participating in the music of the church in the form of hymns, metrical Psalms or free form Psalms

1. Herbermann, Charles, ed. (1913). "Congregational Singing"
2. Pettegree, Andrew (2005). "Militant in Song".

- In the early church, music was done by professionals
- Worshippers largely listened to the sermon and choir
- Congregational singing started during the reformation - incorporating worshippers into the worship experience





The Challenge



- One of the most distinguishing marks of the SDA Church is the richness of its music and musical presentation
- During Evangelistic Crusades/Efforts/Gospel Rallies, we invite and use the best choirs and singing groups - giving the attendees/prospective members a glimpse of what to expect
- When the meetings end and we head back to our churches, then disaster unfolds. Nothing like what was at the meetings. The singing is no longer vibrant but lifeless and dull

Importance of Congregational Singing



**Hebrews 2:12; Colosians 3:16;
2 Chronicles 5:12-14; Ps 60:30-31**

- It is a way of praising God - He is worthy of Praise
- It teaches and edifies others
- It is a way of admonishing others
- It is a way of expressing thankfulness/gratitude to God
- It is a way of uniting the congregation
- It is a way of pleasing the Lord



Key Factors to Consider

- Diversity of cultures in the congregation
- Age categories of congregation
- Melodic Familiarity or capacity to project
- Lyrical content/flow and hymn message
- Use of instruments/Key/Pitch
- Chorister skills/knowledge and lead/backup singers





Key to Vibrant Congregational singing



- Select songs/hymns that are well written (music, theology, pitch, glorifying God)
- Choose songs that appeal and respond to the needs of the congregation, occasion
- The chorister(s) and lead vocalists must be adequately prepared to lead well
- Need to coordinate and blend properly with instruments



Key Take Aways

- Good music is an effective way to communicate to the congregation, and the lyrics play an important role (Ransom)
- People will participate and engage with music that is relevant and familiar (Calvin Johason - Music Ministry)
- The use of musical instruments requires good education and skill, as well as proper coordination with the chorister and lead vocalists





Common Distractions Affecting Congregational Singing

- Excessive vocal ad lib moments (common in more recent worship music). This confuses the congregation and they are not sure whether they should sing.
- Bright stages and dark rooms create the feeling of a “concert” where people assume their role is to watch and listen rather than participate.
- On screen, the lyrics are often too small, formatted poorly, include typos, are mis-timed or have excessive movement in the background.
- Poor audio quality where the audio mix is unclear, too loud, or too soft.





- Now let us put these key aspects to the test
- SDA Hymn 530, Enyimba za Kristo 127 - Let us rise up and sing

- **Guided Question 1:**
How can well established Singing Groups and Choirs enrich congregational singing in their churches?

