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ZUZANA VEVERKOVÁ

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ZUZANA VEVERKOVÁ

Katedra praktické teologie
Vedoucí práce: ThDr. Ladislav Beneš

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ČESTNÉ PROHLÁŠENÍ

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto písemnou bakalářskou práci s názvem Pěvecké sbory v životě církevního společenství napsala samostatně a výhradně s použitím citovaných pramenů. Souhlasím s tím, aby práce byla zpřístupněna veřejnosti ke studijním účelům.

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Anotace

Táto práca pojednáva o vývoji chorálnej hudby v kresťanských spoločenstvách. Čitateľovi poskytuje pohľad na jej vývoj v rôznych časových obdobiach, od čias Starej zmluvy cez intertestamentálne obdobie, Novú zmluvu, obdobie rannej cirkvi a historický vývoj od šiesteho storočia cez reformáciu až po dvadsiate storočie, kde sa buď sústreďí na jednotlivých prispievateľov do vývoja hudby tj. hudobných skladateľov, kráľov atď., alebo zachovanie špecifických artefaktov tzn. spisy. Tento vývoj potom berie do úvahy pri hodnotení postavenia hudby v týchto časových obdobiach a poukazuje na zmeny, ktoré nastali.

Ďalej sa zaujíma o úlohy Cirkvi a Speváckych zborov a plnenie týchto úloh a napokon predostiera časté problémy pri budovaní cirkevných hudobných programov a snaží sa poskytnúť čitateľovi určité riešenia ako sa týchto problémov zbaviť a využiť celý potenciál hudobných programov, ktorý môžu v našich cirkvách poskytnúť. Taktiež sa zameriava na výskyt chorálnej hudby a viery v sponímaných dobách a s pomocou použitej literatúry poskytuje podporné dôkazy k vytvorenej hypotéze. Viera a jej spojenie s chorálnou hudbou je v hlavnej úlohe tejto práce a venuje sa jej adekvátne množstvo pozornosti či už v ohľade na vývoj hudby, alebo na vnútrocirkevné problémy, ktorým čelia dnešné spoločenstvá.

Kľúčové slová: Chorálna hudba, vývoj, viera

Summary

This bachelor work is focused on development of choral music in Christian communities. It provides the reader with a perspective on its' evolution in different time periods from The Old Testament period through intertestamental period, New Testament, Early Church and historical development from the sixth century through reformation to the twentieth century, where it either focuses on individual contributors to music development (that is musical composers, kings etc.) or conservation of specific artifacts (files, records and writings). This development is then taken into account when evaluating position of music in these time periods and it mentions the occurrence of changes.

Next, the paper is interested in the roles of Church and choirs and in fulfillment of these roles. Finally it presents common problems when building a church music program and tries to provide the reader with some solutions to rid of those problems and use an entire potential of music programs that they offer. It also focuses on the presence of choral music and faith in the mentioned time periods and gives supporting evidence on the produced hypotheses with the help of used literature. Faith and its' connection to choral music is a protagonist of this work and is given a fair amount of attention in regard to either development of music or to the problems in the church, that today's communities face.

Keywords: Choral music, development, faith

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Introduction

In this introduction we would like to shortly acquaint the readers of this work with contents of following passages as well as goals we have set to achieve. Of course, an inevitable part will be the presentation of a hypothesis that we will try to defend. The title of our bachelor's thesis is "The life of choirs in the Christian communities" and since it covers and includes a very wide range of topics that can be talked about we had to specify it to some extent. Some of the presented material is gained from our own experience as we have been actively participating in church life and choral singing for eleven years but as in any kind of bachelor's thesis we have drew from the rich experiences of many talented and diligent authors of the books we have used as our bibliography.

Obviously, there are many different directions to go when talking about life of the choirs in the Christian communities. One could do a research on any particular problem or issue concerning this topic. We have decided to joint historical approach with the practical one because we have come to the opinion that it is necessary to look at the roles and signification of music in the history before one can understand them today. Similarly, it is very important not to neglect to focus on the development of music and appreciate all the hard work that has been done in this field.

Therefore, in our first chapter we will focus on Biblical foundations of worship and choral music. Since we will be talking about life in Christian communities, we consider it reasonable to spend some time paying our attention to the passages from both Old and New Testament and exploring the importance of music and the way it has been used in Biblical times. We will look at number of biblical passages such as Psalms or Chronicles and search for evidence of music, singing and choir and try to understand its' significance. Further, we will draw our inspiration from resources on times of Christian early church and

introduce an early development of music. Note that this topic in particular could be a subject of several years or even career's interest and striving; and therefore we could only offer a quick peak to serve our purposes.

In the second part of our work, we will proceed to focus on history of choral music and again present just a few highlights of the incredible journey such a topic could take us, in order to better understand the purpose that choral music fulfilled throughout the centuries, how it has changed and how this transformation could be of significance for us today. This understanding may shed light on the picture of music in our churches. Hence, we have tried to cover as much significant development as the extent of our work lets us and provided the reader with the widest possible insight of choral music evolution starting with Gregorian chant as soon as the 6th century working our way through reformation times to a talented choir conductor Roger Wagner and his contribution to choral music.

The last part of our writing could be called practical and tries to embrace the previous two chapters. We discuss the roles of the church and the choir within and outside of church today, following with a definition that helps us to outline the purpose of the discussion. Connecting the roles of choir and church, we will proceed to face common problems of music programs that are being built today. These problems somewhat uncover the world of music which have to be faced by our church musicians, choir conductors and/or leaders of the church. We will also present them to introduce some ill functioning processes, which may be a reality of some churches today. Further, we will provide some tips and solutions on how to build a quality music program. We will also try to paint a picture of choir experience and stress how rewarding it can be for the singers, congregation and other people involved sharing their faith.

The word 'faith' brings us to our hypothesis that we have chosen for our work and that is that: The choral music and its' experience is and was for the most

part closely connected to faith. We have picked this hypothesis and we will try to defend it for several reasons. The first one is our previous experience as a choral singer and a church member. Secondly, when surveying part of our literature used for writing our work, there seemed to be a frequent reference to faith when talking about music. Whether this connection is true and what it looks like will be part of our goal to find out. There can very possibly be none but we surely hope to find some. We hope the reader will enjoy looking on choral music from our perspective and will possibly be enriched by some of the thoughts presented in this paper.

Chapter one

Biblical foundations of worship and choral music

Music in the Old Testament

In this chapter of our work we would like to focus on biblical foundations which are crucial for further thinking about music and more specifically choir in the life of believing community or church. The reason is clear – choir and choral music is a special type of melodic expression in even more special environment when talking about Christian choirs – as it stands in the theme of our work. Therefore it is not sufficient enough just to sketch the evolutionary development of choral music and assume it somehow got incorporated to the Christian communities and their lives (either personal, collective or liturgical). In this next chapter we would like to stress that this type of music was deeply connected with faith of Jews and Christians. Hence we will begin with the image of choral music and music in general in the Old Testament and proceed to the pages of the New Testament. The method we have used to create this chapter was research with biblical software Bibleworks. We have considered and compared the results that came up from key words such as choir, music, singers etc. Then we evaluated their importance and worked with the contextual and semantic dimensions of the whole passages or exact terms and we have decided to publish some of our findings in following lines. We do not want to cut off the development as we see it and interrupt it unnaturally, thus we will add some facts that intrigued us in the era of early Christian church and church Fathers. Apparently, we will not only deal with the specific form of choral music, although it is our main focus, but we will try to generate the

whole picture about music and believing communities. We are aware of the fact that even this topic is wide enough for entire publication so we will stress what seemed important for our topic.

Music played an important role in the ancient Hebrew community. It would be very surprising if the Hebrew nation had been behind the times and not developed the functions of music typical for the ancient world and its great neighbors that used songs and compositions widely. Professor Waldo Selden Pratt admits in his old but still useful book about history of music that although our knowledge of Babylonian and Assyrian music is limited, it was “a stated element in religious and civic functions, companies of performers forming parts of great processions, and infer that it was under the care of priesthood.”¹ However, in the Hebrew community and its spiritual expression manifested by music, it was not only about pure copying of the customs in adjacent empires as Assyria, Egypt or Babylonia. The Old Testament is not always independent in its artistic tendencies (as any other work cannot be created in a vacuum), but still offers a great testimony of musical and even choral inclinations typical for ancient Jews. “The highly imaginative and poetical spirit of Hebrews, as illustrated in the eloquent epics and lyrics of the Bible, could not but seek vent in music, the art most intimately in accord with such a spirit and best adapted to satisfy it.”² We should now take a closer look at certain Old Testament passages that do not only demonstrate the role of (choral) music, but could also serve as an inspiration for chants-loving believers of different eras.

First, we have to say couple words about probably the best known mention of choir in the Bible. Many believers make connection between choral music and Book of Psalms because the title of some fifty-five psalms begin with an interesting opening formula which some English translations translate as “To the Choirmaster” and various other translations in different languages translate

¹ Pratt 2004, 45

² Mees 2009, 3

the well known למנצח in a similar sense. However, this association is very doubtful in its roots. The first problem is the uncertainty about the term למנצח itself. ³Professor C. S. Rodd in his introduction to Psalms wrote about it: “The meaning is really unknown.”⁴ Therefore it is very hard to conclude whether these psalm we are talking about were intended for choral use simply from their opening formula alone.

There is also a different approach to search for choral music basis in Bible. We can look at the context of some chosen passages and try to analyze whether they take the concept of choir into account. We can strongly assume that there are many Psalms with a structure that points at diversification in performance. The change of persons, use of first person plural, language or subject transformations and many other modifications serve us as hints to recognize the voice and passage of a leader and a reply of choir or organized group responding or taking their part. It can either be the voice of choir formed by professional Levite singers or by the whole congregation taking part in the poetical and surely musical way of thanking God, praising His name, appealing or asking for help and deliverance... This can be the case in Psalm 113, 136 or 24 and many others. Although we presuppose the use of Psalms in the cultic ceremonies, this view is considered to be one of the standard hypotheses when dealing with Sitz im Leben of Biblical Psalms.⁵ Thereafter we can work with the idea of at least poetical and probably even musical setting of various psalms, which means that they could perfectly fit to our area of interest because they unveil some very important aspects of collective approach to music. Psalms also show us the place of music, even the choral music itself, in such a significant part of the life of Israel community as cultic ceremonies.

³ MUDDIMAN, BARTON 2001, 359

⁴ ibid

⁵ Holladay, Hayes 1987, 83nn

We would like to point out to one similar example of choral music use in life of ancient Israel as recorded in the Old Testament. In the books of Chronicles we were able to find clear traces of choirs and musical practices which can surely help us to sketch a picture of Biblical attitude towards the topic of our interest. The two books of Chronicles offer an ancient material which is documented also in other Biblical sources, but adds a specific point of view. And precisely this point of view is so important for our investigation because it gives us an insight into cultic service performed by Levites, musicians and singers around the ark on God (1Ch 15), in the temple (1Ch 25) or on special occasions like lamentations (2Ch 35:25), after the battle (2Ch 20:28)... And those are only the references to musical and choral performances, not the whole contribution of these Biblical chronicles to our knowledge of cultic and ceremonial life in Israel. Nevertheless, our main focus is on music and more specifically choral music, therefore we will pay attention just to this aspect of Israel's rituals.

There are verses that help us to see music and choral singers as a vital part of cultic life:

²⁷ Now David was clothed in a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and as were the singers, and Kenaniah, who was in charge of the singing of the choirs. David also wore a linen ephod.

²⁸ So all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouts, with the sounding of rams' horns and trumpets, and of cymbals, and the playing of lyres and harps. (1Ch 15:27-28 NIV)

The only reason for a dance, music and probably singing is not just the great occasion of bringing the ark to Jerusalem. The Levites, who had the specific function of singers (1Ch 15:16), could not and did not get that function from day to day. There existed a body of Levites who took care of musical aspects of rituals. Those were usual rites (as we will see later) and great occasions, when

king David himself demanded a ceremony. Inevitable part of the music in it was המשררים – singers, who had even their leader. Later they were established (or confirmed) as an indispensable part of the service by the ark in the Temple. This was the decision and command done by David as a representative of royal power and supported by Gad and Nathan as representatives of prophetic authority (2Ch 29,:25). Voices of singers and skills of musicians became part of the temple ceremony:

“⁷ Along with their relatives – all of them trained and skilled in music for the LORD – they numbered 288. (1Ch 25:7 NIV)”⁶

Therefore we can see the process of integrating Levite musicians into the cultic life of Israel. Such passages giving evidence of choral music in the Old Testament are great opportunity to look at the character of this service and its understanding and evaluation. John W. Kleinig, a Lutheran pastor and a scholar interested in the role of music in history as well as today, wrote in his work *The LORD's Song*:

“1 Chronicles 15 suggest that the performance of sacred song was in some way ritually similar, if not equivalent, to the transportation of the ark... The Levites then were chosen as musicians, because their performance of music was to be a ‘ministry’ akin to their care of the ark.”⁷

Thus we see that the very integral element of the service in the Temple was choral music as part of cultic duty. However John Kleinig also emphasizes the other aspect of “musical program” in ancient Israel. The whole congregation

⁶ Other translations say: trained in singing to the LORD (1Ch 25:7 NAS); trained in singing to the LORD (1Ch 25:7 RSV)

⁷ Kleinig, 1993, 91

present in different types of rites was called to join the Levites in a collective worship. This should be clear from passages such as 1Ch 16:8-13 according to Kleinig.⁸ That meant that everybody was invited to form a united community of praise. The choir accompanied by musical instruments was followed by all the people attending the ceremony and they became part of the whole course of events. As every musical instrument had its own task, so did the voices of singers and mainly the voices of congregation. So what is the conclusion from this passage dedicated to the analysis of books of Chronicles? In the times of ark of covenant and the first Temple the faith of people were expressed during the sacrificial and festal rituals. Music was understood as a means of praise. Books of Chronicles teach us that choral music was part of the service to God. The Levites who served at the gate of the temple or took care of the ark had the same position as those who sang in the choir. Moreover, they did not participate in this service just themselves, but shared the privilege of praising the God Almighty with the gathered crowd and called monumentally to all corners of the world for the glory of the Lord. The effect on the congregation remains part of the discussion, though such a service colored by artistic sequences including chant of the choir must have been an attractive experience strengthened by the fact they could become part of the important ceremony.⁹ In these ancient times music and chants had its power and were valued very deeply. It was certainly because they carried the message of exalting the God. For what other reason would king Jehoshaphat use men to sing praises, when going to battle?

²¹ After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever."

⁸ Kleinig, 1993, 95

⁹ *ibid*

²² As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated. (2Ch 20:21-22 NIV)”

The people of Israel chose and believed or chose to believe that the song is able to do miracles. The singers in Levite choirs and even the singers from among ordinary people of the congregation believed that their song is a connection with their God.

This believe was not abandoned and after the destruction of the Temple by Babylonians, the texts of Ezra-Nehemiah show us that with an attempt to restore the previous glory of the cult, also the singers came back from exile (Ezr 2:70) and later with the finishing of the wall they were appointed (Neh 7:1) – singers both male and female (Neh 7:67).

Now we would like to move on to show the real impact of the song and music in the life of individuals. We are not trying to draw a straight causal link between the evidence of Psalms and Chronicles, although we would suppose that the experience from the community cultic rituals had an impact on the ordinary people in their understanding of the music. We would rather like to come up with some examples of the close connection of music and characters in Bible. It would be no surprise to find out that music served to express joy. People of Israel experienced some of the greatest moments of joy when they were delivered from the danger of foreign oppressor. That was the case in two well-known songs from Pentateuch. We can find the first one immediately after the God’s deliverance from the hands of Pharaoh’s army. In Exodus 15:21 we read: “Miriam sang to them: ‘Sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea.’” (Exo 15:21 NIV) This is Miriam’s chant which sounded after the song of praise celebrating the victory of Jews. But there are opinions claiming that this is rather an opening formula

(though at the end) calling for a response from the Israelites.¹⁰ That would again suggest that music and singing was part of the community life. The great occasions were connected with collective consistency in singing. There are important aspects which unite those people: it is their faith in Lord; it is their common experience of deliverance and it is the expression in music – mainly choral music as an instrument of praise. What is even more interesting is the focus of this song. As professor Walter Houston wrote: “Everything is concentrated on YHWH and his victory.”¹¹ What is in the very center of the song is the praise of God. Everything turns around exalting, thanking and admiring Lord. That is how the Old Testament wants us to see the song and music – they are here as instruments of praise. It can be objected that this song is a part of the ritual of organized cultic worship with later dating, but the message of this Biblical passage remains the same.

We can also look at another song in Book of Judges in chapter 5. There is the song of Deborah and Barak which as we have been taught at the very beginning of exegesis class is considered to be one of the most ancient materials in the Bible, though this is the matter with many of the poetical texts. Howbeit this song contains more material concerning the circumstances of the Israelite’s victory, still in the spotlight there remains the idea of praise.

To be complete we must stress that the references to the music in the Old Testament are not always this homogeneous in their topic. Let us take a look at David for example: He is linked with plenty of the psalms mostly with theme of praise *inter alia*. Yet he used music in a different way, when he played the harp for Saul, possessed by evil spirit (1Sam 16:15). Moreover, David’s name is linked with even more profane use of the music in chapter 18 of First book¹²

¹⁰ Houston 2001,77

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² Kleinig 1993, 46-47,54

of Samuel, where we can witness something like the formation of folk literature:

“⁶ When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes. As they danced, they sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." (1Sa 18:6-7 NIV)

These are the examples when music in the Bible is not intended for praise of the Lord only. However what do the pages of the Old Testament bear witness to more frequently is the message of praise, worship and interaction with the Lord.

Short excursion to Qumran

We would like to make a short digression to the intertestamental era, more specifically in the rich corpus of Dead Sea Scrolls. The message, these precious documents of a Jewish community living in area of Qumran around 1st century BC to 1st century AD, preserved us, is of miscellaneous character. First there are manuscripts quoting the Old Testament passages concerned with music, most often psalms (for example 1QpPS 8). Then we can find some kind of commentaries to the books of Hebrew Bible and other significant writings. Unfortunately this material is not preserved well when music is there as a main topic so we cannot look at these passages.¹³ We must not forget about the texts thought to be written by the Qumran community itself. There the theme of music and singing is again connected with the praise:

¹³ Although we could find some helpful passages in commentaries to poetical texts that might be used in liturgy, but this would require more space and special emphasis on Dead Sea Scrolls which we do not have space for.

“I will sing with knowledge and for the glory of God shall all my music be, the playing of my harp according to his holy order, and the whistle of my lips I shall tune to its correct measure.”¹⁴

This passage is from long and well preserved manuscript called Rule of Community and shows how precisely the community understood the role of singing and music. Similar ideas are later in the same chapter (1QS X 17). Another proof, that music was well integrated in the life of this community, can be found in the passage of 1QWar Scroll – further example of Qumran literature. Hymn of return described in column XIV is part of the warfare ceremony and in the center of this passage stands the blessing of God (v. 3), singing of His marvels (v. 6) and praise (v. 12-13). All of this is done in a manner which would fit the scheme of collective singing – as if it was sung by a choir. Apparently the musical tradition from the times of the Old Testament had not disappeared but was still alive in Qumran. This notion can be supported by other passage we want to look at – 1QFestival Prayers where stands: “We will sing of your wonders from generation to generation. Blessed be the Lord who made [us] rejoice.”¹⁵ There can be a doubt whether these are not just metaphorical uses of the music such as 1QH^a XIX 23 (“I will sing with the harp of salvation.”). However, the description of instrument playing together with whistle and singing in 1QS and the structure of the mentioned verse from 1QFestival Prayers where we can see the proclamation formula that “we will sing” and possible exclamation “Blessed be the Lord” – that points in our view to real use of music at least in cultic or liturgical sense or even personal derived from the former one. To conclude the findings of this short digression, we have to say that we have little straight evidence about choirs. On the other hand the Dead Sea Scrolls and mainly the Qumran community knew

¹⁴ Martinez, Tigchelaar 1999, 1QS X 9

¹⁵ Martinez and J.C.Tigchelaar 1999, 1QFestival Prayers 1+2 3-4

music well. Either in metaphorical use or literally, music was deeply connected with praise and was preferred form of blessing the Lord. We know that from some quotations mentioned above and also many poetical texts similar to Psalms, which could easily be used for singing.

We should now move to the pages of the New Testament bearing in mind that music and choral singing in the Old Testament were not exclusively the matter of praise and worship, but in vast majority of the OT these ideas of praise are not only present but count among the main topics of musical expression. We could see that this might be caused by their character of music often (supposed to be) used during the cultic rituals. However, these ceremonies and the sung poetry which is their inherent component are by their character performed among and together with the people. Those are the conclusions from the previous lines confirmed and supported by the Qumran community which inherited the cultural context of the Old Testament being Hebrews themselves.

Music in the New Testament

In the times of the New Testament, Jewish people must have been surely influenced by their history and predecessors as well. “During the first centuries, believers recognized the power inherent within the hymns of the Psalter. Psalmody, a practice by which a text was reproduced tonally in repeated, advanced patterns, formed the foundations upon which church music was based.”¹⁶ Psalms were really one of the most influential materials which were available to first Christians. Not only did their vast use underline the connection of Christian communities with the inheritance of the Old Testament as such, but widely spread the idea of praising God. That can be the reason

¹⁶ Herbert Lockyer 2004, 88

why the first Christians chose them – because they offered the finest examples of worship.

The evidence that music was present in the New Testament is not very extensive, but still we can read Paul's words about singing psalms or having a song in different letters to churches. It can be assumed that the poetry of the Old Testament was not always sung: "What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn¹⁷, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church." (1Co 14:26 NIV) From this passage it seems that psalms could be used to build a community as a part of every believer's contribution to the building or strengthening of the church. However, the context of First letter to Corinthians offers us the insight into the customs in early Christian assemblies: "So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind." (1Co 14:15 NIV) Singing comes along such an important activity as prayer so the famous saying *cantare est bis orare*¹⁸ having the roots in Saint Augustine is really well-founded. Furthermore, Paul writes about psalms and singing also in other letters, for example in letter to Ephesians 5:19, where he warns the Christians in Ephesus against pagan ways and customs not appropriate for believers and shows them what is better for them to do. Among it, we can find a clear appeal for fulfillment with the Spirit (Eph 5:18) which is done by "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." (Eph 5:19 NAS) Very similar advice comparable in use of Greek terms ψαλμός, ὕμνος, ᾠδή is given by Paul to the church in Colossae: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."

¹⁷ ψαλμὸν (1Co 14:26 BGT)

¹⁸ To sing is to pray twice.

(Col 3:16 NIV) These verses confirm that singing was usual in the early Christian assemblies and it was considered to be of great importance. Music was usually performed in form of psalms and dedicated to God. Thus the main theme of this early Christian music remains praise, thanksgiving or worshipping God. What we see clearly is the setting of the music which is public and communal.

Besides, reverend Herbert Lockyer Jr. thinks that “numerous passages from Paul’s epistles seem to be quotations from hymns or psalms that were likely well known to early believers. Passages such as Eph. 5:14 follow a perfect hymn pattern in construct and rhythm when we read (them) in original language.”¹⁹ Consequently we could claim that songs and music were a means of communication of faith.

Music in early church

For fifteen centuries, after birth of Christianity, it was the Church that had a monopole over music and since it discountenanced instrumental music it is but just the history of choral music, which is being the history of church music as such. During that time, choral music came close to perfection and high organization on account of great musical composers whose opus needs to be discussed because of its high quality and flawlessness. Unfortunately, early centuries of Christian times do not provide us with sufficient evidence to help us track and examine the development of choral music. Even if they did, the system of notation that could offer us at least a certain degree of accuracy did not come until the eleventh century. It will be further discussed in the next chapter. ²⁰For this lack of evidence, it seems reasonable to assume that “in

¹⁹ Herbert Lockyer 2004, 122

²⁰ Mees 2009, 20nn

music, the primitive Christians...yielded to the same influences... as in other matters pertaining to their religious observances.”²¹ We know that Christians did not restrict their interaction with pagans if their religious beliefs were not offended. Figures and scenes from ancient mythology were found in catacombs that were built in order to avoid persecution. On the walls of these places for gathering and singing, the scenes were altered so as to fit the stories in the Scripture. Further, we have more indirect evidence of choral music use from Philo. His observations suggest that Christian music was deeply influenced by Hebrew music. ²²He writes about Christian love-feast when he states: “After the Supper, when all had risen, two choirs, one of men and one of women, were selected and from each of these a person of majestic form was chosen to lead. These then chanted hymns in honor of God, composed in different measures and modulations, now singing together and now answering each other by turns.”²³ He is clearly describing the responsive and antiphonal way of singing, widely used in Jewish culture, which was highly probably brought to Christian church by Jewish converts. After all, there is a tight connection of Christianity and Judaism. Therefore, the relative deficiency of evidence of choral and liturgical in the New Testament can be explained by assuming that there was no necessity to record something that was well and long used²⁴. “Christians saw their faith as a completion of Judaism; they were able to continue to use many parts of Jewish liturgy, but to see them in a new light.”²⁵ This tradition was strongly kept all the way to Council of Jerusalem in 49 AD when it was agreed that non-Jewish converts do not need to keep the Law of Moses. With the increasing number of church members, a natural need for improvements of music came along, together with first interdictions of some

²¹ Mees 2009, 21

²² *ibid* 21nn

²³ *ibid* pg. 23

²⁴ *ibid*

²⁵ Dickinson 1992, 24-25

too elaborate styles, such as chromatic melodies.²⁶ Further, we can already see the appearance of trained choirs in the fourth century that belonged to the Greek Church looking back to the times of Ephraem of Edessa or St. Chrysostom.²⁷ It is also necessary to mention the foundation of the singing school. This school was founded by Pope Sylvester and its great importance lies in foundation of “the *oldest choral body in the world*”²⁸, namely the Sistine Chapel representing the role model for any other choral institution until as long as eighteenth century. In addition, this power over the whole music was even more strengthened by the Council of Laodicea stressing the uniformity of music in churches in order to preserve tradition.²⁹

Although there are little written records about development of music in both Christian and Jewish congregations until the sixth or seventh century, when looking at orthodox Jemenite Jews for instance one can observe astonishing resemblance comparing with the earliest records of Christians.³⁰ It would therefore be reasonable to assume a certain connection of both Christians and Jews as we have already mentioned. Because of a certain scarcity of resources from early periods we will continue our survey of choral music origins in the next chapter discussing the history of choral music, starting as late as the 6th century.

To conclude this passage about biblical foundations of worship and choral music, several matters need to be highlighted, stressed and mentioned. Even though there certainly was some influence of Babylonian and Assyrian music as there always is, Hebrew people created a beautiful world of music of their

²⁶ ibid

²⁷ Mees 2009, 25

²⁸ Mees 2009, 25

²⁹ ibid pg. 20nn

³⁰ Dickinson 1992, 25

own. To demonstrate that fact, we have chosen a number of passages from the Old Testament. One of the most familiar examples is number of psalms with their famous beginnings “to the choir master” that may already indicate that there was a person to lead a group of singers maybe distant yet similar to choir conductor in leadership, although we have stated that the translation of “the choir master” is not clear enough to make a reasonable assumption. After that we have examined the book of chronicles and found “clear traces of choirs and musical practices integrating Levite musicians into the cultic life of Israel”. The important aspect we would like to stress in this part is that music and singing is a ministry to God and to congregation, which was often called to participate! It is also very interesting to see a high organization of all the ceremonies where everyone and everything had its’ place such as musical instruments, singers, congregation etc. Subsequently, we have mentioned King Jehoshaphat who attached great importance to song and the music and Miriam and her song that was a beautiful expression of joy. When we moved towards the New Testament passages, we have found certain scarcity of (choral) music descriptions. However, that was explained by taking into account the Philo records and assuming that this scarcity was caused by deep Hebrew influence on Christianity as such. Since they believed Christianity completes Judaism they did not need to repeat known practices in the New Testament. Last but not least, we could see another important development in early years of Christianity in fourth century when first trained choirs appeared and subsequently singing school by Pope Sylvester was founded. These are giving us just a glimpse into the hard work put into this development and important role music played in the church. As we undertake this survey about origins of (choral) music, we would like to point out that from the very beginning of it we can already see that music was not only an integral part of cultic duties but also a center of expressing relationship between God and His people. Whether it was joy, trust or concern, they all had place in music with praise in the middle.

Chapter two

History of Choral Music

Before the reformation

In order to be able to observe specific role of the choir in the church one also needs to understand its' historic position and function. Therefore, we will proceed by short introduction of development of choral music throughout the centuries.

The history of choral music is a very broad subject to explore and since the extent of our work will not let us examine this issue deeply we will only attempt to point out historical highlights of choral music.

We would like to continue discussing the development of choral music with the years 590- 604. These are the years of Gregory I.'s papal reign. Tradition connects him to *Cantus Platus* which is a chant of eight mode system.³¹ The rhythm of Plainsong during the middle ages is unknown but it was used as part of liturgy in Roman Catholic Church. It can also be called Gregorian chant, carrying its' name after already recalled famous pope Gregory the Great. For a time being, he was considered to assemble liturgical books.³² One of his goals was also to prevent a secularization of the church which became a danger when ecclesiastics got caught up in the choir so much; they started to lose interest of anything but a beautiful tone production of their choirs.³³ Gregorian chant originated in early Christian times but Benedictine monks of Solesmes tried to

³¹ Zinn 1995, 416

³² P.Unger 2010, 165

³³ Mees 2009, 27-28

recover the authentic notes. “The restoration of the correct note-value, however, has only recently become possible – since the appearance in 1958 of *Rhythmic Proportions in Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Chant* by the late Dr. J. W. A. Vollaerts, S.J.”³⁴

9th century brings us to an anonymous treatise *Musica enchiriadis*. In this valuable piece one can find a method for polyphony and as well as numerous examples of organum which is a very special way of simultaneously putting together two musical lines in a way note against note.³⁵

Two centuries later, we can come across *The Winchester Tropers*. These two English Manuscripts include number of pieces with two parts. It is considered one of the earliest records of polyphony in Europe³⁶ which does not only make it unique in the historical perspective, but also interesting for our examination. This century also brought a system of sight singing using solmization, which means that we label each individual tone with a syllable. It resulted in efficiency of learning chants in a shorter period of time. However, “until a method of notation capable of designating the duration of tones as well as their pitch came into common use, music in two or more parts was the product of the momentary inspiration of the choristers...it is evident that the choirs of that period must have consisted of highly endowed, thoroughly instructed, and well trained singers and musicians.³⁷” When the Solmization did arrive it was assigned to Guido of Arezzo who dedicated his life to improving teaching procedures of singing. Solmization in its modified form is used until today. For example instead of *ut* we use *do* (*ut, re, mi, fa – do, re, mi, fa*).³⁸

³⁴ Murray 1963, v

³⁵ Randel 2003, 243-244

³⁶ P.Unger 2010, xix

³⁷ Mees 2009, 37-38

³⁸ P.Unger 2010, 410

In 1170 *Magnus liber organi de graduali et antiphonario pro servitio divino* in short *Magnus liber organi* was compiled. This collection was put together for the cathedral Notre Dame de Paris and it is a product of Leoninus and Perotinus³⁹ representatives of the famous Notre Dame school of polyphony. Leoninus' works included an additional vocal line. This line was added to such pieces as Alleluias, Graduals or Responsorial chants. The system used was quite complicated and a considerable number of extra decorating notes were added to sing along with the first part. Sometimes as many as forty notes had to be sung while the first singer had sung just one. Naturally, it resulted in extension of original notes sometimes even up to thirty seconds long. Hence, we consider it completely acceptable when Perotinus shortened parts of Leoninus' works. Further, he added other voice-parts up to four (quadruplum) which can properly be identified as polyphony.⁴⁰ In addition to development of music complexity in the church, it is important to point out that music was still a very strong part of liturgy and sacral life.

At the end of the 12th century Richard le Poore, dean of Salisbury codified and systematized The Sarum rite. ⁴¹This rite was “a compilation of local and Norman rites apparently introduced by St. Osmund, a Norman nobleman, who was appointed Bishop of Sarum (Salisbury) in 1078 by his uncle, William the Conqueror.” ⁴² It was widely practiced by English churches until The 16th century even though it was never fully standardized.

Let us continue our survey of choral music in history with the year 1360 and Guillaume de Machaut. Around this time this great composer of French name completed *La Messe de Notre Dame*. This piece was a mass cycle for four

³⁹ *ibid* pg.83-84

⁴⁰ Dickinson 1992, 51

⁴¹ P.Unger 2010, 115

⁴² *ibid*

voices composed exclusively by Machaut which made it the first mass cycle written by a single person as far as we know. Therefore we must consider it a massive milestone in the evolution of polyphony and almost impossible to left out of our consideration. In addition, he also wrote 42 ballades, twenty two rondeaux, eight virelais and a hocket made mostly for two or three voices.⁴³

First half of fifteenth century brings us *Unus* and *chorus* designations which signify that one line is to be sung by multiple singers. This is a huge step in polyphonic music and it is also a step forward to forming a choir which interests us the most. In connection with these designations we would like to mention John Benet, an excellent English composer whose mass movements are thought to be the earliest works that used them.⁴⁴

In the 15th century we can spot an early development of counterpoint. Kyrie, Gloria or Agnus Dei and other mass texts that were not changing started to be in the centre of musical attention.⁴⁵ „Pervading structural imitation, as exemplified in the works of Josquin des Prez, becomes the standard texture for polyphonic masses and motets.”⁴⁶ In his compositions, Josquin had different sections to copy each other melodically. Sort of like canon, there was always a point – *punctus* that marked a beginning of a new section but the meeting point of the two melodies is placed against each other, hence creating a counterpoint.⁴⁷

Appereance of Falsobordone in this era continued to have an influence all the way to the 1600's when this chordal recitation became a model for Anglican

⁴³ P.Unger 2010, 270

⁴⁴ P.Unger 2010, 34

⁴⁵ ibid pg. XX

⁴⁶ ibid

⁴⁷ Dickinson 1992, 73

chant in English church. Falsobordone is a ⁴⁸“four-part harmonized version of a psalm tone chant. In practice a verse of a psalm sung monodically in chant was alternated with a verse sung in falsobordone.”⁴⁹ “Chordal recitation on root position triads followed by a cadence, used especially for the harmonized chanting of psalms.”⁵⁰

The reformation times

Even though it was not common with church reformers, Luther greatly supported church music, both German and Latin, during the time of his influence. He had however a good predisposition to act that way since he was a singer and a lute player. He thought himself that “music’s proper place lay “next to theology” and in cooperation with Philipp Melanchton, Georg Rhau, and Johann Walter he not only reformed church but also education. Music education was brought to schools and even theology students pastors-to-be had to participate in music studies and were expected to grow their musical skills. Vice versa, those who applied to be in church music positions had to gain a certain theological knowledge. In 1523 he issued *Formula Missae* that show his grand support for Latin chant and three years later in 1526 he published *Deutsche Messe* “a standardized German liturgy”. Along with that Luther substituted a large part of Latin liturgy with German hymns.⁵¹

During the reformation times, Martin Luther greatly changed the perception of singing in the church. Most of the time, either the choir or the clergy were to sing all parts of liturgy, but with the oncoming of new German hymns and

⁴⁸ P.Unger 2010, 122

⁴⁹ Jackson 2005, 146

⁵⁰ P.Unger 2010, 122

⁵¹ *ibid* pg. 266

translation of parts of the liturgy into German congregational singing started to take place and substituted choir more and more. The reasons for this could be different.⁵² Resensburg said: “that the Monday sermon in both hospitals was to be conducted simply, with German psalms before and after the sermon sung by the people, since there were no schoolboys. And in Riga 1530 on weekdays the service was done as on Sundays through the sermon, choral and congregational singing in the church orders but after the sermon the Our Father hymn was sung by the entire congregation so that the boys would not be kept from their studies“.⁵³ Notice that the choir was considered all boys. Even though there was a changing role of choir, congregation and their importance or involvement during the church service, a bond between church and the music became stronger and stronger under the influence of Luther and his colleagues. Together with the reformation of the church, music reformation took place also and created an environment suitable to music growth and new ways to express one’s faith not only in Germany but in many other countries as well.

Moving on to the second half of the sixteenth century, England after death of Henry VIII, his son Edward VI received the throne. Since he was too young, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury and English church reformer used the chance to put some reforms in action. He managed to have the First Act of Uniformity (1549) passed, ⁵⁴“establishing the Book of Common Prayer as the compulsory standard for liturgical Language and practice”.⁵⁵ In England this was rather important because the establishment of the BCP (Book of Common Prayer) resulted in the use of English during the services “as the official language of worship”. ⁵⁶ Cranmers’s intention was to create an alternative to the liturgy books for the Roman mass. BCP was very simple and in 1552 it was

⁵² Heri 2004, 67

⁵³ Heri 2004, 67

⁵⁴ P.Unger 2010, 115

⁵⁵ P.Unger 2010, xxi

⁵⁶ *ibid* pg. 115

even more simplified and reduced. This reduction was rejected for quite some time by many of those who valued liturgy treasured many of its' parts.⁵⁷

Choir music's development was not to stop and just some years later in 1575 one can see another milestone of German choral music to behold the light of the world. Leonhard Lechner, composer and music editor who served in Bavarian court composed *Motectae sacrae*. *Motectae sacrae* is a number of motets⁵⁸ providing us with "one of the first examples of German polychoral writing in the Venetian style."⁵⁹

After the reformation

Seventeenth century brings us a special soul and a musical composer Heinrich Schutz (1618-1648). He was interested to a great extent in laying his textual foundation of his works in the Scripture. He accepted a beautiful challenge to bring the Scripture to life. Schutz was able to compose pieces where he focuses on the relationship between Divinity and Humanity. Most of his biblical intentions are published in *Psalms of David*. This great musician paid much attention to the relationship between God and His people in his works and he is a great example of a close connection that faith and music have. Concerning Heinrich Schutz, we would also like to add that some of his pieces were incredibly complex, certain requiring⁶⁰ "as many as four separate choirs."⁶¹ *Psalms of David* are also a post-product of Schutz's stay in Venice which played a role of great influence in Heinrich's life and his musical compositions as he was fascinated by Venetian style. With that deep impression of Venetian music in his heart he attempted to express it in a Biblical setting and he

⁵⁷ Dickinson 1992, 70

⁵⁸ P.Unger 2010, 252

⁵⁹ ibid

⁶⁰ Dickinson 1992, 90

⁶¹ ibid

succeeded. Inevitably, however, the complexity of musical compositions had lower and lower demand in Germany, destroyed by war. Still, he was able to create an intimacy in the new style and was able to take his listeners on a journey with many biblical characters of his choice.⁶²

In the century of enlightenment we would like to stress several high points of our historical journey of music. First of all The Three Choirs Festival was founded in 1713. The festival originated in three counties of Gloucester, Worcester, and Hereford. Each year these three choirs would gather together and perform⁶³ “oratorios and other works with the combined choirs of the towns’ three cathedrals.”⁶⁴ In addition to the festival, seventeenth and eighteenth century holds a “great stream of outstanding composers in Lutheran tradition”⁶⁵ crowned with brilliant composer, performer and organist Johann Sebastian Bach. His exceptionality was greatly appreciated by his contemporaries:⁶⁶

“When he was called from Leipzig to Cassel to pronounce an organ properly restored [a task he was frequently called to perform], he ran over the pedals with the same facility as if his feet had wings, making the organ resound with such fullness, and so penetrate the ears of those present like a thunderbolt, that Frederick... Prince of Cassel admired him with such astonishment that he drew a ring with a precious stone from his finger and gave it to Bach as soon as the sound had died away.”⁶⁷

Not to mislead the reader however, his pieces were not commonly welcomed. He also endured times when his relationship with his employer – the Church, was rough. His mission was to praise God, using his phenomenal talents in the

⁶² Dickinson 1992, 91-92

⁶³ P.Unger 2010, 74

⁶⁴ *ibid*

⁶⁵ Dickinson 1992, 93

⁶⁶ *ibid*

⁶⁷ *ibid*

best possible way for a reasonable salary. As for his compositions, even though he adopted many old and new musical styles he was able to merge them together and breathe⁶⁸ “a new life into a conventional task.”⁶⁹ Expression of his personal faith is the most noticeable subject in his famous cantatas. They were positioned between the Gospel reading and the sermon in order to strengthen the message of the mentioned. Bach’s Cantatas are a ⁷⁰“significant departure from earlier Lutheran music like that of Schutz, whose texts were almost always directly biblical. A move away of God’s word might be seen as a move for the worse, but the use Bach makes of his cantata-texts is so compelling that they remain unsurpassed as musical expression of Christian truth.”⁷¹ Again, we can see a deep personal faith combined with an extraordinary talent.

Following the stream of exceptional composers of the eighteen century it is necessary to mention Georg Friedrich Händel a celebrated German-British composer. Among great number of his works it is necessary to point out his piece entitled *A Sacred Oratorio, Messiah*. *Messiah* is the one piece from the eighteen century most British people would remember if any. Originally, *Messiah* was intended as an oratorio for ⁷² a performance at the New Music Hall in 1742. However suggestion of its performance in a London theater met with agitation. Still, Händel’s *Messiah* with its contemplativeness was nothing like his other pieces. Typically oratorios engaged Old Testament characters nevertheless Friedrich’s focus was Jesus Christ himself. *Messiah* had such a powerful message that it became an intrusion to many, overloaded with worldly entertainment. Nevertheless, *Messiah* found itself in a peculiar position. It did not have a place in worship and still it was not really a part of contemporary music in England. However, it deeply influenced small local

⁶⁸ ibid pg. 95

⁶⁹ ibid

⁷⁰ ibid

⁷¹ ibid pg. 94-95

⁷² P.Unger 2010, 172nn

choirs in England. The choirs started to gather in order to perform such pieces, especially *Messiah*. As they encountered professional excellence of for instance Handel's oratorios they received a valuable inspiration of how could their church music programs improve.⁷³

Discussing the improvement of church music programs in eighteenth century it is essential to mention Wesley brothers, Charles and John. Their main goal was to communicate the fact that everyone could be saved and live an eternal life if he had Christ. Not only they emphasize generality of this statement to make it accessible to most people but they were also attempting to achieve some interdenominational unity. On their way to a mission in Georgia, they were traveling with Moravian Christians and the way of life of these people made them realized especially John, their true spiritual state.⁷⁴

“What I least of all suspected, that I, who went to America to convert others, was never converted myself...”⁷⁵

After they truly converted, they decided to take action and use their gifts for the Lord and His people. John once again met with Moravian Christians and he fell in love with their music so much that he translated many of Moravian hymns. Charles too had a unique talent to express his spiritual experience in hymns he composed. Not only he composed a great number of hymns (6500!) but they were also challenging to musicians. When discussing the music programs in congregations Wesley brothers knew exactly what they wanted. Their demands were specific and paid attention to detail. John Wesley was in charge of many of Methodist hymn-books that were issued in his time and he required them to be written down precisely in a way the congregations sang it

⁷³ Dickinson 1992, 114

⁷⁴ *ibid* pg. 115-6

⁷⁵ *ibid* pg. 116

with no changes whatsoever. The roles of the choral singing in churches and congregational singing sort of merged together and John did not hesitate to adapt congregations to the new situation. He was very keen to teach them how to sing well. Not only, he wanted to teach them the particular melodies without changes that congregations often do when engaging a song into their repertoire. As it is seen in some of his works, he included some parts about music reading a getting a beautiful tune from your voice. John Wesley even took it one step further and after the congregation was able to sing well, he suggested some new features into congregational singing that was even more elaborate, such as different position of singers at the church etc. ⁷⁶

To briefly finish off the survey of great composers we choose to shortly mention Mozart. Although this extremely young and talented musician did not consider choral music one of his top priorities or if he did, he did not have enough time in the service of his employers to do so he was indeed a great contribution to choral music as well. To mention just a few of his influential works it is good to point out Mozart's Coronation Mass, seven other masses, eight missae breves, litanies, vespers, psalms, oratorios, cantatas, unfinished Requiem and others. ⁷⁷

Even though there are plenty of other names of famous musicians that would deserve to be discussed, the extent of this work does not let us do so. We would like to end our historical survey with Roger Wagner. This great American conductor, born in France founded Los Angeles Master Chorale (1946). As a conductor of this successful musical body, he recorded extensively and often appeared in different media. We consider his choral arrangements as the largest part of his influence to the world of music. Simultaneously with his conducting position at Los Angeles Master Chorale, he was also a head of the music

⁷⁶ ibid pg. 115nn

⁷⁷ P.Unger 2010, 321

department at Marymount College, Los Angeles and director of choral music at UCLA spreading and passing on his musical excellence to students.⁷⁸ He is a bright example of how far the perfection of music came hand in hand with the focus on education and we can also see that the way of performance has changed extensively. With the arrival of technology and media, sharing and spreading music all the way around the world was made possible in an unbelievable speed. That has also made the world of Christian music that is rapidly changing and created some particular challenges face to face with contemporary music. We will discuss them further in chapter 3.

In conclusion we would like to point out what a great progress choral music has made throughout the centuries. Closely connected to Christianity and faith, this evolution was possible thanks to many blessed and gifted individuals who had worked hard for years to bring choral music to perfection. This perfection has different forms. System of notation has built a foundation for exact preservation of all music. Education of singers of all ages by means of different singing and musical schools helped to form and create skilful, very talented and musically literate singers and even established a position for music in theology. Remarkable compositions of a great number of talented musicians helped music to evolve in its complexity and hand in hand set a standard for music as art. Further it is crucial to highlight that it was the choir singing and its' form that was chosen as a representative of art that is worthy to be used as means of praise and worship of our Heavenly Father. Endless attempts to collect and organize parts of liturgy, hymns etc. established a precious order in our churches that can be enjoyed by countless Christians of today. All the organization, reformation of training and excellent performing was there to achieve certain goals. To unveil some of them we will further continue our discussion about choral music, church, their connection and end.

⁷⁸ ibid pg. 459-460

Chapter three

Choral music and faith

The roles of the Church and Choir

As the topic of our thesis is the role of choirs in the Church and its communities, it is necessary to define these subjects of focus. First of all let us concentrate more on the Church itself. What the church *is* and *is not*. On the first sight, this question may appear as a quite simple one but in fact it is far more complex. When seeking the role of choirs in our churches one needs to be familiar with the role of the church in our society today. However, the Church has a rather different position nowadays than some twenty, thirty years ago, not mentioning World War I or WWII times, or even the Dark Ages.

Quite often, the Church appears to be an institution of some sort. People join, people leave, and financially support etc. this peculiar structure. Secular world however is often blind to its mission and the core of the work that is done not on the basis of some social structure but built on the Scripture. Sadly, too often there appear to be churches that are so troubled and forgetful of the Gospel, they only remain social networks of people with common hobbies or similar mentalities. In order for choirs to rightly fulfill their role it is necessary to define the role of the Church. In the search for such issue, although not fully focused on music at this point, still a song from Jay Beech may somewhat unveil what the church is and is not.

*„The church is not a building,
Where people go to pray!*

*It's not made out of sticks and stones;
It's not made out of clay!*

Chorus:

*We are the church;
The body of our Lord;
We are all His children;
We have been restored.*

*The church is not a business,
A committee or a board.
It's not a corporation,
For the business of the Lord.*

*The church, it is the people,
Living out their lives.
Called, enlightened, sanctified,
For the work of Jesus Christ!.,⁷⁹*

Now the first two verses are giving us some insight into what according to this song is *not* a Church. Hence, it states the Church should not be considered a building or a place made from material or somewhat already mentioned business or institution of some kind. Considering the direction today's society is going it really might be the case. Since the world of 21st century is a world of consumption no wonder the Church might be looked upon this way. However, there may be other reasons to it as well.

⁷⁹ (htt) http://coslcgrace.blogspot.com/2011_10_01_archive.html

Let us digress from the negative definition and focus on the church's role. There are endless possibilities of definitions of the Church, however, we have decided to adopt a definition of Sue Ellen Page because it is first of all biblical and appears very reasonable:

“The church may do many useful things in society, but if it does not bear witness to Jesus Christ, it is not the church...”⁸⁰

Therefore the basic characteristic of the church is a community which *bears witness to Jesus*. Coming from such foundation, the obvious assumption takes place that the Church's primary role is to witness about Jesus, God, salvation, Gospel, eternal life. Apparently, it is no easy task to fulfill such a goal and there are obviously number of ways to accomplish it. Naturally it would be incorrect to witness about something one does not believe to be true and therefore the witnessing itself needs to be happening in faith. Here, the subject furthers again, because once we believe in the Gospel, we do not only believe in Jesus Christ as a person but as a Son of God and therefore in the existence of God as such and His plan for salvation of humanity. As we can see the issue is quite complex. Going further, with knowledge about God and His magnificent plan for our redemption the thankfulness comes and along with it worship as well. Worship then can also have different forms and shapes.

Let us now, in the light of the mentioned circumstances widen and revise our previous definitions of the Church:

Church is a community of believers that bear witness to Jesus Christ and worship God with their lives in all kinds of ways.

Certainly, the tougher question is in many communities whether they fall within this definition, and if not can they still be considered a church or not?

⁸⁰ Page, 1995 p. 5

Nevertheless, we will now pay attention to the primary “traits” of the church we had defined. Hence it is believe, bear witness and worship. With these in mind, let us move to the second issue that needs to be discussed.

Choir as an integral part of Church and its communities also has a role of some kind. What is this role? When we look across the wide range of communities it is hard to be sure and it is hard to receive a clear message from the choirs in their communities. Sometimes they do not communicate it well and sometimes what they communicate might not be in agreement of the true role of choral music and all of its participants.

Since we consider choir as an integral part of the church it is necessary for both the former and the latter to have something in common. Hence, when asking the same question about the role it is essential to consider some similarities in this part too. Choir then could be considered as a tool of fulfilling the role of the church or even some kind of extended hand. But could we also say that the role of the choir is to believe, bear witness and worship? Comparing the state of being a member of the church and being a member of a church choir, one could come up with two quite different experiences. Still fulfilling its roles both church members and choir members can do it in number of ways.

As we have already mentioned, singing and music were used as a part of liturgy and during important occasions such as sacrifices or wars etc. Music can indeed deeply influence the congregations and nurture their faith. Therefore a good music program can be crucial for any church, even being sort of an extended hand of the church or a very useful tool. A quality music program can attract many people into the church and communicate its message and mission in a way other programs are not capable of doing.

When looking at the importance of choirs in the churches, let us not forget a special kind of choir. Children's choirs can offer us a great deal of enrichment and still it is not too common today, that our churches do have one, unless we are talking about a large congregation. We would like to offer you a glimpse of an inspiration of what a great asset can the children's choir be. Ruth K. Jacob's, an author of *The successful Children's Choir* believes that "the children's choir is potentially one of the greatest agencies that the Church possesses for rebuilding its waning strength. No other organization has greater natural opportunity for training in those qualities that characterize a strong Christian faith."⁸¹ And no wonder she is of this opinion. Children are highly influential and if taught Christian values at early ages they can very well carry them to their adulthood and become a strong, responsible and faithful church leaders, any church would wish to have. It surely comes along the ideas and values connected with the music as such and its choral forms which we had a chance to examine and present in previous chapters. As we stressed in the part dealing with the Old Testament and even later in the historical passages of our work, choirs' function was also to drag the audience to the happening. A great example was involving people standing by the cultic rites to the ceremony itself calling upon them to join the musicians and singers. This call was not merely about singing together; similarly we are not calling children to sing in choirs just to form a musical body which would make adorable sounds. As well as the Levite singers and their poetical forms aimed for special purposes were to be gates and invitations for crowds to take part in the praise of God, expression of faith, proclamation of this to all corners of the world and forming of a great worshipping community, so do we invite children whose faith we wish God will build even through the choirs.

⁸¹ Jacobs 1995, 7

Problems of today's music programs

However, the journey of getting the children to sing and getting their parents to cheerfully support the music program can be rather complicated. It needs to be taken into account that our society has greatly changed in the last sixty years. There are several problems we have to face. S. E. Page presents us number of them in her book *Hearts and Hands and Voices* where she devoted herself to unveiling the common problems of music programs in our churches and leading all types of children's choirs, their development and the improvement of their voices in different ages.

One of the problems she addresses is that our churches lost their consistency over the years and therefore do not have a chance to communicate their message often enough. This problem may very well be caused by enormously fast pace of our lives and too many opportunities to choose from. It may be then far too complicated for a family to squeeze in any other church activities apart from the Service of Mass.⁸²

Secondly, one of the major problems in this area is nominal Christians. These people can often be a part of the church or even attend some church activities but they do not believe in the Gospel and often stop participating after certain amount of time. They are also part of society that might see the Church as a social structure or be a member of a church because they seek relationships in their neighborhood or they even may attempt to create a false sense of morality in their conscience just by joining the church.⁸³ "Another sign of nominal church memberships" states Page "is to be seen in *giving patterns*"⁸⁴ Especially in Czech Republic and Slovakia, many congregations have a reason to be

⁸² Page 1995, 2

⁸³ *ibid* pg. 2nn

⁸⁴ *ibid* pg. 3

concerned about financial well being of their churches. Naturally, there are many bright exceptions to this trend; however, in general, the situation might be difficult once the State stops supporting the Church. Giving to the church, in many places is distant from sacrificial character. Whether the poor giving is really the effect of nominal membership or whether it is the result of the Church's inconsistency in its teaching methods for giving, remains a question. Nevertheless, it influences all the programs, not only the music one; and therefore the effectiveness of the church and the extent to which it fulfills its role. Secular world also brings us another contributing factor to nominal memberships.

It is fluctuation of people all over the world that is more common to our society than ever before. Quite often nowadays, the choice of what church to attend is "irrespective of denomination".⁸⁵ Hence the tradition fades and people search for churches to fulfill their needs not the other way around. This competition of church and the secular world for people, leaves us with some tough questions such as what concepts will attract new people? And how to reduce any demands our churches have on busy people of today? Naturally then, people are frequently joining the church because of lower demands and standards and we end up with stingy giving habits etc. Church musicians too are left with some hard choices on how to lead their music programs and with whom as well.

In addition, popular culture has become a great part of the Christian culture. It is obvious in music, where Christian music of the 21st century is almost indistinguishable from contemporary one. The matter progressed to such extent that one is able to choose and equivalent of Christian music based on his or her tastes of the contemporary one. In other words:⁸⁶ "If you like artist 'A' in

⁸⁵ ibid pg. 3

⁸⁶ ibid pg. 5

secular music, then there is a good chance you will like some of the music of 'B' in Christian music".⁸⁷ This is a very dangerous direction to go because it suggests that "Christians are successful to the extent that they mimic the models established by the world."⁸⁸ Those models however, support egocentricity which should not be one of the Christian values at all.

Overcoming the problems

S. E. Page offers us number of principles that can help us to overcome some of the mentioned problems and create a healthy church fulfilling its mission. First, she states that "growing congregations are those which offer varied points of entry for various ages and interest. A vital music program has the potential to be one excellent vehicle for realizing this goal"⁸⁹ Building a program in such a way that it gives an opportunity to people of all ages to participate is a great support to the growth of your church. In music program it means to create a way for children to participate, since adults are the ones to participate most often. Children's choirs are a great way to do this. As we have already mentioned, it is much easier to mold children's minds than others. Choir gives the church an opportunity to communicate Christian values clearly and even provide a child with a sense of importance and responsibility for his or her role in the community. Secondly, staff employed in the church needs to do their job with hearts and first of all, be believers.⁹⁰ Faith then, builds a foundation of a good program. With this foundation we can move on to other responsibilities such as training literate musicians with a good taste of music, arriving again to the contemporary problem of the clashes between secular and Christian music.

⁸⁷ ibid

⁸⁸ ibid

⁸⁹ ibid pg. 7

⁹⁰ ibid.

Carefully choosing every single anthem and having in mind the building a quality musical taste of our singers. Obviously, choirs and music programs are not only about singing and building our musical tastes. There are other factors that are even more important. For instance Linda J. Clark tells us that “Music expresses faith.” and “Music also forms faith.”⁹¹ On the first sight, this may seem odd, but having looked into the Old Testament and seeing people sing in the most important and emotional occasions, it leaves us with no surprise. If such intimate moments are shared with brothers and sisters in Christ, they can create strong bonds in the community that are very necessary to improve choirs’ performances and communication to the congregations and also outside of the church. Then again, we come to the ultimate foundation we should stand on when having any type of Christian community and that is our faith in Jesus Christ, our Savior. Further, when singing in a choir, in order to obtain a rich and full sound by combining more voices together, singers need to listen to one another, perceive each other, take into account and adapt themselves in such a way as to produce a one single voice, creating a beautiful unity Paul was talking about when writing to Corinth:

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. (1 Cor 12: 12-14 NIV)

Becoming the body of Christ is no easy task, but it is wonderful to see that we function at our best when we need each other and no one is suppressed or put forward. It is together, that we can walk in the path of light. Vice versa, where there is lack of cooperation we can see inconsistency in the message that is being communicated.

⁹¹ Clark 1994, 3

Apart from music being the expression of faith, Melva Wilson Costen, who sees a very close link between theology and music, as well as Luther and his companions did, tells us that “Church music is a testimony, and in worship, believers use cultural expressions, such as music, to offer testimony as to what God has done in their lives.”⁹² It is a great encouragement for building music programs and engaging choirs in them, knowing that by doing so we help the church to fulfill its role in a new, inspiring way.

Not only then singing in choir expresses and forms our faith and can be a testimony to both listeners and participants but it also communicates other, very important Christian values. Discipline, for instance, is one of the shining stars among them. Week after week after week, choir director has a great opportunity to build a sense of discipline in his or her singers. Consistent participation of choir members is crucial in choir rehearsals and its lack can easily result in the loss of quality of music program. If taught and explained well to both children and adults one can imprint a sense of discipline and along with it, responsibility. Responsibility is another building stone of high quality music program. With these two values, perhaps it will be easier to change our poor giving patterns, support our churches and devote ourselves to them. Obviously, music programs and choir participation of people of all ages are not the only important activities in our congregations that can help us to grow a healthy church. There are other essential parts to obtain a “full picture”, however, we need to keep in mind that it is one of very effective possibilities to do so.

Hence again, we would like to stress the three actualities that we have set as a role of the church, that is to believe, bear witness and worship. We have connected the roles of the church and the choir to a certain extent for several

⁹² Conste 2004, 184

reasons already mentioned above. Believe in the choir, means to share the experience of faith with co-singers and express it in this community through singing and often praying too. Whether we refer to the famous St. Augustine's saying (*cantare est bis orare*) or whether we have in mind common prayers of the choirs, prayer is undoubtedly going on in these places. Then there is the witnessing part that can be accompanied with unceasing longing for sharing the Good News with people in the congregation or even outside of church. At this point there can also be many difficulties and often failures or even fear of all the weight of responsibility from such an important mission, but with God's grace and ongoing discipline we can overcome and successfully communicate the message that tells us about God's great plan for all sinners. At last (but not least!) we come together before Him and worship and praise Him for He is worthy of all praise in the world.

To sum up, in this chapter we addressed the questions What is the Church? and What is its' role. Although it was not an easy task we have come up with a definition that can be said to hold three main characteristic. Those are to believe, bear witness and worship. Subsequently we asked a similar questions about choir and its' role as well. Although experiencing these two can be very different, they have a common purpose and choir acts in the service of the Church. We have also said that choir and music nurture faith and communicate a message which if communicated correctly can be a great asset to the whole Church body and it is a place where responsibility and discipline can be taught.

In addition, it was important to note the significance of children's choirs and their position in our congregation and stress an incredible opportunity it offers us to mold children's minds. Since it is difficult to create and maintain a good music program we have discussed several problems that may occur in this area according to S.E. Page. She has offered us examples such as loss of consistency of message communicating due to busyness of today's families;

problem of nominal Christians and clues to reveal it, such as poor giving patterns or disrespect of tradition of the church; and we have also dealt with popular culture and its' influence on Christian music and the problem of maintaining high musical standards in our Churches. As we have said in previous chapters, many talented musicians throughout the history have worked very hard to achieve perfection in music. Today we can draw from their experience and be thankful for their diligence in music composition, organization, teaching etc. However, many people today are called to walk on this incredible path as well, sharing what God has to offer His people through music and they build music programs for their Churches. Therefore we have considered it to be reasonable to include a number of instructions on how to overcome the problems mentioned above, such as participation of all ages or choosing a staff with strong Christian beliefs and building one's foundation in Christ so the choir can be a spitting image of well functioning body of Christ, where we need each other and have much joy from sharing our faith with this world.

Conclusion

At the very beginning of our paper, we have set our thesis to be: The choral music and its experience is and was for the most part closely connected to faith. Now let us see whether we have proved it right or wrong. We have researched and surveyed literature from several points of view concerning our topic and we have discussed many different contributions to music, its history, development and contemporary problems and music programs.

When surveying the Old Testament for proofs on connection of choral music and faith we came across several interesting passages. Psalms for instance have proved to be a very beautiful source of expressions of deep faith in God. Chronicles, with their vivid description of cultic and ceremonial life also caught our attention. The Levites were a part of sacrificial ceremony and the sacrifice itself was meant to please God. Further, carrying the Ark was accompanied by vibrant celebrations full of music and joy (1 Chr 15: 25-29), David himself was dancing. We think that it would be reasonable to assume, that there was faith involved. The Old Testament also tells us more about deep joy of Israelites in Miriam's song. That song is an expression of bottomless faith in God who freed His people. The people of Israel chose and believed or chose to believe that the song is able to do miracles and it connected them to God. We can clearly see that for instance in 2 Chr 20:21-22 (NIV) when they fight ammonites and win the battle. Hence, the Old Testament is a good source for offering us examples of connection of faith and music. It needs to be said though, that not all of this music is choral. Nevertheless, the song itself has a quite strong position in this field.

Since as we have already said, New Testament suffers from a certain scarcity of choral music evidence but we have also stated the reasons why. However, Paul connected hymns or psalms to a bigger picture, making them part of a service in the community with the goal to strengthen the church (1 Cor 14:26). He also stresses the unity and need of one another in the church and that everyone has a special place.

(Choral) music had a firm place in early church whether we account for Jewish tradition or move to 4th century and see the first developments of it when some of the

first singing schools were founded. Looking at this development was crucial to understanding music's place in the history. Faith played a significant role throughout centuries as well. As choral music has undoubtedly been an important part of the liturgy, it played a spiritual role too. It was a stable and very enriching part of mass and thanks to many hard working individuals it quickly grew to perfection. Naturally, one could argue, and we shall not try to hide the fact, that there might have been many of those, who composed new pieces only for a wage of some sort. But that does not discourage us to look up to bright examples such as Luther or Weasley brothers that have displayed a strong, almost unshakeable faith. In the second chapter we have also covered a considerable number of examples of how choral music had evolved to its' shape today. Although, some of them may seem not to have connection to our thesis we think it was important to display them for several reasons. First two we have already mentioned in our paper those are: recognition of great works, done in diligence and perhaps with faith; and better understanding of music's place. That brings us to our third reason. As we realize what a long way the music itself has come, it makes us think and assume a little, that faith has done the same.

What then follows is the world of today. Our churches, choirs and their problems in 21st century. We have already said that choir experience in not only musical but also a spiritual one. As we look at the roles of both as well as problems they may have, we see that the faith plays the most important role in both. Because it is in faith that we can praise God, it is in faith that we can go to the world and share the Gospel and it is in faith that we are forgiven.

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