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2018

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Sings My
Soul*

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The Heart Of The Matter
教会音乐的核心
I'd Rather Have Jesus
莫等闲，白了少年头

MCIP 11/01/2018



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Hymn Devotions by Kenneth W. Osbeck

I'd Rather Have Jesus

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)

Joshua 24:15; Matthew 16:24-26; Romans 1:16; and Philippians 3:8

*What would be your honest response to this question:
"What are you living for and what would you be willing to die for?"
Sing this testimony.*

The inspiring and challenging words of this hymn, written by Rhea F. Miller, so influenced twenty-three-year-old George Beverly Shea that they determined the direction of his entire life. As he began to compose a melody for these moving lines, he decided to devote his singing talent to God's glory alone.

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Growing up with devoted Christian parents, Bev was encouraged to use his fine singing voice often in the services of the Wesleyan Methodist churches of which his father was a minister. Financial needs of the family made it necessary for him to leave college and work in an insurance office. However, he continued singing in churches and for Christian radio programs. Unexpectedly, he was offered an audition for a secular singing position in New York City and passed the test. The opportunity for a substantial salary and wide recognition made Bev's decision very difficult.

One Sunday as Bev went to the family piano to prepare a song for the morning service, he found there the poem ***I'd Rather Have Jesus***. His mother, who collected beautiful quotations and literary selections, had begun to leave some of them around the house for her son to read, hoping to guide him spiritually. Bev was deeply moved with the challenging message of this text. Immediately he began to compose the music for the lines and used the song that same day in his father's church service.

Bev Shea comments: "Over the years, I've not sung any song more than '***I'd Rather Have Jesus***' but I never tire of Mrs. Miller's heartfelt words." As a young man of twenty-three, Bev allowed the message of this text to guide him wisely to a wonderfully productive and worthwhile life of service to Christ as he shared his musical "theme song" with audiences around the world. ■

我宁愿有耶稣

因为我活着就是基督，我死了就有益处。（腓立比书1章21节）

经文：约书亚记24:15；马太福音16:24-26；罗马书1:16；腓立比书3:8

“你为了什么而活？你又会为了什么而死？”
面对这样的问题，你最真实的答案将会是什么？
唱出你的见证来。

这首诗歌的歌词原由 Rhea F. Miller 所写，歌词具有启发性和挑战性，深深地影响了23岁的 George Beverly Shea，改变了他的人生方向，以致当 Beverly 在为歌词配上旋律同时，下定决心要将自己的歌唱天分献上给神，为的是荣耀祂。

Beverly从小在虔诚的基督徒家庭成长，父亲是卫理公会卫斯理教堂中的圣职人员。父亲经常鼓励Beverly使用他优美的歌声来事奉神。因着家庭生活费的需要，他必须离开学府，到保险公司上班。工作期间，他依旧在多个教会及基督教广播节目中歌唱。后来，他出乎意料地被邀请到美国纽约，为一个世俗的歌唱职位试音，并且被录取了。当下是一份薪金可观并能提升知名度的大好机会，可是Beverly却在决定上面对了极大的纠结。

就在一个星期天早上，Beverly在家为崇拜聚会的歌曲做准备时，看到了“我宁愿有耶稣”的诗词。原来，这是母亲向来喜欢收藏名言文著中的一篇，母亲为了在灵性上塑造他，刻意在家中多处摆放这篇优美的文学摘引。诗词中具挑战性的信息深深地打动Beverly，促使他立刻为诗词编配旋律，结果在当天的崇拜聚会里用了这首诗歌。

Beverly说，他多年来唱过最多次的就是“我宁愿有耶稣”，而且从来不对Miller的诗词感到厌倦。当时23岁的他愿意被歌词与信息引导，走向充满智慧与丰富的人生，向世界各地的听众分享这首诗歌，为的是要服事基督。■

李颖仪

中文翻译

*I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold;
I'd rather be His than have riches untold;
I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands.
I'd rather be led by His nail-pierced hand.*

*I'd rather have Jesus than men's applause;
I'd rather be faithful to His dear cause;
I'd rather have Jesus than world-wide fame;
I'd rather be true to His holy name.*

*He's fairer than lilies of rarest bloom;
He's sweeter than honey from out the comb;
He's all that my hungering spirit needs,
I'd rather have Jesus and let Him lead.*

LYRICS

Chorus:

*Than to be the king of a vast domain or be held in sin's dread sway;
I'd rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today.*

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我宁愿有耶稣，胜于金银，
我宁属耶稣，胜过财富无边；
我宁愿有耶稣，胜过地土，
愿主钉痕手引导我前途。

我宁愿有耶稣，胜于称扬，
我宁忠于主，满足主的心肠；
我宁愿有耶稣，胜于美名，
愿对主忠诚，宣扬主圣名。

他是美中最美，远胜百合，
他是甜中甜，远胜蜂房滴蜜，
他是一切一切，喂我饥灵；
宁愿有耶稣，跟随他率领。

(副) 胜过作君王，虽统治万方，
却仍受罪恶捆绑；我宁愿有耶稣，
胜于世上荣华、富贵、声望。

歌词

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Church Music as Praise, Prayer, Proclamation, Story and Gift

Paul Westermeyer

Emeritus Professor of Church Music at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he taught, served as the Cantor, and directed the Master of Sacred Music degree program with St. Olaf College in Northfield. He is an ordained Lutheran pastor in the Lutheran Evangelical Church in America

CHAPTER 1 - 1

Church Music As Praise

“And David and all the house of Israel were making merry before the Lord with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.” - 2 Samuel 6:5

The church’s music is about the praise of God. David and the people of Israel were carrying the ark of God, they sensed the presence of God among them, and they made merry with music before the Lord. They sang praise to God. This sentiment is not only expressed in 2 Samue1.¹ It is present throughout the Biblical narrative. It comes to most obvious expression in the Psalms, as church musicians know instinctively:

“Sing to the Lord a new song” (Psalm 98);
“Come into [God’s] presence with singing” (Psalm 100);
“Let everything that breathes praise the Lord” (Psalm 150)

These imperatives make explicit what is implicit throughout the Bible: God is to be praised, and music is one of the chief vehicles for expressing that praise.

How does this come about? David and

the people sense the presence of God among them, and they make merry music before the Lord. Or as Martin Luther explained it from the church’s characteristically Christological point of view,

...God has cheered our hearts and minds through His dear Son, whom He gave for us to redeem us from sin, death, and the devil. [Anyone] who believes this earnestly cannot be quiet about it... [but] must gladly and willingly sing...²

God acts with loving-kindness toward us. We respond with a jubilant song of praise.

But what if we don’t sense God’s presence or loving-kindness among us? What if we can’t fathom that God has done anything for us, or worse, that we think God has deserted us to our enemies? We are not the first people to be in this quandary. *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”* cried the psalmist in

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“***At its heart, praise takes musical form. It’s the music of the spheres, the music of the church in its assemblies in community, and our individual songs in concert with all the rest.***”

Psalm 22. “*Why don’t you answer? You are holy, though I’m a worm. You took me from my mother’s womb. From birth I’m cast on you. Yet I’m poured out like water, and evildoers surround me. Please don’t be far away.*” And then without warning, in the midst of this nightmare, the psalmist switches course: “*You have rescued me, and I will praise you.*”

Psalm 22 speaks to one kind of experience, certainly, but does it still beg the question? What if our experience is worse than Psalm 22? What if it’s like Psalm 88? We cry to God, we’re full of trouble, helpless, shunned by our companions, sensing only God’s wrath, with darkness our only companion. There’s no turn to praise as in Psalm 22. We finish the Psalm shut in by dread assaults, closed up with no exit. What then? Is Psalm 89 the response to Psalm 88? “*I will sing of your steadfast love [and] proclaim your faithfulness to all generations,*” it begins. Does that provide the response? Do we simply sing the praise of God’s faithfulness out of nowhere or out of what amounts to the same thing, the pit of our darkness?

Or is that the wrong question? Does the question need a broader scope? Is either our individual jubilation or our individual terror before God too narrow? Is how we feel, no matter how good or how bad, the measure and control of our praise? Or is the praise of God

fundamentally communal? Does praise of God itself stand outside of our individual feelings? Is it the church’s task as community to praise God? We join individually when we can and as best as we can when we can’t. Is that why the text says not only that David made merry with music before the Lord, but that David and all the house of Israel did so?

Karl Barth, the Reformed theologian whose deep and detailed writing does not necessarily call to mind musical expressions of praise, highlights the communal aspect of the praise of God. He virtually made the church’s song of praise a mark of the Christian church.

*The praise of God which constitutes the community and its assemblies seeks to bind and commit and therefore to be expressed, to well up and be sung in concert. The Christian community sings. It is not a choral society. Its singing is not a concert. But from inner, material necessity it sings. Singing is the highest form of human expression. It is to such supreme expression that the **vox humana** is devoted in the ministry of the Christian community...*

What we can and must say quite confidently is that the community which does not sing is not the community. And where it cannot sing in living speech, or only archaically in repetition of the modes and

texts of the past; where it does not sing but sighs and mumbles spasmodically, shamefacedly and with an ill grace, it can be at best only a troubled community which is not sure of its cause and of whose ministry and witness there can be no great expectation.³ In these circumstances it has every reason to pray that this gift which is obviously lacking or enjoyed only in sparing measure will be granted afresh and more generously lest all the other members suffer. The praise of God which finds its concrete culmination in the singing of the community is one of the indispensable basic forms of the ministry of the community.⁴

But there are times when even a whole community can't sing. In the face of the Holocaust, a whole people or at least whole communities of that people were silenced. Just as rape silences the individual, so rape of a community silences a people. And then what? The praise of God goes on. The people of God elsewhere sing it in agony and pain with those who can't sing.

The scope is broader still. The Psalm says, "Let everything that breathes praise the Lord." "Everything that breathes" means the whole creation. The song

of praise is there from the beginning of creation. It's what we sing with the whole creation as the people of God. When the foundations of the earth were laid, already then the morning stars sang together and all the children of God shouted for joy (Job 38:4-6). We could say God's praise is a duty of the whole creation, a delightful duty even when we can't sense the delight, even at times of deepest despair when someone else stands in and sings for us. The song of praise goes on with us and without us.

There is a deep mystery here, the mystery of praising the Triune name. That is why superficial talk about praise of God and superficial music associated with such trivial talk is so enervating and silly. Whatever we may say about this, the church's song of praise is not frivolous. It's an essential part of the church's being and our being as members of Christ's body, related to the being of God and to the being of the universe. It's not something we can add on, as if we could sew a patch onto a pre-existent garment. It's part of the garment of the whole creation, intrinsic to the creation.

It's not only imbedded in the creation's physical being from the beginning. It's



also imbedded in the being and telos of time. Praise of God is the point toward which the whole creation is moving, as Patrick Miller has said.⁵ The organization of the Psalter toward everything that breathes singing a song of praise to God is not just a rhetorical device. It's a proleptic reality. It's where the cosmos is

headed. Praise of God, to say the least, is no small thing and, therefore, worth doing well. At its heart, praise takes musical form. It's the music of the spheres, the music of the church in its assemblies in community, and our individual songs in concert with all the rest. The music of praise is also worth doing well. ■■

Footnotes

1 See also the duplicate passage in 1 Chronicles 13:8, the only difference being that "song" is singular rather than plural.

2 Martin Luther, "Preface to the Baptist Hymnal, 1545," *Luther's Works*, Volume 53, *Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 333.

3 Barth encodes here the bane and blessing of the Reformed position. The bane is the difficulty of understanding the value of human habit, a knee-jerk reaction against catholicity, and a sectarian tendency; the blessing is the reminder that the church is always in need of reformation, always reforming, and that each new generation needs to embrace the faith with renewed vitality.

4 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV, Part Three, Second Half, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1962), pp. 866-867.

5 Patrick Miller, "The Psalms as Praise and Poetry," *The Hymn* 40:4 (October 1989), 13.

教会音乐的核心

敬拜 ~ 祈祷 ~ 宣告 ~ 讲述 ~ 恩赐

保罗·韦斯特迈尔 著 / 陈小岗 中文翻译

明尼苏达州圣保罗路德神学院圣乐系的名誉教授，兼任合唱指挥，和在诺斯菲尔德的圣奥拉夫学院指导圣乐硕士学位的课程。他也是美国路德派福音教会的一位在职牧师。

第一章（上）

教会音乐之敬拜

大卫和以色列全家在耶和華面前用各种松木制造的乐器，就是用琴、瑟、鼓、钹、锣，作乐跳舞。

撒母耳记下六：5

教会的音乐是关乎对上帝的赞美。大卫和以色列的子民抬着上帝的约柜，感觉上帝与他们同在，并在耶和華面前作乐欢喜，唱诗歌赞美上帝。这样的情景除了在《撒母耳记下》中有类似的描写¹，也贯穿于整本圣经的叙述，特别是在《诗篇》中最为明显：

“你们要向耶和華唱新歌”

（诗篇九十八）；

“欢唱着到他的面前”

（诗篇一百）；

“凡有气息的应当赞美神”

（诗篇一百五十）。

这些命令确切地指出了整本圣经中隐含的主题：我们要赞美上帝，而音乐就是表达这敬拜赞美的主要工

具之一。

为什么这么说呢？大卫和以色列子民感受到上帝在他们中间，并因此在耶和華面前作乐欢喜。正如马丁·路德(Martin Luther)从教会特有的基督学观点的角度解释道，

…上帝借着祂的爱子，把我们从过犯、死亡和恶魔中拯救出来，使我们的思想和心灵欢喜快乐。深信这真理的人不可能默然不语，…必欢喜而歌唱…²

所以上帝向我们彰显祂的慈爱，我们以赞美的诗歌来回应祂。

但是如果我们感觉不到神和祂的慈爱与我们同在呢？如果我们无法理

“音乐在形式上是赞美的核心，也是联系教会各肢体的管道。”

解上帝为我们做了什么，或者更糟糕的是，我们认为上帝已经把我们交在敌人的手里？我们不是第一个陷入这窘境的人。“我的神，我的神，你为什么离弃我？”诗篇二十二篇的诗人哭诉说，“你为什么不应允我？你是圣洁的，虽然我是一个虫子，是你使我从母腹中出来的。我自出母胎，就被交托给你。我好象水被倾倒出去，恶党环绕我。求你不要远离我。”然而在这场噩梦之中，诗人突然毫无征兆地改变语气说：“你拯救了我，我要赞美你”。

诚然，诗篇二十二讲述了一种在困境中赞美神的经历。倘若我们的困境比诗篇二十二的还糟呢？若是像诗篇八十八所描写的那样呢？我们向上帝哀求，饱经患难，无助，同伴都远离我们，神的烈怒把我们淹没，黑暗成了我们唯一的知己。而且这里并没有像诗篇二十二那样转向赞美的情节。这诗篇的结尾就是我们已被恐惧所击败，没有出路了。该怎么办呢？诗篇八十九是否就是诗篇八十八的回应呢？“我要永远歌唱耶和华的慈爱，世世代代用口传扬你的信实。”诗篇一开始就用赞美来回应吗？我们能在任何处境

中唱诗赞美上帝的信实吗？就算我们身处黑暗的深渊？

或着以上诸多的问题本身就是不正确的？问题是否要从更广义的视角来省察？我们的自身感受，欢欣或是恐惧，在上帝面前是否太狭隘？难道我们感受的强度，不管是好是坏，可以成为我们衡量赞美的尺度？赞美上帝的本质可否与我们的自身感受分割开来吗？教会的任务不就是召集会众一同敬拜上帝吗？我们尽可能地以个体的身份参与群体的敬拜。这就是为什么经文不仅说大卫在耶和華面前作乐欢喜，而是大卫和以色列全家都这样做了吗？

改革宗神学家卡尔·巴特(Karl Barth)的著作中并不特别强调赞美的音乐表达，反而着重于对上帝赞美的集体性。他甚至将教会赞美诗歌视为基督教会的标志。

对上帝的赞美是群众性的，大家彼此联系彼此服事，具体表现在同声歌唱的活动中。虽然基督教团体并不是一个合唱社团，但它的特征就是歌唱，却又不同于音乐会的演唱。基督教的歌唱是发自内心的，必然自发的歌唱。歌唱

是人类最高形式的表达模式，以至于“人的歌声”成了基督教团体的一个专属事工...

我们可以很有信心地说，没有歌唱的团体就不可能属于基督教。那些死气沉沉的敬拜，或者固守成规没有新意的歌词，甚至歌唱中满是叹息、羞愧、唱词含糊不清的聚会，难免会让人觉得教会的事工没有明确的方向，自然不会在人群中作美好的见证³。在这种情况下，我们应该祈祷，求神把歌唱的恩赐丰富降在这些群体当中，并使肢体一同受益。在唱歌中的敬拜赞美是教会事工不可或缺的基本形式之一⁴。

但也有在特殊的情况下，整个群体都无法歌唱的时候。在第二次世界大战中的“大屠杀”时期，整个犹太民族的群体被压制了，人民和社群都陷入沉默中。然而，对上帝的赞美却没有中断，在别的地方，上帝的子民继续用诗歌纪念他们同胞的苦楚。

敬拜赞美的范围可以更为广泛。诗篇说：“凡有气息的都要赞美耶和

华”。“凡有气息的”指的是全体受造之物。赞美的歌声在创造起初就存在了，上帝的子民与其他受造之物一同唱歌赞美神。当大地根基被奠定的日子，那时晨星一起歌唱，神的众子也都欢呼（约伯记三十八：4-7）。我们可以说，对上帝的赞美是受造万物的责任，尽管我们处在逆境中，或是深深的绝望中，都有人与我们一同赞美神。赞美的歌声不会因为我们个人的处境而中断。

赞美三位一体的真神，其中蕴涵了极深的奥秘。那些在表面上对赞美上帝和赞美音乐的夸夸其谈，比起来就显得非常的肤浅和愚昧。无论如何，教会的赞美都不能是轻佻的。敬拜赞美是教会存在的一个重要部分，也是我们作为基督肢体的一部分，关乎上帝和整个宇宙。这不是可有可无的附加品，不是在服装上缝上的补丁。敬拜赞美是整个创造的一部分，是受造万物所固有的。

这不仅是从一开始就存在于受造万物的实质形体中，也贯穿于整个历史长河，从起初直到末了。正如

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帕特里克·米勒 (Patrick Miller) 所说的那样，赞美上帝就是全体受造物的发展趋向⁵。诗篇中提到的“凡有气息的都要赞美耶和华”不仅仅是一种修辞手段，也是一个曾被预言的现实，更要在全宇宙中延续下

去。至少可以说，赞美上帝不是小事，因此值得我们认真去做。音乐在形式上是赞美的核心，也是联系教会各肢体的管道。赞美的音乐也值得我们认真去做。■

附注-参考第10页

莫等闲、 白了少年头

乐融融

作者：郑棣声

作者曾为香港浸信会神学院教会音乐系主任

壮志豪情 分秒必争

“怒发冲冠、凭栏处、潇潇雨歇、抬望眼、仰天长啸、壮怀激烈、三十功名尘与土、八千里路云和月、莫等闲、白了少年头、空悲切……驾长车……朝天阙。”岳飞的满江红确是一首既充满豪情壮志，又富于浪漫情怀的佳作。词中除了展现出作词者那种“精忠报国”的精神外，对于“时间观”亦予人一种非比寻常的感觉。“三十功名尘与土”固然指出了人一生的岁月与事业的关系，八千里路云和月何尝不也是作者藉路程的长短，天地间自然现象的变幻来表达他披星载月，转载千里的那种分秒必争的心情！而“莫等闲，白了少年头，空悲切”更显出作者对人生苦短，必须珍惜时光的重视。

时空压缩 迎见神国

虽然时代背景不同，岳飞的心理状态和精神意识和现今的人也绝不一样，但现代人在面对历史的转变时刻里，大概也能略略体会岳飞那种“时间不多了”的心情。在都市发展同是面临人多地少的缘故，产生空间挤避感，引发“时间压缩”感，这种感觉，对不少现代人来说，正与日俱增。

当这种“时间压缩”感越来越强烈的时候，我们会有何反映呢？我想，大致离不开下面几种反应吧！一是走为上着。港人移民潮就是最明显的例证，避之则吉嘛！一是手足无措。走不了的，对现状不安，为未来焦虑。怎么办呢？这就是所谓“信心危机”了。在惶惶不可终

日的情况下，唯有“做一日和尚撞一日钟”吧！较为现实的，就“今朝有‘银’今朝‘刮’”啦！悲观者则在长嗟短叹的岁月中，结果是“白了少年头，空悲切。”最积极的反应，最好莫如及摘录岳飞满江红中的“莫等闲……驾长车……朝天阙”了。例如，九七年对港人是十分重要的。我们既不能“等闲”视之，就需采取积极行动——驾长车，作好种种准备，克服各种困难，以一个欢欣的心情迎见神国的降临——朝天阙。

象征意义 问心无愧

对我来说，岳飞的满江红处处都充满着基督教的象征意义，就基督徒的角度看来，“时间压缩”感，不在乎九七，乃在乎神国降临的日子。基督徒最可悲的错误，就是以为天国降临乃“来日方长”之事。焉知，基督不会在今天或是明天就来呢？保罗可不是也曾鼓励我们要珍惜少年时么！他不是如此劝勉提摩太说：“不可叫人小看你年轻”么！主耶稣岂不是也曾警戒我们，应当“趁着白日，多作神的工”！莫等闲，白了少年头啊！

岳飞清楚认识自己的历史责任；也切实地履行了他的历史责任。他驾着长车，完成他所当做和所能做的一切。虽然，终被奸人所害，但他能够问心无愧地“朝天阙”。保罗岂也曾说过：“那美好的仗我已经打过了，当跑的路我已经跑尽

了，所信的道我已经守住了。从此以后，有公义的冠冕为我存留。”身处香港的基督徒，面对所谓九七的历史时刻，为天国的原故，又做了些什么呢？年青的基督徒们，你们心灵的耳朵有听到神以微小的声音对你们说话呢？



传道观念 音乐传道

华人基督教会对所谓“专职”或“全时间”事奉的观念，过往，一向都是非常狭隘的。所谓奉献作“传道”的，几乎等同于奉献作“讲道”的。究竟“传”与“讲”是否能划上一个等号呢？“讲道”是否就等于“传道”呢？今天的华人教会在“传”福音的观念上已有更深广的认识了。尤其在传媒十分发达的先进都市里，更明白到，传道绝不只局限于“讲”道一途。保罗也多方告诉我们，造就教会的属灵恩赐中，除了作先知讲道的恩赐外，音乐也是可以造就教会的属灵恩赐之一。事实上，在旧约时代中，以音乐事奉为终身职志者，也是被列在“先知”的行列中的。

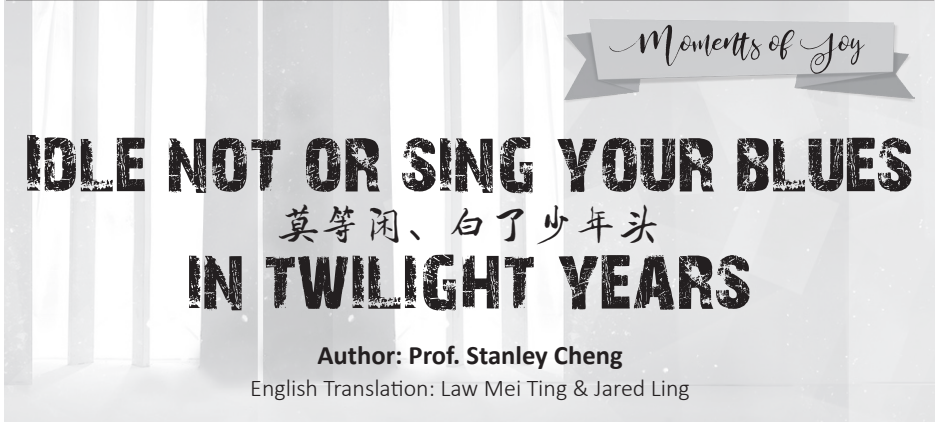
（见历上廿五：一至五节）

今天，神学院所训练的“传道人”也再不是仅仅限于有“讲道”恩赐的信徒，有音乐恩赐的，神一样要使用。虽然，神学院在训练有音乐恩赐的传道人的事工上，起步较

迟，但却可以肯定，是一项进步。相信，今天教会不少年青的基督徒是有音乐恩赐的。你可有听到过主对你作出呼召吗？时间无多了，起来响应吧！

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Grand aspirations yet making every minute count

“My wrath bristles through my helmet, the rain stops as I stand by the rail; I look up towards the sky and let out a passionate roar.

At the age of thirty, my deeds are nothing but dust, the journey has taken me over eight thousand miles. Do not idle, for young men will grow old in regret.

The humiliation of Jingkang still awaits avenging; how can it be laid to rest? We shall ride our chariots through the Helan Pass ...”

The **Melody of a River of Blossoms** written by Yue Fei is a brilliant piece of artwork filled with great ambition and romanticism. Yue Fei not only displayed utmost loyalty spirit in serving the country, he also inspired people towards better “time

management”. *“At the age of thirty, my deeds are nothing but dust”* establishes a connection between a person’s life and career. Likewise, the writer expressly described the length of the journey he has taken—over eight thousand miles—together with the changes in natural phenomena to portray the arduous journey as he races against time. Whereas, *“Do not sit in idle, for young men will grow old in regret”* highlights the importance of cherishing the time given to us as life is short.

Time Compression & receiving the Kingdom of God

Contrary to the historical entrée above, there is a difference to be had when it comes to our emotions and spiritual awareness vis-à-vis Yue Fei’s. However, when it comes to facing changes; people today probably would identify with Yue

Fei's proclamation that "time is running out". As cities develop and living spaces become limited and countries become overpopulated, city dwellers are feeling more claustrophobic. A fine example would be the transfer of sovereignty in Hong Kong from the British to the Chinese government in 1997 which resulted in the increasing claustrophobia. When this feeling of "time compression" gets intensified, how would we react? I suppose it would probably not rule out a few possibilities! The first reaction is to leave. Migration is the one obvious example. For those who are unable to leave yet are uncomfortable with the situation can only worry about the future. What do we do? This is called the crisis of faith. Living in a fearful environment, the only solution is doing enough to get by each day. For those who are realistic, they will grab hold of golden opportunities. The pessimistic ones are those who will just live by each day, and be filled with regret when they grow old. The optimist mirrors what Yue Fei describes in his poetry. For instance, the 1997 event has undoubtedly revealed its importance to Hong Kong people. At the same time, we cannot just "wait", but we need to take more initiative -- riding chariots, preparing to overcome any challenges, and to be joyful to welcome the kingdom of God—Heaven.

Symbolism & clear conscience

To me, as a Christian, every phrase of Yue Fei's *The Melody of a River of Blossoms* is filled with significance. From a Christian point of view, "time of compression" does not relate to the 1997 incident, but relates to the arrival of God's kingdom. Yet, the tragic part of being a Christian is that we often presume the arrival of

God's Kingdom is still "faraway". How is one to know Jesus Christ will be here today, or even tomorrow? Even Paul often encourages us to cherish our time when we are young! He also encouraged Timothy "Do not look down on us for we are young!" Furthermore, God has also reminded us that we should "seize the day and do God's work", and not regret our idleness in our old age.

Yue Fei clearly understands his responsibilities; and actively carries them out. He rides on a chariot, to complete his tasks. Despite getting framed by villains, he has a clear conscience and is not fearful of facing "heaven". Paul declared that: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day." As a Christian living in Hong Kong, and having to reconcile the event of 1997, have we asked ourselves what have we done for God's Kingdom? To the Youths, have you heard God's small voice speaking to you?

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The mindset of a Preacher & Music Preacher

The Chinese churches' of yesteryears had a narrow definition of "profession" or "full time" Christian ministry. Often,

one who has dedicated to be an “evangelist” seem to be understood as one who is dedicated to “preach”. Does “evangelising” equate to “preaching” only, hence making “preaching” evangelism? Chinese Churches today have a broader understanding of “preaching” the gospels. Especially in developed cities with advanced media, it is insufficient to present the gospel only through speech. On many occasions, the apostle Paul has told us that there are many kinds of spiritual gifts that can build the church. Besides the gift of preaching, music is also one of them. In fact, in the Old Testament

days, those who aspire to serve with music in their lifetime were often associated with the league of “prophets”. The pastoral trainings in the seminaries today is not limited to Christians with the gift of preaching only, they include those with the gift in music as well. God treats them equally. Seminaries may have had a late start in training evangelist gifted in music, but it is better than not having any. I believe, in today’s churches, there are many youths who possess spiritual gift in music. Do you ever hear God’s calling? Time is running out, let’s respond to His calling! ■■

The author was formerly the director in-charge of Church Music at Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary Original Chinese version © Chinese Baptist Press (International) Ltd. Translation by permission.

HOS 行政同工消息

News

感谢前行政助理(部份时间)，邓咏裳姐妹，7年来的忠心服事。她曾负责团内部行政运作，处理音乐会与课程相关事务，并协助产品主管处理货物和零售事宜。咏裳姐妹在今年4月尾请辞后便加入圣乐社职员会，成为此届的产品主管。感谢主，她愿意使用过去行政工作所累积的宝贵经验，继续在这方面协助圣乐社。今年5月，圣乐社欢迎新的行政助理(部份时间)，姚美廷姐妹，加入HOS的大家庭，与职员及众团员一同在圣乐领域中一同学习与服事！

We wish to thank Ms Michelle Tang, former HOS Part-time Admin Assistant, for her faithful service in the past 7 years. She has handled the internal administration and operations, concert and music courses related scopes as well as assisted the Product Manager in sales and stocks handling. Michelle left her position this April and was subsequently elected as the new Product Manager in the HOS Executive Committee. We thank God for her willingness to harness the wealth of experience in product management and continue to serve in this aspect. At the same time, we welcome Ms Law Mei Ting, who joined the HOS family as our new Part-time Admin Assistant in May this year. We look forward to learning and serving the Lord together you in the Church music ministry!

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