GATE School o	Reach Resource Reform	
<u>Module</u>	: Praise and Worship	
<u>Session</u>	: Producing New Songs For Every Season Part 1	Cy
Focus	: Scriptural Songwriting Principles	Word to the World

There are many songs sung within the context of the church are not reflective of the truth of the present Word that is proceeding from God. There is a need for new songs, which are representative of the current demand and emphasis of God both in terms of what He is accentuating through His Word, and also what His Will intends to accomplish.

There is a huge disparity between songs sung, and Word preached. Not all, but many of the songs we sing globally, fail to capture the essence and profundity of what God is presently saying and doing. Many present songs do not embody and highlight the specific aspects of God's person or features of His purpose, thereby reducing the song element in our corporate journey to an ineffective role where it did not significantly facilitate the distribution and reception of the most current issues in the heart of God for the global church.

Songs are a powerful medium through which the Word or will of God may be transmitted. Songs feature as a core element of God's people in the Old Covenant. Song content must be relevant to the specific emphasis of the Lord in that given season of the church globally, and/or of your church community locally. A well-written song that has great impact will linger on in the mind of a person for decades.

<u>**Two preconditions**</u> for relevant singing, and thus by implication for songwriting also exist, viz. being filled with the Spirit and having a rich deposit of the word within you.

- **Eph. 5:18-20** And do not be drunk with wine , for that is dissipation, **but be filled with the Spirit**, speaking to **one another** in **psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**, singing and making melody with your heart **to the Lord**; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;
- <u>Col. 3:16</u> Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another <u>with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs</u>, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Worship expressions and songwriting in particular must be inspired by the present truth of the Word.

John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

The Word of God is the ultimate expression of truth. God and His Word are one, so the 'Word made flesh' is 'truth' embodied (see John 1:14). If we worship God, the Truth (John 14:6), our worship of Him must be in accordance with His revealed truth. This refers to worshipping God acceptably as is revealed

by the Word. Also, it embraces worship that is birthed out from an accurate, current and most recent revelation from the Word of God. The Greek word '<u>aletheia', for 'truth'</u> also implies the <u>absence of</u> <u>error. An inaccurate understanding of God's Word</u> invalidates any worship expression.

Matthew 15:7-9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men

The Pharisees and Scribes misinterpreted and thus misrepresented Biblical truth and substituted it for man-made precepts. Jesus classified their worship as 'vain'. What made their worship vain? Their approach to and understanding of the Scriptures. Your comprehension and understanding of Biblical truth has much to do with the validation of your worship. This is an absolutely serious thought. One's worship could be rendered as vain in terms of Heavens evaluation of it, if the worshipper has failed to decode and apply the truth of the Scriptures with precision.

No doubt, some Pharisees and Scribes were sincere in their expressions of worship, yet their worship was in vain. Sincerity is not enough. Biblical accuracy is the greater criteria for worshipping in truth. This is why the present reformation spearheaded by apostolic ministry is so vital. It includes a redress of commonly held positions of belief and understanding of the Scriptures. By God's grace, the general understanding of the Scriptures is being corrected and upgraded. This process is crucial for restoring validity, credibility and effect to worship and expressions of worship. As previously indicated, the Greek word **'maten'** translated as **'vain' = groundless, invalid, objectless, useless, futile, empty, worthless**. Worship based upon an inaccurate body of teaching, however sincere the worshipper, is vain - it is useless, groundless, empty - i.e. it has no effect in the supernatural realm - it does not register in the Heavens - it has no force - no impact - no significance - is of no consequence.

This holds true not only in terms of an accurate Scriptural understanding of worship and worshipful expressions, but also for your general understanding of the 'logos'.

An obsolete understanding of God's Word invalidates any worship expression.

We must always seek to remain relevant and current in terms of our understanding of 'present truth' (2 Peter 1: 12), i.e. the truth that is presently coming from God to us. Nuggets of truth are progressively restored to the Church through time – line upon line and precept upon precept. Each truth leads us to greater accuracy in spiritual things and greater power in our execution of the will of the Lord. Each truth is designed to bring us into greater spiritual impact in the earth and a more deeper experience of worship, both in lifestyle and expression. Holding on to and camping at a previously revealed truth and failing to embrace a new present truth has the effect of limiting the impact and significance of your worship.

You cannot separate 'Word' and 'Worship' - they belong indissolubly together. Because worship is concerned with a person of God, the Word (Truth) of God which portrays and reveals God, will affect your worship of God. What you see of God in the Scripture will affect the level at which you worship Him. <u>A truth</u> from the Word restored to your understanding must always result in the worship of <u>THE Truth</u>, Jesus, the Son of God - the Eternal Word.

After a long period of captivity, the captives returned from Babylon; and Nehemiah led the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. In rebuilding the spiritual stature of Israel, Ezra reads and teaches from the Book of the Law – Nehemiah 8:1-8. In response to understanding what was read and taught, the people respond with intense worship (see verse 6). In some places, worship is poor or ineffectual because the teaching of the Word is poor. But where the Word of God is accurately taught and the most current revelation released from the heavens is captured, communicated, assimilated and embodied, then the worship offered as a lifestyle and in expression is meaningful, acceptable and significantly effectual.

Psalm 138:4,5All the kings of the earth will give thanks to You, O LORD, When they have
heard the words of Your mouth. And they will sing of the ways of the LORD,
For great is the glory of the LORD.

Note here that thanks (which could be viewed as a specific level of worship) is given to God by kings only after they hear the words of His mouth. The result of this is that the 'ways' of the Lord become the theme of their songs. God's Word makes known God's Ways. If the 'content' of your worship is not kept updated with 'proceeding' revelation of the Word that makes known the 'ways' of the Lord, then rulers (kings) will not respond in thanks to the Lord. Worship as we know it has not had that kind of effect upon the world because the 'content' of worship has been deficient. When this is restored, it will be evidenced in our songs and will impact governments and rulers. The 'works' of God has long been the focal point of many songs. We need to transition more strongly into an emphasis on the 'ways' of God in our songs.

The very nature of the Word itself must inspire worship. The Psalmist who wrote Psalm 119, extols the excellencies of God's Word. Jesus is the Word; He and His Word are one. He has exalted His Word above His name, or 'along with His name' as the original Hebrew suggests. His 'name' speaks of His nature, essence, character and being. His Word amplifies His Name – who He is. Worship Him in Truth. Truth is not a doctrine – it is a person. Jesus is Truth. His Word and His Person are one. Worship the Truth, in truth, according to the revealed truth through the Word, which is truth.

Psalm 119:42,62,160 and 164 indicate how a love for God's Word inspires praise and worship.

It is my opinion that the Word, both the Logos and the Rhema, should be the greatest inspiration to and for outward expressions of praise and worship. The Word is more than words or commandments; the Word, like 'Truth', is a person – Jesus Christ. Both the established body of truth within the logos and the specific current flow of present truth of the rhema must not just ignite and spur our worship, but it must fill the content of our worship. Thus worship will be relevant and highly effective in terms of accomplishing the will of the Lord for this hour.

Psa 119:54 Your STATUTES are my SONGS in the house of my pilgrimage. (nsab)

I set your instructions to music and sing them as I walk this pilgrim way. (message bible)

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Songs need to be Word-filled and Word-Centred if they are to fuel and accelerate our forward momentum (pilgrimage) in God. Too many songs today are WORD-less, and thus are devoid of power and substance and actually serve subtly act as a prohibiting factor to spiritual progression. What you sing, can either facilitate your growth in God, stagnate it, or cause it to retrogress.

Creation reveals the invisible attributes of God (see Romans 1 and Psalm 19). Some have worshipped creation rather than the Creator. An invention testifies to the genius and brilliance of its inventor. All of creation speaks of the utter magnificence, wisdom and greatness of God the Creator. All of the creation was framed or formed by the Word of God. Creation can inspire worship, but it must not be worshipped. Psalm 19 highlights the power of creation to declare the glory of the invisible God: verse 1 says, "THE heavens are telling of the glory of God and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands". In the middle of the Psalm (verse 7 to 10), the Psalmist then contrasts the exceeding power of the Word of God that transforms man, but in far greater measure since by the Word, creation existed.

Any manifestation of God can inspire us to worship Him, but all works of God result from a Word from God, and we must mature as a Church to esteeming His Word above His works, otherwise we will forever be dependent upon a work or manifestation from God to inspire our worship of God.

Always seek to be at the cutting edge of the proceeding Word of God to you privately as a person, and to the corporate Church globally so that your worship of God will be fuelled and sustained by that Word. Peter encourages us: "Be established in the present Truth", i.e. the truth that is presently coming to you. (1 Pet. 1:12). Worship God IN TRUTH.

As already indicated, TRUTH is essentially a person. God is TRUTH. We worship in TRUTH. God is Spirit. We worship in the exact same substance that our God is, viz. SPIRIT and TRUTH.

All worship must be 'in truth' (John 4:24). An aspect of worshipping 'in truth' includes worshipping God according to a particular revelation of Himself as it is made known to the worshipper. Worshipping 'in truth' according to this interpretation will prevent worship from becoming 'stale' and irrelevant. Worship must always embrace the most current revelation of God to the worshipper individually or to the Church corporately. Since singing is the most common expression of praise and worship, it therefore is imperative that praise and worship songs carry within them a relevance of who God is and what He is doing currently or desires to do in the lives of his people or in the world generally. We often quote and even sing "The LORD is my strength and MY SONG" (Ex. 15:3). Well, the LORD is continually and progressively revealing aspects of His nature and His purposes, and hence the songs we write must seek to capture this ever changing dynamic.

God is raising up a new breed of songwriters, whose songs are the direct products of an intimate relationship with Him and an ever increasing awareness of His increasingly unfolding character and will. The urge to write new songs must be ignited by this, and not just out of a desire to have a new song simply to add to our already large repertoire of songs globally. The tension between the 'timely' and the 'timeless' must be balanced effectively. Be 'timely' in producing songs for the specific season or emphasis of God in which you live and function, yet embrace the 'timeless' unchanging divine principles that govern life and function.

Exodus 15:1,2 THEN Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and said, "I will sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted; The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea. "The LORD is my strength and song, And <u>He has become my salvation</u>; This is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will extol Him.

Moses pens a song of praise to the Lord after He delivered Israel from the pursuing Egyptians, opening a way through the Red Sea, allowing them to walk through on dry ground and finally drowning the Egyptian riders and their horses. The third line of this powerful song states a very profound truth, viz.,

"The Lord is my STRENGTH and my SONG and He is become my SALVATION." (emphasis mine)

When God is your strength and song, He then **BECOMES** your salvation. God's saving, delivering power becomes the benefit of those who have made God their strength and song. This salvation is not primarily a reference to salvation from sins, but the Hebrew noun, yesha' = safety or ease. The root word yasha' (save) means "to remove or seek to remove someone from a burden, oppression, or danger of defeat. It highlights the military and judicial powers in God.

Psalm 50:23 He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; And to him who orders his way aright <u>I shall show the salvation of God</u>."

Our singing to God, who is our Song, brings God's saving power to manifestation, removing us from a burden, an oppression, the threat of some danger, or the possibility of defeat. God's military might as a God of War, and his righteous judicial capacity to enforce His will or decree are brought to light within the context of our singing. Tehillah praise enthrones God as a judge (see Ps. 22:3), who acts on our behalf releasing His power and might in our situations that His ultimate will be accomplished and sustained.

Isaiah 51 paints the picture of a restored Zion. Verse 3 highlights the type of song that emerges this context:

Isaiah 51:3 Indeed, the Lord will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the Lord; Joy and gladness will be found in her, Thanksgiving and <u>sound of a melody</u>.

Melody = zimrah = music and song. This word is used in (Ex. 15:2; Ps. 118:14; Isa. 12:2), where is is used as a metaphor for GOD HIMSELF – "The Lord is my Strength and my Song (zimrah). In other words, the Lord Himself – his nature, essence character and glory must characterize the nature of our songs. When this is so, the purposes and intention of the Lord are enacted.

NEW SEASON - NEW SONG

ISAIAH 42:9-11

- "Behold, <u>the former things have come to pass</u>, Now <u>I declare new thing</u>s; Before they spring forth <u>I proclaim them to you</u>."
- 10 **Sing to the Lord** <u>a new song</u>, Sing His praise from the end of the earth! You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it. You islands, and those who dwell on them.
- 11 Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voices, The settlements where Kedar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing aloud, Let them shout for joy from the tops of the mountains.

[See also Isaiah 43:19; 47:13; 48:6]

Note the sense of 'progression in this verse, viz.

- 1. Certain things have been finalised and have come to pass (former things)
- 2. God is announcing and declaring NEW THINGS
- 3. God then proclaims them specifically to us before they spring forth.
- 4. We are to sing a NEW SONG in reference to the NEW THING as a precursor forerunner of it before it is done.

Here, God declares that He will do or declare 'new things', then immediately in the next verse He instructs to sing a new song. In this context, the new song is the precursor to the new thing that God is going to do. This highlights the prophetic nature of this type of singing, which essentially functions as a kind of 'preparer of the way' of the Lord to do the new thing declared. Note the verses above, God says, 'before they spring forth', I proclaim them to you. The revelation of the new to us that is to be done by God that we will now sing of is a vital part of the prophetic process to get the thing accomplished. This places a new level of seriousness and accountability upon singers and musicians. The ability to engage the heavens and discern the present prophetic emphasis of the Lord in His dealings with the church you serve, the church at large or the world in general, is a vital factor of the eligibility to serve at this level.

Most times, the music team will simply have to be connected accurately with the emphasis and grace that flows from their spiritual father/ leader, who is functioning with accuracy and who is in touch with 'present truth' by virtue of his connection to authentic apostolic-prophetic grace..

"Be careful not to produce another golden calf in your attempt to produce a new song. A fundamental pre-requisite for songwriters is to be connected to the spirit of the 'sent one' – as in your spiritual father or set man and/or the apostolic grace from which you draw spiritual nourishment and covering. Songwriters must write in terms of the seed within their spiritual fathers." (Thamo Naidoo)

Because of the wide appeal that music and song has, it becomes a powerful tool to affect and impact large groups of people very quickly. Song has the capacity not only to transmit the very intent or emphasis of the Lord, but to do so in a way that clarifies and removes ignorance and ambiguity.

Psalm 49:1-4HEAR this, all peoples; Give ear, all inhabitants of the world, Both low and high,
Rich and poor together. My mouth will speak wisdom, and the meditation of my
heart will be understanding. I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will express my
riddle on the harp.

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KJV I will incline mine ear to a parable: **I will open my dark saying upon the harp**.)

The Hebrew word translated 'riddle' or 'dark sayings' is 'chiydah' which means 'spiritual riddles, or perplexing sayings or questions, an enigmatic saying, a difficult proverb'. The Hebrew word translated 'open' is 'pathach', which means 'to loose or throw open wide'. The harp is symbolic of praise and worship, specifically musical expression of the same. This verse teaches that we able to throw wide open and loose an understanding of difficult spiritual sayings and mysteries in the context of song. Effective songs should have the capacity to unravel and unlock things that are closed and out of reach. Musicians and singers in particular must understand this truth and trust God that this dimension is evident in their musical expression of praise and worship to the Father. Anointed, biblically accurate and relevant songs set the atmosphere for greater penetration into the Word of God and more profound revelation of His will.

In a new season in God, songs must aptly portray the proceeding Word of the Lord in that season. This will release grace to accomplish the intent of the Lord embedded with His Word, since through song, divine creative power is brought to the fore. Within the context of the creation, the sons of God, in spirit, sang. God's unlimited creative ability was released within the context of singing.

Job 38:4-7 Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding, Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? "On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

If God is going to creatively incarnate a fresh emphasis of His Word in a specific way in each season, then our songs must be commensurate with that which He wants to do or reveal. Anointed, Spirit inspired, Word-centred songs with an apostolic-prophetic frequency sets forth the environment for the creativity of God to be released in a powerful way.

SING UNTO THE LORD A NEW SONG

Many times we are instructed to sing a new song. The Greek word translated as 'new' is <u>'kainos'</u> and denotes that which is **unaccustomed or unused**, **not "new" in time**, **recent**, **(neos)**; but "new" as **to form**, **character or quality**, **of different nature from what is contrasted as old** (Vines). If 'new' essentially relates to form and quality and not recency in time, we could logically conclude that a song written yesterday or today might not necessarily be a 'new' song in a biblical sense. It could be new - "neos", but not new - "kainos". A new song may release the intent of God for that specific hour or season.

On another level, in a prophetic sense, people sometimes cannot relate to the new song immediately because it may speak of things still to come. The song actually is given as a kind of 'preparer of the way' – conditioning the hearts and minds of God's people to receive what God is yet to do among them.

Two New Testament references to new songs are ...

- **Rev. 5:9,10** And they <u>sang a new song</u>, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. "You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."
- **Rev. 14:3** And they <u>sang a new song</u> before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and **no one could learn the song except** the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.

A select group of individuals could only sing the 'new' song of Revelation 14:3. Their unique experiences and state of being qualified them to sing the new song. Contextually, this is an Apostolic company in Zion (the perfected Church) who exemplify the nature, character and function of the Lamb of God This scenario gives us further insight to 'new songs'. Not everyone can sing the new song. Everyone could very well vocalise the lyrics and sing in tune, but not everyone can enter experientially and subjectively into the truth of the new song and consequently reap the benefits of it.

The Greek word translated 'learn' is 'manthano', which means to be increased in knowledge – so as to walk differently. Learning a biblical new song is entering into a new level of obedient and overcoming lifestyle by virtue of fresh revelation of the person of Christ that has been unveiled. The new song must of necessity have this effect.

From a New Testament perspective, we define 'NEW' as not something recent in time, but qualitatively fresh, in that it ...

- captures recent revelations of the character/person of God,
- effectively decodes and communicates a scriptural principle or value currently released to the Body of Christ,
- sounds forth specific prophetic aspects of God's purpose or intent still yet to or about to be fulfilled,
- has the effect of activating various spiritual dynamics within God's broad purposes relative to a
 group of people in some sphere, be it a specific jurisdiction, household, geographical area of
 varying sizes (community, city, province, nation/country, the world). In this regard, as with a
 Word preached or taught, the new song might be applicable to a specific group, or might be so
 strategic to the unfolding and acceleration of God's will, that it will be applicable to the entire
 world.

We continue to explore the range of applications that a 'NEW' song might incorporate from a biblical perspective, especially from an Old Testament vantage point.

The Psalmist uses the phrase "a new song" in the following sense: a new saving act of God has occurred and a song responding to that act celebrates it. Six times in the Book of Psalms, we are encouraged to sing a 'new song' unto the Lord. We will consider these briefly to further understand the concept of 'new song'.

1) <u>Ps.33:3,4</u> Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy For the word of the Lord is upright, And all His work is done in faithfulness.

Psalm 33 calls upon us to praise God, our Preserver, with a new song because His word is upright/just and all His deeds are done in truth and faithfulness. The integrity and rectitude of God's Word and the characteristic of faithfulness attendant with how He performs His work is the spur to write new songs.

2) <u>Ps.40:3</u> : He put a <u>new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God;</u> Many will see and fear And will trust in the LORD.

Psalm 40:1-2 celebrates the fact that God hears our cry for help, delivering us from destruction and causing us to stand secure. From this context, He places the new song in our mouths. In this Psalm, the new song, contextually, is defined as a 'song of praise', which has the effect of causing spiritual, SIGHT - as indicated by the word 'see'. The new rhema-word-based song has the power of removing spiritual blindness. The new sight that the new song brings results in heighted fear of and trust in the Lord, i.e. the reverential disposition and the faith capacity of God's people are elevated to new levels. Note also, that the sphere of impact of the song is widespread as denoted by the words 'MANY'.

This song could be evangelistic or simply encouraging or empowering.

3)	Ps.96:1	:	SING to the LORD a new song ; Sing to the LORD, all the earth.
4)	Ps.98:1	:	O sing to the Lord a new song , For He has done wonderful
			things

Psalm 96 and 98 invites us to sing a new song TO THE LORD in the light of the wonderful things that God has done. The song's focus is the LORD and the participants in singing the song is "all the earth" – both psalms have the 'nations' as their focus.

Also, the 'new song' is a powerful medium of documenting and recording the many great things performed by the Lord. After God delivered Israel through the Red Sea, drowning the Egyptian army, Moses penned a song to commemorate that event so that the generations following would forever have an understanding of the wonderful deliverance God brought them. The new song then becomes a means to recall and recount the good dealings of God with His children.

<u>Aside</u>: Herein is also a caution: Do not discard and disdain 'older songs', but cherish them because some of them represent an invaluable resource highlighting the deeds of God, or a profound revelation or truth once revealed at some point in time. In our bid to remain 'current and relevant ' in our songwriting, remember we are building upon good songs that have gone before. Maintain a healthy balance between the 'timeless' and the 'timely'. Note the following verse:

Matt 13:52 And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things <u>new and old."</u>

Similarly, we too must use songs both old and current. An 'old' song could be a biblical 'new' song for a specific context or situation. 'Old' does not necessarily or always imply 'irrelevant' or 'obsolete'.

5) Ps.144:9 I will sing a new song to You, O God; Upon a harp of ten strings I • will sing praises ...

Psalm 144 is a plea by David for God to rescue him from the snare of his enemies. In the midst of this plea, he is resolved to 'sing a new song' to the Lord. In the heat of your greatest trial and affliction, there is something tremendously powerful about breaking forth into a new song of praise to God. This new song becomes a 'song of deliverance' (Psalm 32:8), which releases God's power and deliverance in your situation. The pressure and intensity of a satanic onslaught on your life and destiny can become a powerful impetus to write a new song to the Lord. Many of David's songs (Psalms) were composed within the context of calamity. Some the greatest praise and worship songs today were written during times of great difficulty or personal tragedy.

6) **Ps.149:1** : PRAISE the LORD! Sing to the LORD **a new song**, And His praise in the congregation of the godly ones.

Psalm 149 is an invocation to Israel (and us) to praise the Lord. The context of the song is within the assembly of the godly ones - i.e. sons of God. New songs have the capacity to incite and inspire us to worship. They bring a new sense of freshness and enthusiasm and can avoid our praise and worship from becoming dull and routine.

Some understand new songs only to be spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19-20) that one sings spontaneously under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. These are unrehearsed, impromptu songs either of praise to the Lord, or which contain prophetic elements in that God literally sings through the singer His 'now' word for the singer or for those present. Spiritual singing does encompass singing the new song in a biblical sense as I have explained. But the 'new song' need not necessarily only be a spiritual song as is generally understood. It could also be a song that you sit down to write in one sitting or even over several days or weeks as God directs you.

In conclusion, whether 'new' song is prophetic in terms of paving the way for God's future dealings with us, or whether it is in response to God's miraculous dealings with us, it contains a present emphasis or focus that He wishes to accentuate and bring attention to, because this becomes strategic in the facilitation for His will to prevail.

In our next session we will explore some practical guidelines to songwriting.

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