

Dr. Dean's Annotated Reading List on Music**

(Revised, July 2024)

The subject of music and worship is extremely important. The shift away from hymns with solid doctrinal content to contemporary choruses occurred at the same time that Western culture completed its shift from the “post-Puritan era” as Sidney Ahlstrom labeled it, to the post-modern era. This broader cultural shift was the culmination of 150 years of theological and philosophical degeneration which eviscerated the culture of all biblical influence. To understand this shift, I suggest the reader first read Schaeffer's, *How Should We Then Live*, then his trilogy, *Escape from Reason*, *The God Who is There*, and *He is There and He is Not Silent*.

Two other books which are more accessible to the reader new to this topic are the books: *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns*, and *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians and Popular Culture?*

These last two will enable individuals, and also parents, to be able to evaluate many ways in which modern culture, i.e., the *zeitgeist*, presses the individual to conform to the popular culture.

The issues related to contemporary Christian worship and music are complex. To describe them as issues related to style or personal preference or generational differences in music is to make the discussion very superficial. There is much more to this than the ideas of style, personal preference, and other things that are said are merely the surface and superficial appearances.

Using the [iceberg illustration](#), this is just the 10% that appears above the surface, but saying that those are the issue ignores the 90% that is below the surface that relates to the ultimate view of reality, our views of how we know truth and error, form values of right and wrong, and how that affects our ideas of beauty and attractiveness and acceptability.

In order for anyone to develop an informed and intelligent view, I suggest reading the books by David Gordon, Ken Myers, and Alan Bloom. Otherwise, all we have is an uninformed opinion without investigating or trying to understand the deeper issues.

Double asterisks indicate the preferred priority, single asterisks would be second priority.

General Books on Christian Worldview and Art

Hillary Brand & Adrienne Chaplin, *Art & Soul: Signposts for Christians in the Arts*. Piquant: Carlisle, UK: 2001.

H. R. Rookmaker. *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994. Rookmaker was an art critic and Chair of the Art History Department at the Free University of Amsterdam. He greatly influenced Schaeffer.

**Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1976

_____. *Escape from Reason*. InterVarsity Press Books, 1968.

_____. *He is There, and He is Not Silent*. Wheaton: Tyndale, 1972

_____. *The God Who is There*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2020

_____, *Christianity and Art*. L'Abri: 1973.

*James W. Sire. *The Universe Next Door*. Sixth Ed. Downers Grove: IVP, 2004.

Gene Edward Veith, Jr. *State of the Arts: From Bezalel to Mapplethorpe*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991.

**Kenneth Myers and Marvin Olasky. *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians and Popular Culture?* Wheaton: Crossway, 1989.

Frank Gabelein. *Christianity, the Arts and Truth (Regaining the Vision of Greatness)*. 1985. Pub data not available at this time.

*Alan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*. Simon and Schuster, reissue edition, April 2012.

Specific Critiques of the Contemporary Christian Movement

**Scott Aniol, *Worship in Song: A Biblical Philosophy of Music and Worship*. BMH, 2009. Highly recommended. Perhaps the best overall evaluation and explanation of the issues.

**Scott Aniol, *Biblical Foundations of Corporate Worship*.

*John Makujina. *Measuring the Music*. Old Paths Publications, 2nd Edition, 2002. If you can only read one book on this subject, this should be that book.

Dan Lucarini. *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement/Confessions of a Former Worship Leader*; Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2002. This is a short, quick read. Lucarini brings a personal perspective to this issue.

John Blanchard, Dan Lucarini. *Can We Rock the Gospel?* Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2006.

**T. David Gordon, *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Rewrote the Hymnal*, P&R Publishing, 2010. If you can only read one book on this subject, this should be that book.

Secular Books on Neuroscience and the Effects of Music on the Human Brain

These books by secular musicologists demonstrate the total fallacy of the “music is neutral” assumption based on numerous contemporary studies by people who have no role in the Christian debate.

Daniel J. Levitin, *This is Your Brain on Music*, Dutton, 2006.

David Huron. *Sweet Anticipation/Music and the Psychology of Expectation*. MIT Press, 2006.

Leonard B. Meyer. *Emotion and Meaning in Music*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1961.

Leonard B. Meyer. *Style and Music: Theory, History, and Ideology*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Jourdain, Robert. *Music, the Brain and Ecstasy*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1997.

Anthony Storr. *Music and the Mind*. New York: The Free Press, 1992.

Books on Music History

Donald J. Grout. *A History of Western Music*. W. W. Norton & Co. Ltd. 7th edition, 2005.

Elwyn A. Wienandt. *Opinions on Church Music*. Baylor University Press, 1974.

Elwyn A. Wienandt and Robert H. Young. *The Anthem in England and America*. NY: Macmillan, 1970.

William J. Reynolds and Milburn Price. *A Survey of Christian Hymnody 4th Edition, revised and enlarged by David W. Music and Milburn Price*. Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing, 1999.

Wyatt Tee Walker. *Spirits That Dwell in Deep Woods, The Prayer and Praise Hymns of the Black Religious Experience, Vols. I–III*. NY: Martin Luther King Fellows Press 1987.

Don Cusic. *The Sound of Light, A History of Gospel and Christian Music*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2002.

***The only book I agree with 100% is the Bible. All other books are read for education and learning and the way they help us understand the issues. I do not necessarily agree with everything said in the above list but find them to be extremely helpful in thinking through the current trends in music history and Christianity.